



Conceptual Article

How Digital Service Marketing Mix Drives Enterprise Performance: The Chain Mediating Roles of Digital Customer Experience and Perceived Value

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Abstract

In the era of the digital economy, enterprises increasingly interact with customers through online platforms, leading to the transformation of the traditional service marketing mix (7Ps) into digital contexts. However, the underlying mechanisms through which the digital service marketing mix influences enterprise performance remain underexplored. Drawing on experiential marketing theory and perceived value theory, this study develops a conceptual framework to explain how digital service marketing mix is proposed to influence enterprise performance through the sequential mediating roles of digital customer experience and perceived value. Specifically, we propose that digital marketing activities may shape customer experience, which in turn influences perceived value, ultimately affecting enterprise performance. This study contributes in three ways. First, it provides a systematic digital reinterpretation of the 7Ps framework. Second, it integrates digital customer experience and perceived value into a unified chain mediation mechanism. Third, it links marketing constructs to objective performance indicators, including sales growth, market share, and customer base size. A set of nine propositions is developed to guide future empirical research. This study offers theoretical insights and practical implications for digital service marketing in the evolving digital economy.

Keywords

digital economy, digital service marketing mix, 7Ps, digital customer experience, perceived value, enterprise performance, chain mediation

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Problem Statement

The rapid diffusion of big data, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and mobile internet has accelerated the transition of the global economy into a digital era. Digital technologies have significantly reshaped firm operations, customer consumption patterns, and market competition. In traditional offline settings, enterprises primarily relied on physical stores and face-to-face interactions. In contrast, customers now increasingly use mobile applications, websites, and social platforms to obtain services, express demands, and provide feedback. As a result, digital platforms have become the primary medium for service encounters and value delivery.

In this context, the traditional service marketing mix (7Ps)—product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence—has undergone substantial transformation in digital environments. Each dimension takes on new characteristics: digital products emphasize personalization and intelligence; digital pricing tends to be dynamic and transparent; digital channels enable seamless multi-platform accessibility; digital promotion relies on content interaction and social engagement; digital people highlight online responsiveness and empathy; digital processes focus on efficiency and automation; and digital physical evidence is reflected in interface design, information security, and brand image.

However, existing research has primarily examined the direct effects of these dimensions on customer satisfaction or loyalty, while paying limited attention to the underlying mechanisms through which the digital service marketing mix influences enterprise performance. Furthermore, two important research gaps can be identified. First, studies on digital customer experience and perceived value have largely developed in parallel, with limited efforts to integrate them into a unified framework to examine potential chain mediation effects. Second, enterprise performance is often assessed using perceptual indicators (e.g., satisfaction or intention-based measures), whereas objective operational indicators such as sales growth, market share, and customer base size are less frequently incorporated. From a practical perspective, many firms invest heavily in digital transformation but primarily replicate offline services in online environments, which may lead to suboptimal customer experience, limited perceived value, and constrained performance outcomes. Therefore, it is necessary to examine how the digital service marketing mix may influence enterprise performance through the mediating roles of digital customer experience and perceived value. This study addresses this issue by developing a theoretical chain mediation framework.

1.2 Why This Study? Novelty and Differentiation from Prior Research

This study differs from prior research in three main aspects. First, while existing studies

often examine isolated relationships (e.g., marketing mix → customer satisfaction), this study proposes an integrated chain mechanism linking digital service marketing mix, digital customer experience, perceived value, and enterprise performance. Second, compared with prior conceptual discussions that remain relatively general, this study provides a structured digital reinterpretation of each element of the 7Ps and explains how these elements contribute to customer experience and perceived value formation. Third, this study incorporates objective performance indicators, including sales growth, market share, and customer base size, rather than relying solely on perceptual measures, thereby establishing a more direct connection to firm-level outcomes. In terms of timeliness, the acceleration of digital transformation and the increasing adoption of AI-enabled service technologies (e.g., chatbots and recommendation systems) highlight the importance of understanding how the digital service marketing mix operates in contemporary contexts. The proposed framework provides a theoretical foundation for future empirical research in this evolving domain.

1.3 Research Significance

1.3.1 Theoretical Significance

This study integrates the digital service marketing mix, digital customer experience, perceived value, and enterprise performance into a unified conceptual framework, thereby extending the scope of digital service marketing research. It clarifies the sequential mediating roles of customer experience and perceived value, contributing to the development of experiential marketing theory and perceived value theory in digital contexts. Additionally, by incorporating objective performance indicators, this study provides a more precise conceptual basis for future empirical investigations.

1.3.2 Practical Significance

From a managerial perspective, the proposed framework suggests that optimizing the digital service marketing mix should focus not only on technological investment but also on enhancing customer experience and perceived value. It also offers actionable insights across the seven dimensions of the marketing mix, which may help firms improve service quality, strengthen customer engagement, and ultimately enhance performance outcomes such as sales growth, market share, and customer base size.

1.4 Research Framework

This study adopts a theory-building approach based on conceptual analysis and systematic literature review. The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant

theoretical foundations. Section 3 presents the conceptual model and develops research propositions. Section 4 provides a theoretical analysis of the proposed relationships. Section 5 discusses theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and directions for future research. Section 6 concludes the study.

2. Theoretical Basis and Literature Review

2.1 Experiential Marketing Theory and Digital Customer Experience

Drawing on the experience economy perspective proposed by B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore (1998), customer needs have gradually shifted from functional fulfillment to experiential value. In the digital environment, this transformation extends to online contexts, giving rise to digital customer experience (DCE). Following Katherine N. Lemon and Peter C. Verhoef (2016), customer experience can be understood as the overall perception and emotional response formed throughout the customer journey across multiple touchpoints. Building on this perspective and prior research on service and online customer experience (e.g., Klaus & Maklan, 2012; Rose et al., 2012), this study conceptualizes digital customer experience as comprising four dimensions: convenience, personalization, interaction, and reliability. Specifically, convenience refers to the ease and efficiency of accessing and using digital services; personalization reflects the extent to which services are tailored to individual customer needs; interaction captures the quality of two-way communication and engagement between customers and firms; and reliability relates to system stability, information security, and service trustworthiness. Prior research suggests that high-quality customer experience is likely to enhance customer satisfaction and positive behavioral outcomes (e.g., loyalty), which may in turn reduce customer attrition.

2.2 Perceived Value Theory

Perceived value, as defined by Valarie A. Zeithaml (1988), refers to the customer's overall evaluation of the benefits received relative to the costs incurred. In digital service contexts, perceived value is commonly conceptualized as a multidimensional construct, including functional value, emotional value, and cost value. Functional value reflects the utility and performance of digital services; emotional value captures the affective responses generated during service usage; and cost value relates to the perceived trade-off between monetary and non-monetary costs (e.g., time and effort) and the benefits obtained. Existing studies suggest that higher perceived value is associated with enhanced customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and improved firm performance.

2.3 Digital Service Marketing Mix

The traditional service marketing mix (7Ps), proposed by Bernard H. Booms and Mary Jo Bitner (1981), has been widely applied in service research. With the advancement of digital technologies, the meaning and implementation of each element have evolved significantly. While prior studies have explored individual aspects of digital marketing transformation, a comprehensive and structured reinterpretation of the full 7Ps framework in digital service contexts remains relatively underdeveloped. Therefore, this study proposes an integrated conceptual framework that extends the traditional 7Ps into the digital environment. Specifically, digital product refers to personalized, standardized, and stable online service offerings; digital price emphasizes transparent and data-driven pricing mechanisms; digital place highlights multi-platform accessibility and seamless channel integration; digital promotion focuses on precision targeting and interactive content; digital people captures online service responsiveness and empathy; digital process reflects streamlined and automated service procedures; and digital physical evidence relates to interface design, information security, and brand image. This reinterpretation represents a conceptual extension of the traditional 7Ps framework in the context of digital service marketing.

2.4 Enterprise Performance in the Digital Context

Following prior research on digital marketing and firm performance, enterprise performance in this study is conceptualized using three objective indicators: sales growth, market share, and customer base size. Sales growth reflects short-term revenue performance, market share represents the firm's competitive position, and customer base size captures long-term customer accumulation. These indicators are interrelated and collectively provide a comprehensive representation of enterprise performance in the digital service environment. In line with the theoretical nature of this study, these indicators are treated as conceptual outcome variables that can be operationalized and tested in future empirical research.

2.5 Identification of Research Gaps

Despite the above literature, several gaps remain. First, most studies focus on the direct effects of the service marketing mix on customer satisfaction or loyalty, with limited attention to the underlying mediating mechanisms. Second, digital customer experience and perceived value have seldom been integrated into a unified framework to examine potential chain mediation effects. Third, enterprise performance is less frequently operationalized using objective indicators in theoretical models of digital service marketing. Fourth, although the digital transformation of the 7Ps has been discussed in prior studies, a clearly structured

conceptual framework remains limited. This study addresses these gaps by developing a chain mediation model that links the digital service marketing mix to objective enterprise performance through the sequential roles of digital customer experience and perceived value.

3. Research Model and Proposition Development

3.1 Research Methodology

This study adopts a theory-building research design, focusing on conceptual model development through systematic literature synthesis and logical reasoning. Rather than collecting primary or secondary data, this study develops a conceptual framework grounded in experiential marketing theory and perceived value theory. The model-building process involves four steps: identifying key constructs, specifying theoretical relationships, proposing mediation pathways, and providing theoretical justification. In line with prior conceptual research in marketing, this study aims to provide a structured framework that can guide future empirical investigations.

3.2 Conceptual Model

Based on the theoretical foundations, this study proposes a chain mediation framework in which the digital service marketing mix influences enterprise performance through digital customer experience and perceived value. The conceptual model is: Digital Service Marketing Mix → Digital Customer Experience → Perceived Value → Enterprise Performance.

3.3 Proposition Development

Consistent with the theoretical nature of this study, propositions rather than empirically testable hypotheses are developed.

P1: The digital service marketing mix is proposed to positively influence enterprise performance.

P2: The digital service marketing mix is proposed to positively influence digital customer experience.

P3: Digital customer experience is expected to positively influence enterprise performance.

P4: Digital customer experience is proposed to mediate the relationship between digital service marketing mix and enterprise performance.

P5: The digital service marketing mix is proposed to positively influence perceived value.

P6: Perceived value is expected to positively influence enterprise performance.

P7: Perceived value is proposed to mediate the relationship between digital service marketing mix and enterprise performance.

P8: Digital customer experience is expected to positively influence perceived value.

P9: Digital customer experience and perceived value are proposed to play a sequential mediating role in the relationship between digital service marketing mix and enterprise performance.

4. Theoretical Analysis of the Proposed Mechanisms

4.1 Direct Effect (P1)

Each dimension of the digital service marketing mix may exert a direct influence on enterprise performance. Specifically, digital product strategies may enhance customer engagement; digital pricing may improve perceived fairness; digital channels may expand market reach; and digital processes may improve operational efficiency. The proposed framework suggests that digital transformation strategies embedded within the marketing mix can directly enhance competitive positioning.

4.2 Separate Mediation via Digital Customer Experience (P2–P4)

Digital customer experience is proposed to function as a primary mediating mechanism. The digital service marketing mix shapes interactions: streamlined processes enhance convenience, personalized services strengthen relevance, responsive communication improves interaction, and secure systems reinforce reliability. These factors influence customer evaluations and behavioral responses, contributing to performance.

4.3 Separate Mediation via Perceived Value (P5–P7)

Perceived value represents an additional mediating pathway. The digital service marketing mix influences evaluations of benefits and costs: functionality strengthens functional value, engaging interfaces increase emotional value, and efficient delivery reduces costs. Higher perceived value is associated with loyalty and recommendation, driving performance.

4.4 Chain Mediation (P8–P9)

The sequential mediating mechanism constitutes the core theoretical contribution of this study. The logic suggests a chain process: digital customer experience → perceived value → performance outcomes. A positive digital customer experience enhances the overall benefit–cost evaluation (perceived value), which subsequently leads to favorable behavioral



responses and improved performance. This mechanism highlights that experience alone may not fully translate into performance without value formation.

4.5 Boundary Conditions and Future Research Directions

The strength of the chain mediation may vary. For example, high digital literacy may weaken the role of experiential processes as value judgments form rapidly. In industries with low switching costs, the value-performance link may be less stable. Cultural differences also play a role. Future research should examine these moderating factors.

5. Discussion

5.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it develops a digital reinterpretation of the traditional 7Ps framework, providing a structured conceptualization of digital service marketing. Second, it integrates digital customer experience and perceived value into a unified chain mediation framework, suggesting they operate sequentially. Third, the study incorporates objective performance indicators, strengthening the linkage between marketing activities and measurable firm-level outcomes.

5.2 Practical and Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, the proposed conceptual framework suggests that digital transformation should go beyond simple digitization. Firms benefit from optimizing all seven elements to shape customer experience. This study suggests that experience improvements contribute to value, which supports performance.

5.3 Social Implications

Digital service marketing may enhance consumer welfare by reducing costs and improving access. However, it raises concerns about data privacy and security. Firms must balance personalization with data protection.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

First, as a conceptual study, the proposed relationships have not been empirically tested and should be interpreted as theoretical propositions. Second, this study does not incorporate potential moderating variables like industry characteristics or customer literacy. Third, external factors like competitive intensity are not considered. Future research should use quantitative approaches (e.g., SEM) to test the model.



6. Conclusion

In the context of the digital economy, the traditional service marketing mix has undergone significant transformation, while the mechanisms through which it influences enterprise performance remain insufficiently theorized. This study develops a chain mediation framework grounded in experiential marketing theory and perceived value theory. The proposed framework suggests that the digital service marketing mix may influence enterprise performance both directly and indirectly through the mediating roles of digital customer experience and perceived value. This conceptual analysis also offers implications for managerial practice by highlighting the importance of aligning digital marketing strategies with customer experience and value creation processes.

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