Analysis of Marketing Mix Element Affecting Medical Tourism

Tiara Edithia Natalia¹, Wahyu Sulistiadi²

¹Program Pasca Sarjana Kajian Administrasi Rumah Sakit Indonesia Departemen Administrasi dan Kebijakan Kesehatan Fakultas Kesehatan Masyarakat Indonesia
²Departemen Administrasi dan Kebijakan Kesehatan Fakultas Kesehatan Masyarakat Indonesia

*Email: tiara.edithia@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Medical tourism sector, for third world nowadays, is a multifactorial sector that has slowly risen to the point of becoming one of the industries that produces income and pretty competitive in the world, and also has been considered as sophisticated tourism in modern field. This study aims to investigate the elements of the marketing mix and other factors that influence medical tourism. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA) was used in this study From 11 articles reviewed, it’s found that almost all of the marketing mix element were related to medical tourism in a country. Some of the articles stated that factors like product offered, price, place, and promotion were related to medical tourism in a country. The conclusion from this study is that marketing mix element in general and other factors like regulations, number and skills of medical staffs and health services affected medical tourism significantly.

Keywords: marketing mix, medical tourism, skills of medical staff.

INTRODUCTION

Using marketing mix techniques helps the stakeholders to make optimal decisions about product features, prices, places, promotions, and promotion processes and to successfully implements marketing strategies chosen based on environmental conditions and the unit of determination and market definition. In fact, the number of factors determining which marketing mix to consider (4, 6, 7, 10, etc.) is not important, what is important is that there will be a framework for marketing to manage its activities and strategies.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Medical tourism sector, for third world nowadays, is a multifactorial sector that has slowly risen to the point of becoming one of the industries that produces income and pretty competitive in the world, and also has been considered as sophisticated tourism in modern field. Because of this, a lot of countries are trying to develop this type of tourism and one of the strategies used is to use marketing mix elements.

Factors that increase medical tourism are as follows: high costs of health services in industrialized countries, increased the ease of international travel, profitable currency exchange rates in the world economy, rapid advances in medical technology and standards of care in the most countries, and access to the Internet.

At present, the number of patients who travel from developed countries to third world countries due to medical reasons is increasing. These patients are not included in the upper class, but they seek high-quality medical care with reasonable prices.
So far, various estimates have been made regarding this problem. For example, McKinsey reported that the revenue gotten from medical tourism in the global market reached around 100 billion dollars in 2012. He also believed that well-known international hospitals, such as Brumrungrad in Thailand and Apollo in India, earned 2.3 billion dollars in 2012 and Singapore hopes can serve one million patients in the same year. Overall, 10% of patients in EU countries seek treatment outside their country and it is estimated that they must pay around 12 billion Euros for this purpose.

According to World Health Organization’s annual statistics, around 50 billion dollars are spent each year for treating patients in European and American countries and withdrawing a percentage of this amount, it can have a significant impact on the Asian countries’ economies. Medical tourism can be considered as one of a major source of income and job creation for some countries and its achievements can help private sectors to grow, develop infrastructure, and improve the quality of health services.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyzes (PRISMA) as evidence-based methods for conducting systematic reviews.

Data Source Relevant

English articles published in the last ten years have been sourced using three databases (EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and Proquest). The combination of terms used in multi-field searches relating to the relationship of marketing mix and factors that influence medical tourism.

Eligibility criteria for inclusion are the research journal articles that cover the relationship of marketing mix or the factors that influence medical tourism. Eligible studies are restricted to articles with full-texted access published in English for the past ten years. Qualified studies are those from Asia or the Middle East. This is considering how medical tourism is one of the main sources of tourism for third world countries now. Articles are excluded if they do not meet the criteria above. Exclusion criteria are any studies that do not fit the criteria about.

Study Selection and Data Extraction

The electronic database was reviewed for one week by the authors independently and collectively filtered. The authors review the titles and abstracts produced by search engines to assess their eligibility for further review based on the selection criteria, and select relevant articles for possible inclusion. The findings on the writings are synthesized in narrative synthesis around the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After carry out screening carefully, there were 11 articles that could be reviewed for the purpose of this study:

1. Magatef (2015) examined the impact of the tourism marketing mix and analyzed its impact on tourism in Jordan. Jordan, as stated, has several places for people who wanted to treat their body and soul. The research found that there was a linear relationship between independent variable (all tourism marketing mix elements) and dependent variable (foreign tourists’ satisfaction). Products and promotions had the strongest effect on foreign tourist satisfaction, while price and distribution were significant effective factors.

2. Al-Azzam (2016) in his research analyzes how marketing mix elements affect medical tourism sector in Jordan. This study also evaluates the actual potential of foreign patients as represented by the cost, quality and recognition aspects of the role of government and other relevant bodies in this market. The results show that Jordanian medical facilities in certain circumstances can offer great potential for medical and health tourism and Jordan can become a medical tourism hub in the area in the future.
3. Reddy (2017) conducted a study in Saudi Arabia related to the possibility of applying the method in attracting media travel to hospitals that have been accredited in Saudi Arabia and analyzing the usefulness of the marketing mix elements for Saudi Medical tourism. Two factors that are considered most attractive to the tourists are the treatment of patients and the requirements that must be met by patients before coming to do health care. The results of correlation and regression analysis show that there is a positive correlation between the marketing mix variables except place—price, promotion—price, promotion—price.

4. Ganguli dan Ebrahim (2017) who conducted a qualitative analysis of the competitiveness of Singapore's medical tourism found that Singapore’s competitive advantage stems from its outstanding and synergetic performance around seven pillars that synthesize what is meant by Singapore’s medical tourism as model of competitiveness: enabling tourism sector (tourism to tie strategically in services from healthcare through revenue generating schemes shared between the sectors while creating value-added benefit for medical tourist), strategic planning (integrating approach, through bridging the gaps between strategies and the implementation to successfully develop medical tourism), PPPs framework (existence of integration between Singapore’s government and private enterprises across the different pillars of medical tourism sector), marketing and branding strategies (Singapore promoted the quality and safety their country had for their medical services rather than the price), technology and innovation (combining healthcare and biomedicine), accreditation and governance (ensuring that the medical services provided are all based on international standards and regulations), and human capital development (Singapore has built robust and integrated human resource development system to strengthen industry competencies and to respond to the challenges of the global market).

5. Jabbari, et al. (2019) observed that through the marketing mix elements, medical tourists could be attracted to visit third world countries. From the results of the study, it was found that there were significant differences between public and private hospitals in the price and promotion mix elements, but in the other elements it did not show a significant difference. Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of these hospitals can help health service managers succeed in attracting medical tourists by using hospital strengths and reducing their weaknesses.

6. Rokni et al. (2017) conducted a study of the determination of factors that might hinder medical tourism in South Korea. The results showed that South Korea was one of the top destinations for medical tourism in terms of high quality infrastructure and medicine which designed based on new emerged technologies, but the lack of specialistism and expertise among health care practitioners in cross-cultural communication coverage, seems to be a major barrier to the development of medical tourism in Korea. The demand for easy and convenient promotional activities, policy making, and regulation of actions are other effective factors. Several strategies are needed to fight these barriers, such as government support for cultural training, collaborative efforts to encourage health practitioners to be involved in enhancing linguistic and cultural competence on an international scale.

7. The exploratory research conducted by Rerkrujipimol dan Assenov (2011) identifies the strengths of Thai health service providers and shows to several issues that might reduce growth opportunities in the industry. These factors include the lack of government policies related to medical tourism and other supporting regulations, the lack of organization as a center for cooperation aimed to promoting the medical tourism industry as a whole, the low awareness of the industry's opportunities among prospective foreign patients, and the lack of doctors and medical staff qualified.

8. Pocock dan Phua (2011) in their research provided a conceptual framework that provides an outline of the implications of the growth of medical tourism.
The medical tourism sector requires considerable intervention from various parties in order to grow successfully. Integrating diverse strategies for the development of medical tourism with good country policies and proactive management practices will bring significant positive results to the tourism sector, health services, and other economic sectors.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

From the results of the study, it concluded that in general, most elements of the marketing mix significantly influence the medical tourism sector. Besides the general marketing mix elements, it also concludes several other factors such as government policy, the adequacy of medical staff, the expertise of health service providers, and so on.

Recommendation

The medical tourism sector requires considerable intervention from various parties in order to grow successfully. Integrating diverse strategies for the development of medical tourism with good country policies and proactive management practices will bring significant positive results to the tourism sector, health services, and other economic sectors.

REFERENCES


### Table 1. Resume of Research Results

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<thead>
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<th>Elements of the Marketing Mix that Affect Medical Tourism</th>
<th>Elements of the Marketing Mix that does not Affect Medical Tourism</th>
<th>The Relationship of Marketing Mix toward Customer Loyalty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sima Ghaleb Magatef</td>
<td>Elements: product, promotion, price and distribution. Products and promotions have the strongest effect on foreign tourist satisfaction, while price and distribution are significant effective factors.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Abdel Fattah Mahmoud Al-Azzam</td>
<td>Elements: product, price, promotion and place. These four elements significantly influence the attractiveness of medical tourism in Jordan.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>L. Kalyan Viswanath Reddy</td>
<td>Elements: product prices, places, promotions. It was found that there was a positive correlation between marketing mix elements and media tourism variables except places - prices, promotions - prices, promotions - places.</td>
<td>places - prices, promotions - prices, promotions - places.</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Alireza Jabbari, et al.</td>
<td>Elements: products, prices, places and promotions. There are significant differences between public and private hospitals in the price and promotion elements.</td>
<td>Products and places</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ladan Rokni, et al.</td>
<td>Factors: government support, the specialty and expertise of health service practitioner in cross-cultural communication, promotional activities, policy making, and regulation of actions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jutamas Rerkrujipimol and Ilian Assenov</td>
<td>Factors: practical government policies and supporting regulations, the lack of organization as a center for cooperation, the lack-awareness of industry opportunities, and the lack of medical staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nicola S Pocock and Kai Hong Phua</td>
<td>Factors: its potential for the health system, economic benefits for the country</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mohammad Kazem Rahimi Zarchi, et al.</td>
<td>Elements: products, places, promotions, prices, personnel, promotions, physical attractiveness, and doctors</td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ibrahim Kahlil Bazazo, et al.</td>
<td>Elements: service, price, accessibility, promotion. The relative importance of the impact of the marketing mix element on the quality of medical tourism services in attracting tourists is not significantly different.</td>
<td>service, price, accessibility, promotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Reza Azimi, et al.</td>
<td>Factors: staff, services, processes, prices, facilities, and promotions. Staff, services and processes get the highest score while prices, facilities and promotions get the lowest score in the parameters that affect the attractiveness of medical tourists.</td>
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## Table 2. The Research Results

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Authors/Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Methods</th>
<th>The Marketing Mix Elements that affect Medical Tourism</th>
<th>The Marketing Mix Elements that does not affect Medical Tourism</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sima Ghaleb Magatf 2015</td>
<td>The impact of tourism marketing mix elements on the satisfaction of inbound tourists to Jordan</td>
<td>Identify the impact of tourism marketing mix and analyze its impact on tourism in Jordan</td>
<td>Quantitative with survey methods</td>
<td>Elements: product, promotion, price and distribution. Products and promotions have the strongest effect on foreign tourist satisfaction, while price and distribution are significant effective factors.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Abdel Fattah Mahmoud Al-Azzam 2016</td>
<td>A study of the impact of marketing mix for attracting medical tourism in Jordan</td>
<td>Analyzes how the marketing mix elements affect medical tourism sector in Jordan</td>
<td>Quantitative study</td>
<td>Elements: product, price, promotion and place. These four elements significantly influence the attractiveness of medical tourism in Jordan.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>L Kalyan Viswanath Reddy 2017</td>
<td>Evaluating Medical Tourism Prospects of Joint Commission International Accredited Hospitals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Conduct research in Saudi Arabia related to the possibility of applying methods in attracting media travel to hospitals that have been accredited in Saudi Arabia and analyzes the usefulness of the marketing mix elements for Saudi Medical tourism</td>
<td>Quantitative withstatistic approach</td>
<td>Element: product price, place, promotion. It was found that there was a positive correlation between marketing mix elements and media tourism variables except places - prices, promotions - prices, promotions - places.</td>
<td>place – price, promotion – price, promotion – place.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Subhadra Ganguli, and Ahmed Husain Ebrahim 2017</td>
<td>A qualitative analysis of Singapore's medical tourism competitiveness</td>
<td>Carry out a qualitative analysis of the competitiveness of Singapore's medical tourism</td>
<td>Qualitative with holistic approach</td>
<td>Factors: integration of development strategies, government policies and proactive management practices.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Alireza Jabbari, et al. 2013</td>
<td>Medical tourism in Shiraz</td>
<td>Observe that through the marketing mix element, medical tourists can be attracted to visit third world countries</td>
<td>Descriptive quantitative, analytics, and cross-sectional</td>
<td>Element: product, price, place and promotion. There are significant differences between public and private hospitals in the price and promotion elements.</td>
<td>Product dan place</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Ladan Rokni, et al. 2017</td>
<td>Barriers of developing medical tourism in a destination: A case of South Korea.</td>
<td>Conduct research on determining factors that might hinder medical tourism in South Korea</td>
<td>Qualitative with exploratory approach</td>
<td>Factors: government support, the specialty and expertise of health service practitioners in cross-cultural</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Jutamas Rerkrujipimol and Ilian Assenov 2008</td>
<td>Medical tourism in Thailand and its marketing strategies</td>
<td>Identify the strengths of Thai health care providers and show some of the problems that might reduce growth opportunities in the industry</td>
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<td>Factors: practical government policies and supporting regulations, the lack of organization as a center for cooperation, the lack-awareness of industry opportunities, and the lack of medical staff.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Nicola S Pocock and Kai Hong Phua 2011</td>
<td>Medical tourism and policy implications for health systems: a conceptual framework from a comparative study of Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia</td>
<td>Provide a conceptual framework that provides an outline of the policy implications of medical tourism growth for the health system</td>
<td>Qualitative with framework development</td>
<td>Factors: its potential for the health system, economic benefits for the country</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Mohammadzam Rahimi Zarchi, et al. 2013</td>
<td>Preparation and designing a checklist for health care marketing mix, with medical tourism approach</td>
<td>Use the marketing mix elements to optimize the use of resources and potential in hospitals and health care centers</td>
<td>Qualitative and cross-sectional</td>
<td>Elements: products, places, promotions, prices, personnel, promotions, physical attractiveness, and doctors</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ibrahim Kahil Bazazo, et al. 2016</td>
<td>Exploring the Effect of Marketing Mix Elements on the Quality of Medical Tourism Services in Jordan</td>
<td>Investigate the impact of marketing mix elements on the quality of medical tourism services in Jordan</td>
<td>Quantitative with statistic method</td>
<td>Elements: service, price, accessibility, promotion. The relative importance of the impact of the marketing mix element on the quality of medical tourism services in attracting tourists is not significantly different.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Reza Azimi et al. 2018</td>
<td>Ranking Factors Affecting the Attraction of Foreign Medical Tourists in Hospitals Affiliated to Mashhad University of Medical Sciences Based on Marketing Mix Model</td>
<td>Ranking the factors that attracted foreign medical tourists based on the marketing mix model</td>
<td>Descriptive quantitative</td>
<td>Factors: staff, services, processes, prices, facilities, and promotions. Staff, services and processes get the highest score while prices, facilities and promotions get the lowest score in the parameters that affect the attractiveness of medical tourists.</td>
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Figure 1. PRISMA’s Systematic Review