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## **The Effect of Tourism 4 “P” S on Customer Satisfaction: The Case of Hotels in Dessie and Kombolcha Cities**

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**Abstract:**

**Purpose:** *The hotel industry in Dessie and Kombolcha cities is growing steadily, leveraging tourism marketing tools to meet customer satisfaction. The hotel industry has been utilizing tourism marketing tools such as products, prices, places, and promotions to meet customer satisfaction. The main objective of this research was to determine the effects of tourism marketing tools on customer satisfaction in the case of hotels in Dessie and Kombolcha cities.*

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** *This mixed-method study examined the effects of product, price, promotion, and place on customer satisfaction. Quantitative data derived from 352 survey participants were analyzed.*

**Findings:** *The findings reveal that product, promotion, and place have significant positive effects on customer satisfaction, with product being the most influential factor. Price, however, showed no significant impact.*

**Practical Implications:** *The study recommends an integrated approach to tourism marketing tools to enhance customer satisfaction, discover new market segments, increase sales, and build brand loyalty.*

**Originality/Value:** *The tourism sector, including the hotel business, is a competitive services industry that requires strategic marketing approaches to adapt to technological, political, economic, and environmental changes*

**Keywords:** *Product, price, promotion, place, and customer satisfaction.*

**JEL Codes:** *M31, L83, D12, M39, L15.*

**Paper type:** *Research article.*

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## **1. Introduction**

Tourism marketing is a management philosophy that involves research, forecasting, and selecting the right market segments to achieve organizational goals and build lasting customer relationships through satisfaction (Kotler and Armstrong, 2013). The traditional marketing mix elements (product, price, promotion, and place), as well as the extended service marketing mix (people, process, programming, packaging, and physical evidence), are widely utilized in the tourism and hospitality industries (Rahman, Islam, Al Amin, Sultana, and Talukder, 2019).

The Hotel industry in Dessie and Kombolcha cities has been growing steadily, leveraging tourism marketing tools to meet customer satisfaction. The tourism sector, including the hotel business, is a competitive services industry that requires strategic marketing approaches to adapt to technological, political, economic, and environmental changes (Matura, Mbaiwa, and Mago, 2021). Factors like population growth, technological advancement, and increased leisure time and infrastructure development have created positive conditions for the tourism of these destinations (Al-Debi and Mustafa, 2014).

However, recent challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts, political disputes, and rising fuel prices have hindered the growth in visitor traffic. To overcome these negative outcomes, the tourism sector must carefully plan and implement effective tourism marketing tools.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

The existing literature indicates that customer satisfaction and the effectiveness of tourism marketing tools face various challenges, such as changing customer interests, technological advancements, competition, disease outbreaks, and fluctuations in the value of money and service/product features (Matias, Nijkamp, and Sarmiento, 2011). This problem is prevalent in the hotel industry, particularly in the cities of Dessie and Kombolcha, Ethiopia, where hotels are seeking ways to satisfy customers through the strategic use of marketing tools (Rahman *et al.*, 2019).

While tourism marketing tools and customer satisfaction are well-researched concepts, their specific relationship, influence, and perspectives in the study area have not been adequately investigated (Getachew, 2017; Kotler, 2013; Nezakati, Aziz, Zawawi, and Sohrabinezhadtalemi, 2013; Shreya, 2018).

Previous studies have examined the impact of marketing tools on customer satisfaction in various industries, such as banking, brewing, restaurants, and tourism destinations (Karim *et al.*, 2021; Kefelegn, 2020; Sadq, Othman, and Khorsheed, 2019; Yemane, 2022) but limited research has been conducted in the hotel industry of Dessie and Kombolcha.

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The existing studies in the study area have focused on the availability and quality of hotel services and amenities (Tesfaye, 2019; Zelalem, 2019) but have not explicitly examined how these factors contribute to customer satisfaction.

Additionally, while some researchers have employed quantitative methods to investigate the relationship between marketing tools and customer satisfaction (Magatef, 2015; Tielung and Untu, 2021), a mixed-method approach that considers both tourism and hotel service aspects in the destination has not been explored. To address these gaps, this research aims to analyze the effects of tourism marketing mix tools on customer satisfaction in the hotels of Dessie and Kombolcha cities.

## **1.2 Objectives**

- To assess the status of tourism marketing mixes and customer satisfaction
- To appraise the relationship between tourism marketing mixes and customer satisfaction.
- To analyse the effects of tourism marketing tools on customer satisfaction.

## **2. Literature Review**

Marketing is defined as the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers to benefit the organization. The tourism marketing mix, comprising the 4Ps (product, price, place, promotion) and additional elements like people, processes, and physical evidence, is an essential tool for tourism marketers (Kotler and Armstrong, 2013; Magatef, 2015; Mekonnen, 2019).

Tourism is a complex phenomenon involving the movement of people, the development of infrastructure, and interactions between various stakeholders (Nunkoo, Gursoy, and Dwivedi, 2023; Robinson, 2012; UNESCO, 2021; Var and Gunn, 2020). Tourism marketing focuses on systematically attracting and accommodating visitors to optimize their satisfaction.

Prior studies have examined the impact of tourism marketing mix elements on customer satisfaction. For example, a study on inbound tourists to Jordan found a linear relationship between the tourism marketing mix and customer satisfaction. Another study on the hotel industry in Sicily revealed that service quality is a key driver of customer satisfaction (Adamopoulos and Thalassinou, 2020).

### **2.1 Tourism Product**

Regarding tourism products, the literature discusses the distinction between tangible (goods) and intangible (services) tourism products. The characteristics of the core tourism product, as well as the supporting augmented and system products, can influence customer satisfaction. A study found that the price and quality of tourism

products positively impact customer satisfaction (Wantara, Tambrin, and Journal, 2019; Xie, 2020; Yahyazadeh, 2015).

## **2.2 Tourism Price**

Pricing is a crucial element of the tourism marketing mix, as it generates revenue for the business. The literature highlights various pricing methods, including cost-based, competition-based, and customer-based pricing. It is the only important marketing mix that generates revenue, but others leverage costs (Palmer, 2001). Pricing plays an important role in the decisions of customers to buy or not (Thwala, Slabbert, and Leisure, 2018).

Setting the right price requires considering factors like production costs, competition, and customer perceptions of value. Prior studies have found that pricing has a significant and positive impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Wantara *et al.*, 2019).

## **2.3 Tourism promotion**

Promotion is another important marketing tool that aims to communicate information about tourism products and destinations to attract and persuade potential customers (Goodall and Ashworth, 2013). The literature identifies various promotion tools, such as advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, sales promotion, and public relations.

These tools help raise awareness, influence customer perceptions, and ultimately drive customer satisfaction (Jannah, Mappatempo, and Haanurat, 2019). Empirical studies have shown that effective promotional strategies have a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction (Al-Debi and Mustafa, 2014; Alexandrescu and Milandru, 2018; Chang, 2017; Genchev and Todorova, 2017; Mulec, 2010; Pereira and Almeida, 2014).

## **2.4 Tourism Place**

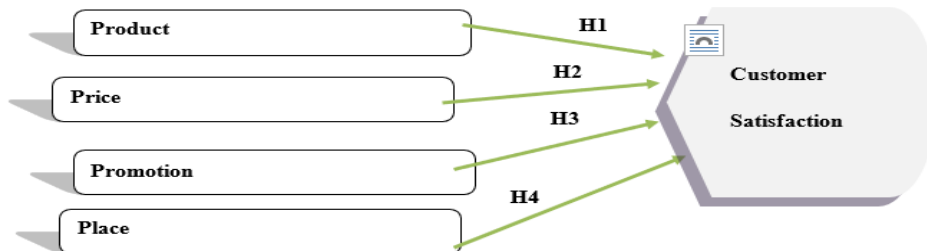
Distribution channels, also referred to as "place", are a critical element of the tourism marketing mix. The selection of appropriate distribution channels, including wholesalers, agents, brokers, retailers, and online platforms, is crucial as it determines how tourism products and services reach and become accessible to customers.

The literature emphasizes that effective distribution channels can positively affect customer satisfaction. When tourism products and services are easily available and convenient for customers, it enhances their satisfaction. Conversely, poor distribution can limit customer access and negatively impact satisfaction (Johnson, 202; Smith, 2019; Williams, 2018).

Prior studies have empirically demonstrated the positive and significant relationship between distribution channels and customer satisfaction in the tourism industry (Jones, 2018). For instance, a mixed-methods study found that distribution channels have a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction (Melo, Gonçalves, and Silva, 2022).

Another explanatory study also revealed a significant positive influence of distribution channels on customer satisfaction (Thompson, 2016). The literature suggests that the availability and convenience of distribution channels are key determinants of customer satisfaction in tourism. Improved distribution that makes tourism products and services more accessible to customers can contribute to enhanced satisfaction levels (Martinez, 2021).

**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework of the study.



**Figure 2.1:** conceptual framework of the study

Source: Adopted from Magatef (2015)

*Source: Adopted from Magatef (2015).*

### 3. Research Methodology

The study took place in Dessie and Kombolcha, cities in the Amhara region of Ethiopia, using a quantitative approach. The quantitative component used a descriptive and explanatory research design to explore the link between tourism marketing mix elements and customer satisfaction. The target population consisted of individuals aged 18 and above who had visited and experienced accommodation establishments in the area.

The researchers employed a combination of quota and convenience sampling techniques to select the 384 respondents, ensuring representation of specific criteria like age and gender. Data collection involved a structured questionnaire survey with 42 items, including demographic information and Likert scale measurements.

Primary data was collected through the survey and key informant interviews, while secondary data came from sources like books, tourism marketing journals, and government reports. A pilot survey was conducted to enhance the reliability of the

questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze quantitative data, providing a summary and enabling conclusions and generalizations about the population.

#### 4. Results and Discussions

After screening and correcting questionnaires, data was entered into SPSS version 26. Unfilled questionnaires were excluded from the analysis. The study achieved a significant response rate of 91%, classified as "very good." The sample had a slight gender imbalance with 61.6% male and 38.4% female respondents. The majority fell within the 34-41 age range (38.1%) and had a Bachelor's degree (59.9%).

Married individuals accounted for 46.9% of the sample, followed by singles (40.1%) and divorced (11.1%). The government sector had the highest occupational representation (47.4%), followed by own business (24.1%) and the private sector (23.0%). Monthly income was primarily between \$81 and \$240 (50.0%), with a smaller percentage below \$80 (44.0%). All respondents were Ethiopian, reflecting a focus on individuals within the country.

##### 4.1 Descriptive Analysis of Tourism Marketing Tools

The product has an average rating of Table 1 with a low standard deviation, indicating consistent positive ratings. The price has an average rating of 3.82 with a higher standard deviation, suggesting moderate satisfaction with varying opinions. The promotion has an average rating of 4.08, indicating positive perception with some variability. The place has an average rating of 4.04, suggesting positive perception with consistent opinions. Overall satisfaction is rated at 3.75 with a higher standard deviation, indicating diverse levels of satisfaction among respondents.

*Table 1. Summary of Descriptive Statistics of dependent and independent variables*

No.	variables	Mean	Standard deviation
1	Product	4.11	1.12
2	Price	3.82	1.21
3	Promotion	4.08	1.21
4	Place	4.04	1.12
5	satisfaction	3.75	1.30

*Source: Own survey, 2025.*

The correlation analysis assessed the strength and direction of relationships between variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine significance and directionality. It is important to note that correlation does not imply causation, despite indicating interdependence. The study utilized the Spearman-Pearson correlation coefficient (r) due to the study's purpose and the type of data (scale). The

correlation matrix showed values ranging from 0 (no relationship) to 1 (positive relationship) or -1 (negative relationship).

**Table 2.** Correlation between tourism marketing tools and customer satisfaction

		<b>Product</b>	<b>price</b>	<b>Promotion</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Satisfaction</b>
<b>product</b>	P. Correlation	1	.601**	.831**	.640**	.850**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	P. Correlation		1	.577*	.611**	.497**
<b>price</b>	Sig. (2-tailed)			.004	.000	.000
	P. Correlation			1	.504**	.724**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.000	.000
<b>promotion</b>	P. Correlation				1	.760**
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000
	P. Correlation					1

*Source:* Own survey, 2025.

The correlation analysis reveals that the quality of the product has a strong positive correlation with customer satisfaction. Improving product quality is important for enhancing satisfaction. Additionally, there is a moderate positive correlation between price and customer satisfaction, indicating that favorable pricing strategies can increase satisfaction. Effective promotional activities significantly contribute to higher levels of customer satisfaction, as indicated by a strong positive correlation.

Moreover, a moderate positive correlation exists between place and customer satisfaction, emphasizing the positive impact of convenient and appealing distribution channels or physical locations. These findings imply that emphasizing product quality, setting appropriate pricing strategies, investing in effective promotions, and ensuring convenient distribution channels are crucial for enhancing customer satisfaction in the tourism industry.

## 4.2 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical method that helps us understand how the dependent variable is influenced by independent variables. It goes beyond correlation by identifying causal relationships and providing more accurate predictions. In regression analysis, we estimate the coefficients of the equation that predicts the value of the dependent variable based on one or more independent variables.

Assumptions testing in multiple regressions is crucial to ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings. This study conducted various assumption tests, including multicollinearity, linearity, and normality. Firstly, a sufficient sample size of 352 was used, which is considered significant for analysis. Secondly, the

dependent variable was transformed into a continuous variable to meet the requirement of multiple linear regressions.

Thirdly, correlation analysis was performed to assess the relationship between the independent variables (product, price, promotion, and place) and the dependent variable (satisfaction). The results showed significant correlations without indicating any multicollinearity issues. Additionally, collinearity diagnostics using tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) confirmed the absence of multicollinearity problems, as all tolerance values were above 0.1 and VIF values were below 10, as shown in Table 3. By satisfying these assumptions, the research ensures the robustness of the regression results.

### 4.3 Multiple Regression of Tourism Marketing Tools and Customer Satisfaction

This regression analysis aims to identify the extent to which the independent variables (product, price, promotion, and place) predict and explain variations in the dependent variable (customer satisfaction).

**Table 3. Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.858 <sup>a</sup>	.735	.732	.522
a. Predictors: (Constant), Place, price, promotions, product				
b. Dependent variable: satisfaction				

**Source:** Own survey, 2025.

Based on the multiple regression analysis, the predictors (place, price, promotion, and product) significantly explain customer satisfaction. These factors account for approximately 85.8% of the variation in satisfaction, indicating their importance in determining customer satisfaction.

The model is reliable, as indicated by the adjusted R-squared value of 0.735 and a low standard error of the estimate (0.522). To enhance customer satisfaction, marketers should focus on improving these predictors by optimizing locations, pricing strategies, promotions, and product quality. Allocating resources to enhance these factors can lead to increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and business performance. However, further research is needed to validate these findings in different contexts. Nonetheless, these results provide valuable insights into marketing strategies related to customer satisfaction.

The results of the multiple regression analysis show that the predictors (place, price, promotion, and product) collectively explain a significant amount of variability in customer satisfaction. The regression model accounts for 263.244 units of the total sum of squares, indicating that these predictors have a strong influence on

satisfaction. The F-statistic of 241.083 is significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that the model is reliable and provides a good fit for the data.

These findings imply that businesses and marketers should pay attention to the factors identified in the regression analysis (place, price, promotion, and product) to enhance customer satisfaction. Optimizing physical locations, implementing competitive pricing strategies, effective promotional activities, and ensuring high-quality products can lead to improved customer satisfaction. By addressing these factors, businesses can increase customer loyalty and ultimately enhance their overall performance.

The coefficients obtained from the regression analysis provide insights into the relationship between the independent variables (product, price, promotion, and place) and the dependent variable (customer satisfaction). The beta values (standardized coefficients) indicate the strength and direction of each independent variable's impact on satisfaction (Burns and Bush, 2006).

The results show that product, promotion, and place have a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction, as indicated by their coefficients of 0.730, 0.138, and 0.160, respectively. However, the coefficient for price is not statistically significant, suggesting that price may not strongly predict satisfaction.

Therefore, businesses should focus on improving product quality, implementing effective promotions, and optimizing distribution channels to enhance satisfaction. Further research is needed to explore the relationship between price and satisfaction in more depth. Prioritizing product quality, promotion, and place can lead to improved customer satisfaction levels and overall business performance. The equation form written as follows Satisfaction =  $-0.189 + 0.730$  (Product) +  $0.063$  (Price) +  $0.138$  (Promotion) +  $0.160$  (Place).

Code	Hypothesis	Status
H1	Product has a positive significant effect on customer satisfaction	Accepted
H2	price has a positive significant effect on customer satisfaction	Rejected
H3	promotion has a positive significant effect on customer satisfaction	Accepted
H4	place has a positive significant effect on customer satisfaction	Accepted

## 5. Discussion

The study aimed to examine the effects of traditional tourism marketing tools, namely product, price, promotion, and place, on customer satisfaction in hotels located in Dessie and Kombolcha cities in Ethiopia. The study considered customer satisfaction as the dependent variable and investigated the relationship between the marketing factors mentioned and satisfaction.

According to the coefficient table (4.16), all the regression beta coefficients were positive, indicating a positive relationship between the independent variables (product, price, promotion, and place) and customer satisfaction, the dependent variable. This suggests that the traditional tourism marketing tools employed by the hotels in Dessie and Kombolcha cities are positively associated with customer satisfaction.

Regarding the tourism product, which encompasses various aspects such as location, facilities, image, services, and price, the study found that customers perceived the hotel offerings positively. The analysis of responses from 352 participants revealed that factors such as hotel services and goods, cleanliness, room facilities, variety of services, staff qualities, technology-advanced materials, and room service significantly influenced customer satisfaction.

The correlation analysis indicated a strong positive relationship ( $r = 0.850$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between product and customer satisfaction. Regression analysis confirmed that the product had the greatest impact on satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.698$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). These findings align with previous studies by (Ahmad, 2012; Hasan and Islam, 2020; Kidula, 2019; Olivar, Demain, Quitoy, and Palmes, 2022; Raeesi, 2013; Rahman, 2019; Xie, 2020; Yahyazadeh, 2015). which also emphasized the importance of product quality in driving customer satisfaction.

Regarding tourism prices, the study found that customers had a neutral perception (neither agree nor disagree) of most of the pricing-related items. However, factors such as hotel food cost, appropriateness of the cost of staying, price policy, clarity of food and beverage prices, and overall fairness of hotel prices received positive and agreeable ratings. The correlation analysis revealed a positive relationship ( $r = 0.297$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ) between price and customer satisfaction.

However, the regression analysis indicated that prices did not have a significant effect on customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.053$ ,  $p = 0.085$ ). This finding is consistent with Tan and Hechanova (2022), (Xie, 2020), and Kidula (2019), who also found that price had no significant contribution to customer satisfaction. The qualitative data analysis further supported the notion that customers were not satisfied with the offered prices, aligning with Guzzo's study (2010) on customer satisfaction in the hotel industry.

Tourism promotion is a crucial marketing tool used by businesses to establish a mutual understanding between the supplier and the customer Rahman et al. (2019). It can be utilized individually or comprehensively at different stages of the product, aligning with market trends. Effective promotion involves delivering targeted messages consistent with the company's objectives.

A study examined the promotion strategy of hotels in Dessie and Kombolcha, finding that certain promotional methods significantly influenced customer

satisfaction. These included using leaflets and brochures for advertising and ensuring clear and definitive communication with consumers in simple language.

Other promotional messages, such as interior and exterior signs, social media usage, billboards and banners, and offering special nights and games, also contributed to customer satisfaction but to a lesser extent. The study revealed a positive relationship between promotion and customer satisfaction, indicating that promotion is a significant factor in estimating customer satisfaction Almuhrzi and Alsawafi (2017).

The location or place of a tourism product plays a vital role in customer satisfaction and competitiveness in the business environment. Well-located hotels with convenient facilities and amenities are more likely to elicit customer satisfaction. The place is a critical marketing tool that needs to be investigated for its impact on customer satisfaction.

In the context of hotels in Dessie and Kombolcha, the place was identified as the fourth factor influencing customer satisfaction. A hotel's location should be easily accessible by the target market, and it should also provide personalized services that enhance user-friendliness.

Philip Kotler describes the place as the means to access tourism products, including booking, reservation, and payment. Distribution of tourism products and services involves various promotional activities, such as trade shows, web pages, resellers, and tourist destinations.

The study analyzed the influence of place on customer satisfaction through statistical tools such as mean, standard deviations, correlation, and regression. The findings indicated that certain aspects of the place, including service provider placement, convenience of product and service, staff network relationships, equitable service for disabled customers, accessibility by public and private transport, and parking and lobby areas, significantly influenced customer satisfaction.

The study also demonstrated a positive relationship between place and customer satisfaction, with an 11% increase in customer satisfaction for every unit increase in tourism place offerings (Al-Debi and Mustafa, 2014; Martinez, 2021; Smith, 2019; Thompson, 2016; Williams, 2018).

## **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study found that tourism marketing tools play a significant role in achieving customer satisfaction in hotels in Dessie and Kombolcha cities. The analysis revealed that the product, promotion, and place were all positively correlated with customer satisfaction. The product was identified as the most influential factor, followed by promotion and place.

The regression analysis further confirmed that the product had the strongest impact on customer satisfaction. The study highlights the importance of providing appropriate and exceptional services to meet customer needs and emphasizes the value of utilizing effective marketing tools to engage and satisfy customers. Satisfied customers not only contribute to business success but also fulfill social responsibilities.

## **7. Recommendations**

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made for hotels in Dessie and Kombolcha cities:

- 1) Hotels should strive to provide a wide range of services and products that cater to customer preferences. This can include offering amenities such as gifts, a swimming pool, and noise-free guest rooms. Additionally, creating package products and organizing self-cooking classes can add value to the customer experience.
- 2) Hotels should develop integrated marketing communication tools that effectively reach and engage customers. This involves investing in well-researched messages about the product and utilizing appropriate media channels. Aligning communication strategies with the product's lifecycle, allocating adequate budget, and motivating staff are also crucial for successful promotion.
- 3) Hotel marketing teams should focus on providing services that meet customer expectations in terms of convenience and accessibility. This can be achieved by strategically locating branches in convenient areas and hiring hotel representatives to improve accessibility for potential customers.
- 4) Hotel marketing managers should prioritize customer satisfaction and dedicate their efforts to meeting customer needs. Satisfied customers contribute to increased sales, achievement of objectives, and competitiveness in the market. Managers should focus on enhancing the product, promotion, and place aspects to ensure overall customer satisfaction.

By implementing these recommendations, hotels can effectively utilize the traditional tourism marketing mix tools, except price, to enhance customer satisfaction and achieve success in the market.

## **8. Limitations and Future Research Directions**

1. The research project faced several limitations. The availability of COVID-19 and war hindered the ability to gather ideas from respondents during interviews. Receptionists had limited awareness of the importance of research projects, resulting in delayed questionnaire responses. Customers

rushing to check out of hotels may have provided incomplete or untimely questionnaire responses.

The study focused on the tourism marketing mix (product, price, promotion, and place) but did not include the extended service marketing mix. The impact of price on customer satisfaction was found to be insignificant in this study, but it could be further explored by other researchers in the same locations.

2. It is recommended that future research into the hotel industry address the limitations mentioned above. Scholars can explore the inclusion of the extended service marketing mix and verify the impact of price on customer satisfaction in Dessie and Kombolcha cities.

Additionally, future research should consider other service sectors in the area to broaden the scope of the study's findings. Exploring different locations outside of Dessie and Kombolcha would also help in generalizing the findings. Furthermore, future research should consider different research designs, such as conducting separate quantitative and qualitative studies or using a sequential approach to data collection and analysis, to strengthen the validity of the findings and align with established theories.

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