

The Impact of the 7P Marketing Mix on Sustainable Competitive Advantage: Evidence from Kasang Kulim Zoo

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Article history:

Received August 27, 2026

Revised September 11, 2026

Accepted September 14, 2026

Abstract

This study examines how the 7P marketing mix influences sustainable competitive advantage in Kasang Kulim Zoo. The tourism sector faces increasingly intense competition, so destination managers need strategies that do more than attract visitors in the short term. A descriptive quantitative design was used through questionnaires distributed to visitors. The population included all visitors to Kasang Kulim Zoo, with 117,967 visits recorded in 2024. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling with criteria that they had visited at least once, were over 18 years old, and agreed to participate. The sample size followed Roscoe's rule of thumb, which recommends 10–15 times the number of variables. The model included seven exogenous variables, namely Product, Price, Promotion, Place, Programming, People, and Partnership, and one endogenous variable, Sustainable Competitive Advantage. A minimum of 120 respondents was set and achieved. Data were processed using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4.0. The results show that Product, Price, Promotion, People, and Partnership have a positive and significant effect on sustainable competitive advantage. Among these variables, Product has the strongest influence, indicating that service quality, variation, and visitor experience are central to differentiation and repeat visits. Price that matches perceived value, promotional activities that broaden reach, competent staff, and strong partnerships all support competitiveness. Meanwhile, Place and Programming do not show a significant effect. This suggests that access to information, service distribution, and program design still need improvement if the destination is to sustain its competitive position over time.

Keywords:

Marketing Mix; Sustainable Competitive Advantage; Tourism; Destination Marketing; SEM-PLS.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become an important driver of regional economic growth in Indonesia and other developing countries. Over the past decade, the sector has expanded steadily and now serves as a meaningful source of income, foreign exchange, and employment. In 2016, tourism accounted for around 4.03% of Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), equivalent to IDR 500.19 trillion, while generating foreign exchange earnings of about IDR 176–184 trillion and providing jobs for nearly 12 million people (Ministry of Tourism, 2016; Rusyidi & Fedryansyah, 2018). These figures indicate that tourism is not merely a leisure activity; it also supports economic growth, local empowerment, and regional development (Li et al., 2018; Maudina & Mulyono, 2023). For this reason, tourism is increasingly viewed as a pathway to better living standards and more sustainable development, especially in developing economies (Gustina et al., 2020; Nopiyani & Wirawan, 2021; Yong, 2021; Zha et al., 2023; Yuli et al., 2025).

Educational tourism has gained attention because it combines recreation with learning. Through direct interaction with educational, cultural, and environmental resources, visitors can gain knowledge and practical experience (Devi et al., 2019; Sulistyowati & Ardianti, 2024). At the same time, this type of tourism can stimulate local economic activity by creating jobs in lodging, guiding, transportation, and handicrafts. However, the benefits are not always shared equally. Households with stronger financial capacity, higher education, or broader networks often gain more than others (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018; Jani et al., 2025). This pattern shows that tourism management should not only aim for visitor growth, but also for strategies that strengthen competitiveness while supporting fairer development.

Competition among tourism destinations continues to rise, forcing organizations to adjust to changing visitor preferences and market conditions. Dynamic Capabilities Theory explains that organizations need the ability to integrate, renew, and rearrange their resources and skills when conditions shift (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Winter). From this perspective, success depends not only on having valuable assets, but also on using them in ways that remain effective under changing circumstances (Ginting et al., 2023). This makes adaptive knowledge management and organizational flexibility increasingly relevant, particularly in tourism where destinations face intense rivalry, fast-moving consumer expectations, technological change, and growing pressure for sustainable practices (Ginting et al., 2023; Ahsani et al., 2018; Azizurrohman et al., 2023).

Table 1. Visitor Data of Kasang Kulim Zoo in 2024

Month	Number of Visitors
January	3,291
February	504
March	591
April	1,412
May	12,037
June	15,040
July	13,569
August	7,948
September	12,297
October	10,344
November	9,658
December	31,277
Total	117,967

Kasang Kulim Zoo, one of the educational tourism destinations in Riau Province, offers a relevant case for examining these issues. Visitor data for 2024 show sharp fluctuations, with a total of 117,967 visits during the year. Traffic rose strongly during holiday periods, while several months recorded much lower numbers. These changes suggest that demand is shaped by promotion, service quality, facility conditions, pricing, destination appeal, and seasonal patterns. The pattern raises an important managerial question: how effective are the current marketing efforts in supporting long-term competitiveness?

Marketing strategy remains a central factor in organizational performance. Kotler (2008) describes the marketing mix as a set of controllable tools used to influence target market responses through product, price, place, and promotion. Yet in service industries, the 4P model often falls short because services are intangible, inseparable, variable, and perishable (Alma, 2011; Marcelina & Tantra, 2017). To address this, Mill and Morrison (2002) proposed three additional dimensions programming, people, and partnership forming the 7P marketing mix. This broader model better reflects the realities of tourism destination management (Ginting, 2023). Earlier studies have examined how the marketing mix relates to satisfaction, loyalty, purchase decisions, revisit intention, and consumer behavior (Wahyundari et al., 2015; Marcelina & Tantra, 2017; Ahmed & Helhel, 2022). Even so, fewer studies have looked at how the 7P framework supports Sustainable Competitive Advantage, especially in educational tourism. Most existing work emphasizes short-term outcomes, while the longer-term question of how destinations build and maintain advantage has received less attention.

Another issue is that the marketing mix is often treated as a list of operational tools rather than as a set of capabilities that help destinations adapt to change. This study addresses that issue by linking the 7P marketing mix to Dynamic Capabilities Theory and testing its effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in an educational tourism setting. In doing so, the study aims to extend the use of this theory in tourism marketing research. Dynamic Capabilities Theory states that organizational success depends on the ability to adapt and renew resources when the environment changes. Teece (2018) describes dynamic capabilities through three processes: sensing opportunities and threats, seizing opportunities through strategic action, and reconfiguring resources to maintain advantage. In tourism, these processes matter because destinations operate under pressure from shifting visitor preferences, changing market conditions, and higher service expectations. Based on this view, the seven marketing mix dimensions product, price, place, promotion, programming, people, and partnership are treated as capabilities that help destinations respond to change, create value, and sustain advantage over time. On that basis, this study examines the effect of the 7P marketing mix on Sustainable Competitive Advantage at Kasang Kulim Zoo.

This study has two objectives. First, it examines the effect of the 7P marketing mix on Sustainable Competitive Advantage at Kasang Kulim Zoo. Second, it develops strategic recommendations to support long-term competitiveness and sustainability. The findings are expected to strengthen tourism marketing literature by extending Dynamic Capabilities Theory in an educational tourism setting. From a practical standpoint, the study can help destination managers refine marketing decisions, improve competitive positioning, and support sustainable tourism development for stakeholders and local communities. The rest of the paper is organized as follows. The next section presents the literature review and hypothesis development. The following section explains the research design, data collection, and analytical methods. The results are then discussed in relation to theory and prior studies. The final section concludes the paper and outlines implications for future research.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Research Framework and Hypotheses Development

Dynamic Capabilities Theory explains that organizational success relies on the ability to adapt, integrate, and reconfigure resources when conditions change (Teece, 2018). In tourism, destinations face shifting visitor preferences, tighter competition, and rising service expectations. These pressures require managers to refine their capabilities so that destinations can create value and maintain competitive advantage over time. In this study, the 7P marketing mix is treated as a set of strategic capabilities that shape destination competitiveness. Product, price, promotion, place, programming, people, and partnership are viewed as managerial tools that can help tourism destinations respond to market demands and strengthen Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA). Based on this view, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Product has a positive effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

H2: Price has a positive effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

H3: Promotion has a positive effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

H4: Place has a positive effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

H5: Programming has a positive effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

H6: People have a positive effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

H7: Partnership has a positive effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

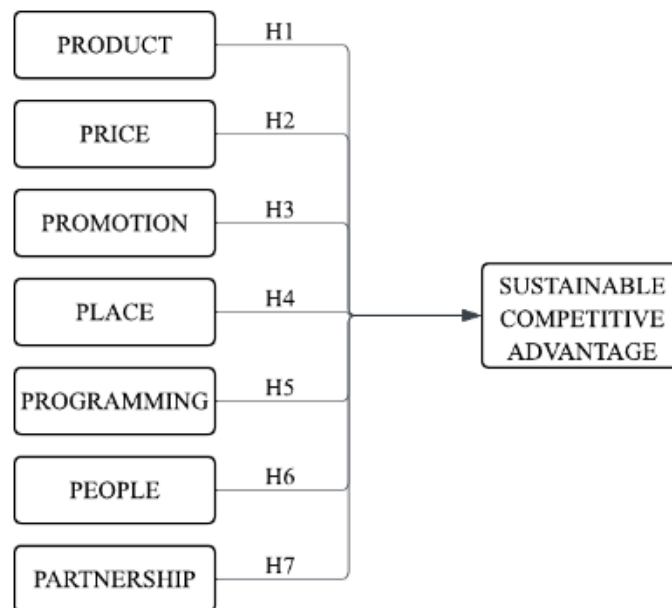


Figure 1. Research Framework

2.2. Research Design

This study used a quantitative approach with a descriptive and explanatory design. A quantitative design was chosen because it allows the relationships among variables to be tested statistically and provides a clearer basis for evaluating hypotheses against empirical data. The study examined how the seven marketing mix dimensions relate to Sustainable Competitive Advantage at Kasang Kulim Zoo, Riau Province. Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) was selected as the main analytical method because it can assess several relationships among latent constructs at once and is well suited for predictive models and studies that aim to explain patterns in observed data.

2.3. Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of visitors to Kasang Kulim Zoo. These visitors were chosen because they directly experienced the services, facilities, and marketing activities managed by the destination. Based on visitor records from the management of Kasang Kulim Zoo, the destination received 117,967 visitors in 2024. The sample was determined using purposive sampling, a technique that selects respondents according to criteria aligned with the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2019). The respondents were required to have visited Kasang Kulim Zoo at least once, be 18 years of age or older, and be willing to participate voluntarily in the study.

2.4. Research Instrument

The primary research instrument in this study was a structured questionnaire developed from indicators used in previous studies on the marketing mix and Sustainable Competitive Advantage. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section collected demographic information, while the second section measured respondents' perceptions of the study variables. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This scale was used because it allows respondents' views to be measured in a more orderly and consistent way. Before hypothesis testing, the measurement instrument was tested for validity and reliability using SEM-PLS procedures. Convergent validity was assessed through indicator loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was examined using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability.

2.5. Data Collection Procedure

This study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed to respondents who met the sampling criteria. Data collection took place at Kasang Kulim Zoo from January 2026 to March 2026. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and invited to participate voluntarily. The questionnaires were given directly to visitors at the site so that the responses would come from individuals who had real experience with the destination's services and facilities. Secondary data were obtained from internal documents of Kasang Kulim Zoo, including visitor statistics, annual reports, and publications related to educational tourism and conservation activities. Additional secondary data were taken from publications issued by the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) and other relevant institutions. These data were used to support the interpretation of the findings and provide additional background for the study. The research process involved four stages: a literature review to identify the research gap and build the conceptual framework, questionnaire development based on previous studies, data collection through survey distribution, and data screening and analysis using SEM-PLS.

2.6. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4.0 software. Before analysis, the dataset was checked for incomplete responses and consistency. Questionnaires with substantial missing data were removed from the final dataset. The analysis was carried out in two stages. The first stage assessed the measurement model, or outer model, to examine validity and reliability. Convergent validity was tested using indicator loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was examined using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading values. Reliability was evaluated through Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability. The second stage assessed the structural model, or inner model, through the coefficient of determination (R^2), path coefficients, and hypothesis testing. The significance of the relationships was tested using bootstrapping, with statistical significance determined by t-statistics and p-values.

2.7. Ethical Considerations

This study followed basic ethical principles throughout the research process. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose and objectives of the study before completing the questionnaire. They were assured that all information would remain confidential and anonymous, and that the data would be used only for academic purposes. No personally identifiable information was collected from the participants.

2.8. Research Limitations

Several limitations need to be noted. First, the study focused on one tourism destination, which may reduce the extent to which the findings can be applied to other settings. Second, the use of self-reported questionnaire data may introduce response bias. Third, the cross-sectional design does not allow changes in visitor perceptions to be tracked over time. Even so, these limitations were reduced by selecting respondents with direct experience of the destination and by applying careful statistical procedures to maintain data quality and analytical consistency.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Respondent Characteristics

A total of 120 valid responses were included in the analysis. The respondents were described by age, gender, and educational background to show the basic profile of the sample. This description helps clarify who participated in the study and supports a more careful interpretation of the findings in the next sections.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-25	67	55.8%
	26-33	24	20.0%
	34-40	9	7.5%
	41-47	6	5.0%
	48-55	9	7.5%
	56-63	3	2.5%
Gender	Male	26	21.7%
	Female	94	78.3%
Education	SMA	78	65.0%
	S1	35	29.2%
	S2	7	5.8%

The respondent profile is dominated by visitors aged 18–25 years, who make up 55.8% of the sample. This is followed by the 26–33 age group at 20.0%, while the remaining age groups account for smaller shares. Female respondents also outnumber males, representing 78.3% of the total. In terms of education, most respondents completed senior high school (65.0%), whereas 29.2% held an undergraduate degree and 5.8% a master's degree.

3.1.2. Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The measurement model was assessed to determine whether the indicators measured the intended constructs in a reliable and acceptable manner. The evaluation focused on convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. This stage was necessary to confirm that the measurement items were appropriate before moving to the structural model. A careful review of these results helps indicate whether the data are strong enough to support further analysis.

3.1.2.1. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was examined through the outer loading values of each indicator. Based on Hair et al. (2022), an indicator is considered acceptable when its outer loading is above 0.70. Higher values indicate that the indicator reflects its construct more clearly and supports the suitability of the measurement items for the next stage of analysis.

Table 3. Outer Loading

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading Value	Remarks
PRODUCT (X1)	P1	0,774	Valid
	P2	0,772	Valid
	P3	0,801	Valid
	P4	0,833	Valid
	P5	0,776	Valid
	P6	0,852	Valid
	P7	0,817	Valid
	P8	0,778	Valid
	P9	0,744	Valid
PRICE (X2)	PR1	0,816	Valid
	PR2	0,833	Valid
	PR3	0,809	Valid
	PR4	0,777	Valid
	PR5	0,809	Valid
	PR6	0,724	Valid
PROMOTION (X3)	PRO1	0,859	Valid
	PRO2	0,819	Valid
	PRO3	0,828	Valid
	PRO4	0,823	Valid
	PRO5	0,837	Valid

	PRO6	0,807	Valid
	PRO7	0,800	Valid
PLACE (X4)	PL1	0,739	Valid
	PL2	0,793	Valid
	PL3	0,708	Valid
	PL4	0,807	Valid
	PL5	0,829	Valid
	PL6	0,830	Valid
	PL7	0,827	Valid
	PL8	0,801	Valid
	PL9	0,712	Valid
	PL1	0,812	Valid
	PL11	0,750	Valid
PROGRAMMING (X5)	PROG1	0,752	Valid
	PROG2	0,733	Valid
	PROG3	0,733	Valid
	PROG4	0,832	Valid
	PROG5	0,711	Valid
	PROG6	0,796	Valid
	PROG7	0,710	Valid
	PROG8	0,715	Valid
	PROG9	0,933	Valid
PEOPLE (X6)	PEO1	0,779	Valid
	PEO2	0,821	Valid
	PEO3	0,810	Valid
	PEO4	0,813	Valid
	PEO5	0,814	Valid
	PEO6	0,809	Valid
	PEO7	0,808	Valid
	PEO8	0,851	Valid
PARTNERSHIP (X7)	PAR1	0,840	Valid
	PAR2	0,790	Valid
	PAR3	0,834	Valid
	PAR4	0,843	Valid
	PAR5	0,820	Valid
	PAR6	0,862	Valid
	PAR7	0,793	Valid
	PAR8	0,828	Valid
SCA (Y)	SCA1	0,809	Valid
	SCA2	0,712	Valid
	SCA3	0,802	Valid
	SCA4	0,774	Valid
	SCA5	0,776	Valid
	SCA6	0,763	Valid
	SCA7	0,825	Valid
	SCA8	0,737	Valid

Source: Data processed using SmartPLS, 2026.

Based on the outer loading results, all indicators exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, with values ranging from 0.708 to 0.933. In addition, all constructs recorded AVE values above 0.50, ranging from 0.595 to 0.683. These results suggest that the indicators capture their intended constructs well and account for more than half of the variance in the latent variables. The evidence therefore supports satisfactory convergent validity.

Table 4. AVE

Variable	AVE
Product	0.631
Price	0.633
Promotion	0.680
Place	0.615
Programming	0.595

People	0.661
Partnership	0.683
SCA	0.601

Source: Data processed using SmartPLS, 2026.

Indicate that all variables met the minimum threshold of 0.50, which supports acceptable convergent validity. Promotion recorded the highest AVE value at 0.680, while Programming obtained the lowest at 0.595. Even so, every construct remained above the required standard, suggesting that the indicators represent their latent variables in a sound manner.

3.1.2.2. Reliability Analysis

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) to examine the internal consistency of each construct. Following Hair et al. (2022), a construct is considered reliable when both values exceed 0.70. Meeting this standard indicates that the indicators perform consistently and the measurement results are stable enough to support further analysis.

Table 5. Realibility Assesment

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Product	0.927	0.939
Price	0.893	0.912
Promotion	0.922	0.937
Place	0.945	0.946
Programming	0.938	0.929
People	0.927	0.940
Partnership	0.935	0.945
SCA	0.906	0.923

Source: Data processed using SmartPLS, 2026.

The results indicate that all constructs achieved Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.893 to 0.945 and composite reliability values ranging from 0.912 to 0.946. These figures are well above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency across the indicators. This outcome supports the reliability of all constructs and provides a sound basis for the next stage of analysis.

3.1.3. Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

After the measurement model was confirmed, the structural model was examined to evaluate the relationships among the research variables. This stage tests whether the proposed paths are supported by the data and helps determine the strength of influence between constructs. The assessment also provides a basis for judging the explanatory power of the model, allowing the analysis to move from measurement quality to hypothesis testing with clearer direction.

Table 6. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

	<i>R-square</i>	<i>R-square adjusted</i>
Y SCA	0.380	0.341

Source: Data processed using SmartPLS, 2026.

The results indicate that the Sustainable Competitive Advantage construct achieved an R^2 value of 0.380 and an adjusted R^2 value of 0.341. This finding suggests that 34.1% of the variance in Sustainable Competitive Advantage can be explained by the seven dimensions of the marketing mix, namely product, price, promotion, place, programming, people, and partnership. Based on Chin's classification, the adjusted R^2 value falls within the moderate category, indicating that the structural model possesses a satisfactory level of explanatory power in predicting Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

Table 7. Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

	<i>Q²predict</i>
Y SCA	0.229

Source: Data processed using SmartPLS, 2026.

Based on the data analysis results, the Q^2 Predict value for the Sustainable Competitive Advantage variable is 0.229. Since the Q^2 value is greater than zero, it can be concluded that the research model demonstrates good predictive relevance. Therefore, the structural model is considered appropriate for hypothesis testing. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS 4.0. The significance of each relationship was evaluated based on path coefficients (β), t-statistics, and p-values. A hypothesis was considered supported when the t-statistic exceeded 1.96 and the p-value was below 0.05.

Table 8. Path Coefficients

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
X1 PRODUCT -> Y SCA	0.348	0.349	0.066	5.282	0.000
X2 PRICE -> Y SCA	0.246	0.248	0.074	3.344	0.001
X3 PROMOTION -> Y SCA	0.211	0.206	0.078	2.708	0.008
X4 PLACE -> Y SCA	-0.130	-0.123	0.163	0.798	0.426
X5 PROGRAMMING -> Y SCA	0.119	0.068	0.178	0.670	0.504
X6 PEOPLE -> Y SCA	0.235	0.236	0.090	2.611	0.010
X7 PARTNERSHIP -> Y SCA	0.275	0.273	0.074	3.710	0.000

The results indicate that Product, Price, Promotion, People, and Partnership have positive and significant effects on Sustainable Competitive Advantage. Therefore, H1, H2, H3, H6, and H7 are supported. In contrast, Place and Programming do not show a significant effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage, so H4 and H5 are not supported. Among the significant variables, Product has the strongest effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage ($\beta = 0.348$), followed by Partnership ($\beta = 0.275$), Price ($\beta = 0.246$), People ($\beta = 0.235$), and Promotion ($\beta = 0.211$).

3.2. Discussion

The results indicate that Product has a positive and significant effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage ($\beta = 0.348$, $p < 0.001$, $t = 5.282$), supporting H1. This finding shows that the quality and variety of tourism products matter in strengthening Kasang Kulim Zoo's position among competing destinations. Wildlife collections, educational attractions, and supporting facilities create a clear value offer that can attract visitors and set the zoo apart. Prior studies by Agustinawati and Cindenia Puspasari, Lutfiah et al. (2021), and Yusuf and Matiin (2022) report similar patterns, linking product quality with satisfaction, purchase intention, and buying decisions. Through Dynamic Capabilities Theory, product improvement can be read as an ongoing capability to create value and maintain advantage over time. For Kasang Kulim Zoo, steady product development and richer visitor experiences appear to be a practical route to stronger competitiveness.

The results show that Price has a positive and significant effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage ($\beta = 0.246$, $p = 0.001$, $t = 3.344$), supporting H2. This suggests that pricing aligned with service quality and visitor expectations helps the destination compete more effectively. When ticket prices feel reasonable, visitors are more likely to judge the experience as worthwhile, which can raise satisfaction and support repeat visits. Similar findings were reported by Agustinawati and Cindenia Puspasari, Haryanto et al. (2024), and Rizqullah, Winarno, and Yulianti (2024). From Dynamic Capabilities Theory, pricing that matches visitor expectations reflects a firm's ability to manage value. At Kasang Kulim Zoo, affordable prices paired with decent facilities and experiences likely strengthen perceived value and help sustain long-term competitiveness.

The results show that Promotion has a positive and significant effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage ($\beta = 0.211$, $p = 0.008$, $t = 2.708$), supporting H3. This points to the role of promotion in keeping the destination visible and memorable. Social media, advertising, and word-of-mouth help communicate the zoo's appeal to potential visitors and widen market reach. Similar results were found by Yusuf and Matiin, Nuraini, Widayanti, and Mubarakah (2023), and Zakirman and Farlis (2025), who linked promotion with satisfaction, purchasing decisions, and loyalty. Within Dynamic Capabilities Theory, promotion works as a market-sensing ability that helps organizations understand visitor preferences and respond to them. For Kasang Kulim Zoo, regular and informative promotion seems to support visitor trust, reinforce image, and keep the destination competitive in a changing tourism market.

The results indicate that Place does not have a significant effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage ($\beta = -0.130$, $p = 0.426$, $t = 0.789$), so H4 is not supported. This differs from studies by Marcelina and Tantra, Melida, et al. (2022), and Haryanto et al. (2024), which found a significant role for place in shaping satisfaction and buying decisions. The difference may reflect the type of destination studied. In tourism settings such as Kasang Kulim Zoo, visitors may care more about attraction quality and experience than location alone. With online maps and location-based services now widely used, accessibility has become a basic need rather than a strong source of advantage. At Kasang Kulim Zoo, digital information channels are still used unevenly, updates are not fully consistent, and booking integration is not yet available. Several facilities also need improvement. These conditions suggest that place management has not yet become a strong strategic strength. Better digital access and wider platform partnerships may help improve competitiveness in the future.

The results indicate that Programming does not have a significant effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage ($\beta = 0.119$, $p = 0.504$, $t = 0.670$), so H5 is not supported. This contrasts with findings by Pasaribu et al. (2024), who reported that tourism programs and event quality affect satisfaction, image, and loyalty. The

difference may lie in how programs are planned and delivered. Through Dynamic Capabilities Theory, programming should reflect a destination's ability to create distinct visitor experiences. Yet in this study, the existing programs at Kasang Kulim Zoo do not seem strong enough to shape competitiveness. Visitors may see the zoo mainly as a place for education and recreation rather than for events, which weakens the strategic impact of programming. Field observations also suggest that programs are not run consistently and are not fully tied to the marketing strategy. As a result, the value created may not be strong enough to affect visitor views of competitiveness. More varied, structured, and consistent programs are needed to build memorable experiences and a stronger position in the long run.

The results indicate that People has a positive and significant effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage ($\beta = 0.235$, $p = 0.010$, $t = 2.611$), supporting H6. This finding confirms that human resources matter in tourism services. Friendly, responsive, and professional staff can improve comfort, satisfaction, and the overall visitor experience, which may lead to repeat visits and positive recommendations. In tourism, staff interactions are part of the service itself and strongly shape how visitors assess quality and value. Similar findings were reported by Pasaribu, et al. (2021), and Yokta and Nuswantara (2025). Through Dynamic Capabilities Theory, employees represent a service delivery capability that helps organizations respond to changing visitor expectations. At Kasang Kulim Zoo, capable staff appear to support satisfaction, word-of-mouth, and revisit intentions, all of which strengthen the destination's image. Ongoing investment in staff development therefore remains a practical way to maintain long-term advantage.

The results indicate that Partnership has a positive and significant effect on Sustainable Competitive Advantage ($\beta = 0.275$, $p < 0.001$, $t = 3.710$), supporting H7. This suggests that cooperation with educational institutions, local communities, government agencies, and industry actors helps strengthen long-term competitiveness. Similar findings were reported by Pasaribu, et al. (2021), who linked partnership with satisfaction and business performance. Strategic partnerships can widen networks, improve access to resources, and support joint promotion and program development. From Dynamic Capabilities Theory, partnership works as a resource integration ability that helps organizations combine outside resources into added value. For Kasang Kulim Zoo, collaboration may support joint promotion, group tour packages, and better use of available resources, which can raise visitor numbers and improve appeal. This finding goes beyond earlier studies by showing that partnership can support not only satisfaction and performance, but also Sustainable Competitive Advantage in tourism destinations.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of the 7P marketing mix on Sustainable Competitive Advantage at Kasang Kulim Zoo, an educational tourism destination in Riau Province. Using Dynamic Capabilities Theory as the main lens, the study treats the marketing mix as a set of managerial abilities that shape value creation and competitiveness. The findings show that Product, Price, Promotion, People, and Partnership have positive and significant effects on Sustainable Competitive Advantage. Product emerges as the most influential factor, indicating that the quality and appeal of tourism offerings remain central to destination competitiveness. Price also plays a meaningful role when it reflects service quality and visitor expectations. Promotion helps maintain visibility and build public awareness, while People strengthens the visitor experience through service quality and responsiveness. Partnership likewise supports competitiveness by widening access to resources and strengthening cooperation with stakeholders. In contrast, Place and Programming do not show significant effects, suggesting that accessibility and tourism programs have not yet been developed into strong drivers of advantage. These results indicate that Kasang Kulim Zoo still relies more on core attractions and service quality than on location or programmed activities to build competitiveness. For that reason, destination managers should prioritize product improvement, sharper pricing strategies, more consistent promotion, staff development, and stronger stakeholder collaboration. Greater attention to digital promotion, educational attraction design, and partnership-based initiatives may help the destination build a more durable position in the tourism market.

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