

# **An Influence of the Marketing Mix and Service Quality on Customers' Decision-Making of Veterinary Clinics in Bangkok**

by

## **Panicha Muanchob**

IT-Smart Program (Innovative Marketing),  
Administration Faculty, Ramkamhaeng University,  
Bangkok, Thailand  
Tel: +6666 141 9395, E-mail: panicha.mu@spu.ac.th

## **Yanisa Yanatham**

Digital TV and Online Media, Communication Arts Faculty,  
Sripatum University (Khon Kaen Campus),  
Khon Kaen, Thailand  
Tel: +6689 178 2221, E-mail: iiamyansa@gmail.com

and

## **Narong Tomcharoen**

IT-Smart Program (Innovative Marketing),  
Administration Faculty, Ramkamhaeng University,  
Bangkok, Thailand  
Tel: +6689 178 2221, E-mail: iiamyansa@gmail.com

**IJMBE** International Journal of  
**Management, Business, and Economics**



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### **Yanisa Yanatham**

Digital TV and Online Media, Communication Arts Faculty,  
Sripatum University (Khon Kaen Campus),  
Khon Kaen, Thailand  
Tel: +6689 178 2221, E-mail: iiamyanisa@gmail.com

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### **Narong Tomcharoen**

IT-Smart Program (Innovative Marketing),  
Administration Faculty, Ramkamhaeng University,  
Bangkok, Thailand  
Tel: +6689 178 2221, E-mail: iiamyanisa@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

This research aims 1) to study the difference in demographic characteristics relating to the difference in decision-making in veterinary clinics in Bangkok, 2) to study the marketing mix that influences the decision-making in veterinary clinics in Bangkok, and 3) to study the service quality that influences the decision-making in veterinary clinic services in Bangkok. This is a quantitative research that uses questionnaires to gather 431 customers who pay a visit to veterinary clinics in Bangkok. The statistical analysis is descriptive statistics and multiple regression for inferential statistics. The results of this research show that the differences in gender and income influence the difference in decision-making; marketing mix factor that influences decision-making are Physical Evidence, Product, Promotion, and People, respectively, with the forecasting equation  $Y = .261X_7 + .209X_1 + .153X_4 + .140X_6$ . The service quality influencing decision-making is Tangible, Empathy, and Responsiveness, respectively, with the forecasting equation  $Y = .255X_1 + .237X_5 + .148X_3$ .

**Keywords:** Veterinary Clinic, Marketing Mix, Service Quality, Decision-Making

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Importance of the Problem

With the expanding urbanization of society, the number of household members has decreased from the past, and the population birth rate has also declined. Many people choose to remain single and have pets as family members instead. This has led to continuous and significant growth in Thailand's pet care business market. According to a survey by the Department of Business Development, Ministry of Commerce, the value of Thailand's pet market will grow at an average annual rate of 8.4%, reaching 66.748 billion Thai Baht in 2026. The study, which sampled 1,046 Thai individuals and conducted in-depth interviews with 100 respondents, revealed that 66.8% were female, 22.3% were male, and 10.9% identified as non-binary. Most of the sample belonged to the Generation Y age group, ranging from 24 to 41 years old, constituting 77.3%. The survey further found that pet owners predominantly raise animals for companionship (Pet Parent) at 49%, for social status (Pet Prestige) at 34%, and for assistance and therapy purposes (Pet Healing) at 18%. The most common types of pets were dogs at 40.4%, cats at 37.1%, and exotic pets at 22.6%.

Veterinary hospitals are essential facilities for the health and treatment of animals, providing care from birth to the end of life. Currently, there is a significant number of veterinary hospitals and clinics to meet the growing demand from service users. This increased demand leads to careful decision-making and scrutiny when choosing services. According to Dr. Setsakit Jitsanasa (2023), veterinary hospitals can generally be categorized into two types: (1) Animal clinics primarily offer examinations, disease prevention, treatment, and minor surgeries. These clinics may or may not provide overnight accommodations for sick animals. However, in cases where overnight care is available, services like blood tests and blood chemistry tests must be provided. The clinics are staffed by at least one veterinary professional throughout operating hours. (2) Animal hospitals provide a broader range of services, including examinations, disease prevention, treatment, minor and major surgeries, blood tests, blood chemistry tests, and overnight care for sick animals. Additionally, these hospitals may offer X-ray services for diagnostic purposes. The number of veterinary professionals in hospitals may be higher than in clinics. The increasing number of veterinary facilities reflects the growing need for animal healthcare services, prompting users to select services based on their specific requirements carefully.

The data supports that the number of households owning pets is increasing, with a faster growth rate in Bangkok compared to other areas (Marketingoops, 2023). This is consistent with the statistics of Major Developer, Origin, and Ananda Developer, which showed a surge in condominium projects that emphasize pet-friendly policies. They found a significant increase in condominium units sold, particularly in the upper echelons. This trend reflects the expanding market of pet owners in Bangkok, aligning with data from the Division of Animal Welfare and Veterinary Service (2023), which indicates a rise in the number of private veterinary hospitals registered and operating in Bangkok. The data for the year 2023 reveals the following breakdown: (1) Veterinary clinics without overnight accommodations: 424 registered clinics primarily operating as animal care clinics. (2) Veterinary clinics with overnight accommodations (up to 10): 137 registered clinics providing services as clinics and hospitals. (3) Veterinary clinics with over 10 overnight accommodations: 197 registered hospitals. In total, there are 758 registered veterinary facilities in Bangkok, comprising both clinics and hospitals. Compared to hospitals, the limitations in medical equipment within veterinary clinics contribute to clinics facing greater competition, particularly in service quality and marketing strategies.

The problems and importance of the abovementioned issues are why the researchers are interested in studying and conducting research on the topic "The Influence of The Marketing Mix and Service Quality on Customers' Decision-making of Veterinary Clinics in Bangkok." The hope is that the results from this research will be beneficial for improving the service quality of animal care clinics. It is also expected to benefit business owners of animal care facilities, enabling them to apply the findings to business and marketing development. This will help enhance service delivery to better meet the needs of service users. Additionally, there are academic benefits, including contributions to the academic community, researchers, and students who can use the results for further development in the future.

## 1.2 Research Question

- 1) How do the differences in demographic characteristics relate to the decision-making on veterinary clinics in Bangkok?
- 2) How does the marketing mix influence decision-making on veterinary clinics in Bangkok?
- 3) How does the service quality influence decision-making on veterinary clinics in Bangkok?

## 1.3 Research Objective

- 1) To study the difference in demographic characteristics relating to the difference in decision-making in veterinary clinics in Bangkok.
- 2) To study the marketing mix that influences the decision-making on veterinary clinics in Bangkok.
- 3) To study the service quality that influences the decision-making on veterinary clinic services in Bangkok.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Related Concepts and Theories

#### 2.1.1 Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and analyzing populations. Researchers and businesses use this information to tailor strategies, policies, and products better to meet the diverse needs of individuals and communities. The dynamic nature of demographics underscores the importance of ongoing research to capture evolving trends and societal changes, which includes the following aspects.

*Gender:* Gender-based research explores how men and women may differ in their choices, behaviors, and responses to various stimuli. This is pertinent in marketing, health, and social sciences, where gender-related disparities are often observed.

*Age:* Age is a fundamental demographic variable. Studies have shown that different age groups exhibit distinct behaviors, preferences, and consumption patterns. For instance, marketing

strategies may need to be tailored differently for younger generations (Millennials, Gen Z) than older generations (Baby Boomers).

*Income:* Income is a crucial determinant of lifestyle and purchasing power. Consumer behavior studies often investigate how income levels impact spending habits and preferences. Income also influences socio-economic status, influencing access to education and healthcare.

*Occupation:* Occupational status reflects social and economic standing. Professionals, laborers, and entrepreneurs may have distinct preferences and needs. Occupational research is valuable for understanding workplace dynamics and career-related decisions.

*Marital Status:* Marital status influences consumer behaviors and lifestyle choices. For example, married individuals may have different spending patterns than single individuals, impacting housing, transportation, and leisure activities.

*Type of Residence:* The type of residence is an essential demographic variable that can significantly contribute to customer segmentation. Customer segmentation involves dividing a market into distinct groups based on specific characteristics or behaviors, allowing businesses to tailor their strategies better to meet the needs and preferences of each segment (Georgescu, 2023).

### 2.1.2 Marketing Mix

The traditional marketing mix, comprised of the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion), was expanded by Booms and Bitner in the 1980s to include three additional People, Processes, and Physical Evidence. This extended framework is particularly relevant for service-oriented industries where customer experience plays a crucial role in the 7Ps.

*Product:* The product concept in the 7Ps includes tangible goods and intangible services. Literature explores the challenges and strategies associated with marketing diverse offerings, emphasizing the need for customization and innovation in service products.

*Price:* Scholars delve into service pricing strategies, considering perceived value, bundling, and dynamic pricing. The literature emphasizes the importance of aligning pricing with the perceived quality of the service.

*Place:* Unlike physical products, services often involve direct interaction with customers. Research on place in the 7Ps considers the role of distribution channels, online platforms, and physical locations in delivering.

*Promotion:* The literature discusses integrating various promotional tools, including advertising, public relations, and digital marketing, to create a cohesive and impactful communication strategy. IMC is crucial for conveying a consistent message across diverse channels.

*People:* The "People" element highlights the significance of employees as part of the service product. Studies focus on the impact of employee behavior, training, and motivation on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

*Process:* Scholars explore the design and management of service processes to ensure efficiency and quality. Process optimization, customer journey mapping, and technology integration are common themes in the literature.

*Physical Evidence:* Physical evidence refers to the tangible cues that help customers evaluate service quality. The research discusses the importance of physical evidence, such as facilities, branding, and documentation, in influencing customer perceptions (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016).

### 2.1.3 Service Quality

Service quality is a critical concept in service marketing and management, reflecting the extent to which a service meets or exceeds customer expectations. The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in the late 1980s, has been a foundational framework for understanding and measuring service quality. The following literature review explores critical themes related to service quality.

*Tangibles:* Tangibles include the physical facilities, equipment, and personnel appearance. Research explores how tangible aspects contribute to the perceived quality of services, particularly in sectors with high customer interaction.

*Reliability:* Reliability is often considered a fundamental dimension of service quality, representing the consistency and dependability of service delivery. Literature explores the impact of reliability on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

*Responsiveness:* Responsiveness refers to a service provider's willingness to help and provide prompt service. Research delves into the role of responsiveness in enhancing the overall customer experience.

*Assurance:* Assurance relates to the competence, courtesy, credibility, and security conveyed by service providers. Studies examine the impact of assurance on building trust and customer confidence.

*Empathy:* Empathy involves understanding and caring for customers' needs. The literature emphasizes the role of empathetic interactions in creating positive emotional experiences for customers (Parasuraman et al, 1991).

## 2.2 Conceptual Framework

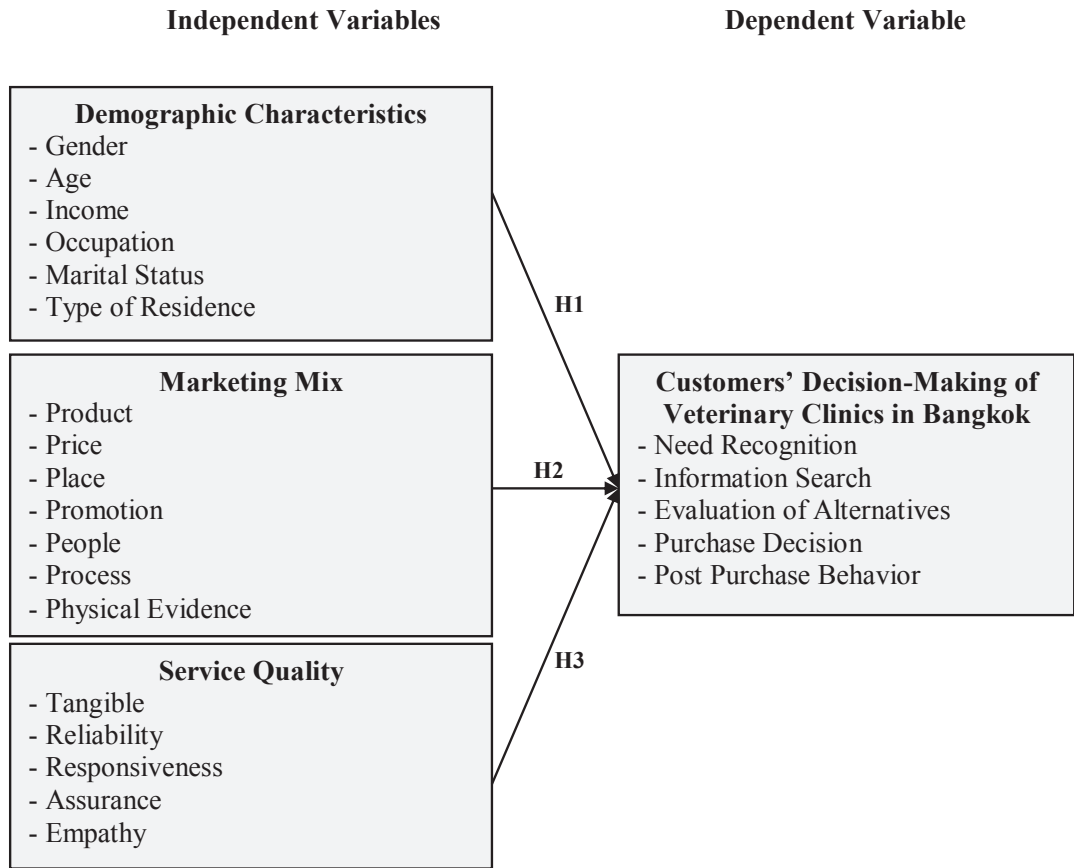


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

## 2.3 Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: The difference in demographic characteristics relates to the difference in decision-making on veterinary clinics in Bangkok

Hypothesis 2: The marketing mix influences the decision-making on veterinary clinics in Bangkok.

Hypothesis 3: The service quality influences the decision-making on veterinary clinics in Bangkok.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This research is survey research in which the researchers use quantitative research to study the differences in demographic factors influencing decision-making, the marketing mix that influences the decision-making, and the service quality that influences the decision-making on veterinary clinics in Bangkok.



### 3.2 Population and Sampling

This research utilizes an unknown population of customers who used to visit a veterinary clinic in Bangkok. The sample size calculation used the Yamane formula (1973) with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, resulting in a total sample size of 400 samples. The researchers used the multi-stage sampling technique to get a sample that is a good representative of the population by separating the sample into 6 zones of Bangkok (67 samples for each zone). Then, the researchers used a convenience sampling technique for data collection via the online platform of veterinary clinics.

### 3.3 Research Instruments

The questionnaires were conducted using the Likert Rating Scale with 5 levels of measurement in a total of 57 questions. The questions were divided into 4 categories, including 6 questions about demographic characteristics, nominal and ordinal scales, 21 about marketing mix, 15 about service quality, and 15 about decision-making.

The researchers tested the instruments' quality by examining content validity (IOC). Three experts conducted the evaluation. The criterion for passing each questionnaire item was set with an average score greater than or equal to 0.7 (Wanichbancha, 2018). The result had an average score of .871, surpassing the established criterion. Subsequently, the researchers conducted a reliability test of the instrument using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This test was performed by applying the questionnaire to a group with characteristics similar to the sample group, totaling 30 individuals. The analysis revealed a reliability coefficient of .967, which is acceptable, indicating good reliability.

### 3.4 Data Collection

The researchers collected data from October to November 2023. After collecting data from the sample group, it was found that 431 individuals cooperated and responded to the questionnaire.

### 3.5 Statistics Used for Data Analysis

*Descriptive Statistics:* Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation.

*Inferential Statistics:* One-way ANOVA and Multiple Regression for testing the hypothesis.

## 4. Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1 Data Analysis of The Quantitative Data

The results of demographic characteristics from the questionnaire were presented in Table 1.

**Table 1** Customers' Demographic Characteristics

				n = 431			
Demographic Characteristics		n	%	Demographic Characteristics		n	%
Gender	Female	265	61.5	Income	Less than 15,000 THB	170	39.4
	Male	145	33.6		15,000-30,000 THB	83	19.6
	Unidentified	21	4.9		30,001-50,000 THB	59	13.7
Type of Residences	House	150	34.8		50,001-100,000 THB	66	15.3
	Apartment	87	20.2		More than 100,000 THB	53	12.3
	Townhouse	84	19.5	Occupation	Student	210	48.7
	Condominium	84	19.5		Company Employee	102	23.7
	Commercial Building	26	6.0		Business Owner	80	18.6
Age	Less than 26 years	231	53.6	Government Officer	39	9.0	
	26-35 years	120	27.8	Marital Status	Single	333	77.3
	36-45 years	50	11.6		Married	86	20.0
	46-55 years	30	7.0		Divorce & Widowed	16	3.7

The most respondents are 265 females (61.5%), followed by 145 males (33.6%) and 21 unidentified (4.9%). 150 respondents live in the house (34.8%), followed by apartment 87 (20.2%), townhouse 84 (19.5%), condominium 84 (19.5%), and commercial building 26 (6%), respectively. Age less than 26 years 231 respondents (53.6%), followed by 26-35 years 120 respondents (27.8%), 36-45 years 50 respondents (11.6%), and 46-55 years 30 respondents (7.0%), respectively. 170 respondents had income less than 15,000 THB, followed by 15,000-30,000 THB 83 respondents (19.6%), 30,001-50,000 THB 59 respondents (13.7%), 50,001-100,000 THB 66 respondents (15.3%), and had income more than 100,000 THB 53 respondents (12.3%), respectively. 210 respondents are students (48.7%), followed by 102 respondents are company employees (23.7%), 80 respondents are business owners (18.6%), and 39 respondents are government officers (9%), respectively. 333 respondents are single (77.3%), followed by 86 married (20%), and 16 divorced or widowed, respectively.

**Table 2** Results of the Hypothesis 1 Testing

					n = 341
Variables	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Demographic Characteristics					
- Gender	5.790	2.985	6.105	.002*	
- Age	3.552	0.888	1.844	.119	
- Income	7.053	1.763	3.725	.005*	
- Occupation	3.134	1.045	2.170	.091	
- Marital Status	0.377	0.189	0.388	.679	
- Type of Residence	4.322	1.080	2.252	.063	

\*p-value = < 0.05

The results of the hypothesis 1 testing from Table 2 were presented as follows:

- 1) The gender difference **was related** to the difference in decision-making.
- 2) The age difference **did not relate** to the difference in decision-making.
- 3) The income difference **was related** to the difference in decision-making.
- 4) The occupation difference **did not relate** to the difference in decision-making.
- 5) The marital status difference **did not relate** to the difference in decision-making.
- 6) The type of residence difference **did not relate** to the difference in decision-making.

**Table 3** Results of the Hypothesis 2 Testing

Variables	B	SE <sub>b</sub>	β	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.395	.145		2.722	.007
Product (X1)	.184	.042	.209	4.380	<.001*
Price (X2)	.071	.042	.084	1.678	.094
Place (X3)	.083	.045	.093	1.826	.069
Promotion (X4)	.119	.033	.153	3.633	<.001*
Process (X5)	.061	.056	.064	1.088	.278
People (X6)	.119	.048	.140	2.460	.014*
Physical Evidence (X7)	.269	.054	.261	4.939	<.001*
R <sup>2</sup> = .698					

n = 431

\*p-value = < 0.05

The results of the hypothesis 2 testing from Table 3 were presented as follows:

The analysis of the influence of marketing mix on the decision-making of veterinary clinics in Bangkok found statistically significant effects at the .05 level in 4 variables. These variables include physical evidence, product, promotion, and people. The standardized regression coefficients (β) were .261, .209, .153, and .140 based on standardized scores (β). The R-squared (R<sup>2</sup>) value was .698, indicating that 4 marketing mix variables can explain 69% of the variance in the decision-making of veterinary clinics in Bangkok. Price, place, and process were variables that did not significantly influence the decision-making. The regression equation in standardized score form is  $Y = .269X_7 + .184X_1 + .119X_4 + .119X_6$

**Table 4** Results of the Hypothesis 3 Testing

Variables	B	SE <sub>b</sub>	β	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.658	.146		4.525	<.001*
Tangible (X1)	.255	.060	.281	4.236	<.001*
Reliability (X2)	.067	.068	.069	.984	.326
Responsiveness (X3)	.148	.068	.155	2.184	.030*
Assurance (X4)	.103	.064	.106	1.603	.110
Empathy (X5)	.237	.057	.276	4.177	<.001*
$R^2 = .674$					

n = 431

\*p-value = < 0.05

The results of the hypothesis 3 testing from Table 4 were presented as follows:

The analysis of the influence of service quality on the decision-making of veterinary clinics in Bangkok found statistically significant effects at the .05 level in 3 variables. These variables include tangible, empathy, and responsiveness. The standardized regression coefficients (β) were .281, .276, and .155 based on standardized scores (β). The R-squared (R<sup>2</sup>) value was .674, indicating that 3 service quality variables can explain 67% of the variance in the decision-making of veterinary clinics in Bangkok. Reliability and assurance were variables that did not significantly influence the decision-making. The regression equation in standardized score form is  $Y = .255X_1 + .237X_5 + .148X_3$

#### 4.4 Summary of the Results

**Hypothesis 1:** The difference in demographic characteristics, gender, and income related to the difference in decision-making, while age, occupation, marital status, and type of residence did not relate to the difference in decision-making statistically significant effects at the .05.

**Hypothesis 2:** The marketing mix, physical evidence, product, promotion, and people influence decision-making, while price, place, and process were variables that did not significantly influence the decision-making.

**Hypothesis 3:** The service quality, tangible, empathy, and responsiveness influence decision-making, while reliability and assurance were variables that did not significantly influence the decision-making.

### 5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendation

#### 5.1 Conclusion

The difference in demographic characteristics, gender, and income, related to the difference in decision-making on veterinary clinics in Bangkok; notably, age, occupation, marital status, and type of residence did not relate to the difference in decision-making on veterinary clinics in Bangkok.

The marketing mix, physical evidence, product, promotion, and people influence decision-making on veterinary clinics in Bangkok; notably, price, place, and process were variables that did not significantly influence the decision-making on veterinary clinics in Bangkok.

The service quality, tangible, empathy, and responsiveness influence decision-making on veterinary clinics in Bangkok; notably, reliability and assurance were variables that did not significantly influence the decision-making on veterinary clinics in Bangkok.

## 5.2 Discussion

1) The results of hypothesis 1 testing showed that the difference in demographic characteristics, gender, and income related to the difference in decision-making in veterinary clinics in Bangkok, which was supported by the study of Akbar et al. (2020) and Bhutto et al. (2019) that can be explained that men and women may have different information-processing styles. In decision-making for veterinary services, gender can influence various aspects of the process. Men may prioritize the health and well-being of their pets, focusing on medical expertise, treatments, and preventive care, while women might be equally concerned about the emotional well-being of their pets, looking for clinics that provide a nurturing and supportive environment for their animals. These differences can influence how individuals gather and assess information when making service-related decisions. According to Dakduk et al. (2020) and Qazzafi (2020), income plays a significant role in decision-making when choosing veterinary clinics. The financial capacity of pet owners can impact various aspects of the decision-making process. Understanding the income demographics of the target audience is crucial for veterinary clinics to effectively tailor their services, pricing structures, and communication strategies. Offering a range of services with transparent pricing and flexible payment options and demonstrating empathy towards various income brackets can contribute to attracting and retaining a diverse clientele.

2) Based on the marketing mix result, there was physical evidence that product, Promotion, and people influence decision-making, consistent with Mishra et al.'s (2021) and Naeem (2021) research. Physical evidence in the context of veterinary clinics refers to the tangible cues and aspects of the environment that customers can observe and evaluate. Physical evidence is crucial in pet owners' decision-making when choosing veterinary services. The results from research by Dodd et al. (2020) and Holland (2019) found that pet owners seek veterinary clinics with knowledgeable and experienced staff that can provide expert care for their animals. Moreover, a team of qualified veterinarians and support staff contributes to the perception of professionalism and competence, influencing the decision to choose a particular clinic. According to the study of Foreman-Worsley et al. (2021) and Dodd et al. (2020), Promotion plays a crucial role in influencing decision-making when it comes to choosing veterinary clinics. Effective promotional strategies create awareness and shape pet owners' perceptions and preferences. An effective promotion strategy is essential for veterinary clinics to reach their target audience, create positive perceptions, and influence the decision-making process of pet owners. By leveraging various promotional channels and emphasizing key messages, clinics can differentiate themselves in a competitive market, attract new clients, and foster long-term relationships with satisfied pet owners. For the people, Bir et al. (2020) and Malnight et al. (2019) found that the role of people (staff) is crucial in the decision-making process when choosing veterinary clinics. Pet owners often consider the clinic's staff's professionalism, expertise, and friendliness when making decisions about their pets' healthcare. The staff of a veterinary clinic plays a central role in influencing pet owners' decisions. A knowledgeable, compassionate, and customer-oriented staff contributes to a positive experience and establishes trust, which is crucial for building long-term relationships with pet owners. Veterinary clinics prioritizing hiring and training staff to meet these expectations will likely attract and retain satisfied clients.

3) The analysis of the influence of service quality on decision-making found that tangible empathy and responsiveness influence decision-making. From the results of Fogle & Sheats (2021) and Tompson et al. (2020), Tangible elements are significant in the decision-making process when choosing veterinary clinics as they contribute to the overall perceived quality of service. Pet owners often consider the clinic's physical environment, equipment, and overall presentation when making decisions about their pets' healthcare. Veterinary clinics that prioritize these tangible aspects can enhance their appeal and create a positive impression, ultimately influencing the decision-making process of pet owners. Second, Sukono et al. (2023) and Springer et al. (2021) found that empathy is crucial in the decision-making process when choosing a service, including veterinary clinics. Clinics that prioritize empathy in their interactions, communication, and service delivery create a positive and supportive environment that resonates with pet owners. Empathy contributes to trust, client satisfaction, and long-term relationships, ultimately influencing the decision-making process favoring veterinary clinics prioritizing compassionate care. Last, Responsiveness is crucial in the decision-making process when choosing a service, including veterinary clinics. Responsiveness contributes to client satisfaction, trust, and the overall client experience, ultimately influencing the decision-making process favoring veterinary clinics prioritizing efficient and client-focused care. (Ferrell & Crowley, 2021; Ribitsch et al, 2020)

### 5.3 Recommendation

Future studies should investigate the issues that negatively impact decision-making when choosing veterinary clinic services. The findings can then be used to improve and address these problems in conjunction with studying variables that enhance service quality. This approach aims to maximize benefits, both in terms of improving existing aspects and minimizing issues.

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