EXPLORING COMPONENTS OF MINDFUL MARKETING IN YOGA STUDIOS: EVIDENCE FROM VIETNAM'S WELLNESS INDUSTRY

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Abstract: *This study explores mindful marketing in the Vietnamese wellness sector with three aims: to clarify its conceptual understanding, to examine how it is practiced in yoga & wellness studios, and to identify its main components. Using a qualitative design based on Grounded Theory, twenty in-depth interviews were conducted with studio's managers & marketing professionals, senior yoga instructors and mindfulness experts. Thematic analysis revealed that mindful marketing is an authentic and ethical approach that emphasizes honesty, transparency, and customer well-being, while avoiding aggressive sales and instead fostering trust, community, and long-term sustainable relationships. Eight components emerged: transparency, professionalism, authenticity and sense of community are core components of mindful marketing while peaceful environment, holistic programs, sustainability and customer-centric values are supporting components. The findings extend mindful marketing research into the wellness context and offer practical implications for managers in yoga and related industries. By adopting strategies that align with mindful values, studios can strengthen customer loyalty, enhance differentiation, and respond more effectively to the challenges of today's disruptive economy.*

Research purpose:
This paper aims to: (1) investigate the concept of mindful marketing in yoga and wellness sector, (2) examine how mindful marketing is defined and manifested in the context of wellness-oriented businesses such as Vietnamese yoga studios, and (3) identify the components of mindful marketing implemented in Vietnamese yoga studios

Research motivation:
The global wellness industry has expanded rapidly, with yoga emerging as a prominent segment. In today's disruptive economy, where shifting consumer expectations and competitive pressures reshape service models, yoga studios must adopt new business dynamics to remain resilient. Mindfulness is central not only to yoga practice but also to its marketing, making mindful marketing a relevant approach. Yet, its application in the yoga and wellness sector, particularly in Vietnam, remains underexplored. This study addresses that gap by examining mindful marketing as a marketing tool that can serve as an adaptive business dynamic fostering customer loyalty and sustainable growth.

Research design, approach, and method:
This qualitative study, grounded in the principles of Grounded Theory, aims to gain insights into the concept and components of mindful marketing in the wellness industry by interviewing twenty studio's managers & marketing professionals, senior yoga instructors and mindfulness experts from long-established and reputable yoga studios in Vietnam. Through these interviews, the study seeks to understand how participants perceive, experience and practice mindful marketing in these yoga studios. The interview data were analysed inductively using a systematic coding process to identify recurring patterns and develop conceptual categories.

Main findings:
(1) The study defines mindful marketing as an authentic and ethical approach that emphasizes honesty, transparency, and customer well-being. It avoids aggressive sales, focusing instead on trust, community, and long-term sustainable relationships. (2) The components of mindful marketing implemented in yoga & wellness studios comprise dominant components: transparency, professionalism, authenticity, and a sense of community, along with supporting components such as sustainability, a peaceful environment, holistic programming, and customer-centric values.

Practical/managerial implications:

The study contributes to marketing theory by extending mindful marketing into the wellness context and to managerial practice by offering evidence from Vietnam's yoga industry. The findings of this study provide practical implications

for managers in the wellness industry, particular yoga studios. Managers (not only in Vietnam but also in other emerging markets) can rely on these insights to better understand the components of mindful marketing, adopt strategies that emphasize transparency, authenticity, professionalism and sense of community for customer retention, and adapt more effectively to the challenges of a disruptive economy.

Keywords: Mindful marketing; Grounded Theory; Yoga and wellness industry; Sustainability; Vietnam

1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of disruptive economy, businesses across industries are compelled to rethink their strategies as consumer expectations, technologies, and competitive landscapes evolve at unprecedented speed. Service-based sectors face heightened challenges in maintaining resilience and sustainable growth while adapting to shifting market dynamics. The wellness industry illustrates this disruption clearly: global demand for holistic well-being has surged, and businesses must innovate to remain competitive and relevant.

The global wellness industry has undergone substantial expansion in recent years, with particular emphasis on the integration of physical and mental health. It has witnessed significant growth, especially in balancing physical and mental health, a trend that has accelerated following the COVID-19 pandemic (Hung et al., 2024). Research shows that the wellness industry is becoming increasingly customer-centric, with consumers expecting not just physical health benefits but also support for mental and emotional well-being (McKinsey & Company, 2021). This global trend has also manifested strongly in emerging markets such as Vietnam, where wellness practices are increasingly integrated into everyday lifestyles (Doan & Quynh, 2025). However, the rapid expansion of yoga studios in Vietnam has revealed a divergence between fitness-oriented businesses and those pursuing a more holistic wellness philosophy. In fact, only a limited number of these studios genuinely belong to the wellness sector. Most yoga studios are part of the fitness industry, where activities and programs primarily focus on physical exercise. These studios operate successfully, attracting a high number of members and offering a wide variety of classes daily. However, the large class sizes often hinder yoga instructors from providing individualized guidance and attention to students, thereby limiting the potential wellness benefits of the practice. Conversely, a subset of yoga studios prioritizes creating value for their members by promoting holistic health and incorporating mindfulness as a core business objective (Interviews with studio managers and yoga experts, January–July 2025).

Mindful marketing, which emphasizes authenticity, transparency, sustainability, and ethical practices, aligns well with the goals of the wellness industry. This approach not only supports business growth but also upholds social and personal values, fostering deeper connections with consumers (Hagenbuch & Mgrdichian, 2019; Kumar et al., 2024). This distinction highlights the necessity of examining how marketing strategies, particularly mindful marketing can strengthen customer relationships and influence re-enrolment behaviour (Oly Ndubisi, 2012). By prior studies, this research has identified the inconsistent in definition and dimension of mindful marketing; this marketing approach in wellness and service contexts is rarely investigated; most works use conceptual or quantitative designs, lacking grounded qualitative insights into how mindful marketing is practiced; the link between mindfulness philosophy and marketing management remains under-theorized and limited empirical research from emerging economies like Vietnam.

These gaps highlight the need to investigate how mindful marketing is conceptualized and practiced in yoga & wellness studios. By addressing this issue, the present study contributes to marketing theory by extending mindful marketing into the wellness context and to managerial practice by offering evidence from Vietnam's yoga industry. Managers (not only in Vietnam but also in other emerging markets) can rely on these insights to better understand the components of mindful marketing, adopt strategies that emphasize transparency, authenticity, professionalism and sense of community for customer retention, and adapt more effectively to the challenges of a disruptive economy. Therefore, this study examines the following research questions:

1. What is the conceptual understanding of mindful marketing?

2. How is mindful marketing defined and manifested in the context of health-oriented businesses, particularly Vietnamese yoga studios?

3. What are the components of mindful marketing implemented in Vietnamese yoga studios?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Grounded Theory as a theoretical lens

Grounded Theory is a qualitative methodology developed by Glaser& Strauss that enables the systematic generation of theory from empirical data (Glaser & Strauss, 1998). Rather than testing pre-determined hypotheses, Grounded Theory emphasizes an inductive approach through iterative coding, constant comparison, and theoretical sampling, ensuring that theory remains grounded in real-world observations (Service, 2009). In market research, Grounded Theory has been increasingly applied to explore under-investigated phenomena, providing rich insights into consumer behavior, organizational practices, and value co-creation. Charmaz further advanced Grounded Theory by introducing a constructivist perspective, which highlights the researcher's active role in co-constructing meaning with participants (Charmaz, 2006). This methodological flexibility makes Grounded Theory particularly valuable in contexts where

existing theoretical frameworks are limited or fragmented, such as in the study of mindful marketing. By adopting Grounded Theory, researchers can capture the dynamic, context-specific nature of marketing practices, thereby generating theoretical contributions that are both rigorous and practically relevant. This approach is particularly relevant to emerging fields such as yoga and wellness, where marketing practices remain underexplored. Applying Grounded Theory allows researchers to capture how mindful marketing is conceptualized and practiced in yoga studios, offering context-specific theoretical and practical insights.

2.2. Mindfulness concept

Mindfulness has been conceptualized through both Eastern and Western perspectives. The Eastern view is rooted in Buddhist philosophy and teachings, whereas Western studies have largely examined mindfulness from a psychological standpoint (Krägeloh, 2013; Neves-Pereira et al., 2017). At the individual level, mindfulness is described as openness to novelty, sensitivity to context, awareness of multiple perspectives, and attention to the present (Sternberg, 2000). It also involves focusing on current tasks, attending to details, considering alternative viewpoints, and learning from failures (Langer, 1989). Other definitions highlight mindfulness as recollection and sustained awareness (Christopher & Gilbert, 2010). Through such awareness, individuals develop stronger self-regulation and greater control over automatic or habitual behaviours, which in turn lead to healthier decision-making and consumption patterns (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Chatzisarantis & Hagger, 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Beyond the individual, mindfulness extends to the collective and organizational levels, which these approaches provide more resilient and sustainable solutions to quality and reliability challenges than routine-based methods (Oly Ndubisi, 2012). Organizational mindfulness emphasizes sensitivity to errors, failures, unexpected events, and subtle environmental cues, along with the flexibility to respond with diverse and appropriate actions (Levinthal & Rerup, 2006). It is considered vital for achieving strategic goals, advancing missions, and fostering collaboration and leadership (Malhotra et al., 2012). Collective mindfulness further enables organizations to adapt rapidly and effectively to changing stimuli (Levinthal & Rerup, 2006; Oly Ndubisi, 2012). Moreover, mindfulness enhances organizational capacity for creativity, conflict management, and innovative thinking, while also improving teamwork, attention to detail, adaptability, and overall performance (Owusu-Frimpong & Nwankwo, 2012). In this sense, mindfulness represents more than a mental state; it functions as a guiding principle that bridges self-awareness and organizational ethics. By cultivating awareness, authenticity, and responsibility, both individuals and organizations can act more consciously in their decisions and relationships. This conceptual foundation forms the basis for mindful marketing, where mindfulness principles are integrated into marketing practices.

2.3. Mindful marketing in yoga and wellness sector

Mindful marketing is an emerging approach that integrates the principles of mindfulness into marketing practices. It is both effective and ethical which meets the demands of marketers and customers while doing no harm to them or any other stakeholders. The effective component creates stakeholders' value, and ethical marketing upholds societal values (Hagenbuch & Mgrdichian, 2019; Kumar et al., 2024). Mindful marketing is strategies and tactics that show decency, fairness, honesty, respect for others, and responsibility (Hagenbuch & Mgrdichian, 2019). In Malhotra's research, mindful marketing is inherently linked to the market and quality orientation concepts. It is customer-centric and helps in value co-creation (Malhotra et al., 2012). Mindful marketing can improve sustainable development for business and society (Oly Ndubisi, 2012).

According to Seth & Sisodia, mindful marketing involves a shift from traditional profit-driven strategies to a more holistic approach that considers the well-being of all stakeholders (Sheth & Sisodia, 2006). This approach aligns with the growing consumer demand for ethical and sustainable business practices. Mindful marketing leads to mindful consumption that generates win-win solutions for the planet, people and profit (Sheth et al., 2011). Marketers aim at seeking ways to create win-win strategies by thoughtfully aligning marketing functions with consumers' interests in mind, and avoid being involved in wasteful, unethical, and selfish marketing practices (Sheth & Sisodia, 2006).

Ahmet Bayraktar's research (2015) introduces the importance of the mindful marketing approach for positive marketing by discussing how mindful marketing contributes to firms' social responsibility, environmental concern, and consumer and societal well-being. In other words, it discusses how mindful marketing leads to ideal marketing by helping an organization improve individual and societal well-being while at the same time helping the organization and its stakeholders enjoy profits or increased business (Bayraktar et al., 2015).

Mindful marketing integrates market orientation, quality orientation, and organizational mindfulness to encourage value co-creation and mindful consumption, aligning with wellness's holistic nature (Malhotra et al., 2012). Authentic strategies such as mindfulness-based stress reduction programs can enhance practitioners' well-being while positioning studios as genuine wellness providers. To avoid alienating consumers, companies should emphasize authenticity and holistic wellness rather than religious references (Telej & Gamble, 2019). Evidence also shows that yoga and mindfulness practices improve self-regulation, engagement, and body appreciation, both in educational settings (Cook-Cottone, 2017) and among regular practitioners (Cox & McMahon, 2019), reinforcing the value of

mindful marketing in promoting self-care and body positivity.

Additionally, the practice of mindful marketing needs the revision of the whole spectrum of marketing and includes mindful product, price, place and promotion (Malhotra et al., 2012). Products could have a mindful design with features that reduce repetitive consumption. For example, the product can be made more durable, easier to upgrade and repair, and allowing for shared use and reuse. Price should include environmental and societal costs and regulate over- (or under) consumption. Place should be such a location and facilities that are convenient, attractive and shared use. Finally, promotion should reduce wastefulness and lead to educated consumers. In other words, the only and primary objective of promotion should not be to generate more consumption (Malhotra et al., 2012; Sheth et al., 2011).

Table 1. Conceptual Framework of Mindful Marketing: Definitions and Dimensions

Source: Developed by the authors based on sources

No.	Author(s) & Year	Definition / Conceptualization	Key Dimensions / Components	Context or Focus
1	Sheth & Sisodia (2006)	Mindful marketing shifts from profit-driven strategies to a holistic approach that considers the well-being of all stakeholders.	Stakeholder well-being, ethical balance, long-term value	Marketing philosophy & stakeholder theory
2	Sheth et al. (2011)	Mindful marketing fosters mindful consumption that creates win–win solutions for people, planet, and profit.	Triple-bottom-line orientation (people–planet–profit), conscious consumption	Sustainability & consumer ethics
3	Malhotra et al. (2012)	Integrates mindfulness with market and quality orientation, emphasizing customer-centric value co-creation and sustainable marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion).	Market orientation, quality orientation, customer-centricity, mindful 4Ps	Strategic marketing & service design
4	Oly Ndubisi (2012)	Mindful marketing enhances sustainable development for business and society.	Sustainability, societal well-being, responsible management	Emerging markets & sustainability
5	Bayraktar et al. (2015)	Mindful marketing contributes to social responsibility, environmental concern, and well-being for both firms and society.	Social responsibility, environmental care, well-being	Positive marketing
6	Hagenbuch & Mgrdichian (2019)	A marketing approach that is both effective and ethical, meeting the needs of marketers and consumers while doing no harm.	Effectiveness, ethics, fairness, honesty, respect, responsibility	Marketing ethics
7	Mora et al. (2018)	Frames yoga as a conscious lifestyle that provides physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.	Authenticity, holistic well-being, consciousness	Wellness & yoga
8	Telej & Gamble (2019)	Advocates authentic, inclusive, and non-religious mindfulness-based branding for wellness businesses.	Authenticity, inclusivity, holistic wellness	Branding & communication ethics
9	Cook-Cottone (2017); Cox & McMahon (2019)	Yoga and mindfulness enhance self-regulation, body appreciation, and engagement.	Self-regulation, well-being, body positivity	Education & wellness
10	Markula (2004)	Blending Eastern and Western wellness practices enables self-awareness and individual health journeys.	Cultural inclusivity, self-stylization, empowerment	Cross-cultural marketing & fitness
11	Kumar et al. (2024)	Integrates mindfulness principles into marketing strategy to promote ethical, sustainable, and conscious consumption.	Awareness, ethics, conscious decision-making	Contemporary marketing strategy

As summarized in Table 1, prior studies offer diverse perspectives on mindful marketing, reflecting its multidimensional nature but also revealing notable inconsistencies. Some scholars define mindful marketing primarily as an ethical and sustainability-oriented philosophy that balances profitability with stakeholder well-being and social responsibility, while others conceptualize it as a strategic or operational capability, integrating mindfulness principles into marketing processes, customer relationship management, and the marketing mix. In contrast, research in the education and wellness domains emphasizes authenticity, inclusivity, and holistic well-being as central expressions of mindful marketing.

These variations indicate a lack of conceptual clarity in defining the scope and dimensions of mindful marketing. Specifically, the literature has not reached consensus on whether mindful marketing represents a managerial capability, or a set of actionable marketing practices. Such fragmentation limits theoretical advancement and poses challenges for practitioners seeking to operationalize mindfulness in marketing activities. Moreover, most existing studies are concentrated in sectors such as tourism, food, and fashion, while service-based and wellness industries remain underexplored. In emerging markets like Vietnam, where wellness practices are expanding rapidly but still lack theoretical grounding, the application of mindful marketing principles is even less understood. Finally, most works use conceptual or quantitative designs, lacking grounded qualitative insights into how mindful marketing is practiced.

Therefore, this study addresses the gap by empirically exploring how mindful marketing is conceptualized and practiced within yoga and wellness studios. Using a qualitative, Grounded Theory approach, it seeks to identify the core components that constitute mindful marketing in this context. This approach not only clarifies the conceptual ambiguities in existing literature but also provides a contextualized understanding of mindful marketing as a dynamic and adaptive business practice.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Approach

The methodological approach of this study is qualitative research. The primary objective of employing a qualitative design is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the concept of mindful marketing within the wellness sector, particularly in the context of yoga studios. This approach plays a vital role in validating and contextualizing the study's core concepts, while also providing a critical foundation for subsequent quantitative investigations (Lim, 2024; Ruark & Fielding-Miller, 2016). In-depth interviews were conducted to explore and define the dimensions of mindful marketing specifically within the Vietnamese yoga and wellness industry. Given the relative novelty of this concept, examining it from the perspective of experts ensures that the factors incorporated into future quantitative research accurately reflect market realities (Lim, 2024).

This study adopts Grounded Theory not only as a qualitative approach but as an analytical framework for data interpretation. Following the procedures of Grounded Theory, the interview transcripts were analysed through a three-step coding process: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1998). During open coding, segments of data were broken down into initial codes; axial coding was then used to cluster these codes into higher-order categories; and selective coding integrated them into core dimensions that shaped the proposed framework of mindful marketing(Glaser & Strauss, 1998). Throughout this process, constant comparison was employed, both across interviews and among different participant groups (studio managers, instructors, experts), ensuring that emerging categories were grounded in the data rather than imposed a priori (Kolb, 2012; Williams & Murray, 2025). Consequently, the components of mindful marketing reflect theoretical insights that genuinely emerged from the Vietnamese yoga and wellness context

3.2. Participant Recruitment Process

Participants for this study were recruited through purposive sampling, a strategy deemed most appropriate for qualitative research as it allows researchers to identify individuals who can provide rich, relevant, and insightful information to address the research questions (Palinkas et al., 2013). This approach enabled access to individuals with extensive experience in mindfulness, yoga, and wellness. The researcher leveraged existing professional and personal networks within these fields to approach potential participants. Given the cultural significance of trust and personal introductions in Vietnam, this strategy proved effective in fostering rapport and ensuring participants felt comfortable and open throughout the interview process.

In addition to purposive sampling, a snowball sampling technique was employed to further reach the targeted population. After completing an interview, participants were asked to recommend peers or acquaintances who shared similar expertise or interests and who met the study's selection criteria.

The adequacy of the sample size in qualitative research is determined by the richness and depth of the data rather than

by numerical representativeness (Patton, 2014). Following the principles of Grounded Theory, a total of twenty participants was deemed sufficient to ensure conceptual depth and data saturation. During the final interviews, no new categories or themes emerged, indicating that saturation had been achieved. This sample size aligns with established qualitative research standards, which suggest that between 15 and 30 participants are typically adequate for Grounded Theory studies (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Guest et al., 2006). Therefore, the inclusion of twenty respondents is considered appropriate for the scope and aims of this study. Those 20 participants were recruited, including certified mindfulness practitioners trained through MBSR programs, marketing managers from some yoga centres applied mindful marketing in Hanoi, and yoga instructors with at least five years of teaching and practicing experience in yoga and mindfulness. This selection ensured that respondents possessed both theoretical knowledge and practical experience relevant to the research objectives. All participants were based in Hanoi at the time of data collection.

Interviews were conducted in settings that fostered openness and comfort, such as participants' homes, workplaces, or quiet cafés offering privacy. Several interviews were also conducted online to provide scheduling flexibility and overcome geographical or logistical constraints. Ethical procedures were strictly observed to ensure the study's rigor and integrity. Participation was voluntary, and all respondents were informed about the research purpose, process, and their right to withdraw at any time. Informed consent was obtained before each interview, either in written or verbal form. Confidentiality was maintained through pseudonyms and secure data storage accessible only to the researchers. These procedures comply with established qualitative research ethics (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Orb et al., 2001), ensuring credibility and trustworthiness.

3.3. Interviews

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were employed as the primary method of data collection, following McCracken's (1988) guidelines on qualitative interviewing. Each interview lasted between 90 and 120 minutes, depending on the participants' experience and willingness to share.

The interview protocol was structured into three main sections (excluding introductory and closing questions). The first section consisted of exploratory, open-ended questions designed to encourage participants to freely describe the marketing activities conducted at their studios, as well as distinctive practices compared to conventional studios. Example questions included: "*Could you introduce the marketing activities at the studio?*", "*What marketing aspects stand out at the studio?*", and "*As a teacher/ member, do you consider yourself a marketer for the studio?*"

The second section focused on eliciting participants' understanding, perspectives, and evaluations of mindful marketing, along with its current implementation within their studios. Questions in this stage included: *"What is your understanding of mindful marketing?*", "*What are the components of mindful marketing*?", and "*How are these components reflected in the studio's marketing practices*?"

The final section aimed to capture participants' suggestions and professional insights, particularly from long-term teachers and experts on how studios could further optimize the application of mindful marketing.

3.4. Data Analysis Technique

The qualitative data collected were analysed using thematic analysis, a method particularly suitable for datasets of moderate size, such as the 20 interviews conducted in this study. Thematic analysis allows researchers to identify, categorize, and interpret recurring themes and patterns within the interview data while offering flexibility to adopt either a theory-driven or data-driven approach.

All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent, transcribed verbatim, and systematically coded using an open-coding technique. During the initial coding phase, open codes were generated to capture recurring concepts and perspectives directly expressed by participants, particularly regarding their understanding and practices of mindful marketing in yoga and wellness contexts. In the subsequent stage, a round of theoretical coding was undertaken to group these open codes into broader categories informed by existing literature. This process involved identifying patterns and relationships across the codes, leading to the development of axial coding that represent more abstract conceptual dimensions. Finally, the selective coding was developed from the axial coding and subsequently compared with established theories and findings from the literature review.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Findings of the study

4.1.1. Mindful marketing definitions

The findings from the interviews highlight a shared understanding among participants that mindful marketing is fundamentally different from traditional, profit-driven promotion:

Interviewee 1,5 and 11 repeatedly stressed that mindful marketing means "*being real and caring*," where honesty and genuine relationships form the foundation for loyalty rather than aggressive persuasion. Similarly, interviewees 2,10 and 12 reinforced this perspective by explaining that mindful marketing is about sharing the right information at the right time in a sincere, pressure-free way. In the same vein, interviewee 4 emphasized the importance of honesty,

transparency, and non-reactivity to market pressures, noting that mindful marketing should always stay true to the studio's values.

At the same time, several interviewees pointed out the tensions and challenges of practicing mindful marketing. Interviewee 3, 14 and 15 provided a critical reflection, observing that marketing is often profit-driven, while mindfulness is non-materialistic, creating a difficult balance between commercial demands and mindful principles. Others, including interviewees 6, 7 and 18 acknowledged this challenge but argued that authenticity, professionalism, and sustainability can bridge the gap. They described mindful marketing as a practice of awareness and presence, one that avoids exaggerated claims and instead nurtures long-term trust and mindful consumption. This reinforced the definition of mindful marketing as a practice that privileges long-term well-being over immediate commercial gain.

Finally, other participants elaborated on the ethical and relational dimensions of mindful marketing. Interviewees 8, 17 and 20 grounded their definition in ethical practice, highlighting that mindful marketing should align with the true philosophy of yoga and avoid hype or manipulation. Interviewees 9, 16 and 19 echoed this by framing MM as a mindfulness-based approach to building genuine and lasting relationships, helping customers recognize real value rather than being persuaded by commercial tactics. Taken together, the interviews reveal a strong consensus that mindful marketing is not just a promotional technique but a values-based philosophy. By integrating awareness, authenticity, and responsibility into business practice, mindful marketing offers a pathway toward sustainable growth and meaningful stakeholder relationships.

Across the responses, mindful marketing is a values-driven marketing approach that integrates mindfulness principles: authenticity, awareness, transparency, and ethical responsibility into business practices. Instead of relying on aggressive promotion or short-term profit, it focuses on building genuine, trust-based, and sustainable relationships with customers and communities. Mindful marketing emphasizes honesty, professionalism, and customer well-being, while balancing business goals with social and environmental responsibility to create long-term value. Based on the participants' insights and grounded in prior literature, this study conceptualizes *mindful marketing as an authentic and ethical approach that emphasizes honesty, transparency, and customer well-being. It avoids aggressive sales, focusing instead on trust, community, and long-term sustainable relationships*.

This study extends existing definitions by framing mindful marketing not only as an ethical orientation but also as a managerial capability that operationalizes mindfulness principles within organizational processes. In doing so, it bridges the moral and practical dimensions identified in prior literature, offering an integrative framework that links individual awareness, organizational ethics, and customer-centered marketing practices. This theoretical contribution provides a clearer foundation for understanding mindful marketing as both a value system and a strategic approach applicable to wellness-oriented businesses.

4.1.2. The components of mindful marketing

The analysis of twenty in-depth interviews identified eight components that collectively characterize mindful marketing practices within yoga and wellness studios in Vietnam: transparency, professionalism, authenticity, sense of community, sustainability, peaceful environment, holistic program, and customer-centricity. While all eight dimensions emerged from the data, the frequency and intensity of references varied across participants. Specifically, *transparency, professionalism, authenticity*, and *sense of community* were consistently emphasized and can be dominant themes, as they represent core practices perceived as indispensable to mindful marketing. In contrast, *sustainability, peaceful environment, customer-centricity*, and *holistic program* appeared less frequently in the interviews, yet still offer valuable insights as supporting or latent themes that enrich the theoretical framework. Presenting both dominant and supporting components not only ensures a comprehensive representation of the empirical data but also highlights avenues for future research, where the relative significance of these dimensions can be further examined through quantitative validation. Following the Grounded Theory approach, eight dimensions of mindful marketing emerged inductively from the interview data, reflecting participants lived experiences and contextual realities.

Transparency: Transparency consistently emerged as a crucial component in mindful marketing. Respondents emphasized clarity in pricing, class descriptions, and communication. This approach fosters trust and reduces misunderstandings between studios and students. Below are respondents' quotes about transparency: "*Transparent pricing with clear policies*.", "*Clear class information and pricing. No exaggerated claims*.", "*Students fully understand what they are signing up for, no hidden fees*.". Transparency was seen not merely as an ethical practice but also as a differentiator from sales-driven competitors, aligning with the core value of mindful marketing.

Professionalism: Another theme highlighted the professional conduct and teaching quality of yoga instructors and managers. Professionalism was viewed not only as technical expertise and preparedness but also as the ability to demonstrate mindfulness, respect and originality in customer interactions. Participants emphasized that professional instructors go beyond delivering lessons, they inspire, motivate, and model positive lifestyles for their students. As expressed by respondents: "*Teachers and staff are well-trained, ensuring a high-quality experience*." and "*Being well-*

prepared and dedicated in class." This theme underscores how instructors' professionalism itself functions as a form of mindful marketing, fostering trust, loyalty, and long-term customer relationships.

Authenticity: Authenticity emerged as a recurring theme, with participants stressing the need for marketing practices that reflect true yoga values rather than commercial trends. To have authenticity, several interviewees also mentioned self-awareness about products of companies, ensuring that marketing communications accurately represent the studio's offerings without exaggeration. According to the participants' responses, it's the product authenticity: "*We do not practice trends, we practice truth*.", "*Sincerity and authenticity, non-commercial interactions*.", "*Marketing must align with yoga's true essence*.", "*Mindful marketing is honest and sustainable*."

Sense of Community: Building community was identified as a defining feature of mindful marketing in yoga studios. Respondents stressed the role of workshops, events, and interpersonal connections in fostering loyalty. This sense of belonging was considered essential for student retention and aligned with yoga's philosophical roots: "*Strong emphasis on relationships between instructors, students, and staff*.", "*Free workshops, donation-based meditation & sound therapy*.", "*Community events and outdoor activities*."

Sustainability: Many participants connect mindful marketing with sustainability, not only in environmental terms but also in business practices that emphasize long-term growth over short-term gains. Sustainability was thus interpreted as both ecological responsibility and a philosophy of slow, authentic growth: "*Eco-friendly values, green environment*.", "*Sustainable investment, not profit-first*.", "*Eco-friendly materials and mindful consumption*."

Peaceful Environment: The physical and emotional atmosphere of the studio was frequently cited as an essential marketing factor. A calm, stress-free space enhances customer relaxation.

"*Quiet, clean, energy-calming space with greenery and soft music*.", "*Peaceful environment is critical for yoga spaces*." , "*The studio space is designed to promote relaxation and mindfulness*."

Customer-centric Values: Participants consistently underscored the importance of placing students' needs at the centre of marketing efforts. Personalized care and attention were seen as key differentiators. This theme shows how mindful marketing is perceived not as pushing services but as understanding and responding to student needs: "*Students fill out health info forms for customized lesson plans*.", "*Matching students with suitable classes are key for retention*.", "*Marketing should target the right audience, not mass advertising*.", "*Focus on solving student problems, not profit*."

Holistic Program: Several respondents highlighted the importance of holistic programs that address physical, mental, and emotional well-being: "*Classes cover mental, emotional, and physical well-being*.", "*Various wellness-focused courses, sound healing*.", "*Therapeutic yoga and mindfulness practices*.". While some noted that holistic programs were not always the primary driver of marketing, most agreed that they enhanced customer experience and supported loyalty.

In sum, the analysis revealed eight interconnected dimensions of mindful marketing, with transparency, professionalism, authenticity, and community emerging as dominant themes, and sustainability, peaceful environment, customer-centricity, and holistic program serving as supporting components. Together, these findings form a grounded framework that captures how mindful marketing is understood and practiced in the context of Vietnamese yoga and wellness studios.

Table 2. The Eight-Component Framework of Mindful Marketing in Yoga and Wellness Studios

Source: Developed by the authors based on qualitative findings

No.	Core Components	No.	Supporting Components
1	Transparency	5	Sustainability
2	Professionalism	6	Peaceful environment
3	Authenticity	7	Holistic program
4	Sense of community	8	Customer-centric values

Besides the potential of a mindful marketing approach, participants also pointed out several challenges in applying it. Interview data reveal several barriers that yoga studios in the Vietnamese wellness sector are currently facing: studios face intense price competition, with many facilities relying on discounts or promotions, which pressures mindful studios to maintain authenticity and quality without resorting to aggressive sales tactics; dependence on individual teachers emerged as a structural challenge, since student loyalty often follows specific instructors rather than the studio itself; cultural differences further complicate management like while international clients tend to accept studio policies, local customers often expect more personal accommodation; participants also highlighted tensions between maintaining mindfulness principles and pursuing financial sustainability, as balancing authenticity with revenue growth is an ongoing difficulty; finally, mismatched expectations present a challenge: many customers desire quick results, which contrasts with yoga's philosophy of gradual, long-term practice.

4.2. Discussion

The eight dimensions identified in this study represent more than descriptive categories; they form a substantive theory of mindful marketing grounded in the lived experiences of yoga studio managers, instructors, and experts. By applying the principles of Grounded Theory, these components emerged inductively from interview data, reflecting how mindful marketing is practiced and understood in the Vietnamese wellness context. In this way, the study contributes a data-driven conceptualization that enriches the broader marketing literature. When compared to prior research, earlier studies defined mindful marketing mainly through values such as customer-centricity, ethical responsibility, sustainability, and transparency (Kumar et al., 2024; Oly Ndubisi, 2012; Sheth et al., 2011). While these works view mindful marketing as a moral or value-based orientation, this study extends it as a managerial capability comprising interconnected components that guide ethical action and organizational practice.

This study contributes to theory by extending the concept of mindful marketing into the wellness & yoga context, an area that has received limited scholarly attention. It also clarifies the conceptual dimensions of mindful marketing by identifying eight interrelated components that bridge moral philosophy and managerial practice. These findings advance theoretical understanding by positioning mindful marketing as both an ethical orientation and an operational capability within service-based industries.

In practical terms, the implications are significant. Studio managers in Vietnam and by extension, in other emerging economies face the constant challenge of reconciling business viability with mindfulness values. The research suggests that mindful marketing application can help studios differentiate themselves from competition while staying true to their identity. These strategies not only foster student loyalty but also serve as adaptive responses to the pressures of a disruptive economy. Building on these theoretical insights, the findings highlight four key implications for manager. First, developing professional competence among teachers and staff is central to service quality and customer engagement. Second, enhancing customer care through transparency, honest communication, and flexible membership options improves satisfaction and retention. Third, strengthening community connections via inclusive activities and eco-friendly initiatives fosters loyalty and long-term commitment. Finally, adopting marketing with a focus on authenticity, digital presence, and balanced financial strategies ensures the studio's credibility and long-term viability.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The findings highlight that mindful marketing, as practiced in Vietnamese yoga studios, is defined by authenticity, honesty, and care for customer well-being rather than relying on aggressive sales tactics; studios build their reputation and loyalty through trust, community, and sustainability. From the thematic analysis, the study distilled eight components of mindful marketing that together form a coherent framework: transparency, professionalism, sense of community, authenticity, sustainability, peaceful environment, holistic programs, and customer-centric values. These components reflect a marketing approach that is deeply aligned with the philosophy of yoga and equally responsive to the shifting dynamics of today's wellness industry.

The research has some limitations. With twenty participants concentrated in Hanoi, the data reflect Hanoi's urban context. The findings center on managerial perspectives rather than customer experiences. The future research should expand data beyond Hanoi to include other regions and cultures and integrate customer experiences to balance managerial viewpoints.

Within the theme of Business Dynamics in a Disruptive Economy, this study shows that mindful marketing is both a marketing innovation and a resilient business dynamic. It enables yoga studios to navigate uncertainty without losing their core philosophy, proving that financial sustainability and social responsibility can coexist. By aligning with growing demands for honesty, transparency, and well-being, studios and businesses more broadly can build lasting strength and resilience in disruptive environments.

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7. APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Interviewee profiles (In- depth qualitative interview)

Interviewee No.	**Position**	**Yoga studio/ company (Code)**	**Nationality**	**Experience** (in yrs.)	**Interview duration** (hrs. min)
1.	Studio manager	A	Vietnamese	12	90
2.	Studio manager	B	Vietnamese	13	90
3.	Studio manager	C	Vietnamese	15	90
4.	Mindfulness expert	-	Vietnamese	10	120
5.	Yoga & mindfulness expert	C	Vietnamese	15	100
6.	Yoga & mindfulness expert	D	Vietnamese	9	90
7.	Senior Yoga instructor	C	Vietnamese	11	95
8.	Senior Yoga instructor	B	Vietnamese	8	105
9.	Marketing manager	B	Vietnamese	8	90
10.	Former marketing manager	B	Vietnamese	11	90
11.	Marketing manager	E	Vietnamese	5	90
12.	Studio owner 1	E	Vietnamese	6	100
13.	Studio owner 2	E	Vietnamese	8	85
14.	Studio owner	A	Vietnamese	12	120
15.	Senior yoga instructor	A	Vietnamese	11	90
16.	Senior yoga instructor	A	Vietnamese	5	90
17.	Wellness instructor	B	Vietnamese	10	85
18.	Wellness instructor	C	Vietnamese	14	80
19.	Senior yoga instructor	D	Vietnamese	8	110
20.	Senior yoga and wellness instructor	D	Vietnamese	8	100

Appendix 2: Question discussion guide (In-depth qualitative interview)

Section 1: Background Information

- Could you please briefly introduce yourself (age, occupation, experience in the field of yoga/marketing/mindfulness)?
- How long have you been working at the yoga and wellness studio/ researching on mindfulness, and what is your role here?
- What made you choose to work at this yoga studio initially?

Section 2: Perception of Marketing activities at the yoga and wellness studio

1. Could you introduce the marketing activities at the studio?
2. What marketing aspects stand out at the studio?
3. As a teacher/staff member, do you consider yourself a marketer for the studio?

Section 3: Application of mindful marketing in Yoga Studios

4. What is your understanding of mindful marketing? What are components of mindful marketing?
5. How are these components reflected in the studio's marketing practices?
6. Which components of mindful marketing are the most important? Why?
7. How do customers respond to the studio's marketing approach? Do you believe mindful marketing leads to customer satisfaction?
8. According to your perspective, what is mindful marketing definition?

Section 4: Recommendations and Improvements

9. What are the challenges of marketing at the studio?
10. What recommendations/ plans would you make to improve MM at studios?

Appendix 3: Summary table with illustrative quotes from 20 respondents

Selective coding (Mindful marketing components)	Axial coding	Open coding / Core quotes from respondents
Transparency	Honest & open communication	- "Transparent pricing with clear policies." - "Clear class information and pricing. No exaggerated claims." - "Honesty and transparency, no misleading promises." - "Students fully understand what they are signing up for, no hidden fees." - "No exaggerated claims, straightforward information."
Professionalism	Instructor and staff with customer-focused expertise	- "Teachers and staff are well-trained, ensuring a high-quality experience." - "Non-intrusive marketing." - "Being well-prepared and dedicated in class indirectly contributes to marketing." - "Teachers support students with authenticity, not sales tactics." - "High standards in teaching and service quality."
Authenticity	Staying true to yoga values	- "We do not practice trends, we practice truth." - "Sincerity and authenticity, non-commercial interactions." - "Conflict between marketing & mindfulness – must stay authentic." - "Self-awareness about product, avoid exaggerated claims." - "Marketing must align with yoga's true essence." - "Mindful marketing = mindfulness, authenticity, sustainability."
Sense of Community	Relationship & bonding	- "Strong emphasis on relationships between instructors, students, and staff." - "Free workshops, donation-based meditation & sound therapy." - "Community ensures long-term engagement." - "Encourages deep student connections." - "Community events, outdoor activities." - "Internal community-building & student care groups."
Sustainability	Environmental & ethical practices	- "Eco-friendly values, green environment." - "Sustainable investment, not profit-first." - "Sustainability linked to peaceful environments." - "Focus on mental and emotional well-being for long-term." - "Eco-friendly materials, mindful consumption." - "Long-term growth without quick-profit strategies."
Peaceful Environment	Stress-free physical space	- "Quiet, clean, energy-calming space with greenery and soft music." - "Mindfulness practices integrated into classes." - "Peaceful environment critical for yoga spaces." - "Calm, stress-free learning atmosphere."

Selective coding (Mindful marketing components)	Axial coding	Open coding / Core quotes from respondents
		- "Studio space designed for relaxation and mindfulness."
Customer-centric Value	Individualized attention & care	- "Students fill out health info forms for customized lesson plans." - "Matching students with suitable classes are key for retention." - "Marketing should target right audience, not mass." - "Focus on solving student problems, not profit." - "Personalized care, authenticity in teaching." - "Listening and understanding true customer needs."
Holistic Program	Integrated wellness	- "Classes cover mental, emotional, and physical well-being." - "Various wellness-focused courses, sound healing." - "Holistic programs add value but not always core." - "Well-rounded growth approach." - "Therapeutic yoga, mindfulness practices."