



## Food, Accommodation, Tourist Attraction, Transportation and Shopping Impacting Chinese Tourists' Satisfaction in Visiting Thailand

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### Abstract

This study aimed at exploring how food, accommodation, tourist attraction in terms of scenic spot and entertainment, transportation and shopping impacting Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. The survey questionnaire was applied for collecting the primary data. The sample size was 200 Chinese tourists who had visited Thailand. The majority of respondents were female (129 people with 64.5%) with 19-30 years of age (93 people accounting for 46.5%). They were company employees (65 people of 32.5%) and earned an average monthly income less than 4,000 CNY (72 people with 36%). Most of them completed bachelor's degree (104 people with 52%) and had visited Thailand once (143 people with 71.5%) with group tour (128 people with 64%). Based on the findings, tourist attraction in terms of scenic spot and shopping influenced Chinese tourists' satisfaction while visiting Thailand at the significant level of .05 while food, accommodation, tourist attraction in terms of entertainment and shopping had no impact.

**Keywords:** Food, Accommodation, Tourist Attraction, Transportation, Shopping, Tourists' Satisfaction

### 1. Introduction

Overview of China-Thailand Relations (2011) posted in Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of Thailand presented that Thailand was one of the first countries to gain support and approve Chinese citizens to travel from the Chinese government. In recent years, the exchanges and cooperation between Thailand and China had continued to prosper in many fields, including economics, culture, education and military. Thailand was a multicultural and fascinating tropical country that attracts more and more Chinese tourists (Chetanont, 2015). According to the Tourism Statistic of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand (2018), the number of Chinese tourists traveling to Thailand increased from 4.63 million in 2014 to 7.98 million in 2015 which was accounting for 72.31% of a raise. In recent years, this data has been continuously increasing, the number of Chinese tourists reached 8.76 million in 2016 and 9.81 million in 2017 respectively. According to the National Statistical Office (2019), the largest tourism market for Thailand was China. In other words, Chinese tourists contributed one-third of the total number of travelers to Thailand. Chinese tourists were also the largest contributor to the lubricate tourism industry of Thailand, with more than 580 billion baht generated from more than 10.54 million Chinese tourists in 2018 (National Statistical Office, 2019). There were many researchers studying the main factors that impact the satisfaction of tourists visiting Thailand. Baguisi, Aung, Yu, Linn and Oo (2015) found that there was a significant difference of factors affecting the level of satisfaction of the tourists from 2015 and tourists for more than 10 years ago considering cleanliness and sanitation in various places in Thailand. Previous research by Choibamroong (2017) illustrated that it is necessary to take the tourists' income into consideration in order to enhance the guideline for promoting tourism in Thailand. The research found that it was crucial for government, organizations and business owners to provide Chinese language service to assist Chinese tourists for example, Chinese signs and leaflets should be provided at any tourist attraction. Furthermore, according to Xu, Cui, Ballantyne and Packer (2013), Thailand's rich natural tourist attractions tended to be one of the main factors that lure Chinese tourists. There were several popular natural tourist attractions in Thailand such as the Grand Palace, Wat Phra Kaew, Doi Suthep, Wat Pho and Ayutthaya Historical Park, etc (Iverson, 2017).

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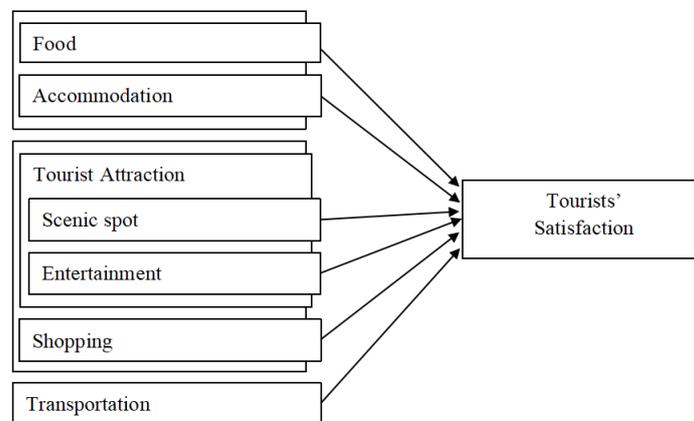


It can be said that there are so many factors impacting Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. If visitors are satisfied with local food, accommodation and transportation system, it will improve the quality of the overall travel experience (Nagy & Carr, 2018; Page & Lumsdon, 2004). Previous research (Xu, Cui, & Ballantyne, 2013) proved that Thailand had rich attractions that were often one of the reasons for Chinese tourists want to revisit. Shopping was also an essential part of the trip. Souvenirs were not only considered as the evidence of travel but also were used to maintain the tourist's social relationships with others (Kim & Littrell, 2001). Tourists' destination satisfaction was a powerful indicator of their revisiting and spreading destinations (Christina, Qing, & Hai, 2008).

Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a survey on Chinese tourists' satisfaction in Thailand focused on the experience and feedback of food, accommodation, tourist attraction, transportation and shopping during their stay in Thailand. Government and travel companies should explore the existing problems and put forward corresponding countermeasures, so as to firmly grasp the potential Chinese tourists in the tourism sector. This is the essential action to promote the sustainable development of Thai tourism. At the same time, it will play a significant role in promoting cultural exchanges, business cooperation and friendly exchanges between Thailand and China.

## 2. Objectives

The objective of this study was to investigate factors impacting Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. The concerned factors were food and accommodation service, tourist attraction in terms of scenic spot and entertainment, shopping as in activities, and transportation service. The conceptual framework of the study was illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

## 3. Methodology

The researcher adopted the technique of quantitative approach to study the factors impacting Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. The questionnaire was used as a survey tool, constructed by using relevant theories and previous research methods, which was approved by three professionals.

### 3.1 Population and Sample Selection

Selected responders of this research were Chinese tourists who had experienced in visiting Thailand, regardless of their genders, ages, occupations, incomes and educational background. After conducting a pilot with 40 respondents and inputting the data to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), the partial  $R^2$  was estimated. Then G\*Power version 3.1.9.4 (Erdfelder, Faul, & Buchner, 1996) was used to compute the sample size of the study. Based on the power ( $1-\beta$ ) of 0.95, alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.05, test predictor number of 6, effect size of 0.1128422, and partial  $R^2$  of 0.1014, the result was 192. Then, the total sample size of 200 was implemented for the field survey.

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The target sample was Chinese tourists who had visited Thailand and was willing to cooperate with the researcher in answering the questionnaire. The survey method was convenience sampling selection by sending the online questionnaire to Chinese tourists. The online survey questionnaires with a screening question were distributed to the target sample by posting on WJX and Mafengwo for collecting data. WJX was one of the famous Chinese websites for collecting data online (Li, 2016). Mafengwo was one of the famous websites for sharing travel information by whom traveled all over the world (China Webmaster, 2019).

### 3.2 Research Instrument

The research instrument of this study was the qualified closed-end-questionnaire which was derived from previous studies (Sim, 2019; Charmayne, 2013; Vanessa, Prateep, & Diyah, 2011; Adeboye, 2012; Truonga & Shimizu, 2017; Correia & Kozak, 2016) and was passed content validity by three experts. The questionnaire was translated into Chinese therefore the respondents can clearly understand and answer the questions accurately.

There were 40 sets of the questionnaires that were applied for the pilot test. The results of reliability test revealed that Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.903-0.945 was acceptable. In addition, the results from 200 sets of questionnaires in the field survey were ranging between 0.850-0.909, and all data could be used for further analysis (Nunnally, 1978).

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Summary of Demographic Data

According to the table 1, the sample characteristics from the filed survey revealed that most of respondents were female (64.5%). They were mostly in the range between 19 - 30 years old (46.5%). More than half of them completed a bachelor's degree (52%). Moreover, one-third of the respondents were company employees (32.5%) and their monthly income was less than 4,000 CNY (36%). Additionally, most of the respondents in this survey had visited Thailand once (71.5%) through the group tour (64%).

**Table1** Demographic Profile of Respondents (n=200)

	Description	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	Male	71	35.5
	Female	129	64.5
<b>Age</b>	Under 18 years old	2	1.0
	19-30 years old	93	46.5
	31-40 years old	76	38.0
	41-50 years old	17	8.5
	51-60 years old	9	4.5
	Over 60 years old	3	1.5
<b>Education</b>	Middle school & below	5	2.5
	High school/vocational	17	8.5
	College's degree	40	20.0
	Bachelor's degree	104	52.0
	Master's degree	29	14.5
	Doctor's degree	5	2.5
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	43	21.5
	Government employee	34	17.0
	Company employee	65	32.5
	Self-employee	16	8.0
	Retiree	14	7.0
	Other	28	14.0
	<b>Monthly income</b>	Below 4,000 CNY	72
4,000-6,000 CNY		50	25.0
6,001-10,000 CNY		53	26.5



	Description	Frequency	Percent
<b>Times of visiting Thailand</b>	Above 10,000 CNY	25	12.5
	Only 1 time	143	71.5
	2 times	25	12.5
	3 times	9	4.5
	More than 3 times	23	11.5
<b>Type of traveling</b>	Group tour	128	64.0
	Independent travel	72	36.0

#### 4.2 Results of Hypothesis Testing

According to Table 2, the results of multiple regression analysis presented that the factors impacting Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand with significant level at .05 were tourist attraction in terms of scenic spot (sig = .005) and shopping (sig = .000). In addition, the results showed that shopping ( $\beta = .386$ ) accounted for the strongest component impacting Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand, followed by tourist attraction in terms of scenic spot ( $\beta = .218$ ). These two factors accounted for 73.8% of the influential factors toward Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. Another 26.2% were factors from other variables that will not be discussed in this research. On the other hand, food (sig = .549), accommodation (sig = .052), entertainment (sig = .057), and transportation (sig = .538) did not impact Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand.

**Table 2** The Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	Tourists' Satisfaction						
	S.E.	B	$\beta$	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	.151	.630	-	4.174	.000	-	-
Food	.059	.035	.040	.600	.549	.312	3.203
Accommodation	.067	.130	.143	1.951	.052	.253	3.955
Tourist Attraction							
- Scenic spot	.074	.213	.218	2.867	.005*	.236	4.246
- Entertainment	.063	.121	.130	1.911	.057	.294	3.402
Transportation	.064	.028	.034	.616	.538	.441	2.266
Shopping	.057	.333	.386	5.806	.000*	.307	3.262

$R^2 = .738$ ,  $F = 90.722$ ,  $*p < .05$

In addition, variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance was used for multicollinearity analysis. Multicollinearity was the method to determine multiple correlations among independent variables and uncorrelated assumption of independent variables. Tolerance value must be above .2 (Miles & Shevlin, 2001), while VIF value must be below 5 (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2013). From the Table 1, VIF values of this study were 2.266 - 4.246 which were below 5 and the tolerance values ranged between .236 - .441 which were above .2. Therefore, multicollinearity problem did not exist in this research.

#### 4.3 Discussion

Hypothesis 1: This hypothesis included food and accommodation service aspect.

There was an impact of food on Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. The results showed that there was no impact of food on Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. This might due to personal factors such as food preferences, etc. Dindyal (2003) stated that cultural factor was the foundation of our daily food choice and global consumption. He also mentioned that different cultures encouraged or disapproved people in the same group to eat or not to eat certain food. In addition, the previous study found that it was necessary to import food or change the taste meet the preference of the major tourists group (Nield, Kozak, & LeGrys, 2000). The result was contrasted with the study since more and more tourists preferred food tourism in which food was a main motivation for travelers to choose their destinations (Ellis et al, 2018).



There was an impact of accommodation on Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. The research results showed that there was no impact of accommodation on Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. This hypothesis was unsubstantiated in the view of the fact that two-third of the respondents in this study were with group tours. Choibamroong (2017) found that some Chinese tourists with group tours did not pay much attention and satisfaction on accommodation because the accommodation had already been covered in the travel price offered by travel agencies.

Hypothesis 2: There were there items in this activities aspect.

There was an impact of tourist attraction in terms of scenic spot on Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand which was verified in this research. Most of the respondents agreed that the variety of natural resources and cultural heritages of Thailand impacted their satisfaction level. The result confirmed the previous study proved that Thailand owned abundant natural attractions like island, seashore, mountains and other natural scenic spots which considered as the primary attractions for Chinese tourists to visit and revisit (Xu, Cui, & Ballantyne, 2013). Vanessa, Prateep and Diyah (2011) demonstrated in the study that tourists traveling to Thailand were fond of the tourist attractions with cultural heritages.

There was also an impact of tourist attraction in terms of entertainment on Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. However, the research showed that there was no impact of tourist attraction in terms of entertainment on Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. In short, this hypothesis was unsupported. This might be because most of the respondents in this study were 64.5% female, who did not considered Thai boxing and ladyboy cabaret show as a must-see of Thai tourism. The result was contrasted with the previous study which showed that the ladyboy cabaret show was an entertainment activity suited for the whole family which was guaranteed by many viewers on many tourism websites (Maneenetr, Tran, & Sangsrirueang, 2014). Moreover, the result was contrasted with the previous study that Thai boxing was a sport worthy of being a cultural experience even if you were not interested in sports (Gray & Ridout, 2001)

There was an impact of shopping on Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. The research showed that there was an impact of shopping on Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. For the reason that Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand, was one of the world's premier shopping hub including mega-malls and unique outdoor markets. The variety of shopping experiences in Bangkok went far beyond a stroll in a mall. Shopping in Bangkok was a day-and-night activity that ran parallel with the best in the West, while also giving a flavor of the cultural uniqueness of the East (Hauglann, 2019). In addition, most of the respondents agreed that goods were variety and distinctive, and its price was reasonable. The result of this study confirmed the previous study of Correia and Kozak (2016) which revealed that shopping as an essential tourist activity was an important part of the travel experience. The results also aligned with the research of Xu and McGehee (2012) in which Chinese tourists were well known for their purchasing power in the global travel market.

Hypothesis 3: There was an impact of transportation on Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. The research showed that there was no impact of transportation on Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. This was because respondents might already developed and accepted the idea that the traffic in Thailand was congested. However, a report published by Marks (2019) on Bangkok Post claimed that Thailand was one of the world's most traffic congested countries. The problem was further exacerbated by reduced road space due to the ongoing construction of many mass-transit projects. Consequently, it is a challenge to get around the city during rush hours (Marks, 2019). The result was contrasted with the previous study of Page and Lumsdon (2004), they argued that the transportation system of tourist destinations would affect the travel experience of the tourists.

## 5. Conclusion

Regarding the result, tourist attraction in terms of scenic spot had the greatest impact on Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. Thailand should take Buddhist culture as the focus of scenic spot development to realize the specialization of its tourism resources. It was necessary to expand online publicity and to strengthen cooperation among tourism companies, which could enlarge the visibility rate



and attract more tourists. Moreover, scenic spot should actively apply for international conferences and exhibitions on the basis of attracting general tourists, which could attract some high-level tourists. The second significant factor influencing Chinese tourists' satisfaction to visit Thailand was shopping. It can be inferred that shopping is a crucial part of travel experience. To specify, travelers not only keep souvenirs as trace of their journey but also use them as tools to maintain social relations with others. Thailand should pay attention on tourism shopping, regulate the tourism shopping market, increase the development of souvenirs, provide more types of tourism products with higher quality, and conduct targeted promotions as well as marketing activities. For example, public of prices should be required in the shopping malls or small vendors, and receipts or invoices should also be required after the shopping. Moreover, the merchants should show the production process of the products to the tourists so that the tourists could gain a better understanding of the products and generate a purchasing tendency. For instance, the process of making tropical dried fruits can guarantee the tourists that those dried fruits are made with fresh fruits and the production process is clean and hygienic, so the tourists can rest assured to buy.

The research study was conducted in the basis of Chinese who had traveled to Thailand. Therefore, there would be more research opportunities in the future and more extensive research on Thailand tourism should target tourists from different countries to obtain more reliable results. Those who are interested in this topic might compare the development of the Chinese tourism market in Thailand with other Southeast Asian countries by extracting the advantages and disadvantages of competition among these countries. Moreover, the researchers might add expectation of destinations as independent factors which might be a crucial factor that influence Chinese tourists' satisfaction in visiting Thailand. Also, they can investigate and compare the results based on the different levels of tourists' expectations. Finally, for the next research methodology, the study of tourists' satisfaction should be evaluate through the use of importance-performance analysis (IPA) (Martilla & James, 1977). IPA generates four different recommendations that are a combination of importance and performance. Tourism related departments can clearly capture a) which sector needs to maintain the good work, b) which sector is possible overkill, c) which sector contributes low priority, d) which sector needs to attention. They can maintain, limit, improve and strengthen their products or services in a targeted manner, which is an effective and efficient way to improve tourists' satisfaction.

## 6. Acknowledgments

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