The Personal Characteristics and Satisfaction of Chinese Tourists: Evident of Chinatown in Bangkok

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Abstract

This research aimed to (1) study the satisfaction of the Chinese tourists and (2) compare the satisfaction level towards Chinatown in Bangkok based on personal characteristics of Chinese tourists. The study used a quantitative approach, asking 400 samples that were selected by convenient sampling. The information was then analyzed using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, T-Test, and One-way ANOVA (F-test). The study found that the overall and by-category satisfaction of the Chinese tourists were high, with overall average score being 3.78, the average score of food and drink restaurants being 3.90, the average score of amenities was 3.85, the average score of security was 3.76, and the averages score of service was 3.62. Comparison of the demographic data revealed that gender difference affected the satisfaction level towards Chinatown in Bangkok, but only regarding tourism and security. There was no conclusive data for confirmation of other hypotheses with a statistical significance of 0.05.

Keywords: Satisfaction; Chinese Tourists; Chinatown; Bangkok

Introduction

However, the government expected economic stimulation and thus the Thai government fully reopened the country on 1 May 2022, canceled the Test & Go system and allowed tourists that had received full vaccination to travel, in an expectation that such relaxation in pandemic policies would attract more tourists, and generate revenue and revitalize the economy with tourism once again (BBC News Thai, 2022). Since the reopen, Thailand's tourism gradually recovered back to pre-pandemic levels. The information from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports. (2021-2023) revealed that 29 million tourists visited Thailand, with Chinese tourists being the second-most numerous of all the tourists to Thailand.

A popular destination among the Chinese tourists was Thailand and Bangkok ranked fifth among the most popular tourist destination in 2023 according to Airbnb (Bangkokbiznews, 2023). Furthermore, Bangkok's diversity in creativity, culture, ethnicity and religious faith gave the city a well-blended mix of world cultures. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports engaged in extensive marketing efforts to stimulate visits, with Chinese tourists being one of the targets. Chinese tourists entering Thailand, especially during the 2023 Lunar New Year, as the Thai tourism authorities promoted the festivals in Bangkok as the longtime top revenue generator since before the pandemic. And "Yaowarat" as the location of many reputable temples and shrines that served as centers of many religious faiths, and delicious food from restaurants to street foods which kept the Yaowarat area bustling and generated enormous income during the Lunar New Year for Bangkok.

Regarding the academic study that lately focused on development of quality and efficiency of the tourist attractions, Yaowarat was also one of the targets for study. Mitgosoom (2020)'s study on Yaowarat's tourist attraction image survey from the view of foreign tourists that aimed to analyze the components of tourist attractions, structure and component of emotion, identity, and guideline for tourist attraction improvement in Yaowarat, Bangkok. The aforementioned reasons led to the study the Chinese tourists' satisfaction towards Chinatown in Bangkok to gain information that can contribute to tourism promotion as mentioned, and propose a satisfaction level comparison based on the personal characteristics of the Chinese tourists to understand the demographic factors that were used as major variables. The information obtained in this study would assist the policymakers, tourism entrepreneurs, and local entrepreneurs in Chinatown in Bangkok in applying their marketing strategy and setting the goal.

Objective

This study has the following objectives: (1) Examine the Chinese tourists' satisfaction towards Chinatown in Bangkok, and (2) Compare the satisfaction level based on personal characteristics of the Chinese tourists.

Scope of Research

The content analysis scope: examine the behavior and satisfaction of the tourists. The area scope was Chinatown in Bangkok. The population scope was Chinese tourists in Chinatown in Bangkok. The time scope was between March and April 2023.

Literature reviews

Thailand tourist destination: Chinatown in Bangkok

Thailand is another successful tourist attraction in ASEAN, with the continuously growing number and spending of tourists since the post-pandemic reopening in 2022 (Ministry of Tourism and Sports. 2023). Thailand has a diversity in tourist attractions, being dubbed as "A City That Never Sleep" (National Geographic, 2021), and ranked fifth among the most popular tourist destination in 2023 according to Airbnb (Bangkokbiznews, 2023). Yaowarat Road or "Chinatown in Bangkok" is one of Bangkok's tourist attractions as a Chinese community, business and financial district brimming with banks, gold shops, restaurants and other shops, etc. At night, Yaowarat Road would turn from the economic road into one of the longest food streets full of food all along both sides of the street (Mitgosoom, 2020). Yaowarat Road was built and completed in 1900 following a decree by King Rama V, and due to the curvy characteristic, some people said the road looked like a dragon (Chinatownyaowarach, 2023).

Chinese tourisms in Thailand.

Ministry of Tourism and Sports. (2023) reported that the number of Chinese tourists in 2023 was 3,521,095, ranking second or 12.0% of all the tourists to Thailand (the largest group was Malaysian, 16.3%), and therefore Chinese tourists could freely travel, and Thailand was one of their main destinations. Regarding tourism promotion among Chinese tourists thus a huge number of Chinese tourists flocked into Thailand on flights from the People's Republic of China to Thailand (Ruiqiu, 2020). On the Thailand's side, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports encouraged visits by Chinese Tourists by hosting and promoting the 2023 Lunar New Year in Bangkok that had always seen the highest revenue and number of tourists during Lunar New Years, especially Yaowarat (Bangkokbiznews, 2023).

Tourism Behaviors.

Behavioral studies mentioned individual expression as either tangible by action or interaction with the surrounding environment, and intangible such as the inner behavior. Tourist behavior means individual expression related to consumption of product and service, as well as the decision process that affected the physical and mental expression of the tourists (Meesomya, 2017). The factors in tourist expression were both internal and external or surrounding environment, to which the tourists would adapt. The tourist behavior study was a retroactive factor for effective tourism area management (Juntavong, 2022). Regarding the behavioral study on the foreign tourists usually supported the reasons to visit a tourist attraction, as the tourists did homework about the destination through familiar sources, and then planned the trip in terms of transportation, duration, companion, and budget (Deawvanich, 2020).

Personal Factors and Satisfaction with Tourist Attractions

Demographic factors that explained individual characteristics such as age, gender, family size, marital status, education, profession and income, were commonly used for consumer or tourist grouping for understanding and management to achieve marketing goals (Kotler, 1988; and Kotler et al., 2018). Juntavong (2022) found that interpretation would lead to different perception and comparison based on experience and event. Regarding tourism, different demographic factors such as age, gender, education, profession and monthly income led to different needs (Meesomya, 2017; Deawvanich, 2020; and Ruiqiu, 2020). Demographic factors were studied to connect to the consumption behavior and satisfaction of tourists to benefit future tourism development that cater more to the expectation of the target demographic groups (Meesomya, 2017). This study used tourist satisfaction factors improved from the works of Danni (2022); Juntavong (2022) through factors such as (1) satisfaction towards

tourism security; (2) satisfaction towards tourism amenities; (3) satisfaction towards food and drink restaurants; and (4) satisfaction towards service. The study set forth hypotheses as follows:

H1: Different gender of the Chinese tourists would lead to different satisfaction levels toward Chinatown in Bangkok.
H2: Different age of the Chinese tourists would lead to different satisfaction levels toward Chinatown in Bangkok.
H3: Different education of the Chinese tourists would lead to different satisfaction levels toward Chinatown in Bangkok.
H4: Different profession of the Chinese tourists would lead to different satisfaction levels toward Chinatown in Bangkok.
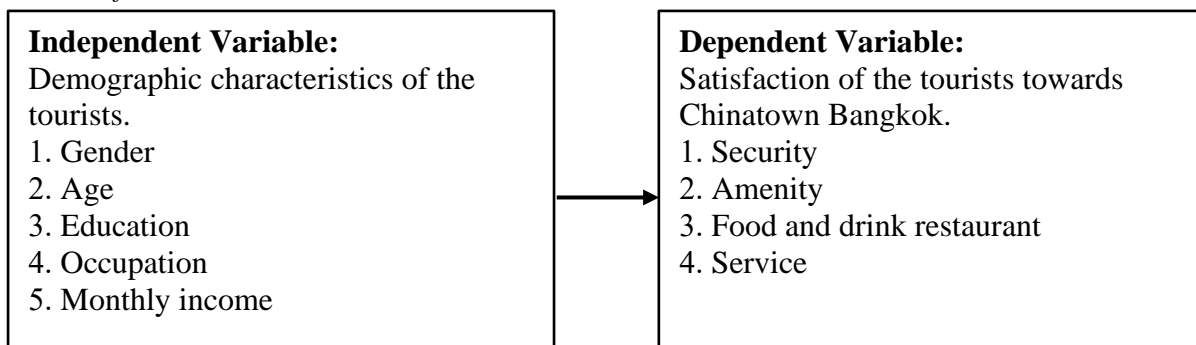*H5: Different monthly income level of the Chinese tourists would lead to different satisfaction levels toward Chinatown in Bangkok.*

Research framework

The literature review led to a summary of research scope as follows:

Figure 1
Research framework

| **Independent Variable:** Demographic characteristics of the tourists. 1. Gender 2. Age 3. Education 4. Occupation 5. Monthly income | → | **Dependent Variable:** Satisfaction of the tourists towards Chinatown Bangkok. 1. Security 2. Amenity 3. Food and drink restaurant 4. Service |

Methodology

Population and sampling design

The population in this study were Chinese tourists that visited Chinatown in Bangkok, of the population, 400 were selected by convenience sampling as a sample group. It was found that the respondents had the following characteristics:

Figure 2
The profile of the sampled Chinese tourist that visited Chinatown in Bangkok (n=400).

Gender   Age   Education

Occupation   Monthly Income
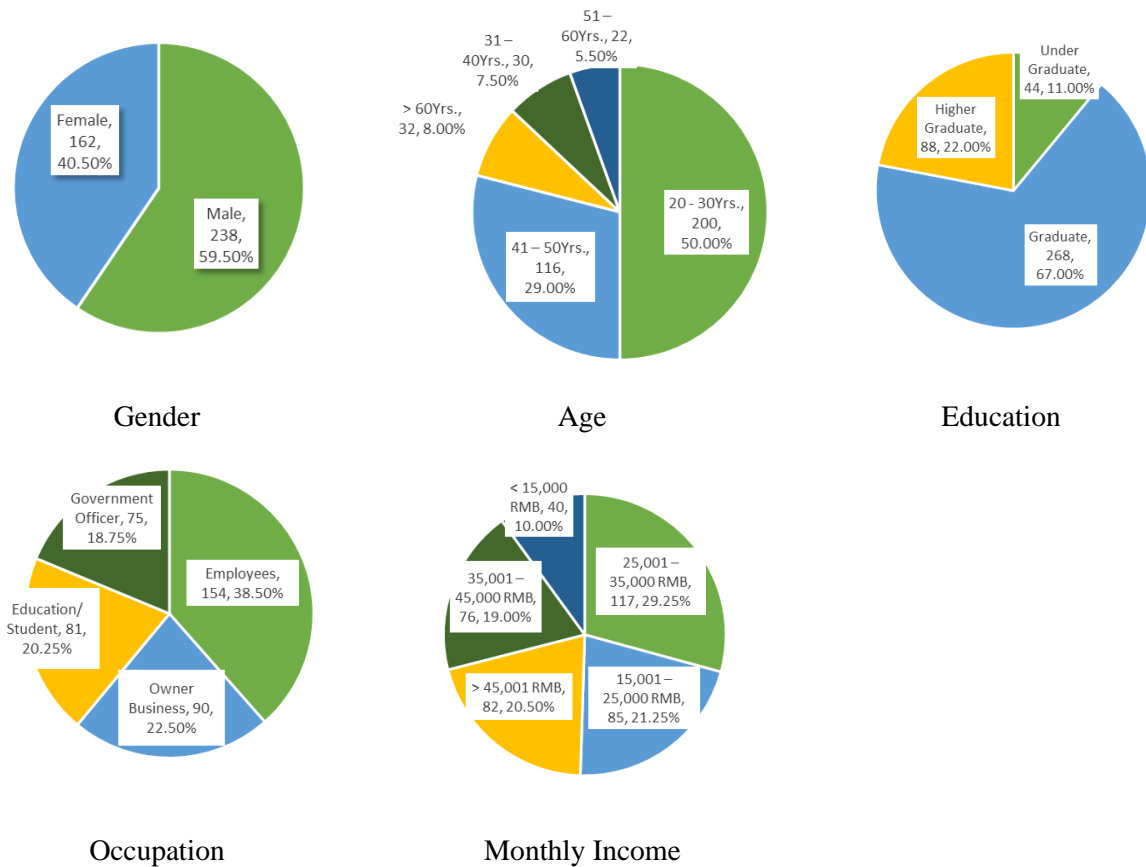
Examination of the general characteristics of the respondents revealed that most of the tourists were male (238 respondents or 59.5%), aged between 20 and 30 year (200 respondents or 50%), followed by 41 and 50 years (116 respondents or 29.0%), had a bachelor's degree (268 respondents or 67.0%) were freelancers (154 respondents or 38.5%), followed by owning a business (90 respondents or 22.5%), earning between 25,001 and 135,000 RMB (117 respondents or 29.3%) followed by 15,001-25,000 RMB (85 respondents or 21.3%).

Measures and Data collection.

The survey form was in Mandarin with the Index of item objective congruence (IOC) score being over 0.67 after examined thoroughly by experts. The tryout revealed that Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was less than 1, and thus the survey was sufficiently reliable for the actual use. Data collection was done by distributing the survey form to the sample group in Chinatown in Bangkok.

Data analysis approach

The study used descriptive statistics to analyze demographic factor such as gender, age, education, monthly income, profession, and tourist behavior such as companion, number of visits, source of information, average expense per trip and average duration of trip. Inferential statistics, t-Test, and One Way ANOVA (f-Test) were likewise used in this part.

Results

To following the research objectives: (1) Examine the Chinese tourists' satisfaction towards Chinatown in Bangkok, and (2) Compare the satisfaction level based on personal characteristics of the Chinese tourists. The topics following by;

1. Population and sampling (Chinese' Tourists) behavior of visiting Chinatown in Bangkok.

The study found that statistical data that explained the number and percentage of tourist behavior was as follows:

Figure 3
Traveling companion
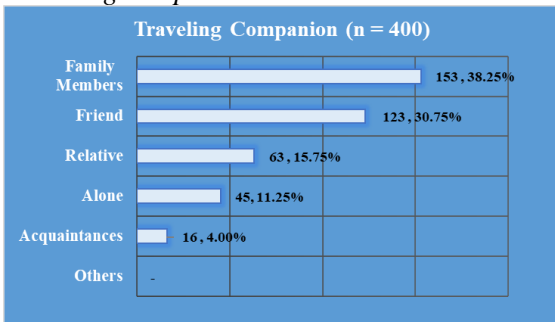
Regarding the travel companion, most came with father, mother, or siblings, (153 respondents, or 38.3%), followed by friends (123 respondents, or 30.8%), relatives (63 respondents, or 15.8%), alone (45 respondents, or 11%), and finally with general acquaintances (16 respondents or 4.0%)

Figure 4
*Traveling to Chinatown Thailand on average Time/year*
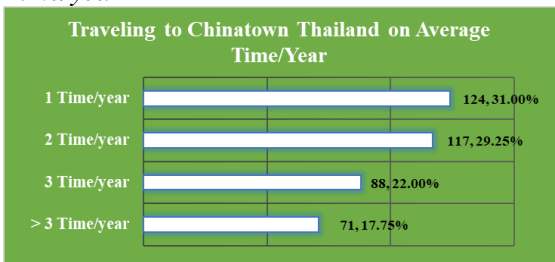
Regarding the number of times respondents traveled to Chinatown, Bangkok, most of the tourists came once per year (124 respondents, or 31.0%), followed by 2 times per year (117 respondents, or 29.3%), 3 times per year (88 respondents, or 22.0%), and finally more than 3 times per year (71 respondents, or 17.8%).

Figure 5
Average expense/ Time (Thai Bath)
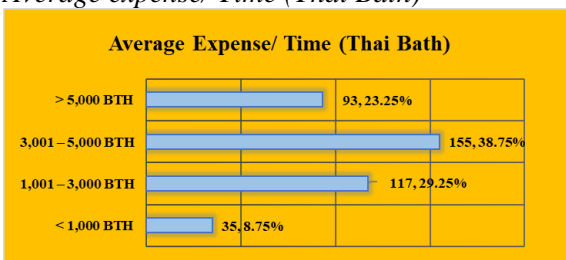
Regarding expenses (per visit), most of the tourists spent 3,001-5,000 baht (155 respondents or 38.8%), followed by 1,001-3,000 baht (117 respondents or 29. %), over 5,000 baht (93 respondents, or 23.3%), and finally less than or equal to 1,000 Baht (35 respondents, or 8.8%)

Figure 6
Source of Travel information.
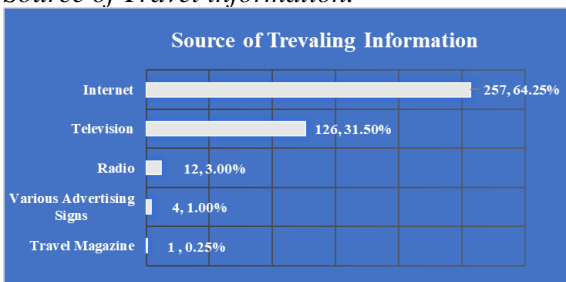
Regarding the information source from which the respondents received information about tourism in Chinatown in Bangkok, most of the tourist's gained information from the Internet media (257 respondents or 64.3%), followed by television (126 respondents or 31.5%), followed by radio (12 respondents, or 3.0%), other media include billboards from various sources (4 respondents, or 3.0%). 1.0%, and finally travel magazines (1 respondent, or 0.3%)

Figure 7
Average time spending/ visit (Hr.)
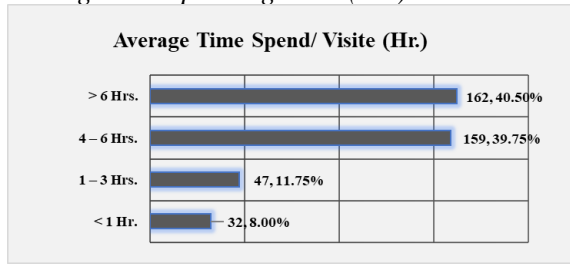
Regarding the average time spending/ visit, most respondents spent > 6 hours (162 respondents, 40.5%), followed by 4-6 hours (159 respondents, or 39.8 %), 1-3 hour, (47 respondents, or 11.8%) and finally less than or equal to 1 hour, (32 respondents, or 8.0%).

2. Examine the Chinese tourists' satisfaction towards Chinatown in Bangkok.
Descriptive statistics regarding the satisfaction level of Chinese Tourists towards

Table 1
Satisfaction Level of Chinese Tourists Towards Chinatown in Bangkok.

	Mean	S.D"	Satisfaction
Security			
1. Having security guards in Chinatown in Bangkok	3.96	1.07	High
2. There is a warning sign to be careful in the area.	3.35	1.10	Moderate
3. The parking lot has staff for security and facilitation	4.18	0.79	High
4. Having emergency exit signs in the area	3.26	1.02	Moderate
5. Having first-aid service in the area	4.05	0.91	High
Overall satisfaction towards security	**3.76**	**0.51**	**High**
Amenity			
1. Access to various locations	3.30	1.06	Moderate
2. Having clean toilets in sufficient numbers	4.11	0.83	High
3. Having enough parking space	3.94	0.84	High
4. Having a Chinese-language service in the area	4.11	0.81	High
5. Having ATMs and foreign currency exchange counters	3.82	0.98	High
Overall satisfaction towards amenity	**3.85**	**0.48**	**High**
Food and Drink Restaurant			
1. Variety of products, foods, and drinks	4.23	0.83	Highest
2. The restaurant has enough seats.	3.83	0.78	High
3. Employees services in Chinese language.	3.90	0.91	High
4. Restaurants offer online ordering/booking services	3.70	0.87	High
5. Having souvenir stores with memorable Thai souvenirs	3.83	0.78	High
Overall satisfaction towards food/drink/restaurants	**3.90**	**0.51**	**High**
Service			
1. Willingness and readiness in providing polite service	3.90	0.95	High
2. Having payment channels such as Alipay or WeChat	4.23	0.73	Highest
3. Having guesthouse services in the area	3.84	0.94	High
4. Public transportation: buses, taxis, Tuk-tuks, etc.	3.37	0.88	Moderate
5. Opening and closing time of the shops and restaurants	2.77	1.16	Moderate
Overall satisfaction towards service	**3.62**	**0.43**	**High**
Overall satisfaction towards Chinatown in Bangkok	**3.78**	**0.32**	**High**

The study on the mean and standard deviation values of the respondents' satisfaction towards Chinatown in Bangkok found that overall and, in all aspects, the respondents were highly satisfied (Mean = 3.78, SD = 0.32). When considering each aspect, it was found that the respondents were highly satisfied with the store, food and beverage restaurants (Mean = 3.90, SD. = 0.51), followed by amenity (Mean = 3.85, SD. = 0.48), security (Mean = 3.76, SD. = 0.51), and finally service (Mean = 3.62, SD. = 0.43), respectively. Details on each aspect were:

Regarding satisfaction towards food and drink restaurant and shops, indicative factors were 1. Variety of products, foods, and drinks was given the highest rating (Mean = 4.23, SD. = 0.83), followed by 3. Chinese language services to Chinese tourists (Mean = 3.90, SD = 0.91), 2. The restaurant has enough seat and 5. having souvenir stores with memorable Thai souvenirs (Both were tied at Mean = 3.83, SD = 0.78). The least indicative factor was 4. having an online food ordering-reservation service from the restaurant (Mean = 3.70, SD. = 0.87). Regarding satisfaction towards amenities, the indicative factors that showed the high score were: 4. Having a Chinese-language service center in the area (Mean = 4.11, SD. = 0.81), followed by 2. Having clean toilets in sufficient numbers (Mean = 4.11, SD. = 0.83), 3. Having enough parking space (Mean = 3.94, SD. = 0.84), and 5. Having ATMs and foreign currency exchange counters (Mean = 3.82, SD. = 0.98). On the other hand, 1. Access to various locations (Mean = 3.30, SD. = 1.06) had a moderate score.

Regarding satisfaction towards security, indicative factors with high score were: 3. The parking lot has staff for security and facilitation (Mean = 4.18, SD. = 0.79), 5. Having first-aid service in the area (Mean = 4.05, SD. = 0.91), 1. Having security guards in Chinatown in Bangkok (Mean = 3.96, SD. = 1.07) 2. There is a warning sign to be careful in the area. (Mean = 3.35, SD. = 1.10) and 4. Having emergency exit signs in the area (Mean = 3.26, SD. = 1.02).

Regarding satisfaction towards service, indicative factors with high score were: 2. Having payment channels such as Alipay or WeChat (Mean = 4.23, SD. = 0.73), 1. Willingness and readiness in providing polite service (Mean = 3.90, SD. = 0.95) 3. Having guesthouse services in the area (Mean = 3.84, SD. = 0.94), 4. Public transportation such as buses, taxis, Tuk-tuks, etc. (Mean = 3.37, SD. = 0.88), 5. Opening and closing time of the shops and restaurants (Mean = 2.77, SD. = 1.16)

3. Compare the satisfaction level based on personal characteristics of the Chinese tourists (Hypothesis Test)

Result of the hypothesis test under this study is shown below:

Table 2
Hypothesis Test

Hypot.	Description	Result	Summary
H1	Different gender of the Chinese tourists would lead to different satisfaction levels toward Chinatown in Bangkok.	Safety factor (t-value = 3.80, Sig = 0.00*) while no statistical significance for others.	Supported
H2	Different age of the Chinese tourists would lead to different satisfaction levels toward Chinatown in Bangkok.	insufficient information for a conclusion with statistical significance	Rejected
H3	Different education of the Chinese tourists would lead to different satisfaction levels toward Chinatown in Bangkok.	insufficient information for a conclusion with statistical significance	Rejected
H4	Different profession of the Chinese tourists would lead to different satisfaction levels toward Chinatown in Bangkok.	insufficient information for a conclusion with statistical significance	Rejected
H5	Different monthly income level of the Chinese tourists would lead to different satisfaction levels toward Chinatown in Bangkok.	insufficient information for a conclusion with statistical significance	Rejected

According to the table, statistical significance of the gender of the Chinese tourists was sufficient that the difference in gender would lead to a different level of satisfaction towards security in Chinatown in Bangkok (Support H1).

Discussion

The result of this study was empirical data supporting the following discussions:

Objective 1: Study of behavior and satisfaction of Chinese tourists towards Chinatown in Bangkok found that the tourism behavior, it was found that most of the tourists traveled to Chinatown in Bangkok with their family members, followed by friends, visited Chinatown in Bangkok twice a year, spent 1,001-5,001 baht per trip, received information about tourism in Chinatown in Bangkok from the Internet, and took 4 hours to more than 6 hours per trip. There was a high level of satisfaction with the (1) store, food and beverage restaurants, (2) amenities, (3) security, and (4) service. It was found that currently Chinatown has become one of the most popular places for foreign tourists to visit as there were many guesthouses, therefore it is convenient regarding accommodation. In terms of location, it is considered very good, being located in the heart of the city near many important tourist attractions and It is also close to shopping areas. In addition, the charm of Chinatown that foreign tourists are interested in is its nightlife as Chinatown becomes a center of international restaurants, both regular shops and shops selling on the roadside, giving foreigners the opportunity to conveniently taste various Thai and Chinese foods. There are also many shops for listening to music, as well as trinket and service shops. Chinatown is thus considered one of the most popular hangout spots for foreign tourists in Bangkok, consistent with the research of Deawvanich (2020) which found that tourists mostly spent around 15-30% of their monthly income, and the Internet was the main source of information for the tourists. Maneesomya (2017) found that Yaowarat was the most popular street food attraction among the Chinese tourists, with the most popular dishes

being Pad Thai, coconut ice cream and Thai fruit due to their striking taste and image. The most important factors in the shops and food and drink restaurants were variety of products, foods, and drinks, followed by Chinese language services to Chinese tourists, sufficient seats in restaurants, having souvenir stores with memorable Thai souvenirs and having an online food ordering-reservation service from the restaurant. Maneesomya (2017) added that amenities should have Chinese language services to Chinese tourists, followed by having clean toilets in sufficient numbers, having enough parking space, having ATMs and foreign currency exchange counters, having first-aid service in the area, having security service in Chinatown in Bangkok, and having payment channels such as Alipay or WeChat. This suggestion concurred with studies on Yaowarat tourism area management by Juntavong (2022); Mitgosoom (2020) and Meesomya (2017).

Other factors that only had moderate scores and were in need of improvement were access to various locations, effective public transportation, opening hours of shops, food and drink restaurants, and having caution signs and emergency exit signs in the area, which concurred with Mitgosoom (2020) that concluded the study on the development of tourism attraction image as there must be a need to improve the image from components of the tourist attraction, along with structural and emotional components, and development of Chinatown in Bangkok's image.

Objective 2: Regarding the study to compare satisfaction levels based on the characteristics of Chinese tourists, it was found that Chinese tourists of different genders had a different level of satisfaction towards traveling to Chinatown in Bangkok. This is because Chinatown is considered a foreign place for Chinese tourists with both daytime tours and nighttime tours and most tourists tend to visit at night more than during the day. As a result, female tourists tend to desire safety when traveling more than males, especially in the entertainment venues in Chinatown. This is consistent with the research of Ruiqiu (2020), and Juntavong (2022) that was attentive towards security, while other personal characteristics such as age, education, profession and monthly income did not have sufficient data to conclude that they affected tourism satisfaction with statistical significance, conflicting with Deawvanich (2020), which studied the factors affecting the satisfaction of foreign tourists visiting Koh Phangan, Surat Thani Province or Ruiqiu (2020) which found that only income affected the tourists' decision to visit Chiang Rai, and education and income did affect the Chinese tourists' decision.

Conclusion

The study on Chinese tourists' data was important because they were among the top categories of visitors to Thailand, and understanding their satisfaction was necessary for tourism development and satisfying the tourists that visited the area, which would be a good experience for the tourists and propagating their loyalty through the word-of-mouth. A study to understand satisfaction as tied to the tourists' personal characteristics, especially those in working age (20-50 years old), having a bachelor's degree, working as freelancers or owning businesses. Tourism in Yaowarat Road area had a striking culture, and the most popular dishes were coconut ice cream, Pad Thai and Thai fruit due to their taste and image that Chinese tourists knew and loved. Suggestions of this study were:

Suggestion

Policy suggestion: This study could be used by government agencies involved in tourism in Bangkok. Emphasis should be placed on safety for tourists, especially adding more officers to keep the tourists safe at night, and providing security guards at important points such as on the way to the restroom. between restaurants, etc.

Tourist management suggestion: Entrepreneurs involved in the tourism business in Chinatown in Bangkok should add more strategies for providing various facilities to tourists especially the establishment of Chinese language service centers in the area, creating a sufficient number of toilets for the number of tourists, and having enough parking lots, ATMs, and foreign exchange counters in Chinatown in Bangkok, and lastly a having a guideline for tourism promotion that caters to working-age and family tourists.

Chinatown in Bangkok business owner: Business operators of shops, food and beverage shops Should focus on providing services that cover the needs of tourists especially to create a variety of products and services, and hiring employees with Chinese language skills to provide Chinese language services to Chinese tourists, in addition to facilitating various aspects related to business, such as having a sufficient number of seats in the restaurant area, online booking/food ordering services, etc. In addition, the service provider should have a variety of payment methods such as Alipay, WeChat. Accommodation business operators should focus on motivating employees to provide services to tourists with good hospitality, set the format for the service, and provide guesthouse accommodation in the Chinatown in Bangkok.

Future research

Suggestions for future research about tourism in Chinatown in Bangkok were that the area remained a strategic tourism area in Thailand. As a spatial study, Chinatown in Bangkok remained an opportunity for future research into how to improve satisfaction of the Chinese tourists, how to manage the area to accommodate the Chinese tourists or tourists from other countries,

New Knowledge

This study presented knowledge that reflected a quantitative study result based on a survey of personal characteristics, behavior, and satisfaction with the sample group being Chinese tourists in the post-COVID-19 era.

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