

6th ISCAMR 2026

**International Students Conference on
Academic Multidisciplinary Research**

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

May 20, 2026

College of Hospitality Industry Management
Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Edited by

College of Hospitality Industry Management,
Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand

in collaboration with

Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and
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**6th International Students Conference on
Academic Multidisciplinary Research 2026**

Proceeding of International Students Conference

**College of Hospitality Industry Management
Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University**

May 20, 2026

Dear all delegates participating of the 6th International Students Conference on Academic Multidisciplinary 2026. In the era of globalization, spreading of modern knowledge and forms of education, the embracing of disruptive technology. The education has gone to online, onsite and on demand. Whilst, the quality of the country's human capital production has to be kept in higher standard. The students' international conference is vital to develop student competence on both knowledge and skills systematically.

I would like to express my gratitude to co-organizers; the institution both internal and international institutions from Thailand, Russia, China, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Philippines, Japan, India and Vietnam whose effort made the 6th international students conference possible. And of course, I would like to thank all participants for joining the conference presentation for outstanding and interesting researches. I want to say that the College of Hospitality Industry Management; Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University- a leading Rajabhat University of the country is very proud to be organizer of this marvelous conference for students.

To all delegates participating, I wish you success, finding new friends and colleagues, developing and advancement your Scientifics thoughts and research for your future endeavor.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Chutikan Sriviboon
President of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University
Bangkok Thailand

On behalf of Organizational Committee, I welcome you to the 6th International Students Conference on Academic Multi- Disciplinary 2026. Our conference enhances students an excellent opportunity to share their research experiences, practice their presentation skills in international environment with colleagues from various institutions on their subject interest. The ISCAMR 2026 has established on international basis. The peer-review process was conducted all submissions where total of 113 papers were accepted for presentation in the conference. Accepted papers were scheduled for presentation in 6 sections online.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all reviewers, chairs, and various committee of ISCAMR 2026 for their precious time and expertise. Lastly, I would like to demonstrate our sincere appreciation to everyone involved in making the joint conference a success. Million thanks to go to the organizing committee, co-institutions, special welcome speaker, reviewers, and participants, and of course, to all professors, lecturers who advise students distributing valuable research. It is our great pleasure to have you with us at the ISCAMR 2026. I hope new ties will be made and existing ones renewed and strengthened.

Asst.Prof.Dr. Weera Werasophon
Dean of College of Hospitality Industry Management
Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Dear colleagues and students, this is the first international students is a meaningful crystallization of initiatives collaboration among institutions towards practical cooperation in interdisciplinary studies. This would contribute to the participants strengthening in research, presentation skills, and augmented educational system internationally.

The characteristic of the education in the era of disruptive change at the speed of light, which led us to learn and develop our new generation in diverse disciplines to meet and discuss the phenomena, and recommend solutions. We should teach our students to be able to explore deeper by discussing problems across different disciplines as much as possible, and thence, grasping more profound suggestions and solutions.

The motivation of this conference is to encourage students get through individual expertise and point of view based on their discipline. As we gather from multiple fields of studies. I believe that we should be able expand the scope of our efforts and aim more challenging global contributions. I hope all participants of this conference will enjoy and get opportunities to enhance relationships of knowledge exchange.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tatiana Podolskaya
Head of International Economic Relationships Department,
South Institute of Management, Russian Presidential Academy
of National Economy and Public Administration

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A STUDY OF THE VALUES OF TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN CREATIVE TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN THAILAND

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Abstract

This study employed a quantitative research approach. Data were collected from a sample of 388 participants using an accidental sampling technique. The primary research instrument was a questionnaire, which was used to gather data for subsequent analysis. The statistical methods utilized included frequency and percentage for the demographic profile of the respondents. Additionally, a 5-point Likert scale was applied to evaluate the participants' opinions, with the data analyzed through mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.) to determine the perceived values of tourism activities in Thailand's creative tourism destinations.

The study revealed that the overall opinions of tourists regarding the value of creative tourism activities were at the highest level. The top three highest-rated values perceived by the tourists are as follows:

1. The creative tourism activities facilitated a deeper understanding and learning of local culture

2. The experiences gained from these activities have motivated me to plan a return visit in the future.

3. Tourists experienced warm hospitality and attentive care from the local hosts throughout the activities.

Keywords: Tourism Values Creative Tourism Activity Creative Tourism Destination

Introduction

Thailand's tourism industry has consistently maintained its global popularity, evidenced by its high international rankings, such as being ranked 3rd in the "Best Countries" category in 2022. (WorkpointToday, 2022) This success is attributed to the diversity of Thailand's tourism resources, which cater to the varied cultural needs of international travelers. Furthermore, robust policy support and marketing communications from organizations like the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) have effectively promoted Thailand's destinations worldwide.

Creative tourism is a strategic priority for Thailand. It focuses on utilizing cultural capital to develop participatory activities where tourists collaborate with local community members. This model caters to travelers seeking profound experiences through learning and engaging with local history, arts, culture, and lifestyles. According to Richards and Raymond (2000) And Department of Tourism. (2017.), creative tourism offers opportunities for self-development through connections with cultural heritage and local interactions. Consequently, the development of creative tourism activities must leverage local cultural assets to create authentic attractions that reflect unique identities and innovative content (Wongmanee & Wongsaroj, 2021).

Currently, numerous creative tourism sites exist across Thailand, such as Ban Na Ton Chan (Sukhothai) and Ban Nam Chiao (Trat). These sites integrate local culture into activities to provide multi-dimensional value and meaningful experiences. This study aims to evaluate the perceived value of these activities among tourists to provide a foundational database for communities and stakeholders to enhance and align their creative offerings with tourist expectations effectively.

Objective

To examine the levels of tourists' opinions regarding the values of tourism activities within creative tourism destinations in Thailand.

Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design. Data were collected via a questionnaire validated for content validity by three experts and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The sample consisted of 388 participants who had previously engaged in creative tourism activities in Thailand, selected through accidental sampling. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage for demographic profiles. A 5-point Likert Scale was utilized to measure opinion levels, analyzed through mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.).

Research Findings

1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

The majority of the 388 respondents were female, aged 21–30 years, followed by the 31–40 and 41–50 age groups, respectively. Most were single, earned a monthly income between 20,001 – 30,000 THB, and identified as Buddhist. Geographically, most resided in Bangkok and its vicinity. Professionally, the majority were private company employees or civil servants, followed by engineers, influencers, and service sector workers.

2. Analysis of Tourists' Opinions on the Value of Creative Tourism Activities in Thailand

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of Opinion Levels Toward the Value of Tourism Activities in Thai Creative Tourism Destinations.

Creative Tourism Values	Opinion Levels			
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Interpretation	No.
1. The creative tourism activities facilitated a deeper understanding and learning of local culture	4.92	.271	highest	1
2. Participating in these activities fostered a sense of active engagement with the local community.	4.87	.335	highest	4
3. The activities within the creative destination created lasting impressions and meaningful memories.	4.80	.444	highest	7
4. The creative tourism experience contributed to the promotion and preservation of the community's way of life.	4.83	.376	highest	6
5. I experienced warm hospitality and attentive care from the local hosts throughout the activities.	4.89	.338	highest	3
6. These activities enhanced the economic value and contributed to the sustainable income of the local community.	4.85	.357	highest	5
7. The experiences gained from these activities have motivated me to plan a return visit in the future.	4.91	.296	highest	2
8. The activities established a profound emotional and spiritual connection between myself, the destination, and the community.	4.85	.360	highest	5
Overall	4.54	.226	highest	

According to Table 1, the overall level of tourists' opinions toward the value of creative tourism activities in Thailand was at the highest level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.54). When considering individual items, it was found that all criteria received the highest level of agreement. The items are ranked by their mean scores from highest to lowest as follows:

1. The creative tourism activities facilitated a deeper understanding and learning of local culture. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.92)

2. The experiences gained from these activities have motivated me to plan a return visit in the future. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.63)

3. I experienced warm hospitality and attentive care from the local hosts throughout the activities. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.61)

4. Participating in these activities fostered a sense of active engagement with the local community. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.87)

5. These activities enhanced the economic value and contributed to the sustainable income of the local community. And The activities established a profound emotional and spiritual connection between myself, the destination, and the community. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.85)

6. The creative tourism experience contributed to the promotion and preservation of the community's way of life. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.83)

7. The activities within the creative destination created lasting impressions and meaningful memories. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.80)

Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that the most significant value perceived by tourists is the learning of local culture, which aligns with the core definition of creative tourism as a platform for cultural immersion and self-development (Department of Tourism, 2017). This resonates with Wongmanee, J. and Wongsaroj, R. (2021), who emphasize that creative activities must reflect the unique cultural identity of a site.

Furthermore, the results support the MEDITATE Model, which suggests that creative tourism management must enhance the capacity of stakeholders to translate cultural assets into concrete practices (Sangragsa et al., 2015). The preference for authenticity over artificial constructs found in this study also aligns with Thongkamnush, T. (2016), highlighting that tourism development should prioritize cultural and environmental preservation. Lastly, the findings are consistent with Muenpaopong, O. et al. (2025), who noted that tourists are drawn to creative tourism because of the hands-on learning experiences and the opportunity to understand the "spirit of the place."

Recommendations

1. Practical Recommendations: Local communities should prioritize the development of activities that authentically communicate cultural value, ensuring that tourists feel like an integral part of the local community rather than mere observers.

2. Future Research: Subsequent studies should categorize creative tourism by the specific type of cultural capital used or segment the analysis by Generations (e.g., Gen Z, Gen Y), as different age groups may have distinct needs and expectations regarding creative experiences.

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BIOMETRIC AUTHENTICATION FOR SEAMLESS PASSENGER TRAVEL IN THE AVIATION INDUSTRY

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of biometric authentication in enhancing seamless passenger travel within the aviation industry. The research focuses on passengers using biometric systems at international airports, particularly facial recognition, fingerprint scanning, and iris recognition technologies. A sample of 400 respondents was selected using a simple random sampling method, and data was collected through structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, including percentages, mean score ($\bar{x}$), and standard deviation (SD), were used to analyze the data.

The findings revealed that passengers generally reported high satisfaction with biometric authentication systems, particularly in terms of speed, convenience, and reduced waiting times. Facial recognition at check-in, security checkpoints, and boarding gates received the highest satisfaction scores. However, concerns regarding data privacy and system reliability were identified as key issues.

Overall, biometric authentication significantly improves passenger experience by enabling faster processing, reducing physical contact, and enhancing airport efficiency. The study suggests that further development in system reliability and data protection policies will strengthen passenger trust and support wider adoption in the aviation industry.

Keywords: Biometric Authentication, Aviation Industry, Passenger Experience, Airport Technology, Seamless Travel

Introduction

The global aviation industry has undergone rapid technological transformation, particularly in response to increasing passenger demand and the need for efficient airport operations (International Air Transport Association [IATA], 2024; Airports Council International [ACI], 2025). As air travel continues to grow, airports and airlines are adopting advanced technologies to improve passenger processing and overall travel experience (International Civil Aviation Organization [ICAO], 2024). One of the most significant innovations is biometric authentication, which enables seamless and contactless passenger journeys (SITA, 2023).

Biometric technology refers to the use of unique physical characteristics such as facial features, fingerprints, and iris patterns to verify identity (Thales Group, 2023). In aviation, biometric systems are increasingly implemented at key touchpoints, including check-in, security screening, immigration, and boarding (Amadeus IT Group, 2024). These technologies aim to reduce congestion, minimize waiting times, and enhance operational efficiency (Deloitte, 2024). Airports worldwide are adopting biometric solutions to meet rising passenger expectations for speed, convenience, and safety (World Economic Forum, 2024). Particularly

after the COVID-19 pandemic, contactless travel solutions have become essential (ICAO, 2024). Biometric authentication not only improves efficiency but also enhances security by reducing identity fraud and human error (SITA, 2023; Thales Group, 2023).

Therefore, this study aims to examine the impact of biometric authentication on passenger experience and identify key factors influencing satisfaction in the context of seamless air travel.

Objectives

1. To examine the level of passenger satisfaction with biometric authentication systems in airports.
2. To analyze the issues and challenges associated with biometric technology implementation in the aviation industry.

Literature & Theory

1. Biometric Authentication and Passenger Experience

Passenger experience is a key indicator of service quality in the aviation industry, particularly in the context of biometric authentication. It reflects how well airport services and technologies meet passenger expectations. Recent studies indicate that digital technologies, including biometric systems, significantly influence passenger experience by improving speed and reducing stress during travel. Passengers value efficiency, convenience, and reliability. The use of biometric authentication reduces manual processes and enhances the overall travel experience across airport touchpoints such as check-in, security screening, and boarding. However, passenger experience is also influenced by trust in technology, as well as concerns about privacy and data security.

Recent studies have highlighted the impact of biometric technologies on passenger experience in the aviation industry. According to International Air Transport Association (IATA, 2024), biometric authentication significantly enhances passenger convenience by reducing processing time and improving efficiency at airport touchpoints. Similarly, SITA (2023) reported that passengers show higher satisfaction when using biometric systems due to shorter queues and contactless procedures. These findings indicate that biometric technology plays an important role in improving overall passenger experience.

2. Biometric Authentication for Seamless Passenger Processing

Biometric authentication involves identifying individuals based on unique biological traits. In aviation, common biometric technologies include:

- Facial recognition
- Fingerprint scanning
- Iris recognition

These technologies are used at various stages of the passenger journey, such as:

- Check-in
- Security screening
- Immigration control
- Boarding

Studies show that biometric systems improve operational efficiency and reduce processing time, contributing to seamless passenger processing. Airports implementing biometric solutions report shorter queues and smoother passenger flow, enhancing the overall travel experience.

Previous research supports the role of biometric systems in enabling seamless passenger processing. Amadeus IT Group (2024) found that biometric solutions improve passenger flow and reduce congestion in airports. In addition, Deloitte (2024) stated that biometric-enabled processes help streamline operations and create a more efficient travel journey. These studies confirm that biometric authentication contributes significantly to seamless and efficient passenger processing in modern aviation.

3. Service Quality (SERVQUAL) in Biometric-Based Aviation Services

(Tap)The SERVQUAL model evaluates service quality across five dimensions:

- Reliability
- Responsiveness
- Assurance
- Empathy
- Tangibles

In the context of biometric authentication, Reliability refers to system accuracy:

- Reliability refers to system accuracy
- Responsiveness relates to processing speed
- Assurance involves security and trust
- Empathy includes user-friendly design
- Tangibles refer to physical technology infrastructure

Biometric systems enhance these dimensions by providing faster, more accurate, and secure services, contributing to higher passenger satisfaction and seamless travel experience.

The SERVQUAL model has been widely used in evaluating service quality in various industries, including aviation. Parasuraman et al. (1988) introduced SERVQUAL as a framework for measuring customer perceptions of service quality. In recent studies, Thales Group (2023) emphasized that biometric technologies enhance service quality by improving system reliability, security, and user experience. Moreover, World Economic Forum (2024) highlighted that integrating biometric systems into airport services can increase passenger trust and satisfaction.

Methodology

This research is a quantitative study focusing on the use of biometric authentication in airport passenger processing. The study examines passenger experience and satisfaction with biometric systems.

Population and Sample

The population consists of international passengers using biometric systems at airports. A sample of 400 respondents was selected using a simple random sampling method.

Research Instrument

The research instrument is a questionnaire divided into two sections:

- Section 1: Demographic information
- Section 2: Satisfaction with biometric systems across three dimensions:
 - Efficiency
 - Security
 - Convenience

The questionnaire was validated using the Index of Congruency (IOC) and tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha, resulting in a reliability coefficient of 0.87.

Results

1. Satisfaction in the Efficiency Dimension

Passengers reported high satisfaction with processing speed. Facial recognition at boarding gates received the highest rating (Mean = 4.45, SD = 0.65). However, system delays in some cases received lower scores (Mean = 4.18, SD = 0.80).

Table 1: Efficiency Dimension

Item	Mean	SD
Speed of facial recognition	4.45	0.65
Reduces waiting time	4.38	0.70
System reliability	4.18	0.80

Table 1: High efficiency satisfaction

2. Satisfaction in the Security Dimension

Passengers expressed confidence in biometric security systems. Identity verification accuracy scored highest (Mean = 4.40, SD = 0.68). However, concerns about data privacy scored lower (Mean = 4.15, SD = 0.85).

Table 2: Security Dimension

Item	Mean	SD
Identity verification accuracy	4.40	0.68
System security	4.32	0.72
Data Privacy concerns	4.15	0.85

Table 2: Strong security confidence

3. Satisfaction in the Convenience Dimension

Passengers rated convenience highly, especially for contactless processing (Mean = 4.42, SD = 0.66). Ease of use also received strong ratings.

Table 3: Convenience Dimension

Item	Mean	SD
Ease of use	4.35	0.69
Contactless processing	4.42	0.66
Overall convenience	4.38	0.71

Table 3: High convenience level

Summary

Overall, passenger satisfaction with biometric authentication systems is high across all dimensions. Technology significantly enhances efficiency, security, and convenience in airport operations.

However, key issues remain:

- Data privacy concerns
- System reliability during peak hours

Addressing these issues will further improve passenger trust and adoption of biometric systems.

Recommendations

Future research should include a larger and more diverse sample to improve accuracy. Additionally, further studies should explore the relationship between biometric technology adoption and passenger trust.

Airports should also:

- Enhance data protection measures
- Improve system reliability
- Provide clear communication about biometric usage

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GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTING AGRITOURISM IN RAYONG PROVINCE FOR NEW GENERATION TOURISTS

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the behavior, experiences, and satisfaction of new generation tourists towards agritourism in Rayong Province, Thailand, and to propose effective guidelines for promoting agritourism. This study employs a qualitative research approach using in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method. The key informants consisted of 15–20 new generation tourists (Generation Y and Generation Z) who have experience in agritourism in Rayong Province, along with 3–5 local stakeholders such as orchard owners and community representatives. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that new generation tourists prefer experiential tourism, especially activities such as fruit picking, farm visits, and local food experiences. They value authenticity, convenience, and opportunities to share their experiences via social media. Satisfaction is mainly influenced by accessibility, uniqueness of attractions, and the hospitality of local communities. The study suggests that agritourism in Rayong Province should focus on digital promotion, experience-based activities, infrastructure improvement, and sustainable tourism practices to attract new generation tourists effectively.

Keywords: Agritourism, Rayong Province, New Generation Tourists, Qualitative Research, Tourism Development

Introduction

Tourism in Thailand has continued to grow in recent years, especially in alternative forms such as agritourism, which focuses on agricultural experiences, local culture, and sustainability. This type of tourism is increasingly seen as an important way to support local communities, create income, and promote more sustainable travel practices (World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2021). In Thailand, agritourism and community-based tourism have also been promoted as part of national tourism strategies to diversify tourism products and reduce reliance on mass tourism (Tourism Authority of Thailand [TAT], 2023). In this context, Rayong Province stands out due to its rich agricultural resources, particularly its well-known fruit orchards such as durian, mangosteen, and rambutan, which make it a strong candidate for agritourism development.

At the same time, tourist behavior has been changing, especially among new generation tourists (Generation Y and Generation Z). These groups tend to prefer more meaningful and hands-on travel experiences, where they can interact with nature, learn about local lifestyles, and enjoy authentic activities (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Moreover, digital technology plays a key

role in how they plan their trips, as they often rely on social media for searching information, making decisions, and sharing their experiences (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Because of this, agritourism in Rayong has good potential to meet these needs through activities such as fruit picking, farm visits, and community-based experiences. In addition, it can also be linked to broader tourism strategies, including MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions), by developing creative programs such as farm-based activities or incentive trips that focus on local experiences and sustainability.

However, even though Rayong has strong potential, most previous studies have focused on general tourism or international destinations, and there is still limited research specifically on agritourism in Rayong, especially from the perspective of new generation tourists. In particular, there is a lack of qualitative research that explores tourists' real experiences, expectations, and opinions in depth. As a result, it is still unclear how agritourism in this area should be promoted in a way that truly matches the needs of this group. Therefore, this study aims to explore the behavior, experiences, and satisfaction of new generation tourists towards agritourism in Rayong Province, and to develop practical guidelines that can support more effective and relevant tourism promotion.

Objectives

1. To explore the behavior of new generation tourists towards agritourism in Rayong Province.
2. To examine their experiences and level of satisfaction with agritourism in Rayong Province.
3. To develop practical guidelines for promoting agritourism that better respond to the needs of new generation tourists.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach. The researcher followed the steps as follows:

Exploring the behavior and satisfaction of new generation tourists towards agritourism in Rayong Province.

This research uses in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method. The researcher collected data by interviewing participants using semi-structured interview questions to gain detailed insights into their behavior, experiences, and satisfaction regarding agritourism in Rayong Province. The target group of this study consists of new generation tourists (Generation Y and Generation Z).

Selection of key informants.

The researcher used purposive sampling to select participants who have experience in agritourism in Rayong Province. The total number of key informants ranged from 15 to 20 tourists, along with 3–5 local stakeholders such as orchard owners or community representatives.

Research instruments.

The research instrument used for data collection was a semi-structured interview guide, consisting of the following parts:

- Part 1: General information of participants (e.g., age, occupation, travel behavior)
- Part 2: Experiences and satisfaction with agritourism in Rayong Province
- Part 3: Opinions, expectations, and suggestions for improving agritourism

Data analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using content analysis and thematic analysis. The researcher interpreted the data by identifying key themes, patterns, and meanings from participants' responses to understand their behavior, experiences, and satisfaction in depth.

Results

The results of this study are presented in two main parts: (1) the behavior and experiences of new generation tourists, and (2) their satisfaction towards agritourism in Rayong Province.

Part 1: Behavior and Experiences of New Generation Tourists

Based on the in-depth interviews, most new generation tourists prefer short trips, typically lasting 1–2 days, especially during weekends or the fruit season in Rayong Province. Many participants mentioned that Rayong is a convenient destination due to its proximity to Bangkok and relatively easy accessibility.

In terms of travel companions, most tourists prefer traveling with friends or partners, as they enjoy sharing experiences and participating in activities together. As one participant noted:

“I usually travel with my friends because we can enjoy activities together and take photos for social media.”

Regarding travel motivations, the majority of participants showed strong interest in experiential tourism, particularly activities related to agriculture. Popular activities include fruit picking, visiting orchards, learning about farming processes, and trying local food. These activities were often described as unique and memorable experiences. One participant stated:

“I really enjoyed picking durian by myself. It felt like a real local experience, not something you can do in the city.”

In addition, social media plays an important role in influencing travel decisions. Many participants reported that they discovered agritourism destinations in Rayong through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Reviews, photos, and influencer content significantly affected their decision-making process. For example:

“I saw reviews on TikTok, and the orchard looked very beautiful, so I decided to visit.”

Part 2: Tourist Satisfaction towards Agritourism in Rayong Province

Overall, the findings indicate that tourists have a high level of satisfaction with agritourism in Rayong Province, particularly in terms of natural attractions, local experiences, and community hospitality.

In terms of attractions, participants appreciated the natural environment, the uniqueness of fruit orchards, and the opportunity to engage in hands-on activities. Many tourists felt that these experiences provided a sense of authenticity and relaxation that differs from urban tourism. One participant shared:

“The atmosphere in the orchard is very peaceful. It's different from my daily life in the city.”

Regarding accessibility, most participants agreed that Rayong is easy to travel to, especially for domestic tourists. However, some mentioned minor challenges related to signage and information availability. As one participant explained:

“It's not difficult to travel, but sometimes the signs are not clear, and I had to search again on Google Maps.”

In terms of service and local people, tourists expressed positive impressions of the friendliness and hospitality of local communities. Personal interaction with orchard owners and local residents was considered a key factor contributing to a meaningful travel experience. One participant noted:

“The orchard owner was very friendly and explained everything about the fruits. It made the trip more meaningful.”

However, in terms of facilities and tourism management, some participants suggested areas for improvement, such as clearer directions, better organization of activities, and the development of supporting facilities. For example:

“It would be better if there were more cafes or rest areas for tourists to relax and take photos.”

Summary of Findings

In summary, the results show that agritourism in Rayong Province aligns well with the preferences of new generation tourists, particularly in terms of experiential activities, authenticity, and opportunities for social media engagement. At the same time, there are still areas that require improvement, especially in terms of information accessibility, infrastructure, and tourism management.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide important insights into the behavior, experiences, and satisfaction of new generation tourists towards agritourism in Rayong Province.

In terms of tourist characteristics, although this study employed a qualitative approach, the findings reflect patterns consistent with previous research, indicating that most new generation tourists are working-age individuals who prefer convenient, short-duration trips and often travel with friends or partners. This aligns with the idea that lifestyle and demographic factors influence travel behavior and decision-making (Chareeruk & Zumitzavan, 2021). In the case of Rayong, its proximity to Bangkok and ease of access make it particularly suitable for short experiential trips.

Regarding tourist behavior, the study clearly shows that new generation tourists are highly interested in experiential tourism. Activities such as fruit picking, farm visits, and local food experiences were frequently mentioned as key motivations for travel. This is consistent with the concept of the “Experience Economy,” which emphasizes that tourists increasingly seek memorable and engaging experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). As one participant mentioned:

“I prefer trips where I can actually do something, not just walk around. Picking fruits and learning from locals makes it more meaningful.”

In addition, the influence of social media is significant, as many tourists rely on online platforms to discover destinations and share their experiences. This reflects the changing role of digital media in shaping tourism behavior among younger generations.

In terms of satisfaction, tourists expressed positive perceptions of agritourism in Rayong, especially regarding the natural environment, authenticity, and the hospitality of local communities. These elements contribute to a more meaningful and memorable experience. For instance, one participant stated:

“What I liked the most was talking to the orchard owner. It felt real and personal, not like typical tourist places.”

However, despite these strengths, the findings also reveal some limitations. Issues such as unclear signage, limited online information, and insufficient supporting facilities were identified. This suggests that while the core tourism experience is strong, supporting elements still need to be improved in order to enhance the overall tourist experience.

Furthermore, the findings highlight that agritourism in Rayong Province has strong potential to be integrated into broader tourism strategies, including sustainable tourism development and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions). For example, farm-based experiences can be developed into incentive travel programs or corporate activities, which align with the growing demand for unique and meaningful travel experiences.

Implications

1. Policy Implications

From a policy perspective, the findings suggest that government agencies should place greater emphasis on promoting agritourism as part of regional tourism development strategies. This includes improving infrastructure such as road signage, enhancing digital information systems, and supporting local communities in developing tourism products. In addition, policies should encourage sustainable tourism practices to ensure long-term environmental and community benefits.

2. Business Implications

For tourism entrepreneurs and local stakeholders, the results highlight the importance of designing experience-based tourism products that match the preferences of new generation tourists. Orchard owners and community-based tourism operators should focus on creating interactive activities, improving service quality, and developing facilities such as cafes, rest areas, and photo spots. Moreover, using social media as a marketing tool is essential, as it directly influences tourists' decision-making and travel behavior.

3. Practical Implications

In practical terms, collaboration between the public and private sectors is essential to strengthen the overall tourism experience. Developing clear information channels, online booking systems, and integrated tourism packages can help improve accessibility and convenience for tourists. These efforts will contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of agritourism in Rayong Province.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study focused on exploring the behavior, experiences, and satisfaction of new generation tourists towards agritourism in Rayong Province using a qualitative approach. However, there are several areas that future research could further develop.

First, future studies could apply a quantitative approach to examine a larger sample size in order to generalize the findings and compare different groups of tourists more clearly. This would help provide a broader understanding of tourist behavior and preferences.

Second, future research could expand the study area to other provinces in Thailand that have strong potential for agritourism, in order to compare similarities and differences in tourist experiences and development strategies.

Finally, future studies may focus on specific aspects such as digital marketing, social media influence, or sustainable tourism practices in agritourism. This would provide more in-depth insights that can support more effective tourism planning and development.

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ENHANCING INSTRUCTIONAL AND RESEARCH QUALITY THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION (ODI) IN AN AVIATION INSTITUTE

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Abstract

This study aims to explore approaches to enhancing instructional quality and research quality through Organizational Development Intervention (ODI) in an aviation institute. The focus of the study is on improving learning engagement, teaching effectiveness, and research capability through the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) tools.

The research employed an intervention-based approach, beginning with faculty development programs in which instructors were trained in the use of AI for teaching and research. Following the training, instructors applied AI tools in their teaching practices and research activities and shared their experiences within the organization.

The findings revealed that most instructors adopted AI tools such as Kahoot, learning management systems (LMS), and ChatGPT to enhance classroom engagement. AI applications helped make lessons more interactive, reduced student cognitive overload, and supported content summarization. In terms of research, AI tools such as Perplexity and Claude significantly reduced time spent on literature search, organization, and writing processes, leading to increased research productivity and improved publication quality.

However, the study also found that AI must be used with caution, as it may produce inaccurate or misleading information (hallucination), particularly in local or context-specific research. Therefore, human judgment remains essential in ensuring research accuracy and quality.

The study highlights the potential of ODI as a strategic approach to integrating AI into teaching and research practices, contributing to continuous improvement in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Instructional Development, Research Development

Introduction

In recent years, higher education has undergone significant transformation under international quality assurance frameworks such as AUN-QA, which emphasize outcome-based education and the achievement of expected learning outcomes (ASEAN University Network,

2020). This framework focuses on ensuring that graduates are able to apply knowledge and skills in real-world contexts rather than relying solely on theoretical understanding.

This shift presents challenges for universities, as instructors have traditionally focused on content delivery and academic research. Under AUN-QA requirements, teaching must be redesigned to incorporate technology, interactive learning environments, and experiential approaches that enhance student engagement and practical application.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as an important tool to support these changes. Studies indicate that AI-based and gamified tools can enhance student engagement and motivation, making learning more interactive and effective (Hu, 2024). Additionally, AI technologies such as chatbots and intelligent systems can support personalized learning and improve overall learning experiences (Cao et al., 2023). AI also plays a significant role in research by improving efficiency in literature search, data organization, and academic writing.

To support this transformation, organizational development intervention (ODI) provides a systematic approach to improving institutional performance through training and knowledge sharing (Cummings & Worley, 2019). Therefore, this study applies ODI to examine how AI integration can enhance instructional and research quality in an aviation institute preparing for AUN-QA implementation.

Research Objectives

1. To explore approaches for enhancing instructional quality to support outcome-based aviation education.
2. To explore approaches for improving research quality to align with aviation curriculum development and industry needs.

Literature Review and Theory

Recent developments in higher education emphasize the need to enhance both instructional quality and research quality in response to outcome-based education frameworks such as AUN-QA. These frameworks require universities to produce graduates who are capable of applying knowledge in real-world contexts, while also promoting research that contributes to practical and societal impact (ASEAN University Network, 2020).

In terms of instructional development, recent studies highlight the importance of student engagement and active learning. Learning engagement has been identified as a key factor influencing academic achievement, particularly when supported by digital technologies and interactive learning environments (Bond et al., 2020). The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in teaching has been shown to significantly enhance engagement, motivation, and learning effectiveness by enabling personalized learning, adaptive feedback, and interactive activities (Holmes et al., 2022; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). AI-based tools such as gamified platforms, chatbots, and intelligent tutoring systems can transform traditional teaching into more dynamic and learner-centered approaches.

In addition to teaching, research development in higher education is increasingly supported by AI technologies. Recent studies indicate that AI tools can improve research efficiency by assisting in literature review, data organization, and academic writing, thereby increasing research productivity and output quality (Dwivedi et al., 2023). However, it is also emphasized that AI should be used critically, as issues such as hallucination and lack of contextual accuracy may affect research reliability.

At the policy level, higher education systems are increasingly emphasizing applied research and innovation. In Thailand, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI, 2022) and the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT, 2021) highlight the importance of research that contributes to national development and practical application. This aligns with global trends that prioritize impact-driven research over purely theoretical contributions.

To support these transformations, Organizational Development Intervention (ODI) is adopted as a key theoretical framework in this study. ODI is defined as a planned change process aimed at improving organizational effectiveness through interventions such as training, workshops, and collaborative learning (Cummings & Worley, 2019). Recent perspectives emphasize that ODI plays a critical role in higher education by facilitating continuous improvement, enhancing faculty capabilities, and promoting innovation in teaching and research practices.

ODI interventions can be implemented at multiple levels, including individual, group, and organizational levels, through structured activities such as brainstorming sessions, seminars, and knowledge-sharing workshops. These interventions are particularly effective in fostering collaboration, improving competencies, and driving sustainable change in educational institutions.

Therefore, this study integrates AI and ODI as strategic approaches to simultaneously enhance instructional quality and research quality in an aviation institute, ensuring alignment with modern educational standards and real-world application.

Research Methodology

This study employed an organizational development intervention (ODI) approach using a mixed-methods design to enhance both instructional quality and research quality within an aviation institute. The intervention focused on two key dimensions: teaching competency and research development.

In terms of instructional development, the study emphasized enhancing teaching competency to improve students' learning engagement and learning effectiveness. The goal was to create interactive, student-centered learning environments that encourage active participation and meaningful learning outcomes.

In terms of research development, the study focused on promoting research for professionalism and research for practicality. Research for professionalism refers to the development of academic and professional standards in research, while research for practicality emphasizes producing research outputs that are applicable, valuable, and beneficial to real-world professional contexts.

The participants of the study consisted of 25 individuals, including 20 instructors and 5 administrators within the aviation institute.

The ODI process was implemented through four main intervention activities:

1. **AUN-QA Training Programs** organized at both university and faculty levels to enhance understanding of outcome-based education and quality assurance standards.
2. **AI-Based Teaching Development Workshops** conducted by external experts, focusing on the integration of artificial intelligence tools into teaching practices to improve engagement and instructional effectiveness.

3. **AI-Based Research Development Training**, which aimed to enhance research capability by introducing AI tools for literature review, data organization, and academic writing.
4. **Knowledge Management (KM) Activities**, conducted to promote knowledge sharing and collaborative learning. These activities were organized in two areas: teaching and research, with six sessions each.

The research utilized both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Qualitative data were obtained through observations, group discussions, and reflections during the ODI activities. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires to evaluate the impact of the intervention.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis to assess improvements in teaching competency and research quality. The findings were used to propose practical guidelines for enhancing instructional and research practices in alignment with AUN-QA standards.

Conceptual Framework

This study adopts an organizational development intervention (ODI) approach to enhance instructional quality and research quality in an aviation institute. The framework is adapted from the ODI-based academic service development model, which emphasizes systematic improvement through planned interventions (Witthawassamrankul, 2020).

ODI is conceptualized as the independent variable, while the dependent variables consist of two key dimensions:

1. **Instructional Quality Development**, focusing on teaching competency, learning engagement, and learning effectiveness, particularly through the integration of AI-supported, student-centered learning environments.
2. **Research Quality Development**, focusing on research for professionalism and research for practicality, which emphasize both academic rigor and the production of applicable and value-driven research outputs.

The framework proposes that ODI, through structured development processes, enhances instructors' competencies and promotes the integration of AI in teaching and research. Consequently, this leads to improvements in both instructional and research quality.



Results

The findings of this study are divided into two main areas: instructional development and research development through the use of artificial intelligence (AI) within an organizational development intervention (ODI) framework.

1. Instructional Development through AI

The findings indicate that effective use of AI in teaching requires instructors to shift their roles from knowledge transmitters to facilitators of learning. Rather than relying on AI to replace teaching, instructors should use AI as a supportive tool to enhance student engagement and learning effectiveness.

AI tools that are compatible with students' daily digital behaviors, particularly mobile-based applications, were found to be highly effective. For example, gamified platforms such as Kahoot, interactive AI tools such as ChatGPT, and learning management systems (LMS) contribute to more engaging and less monotonous learning environments. These tools help reduce cognitive overload, especially in content-heavy subjects, by summarizing information and presenting it in accessible formats.

Furthermore, the integration of AI supports active learning by encouraging student participation, interaction, and real-time feedback, which enhances both learning engagement and effectiveness.

2. Research Development through AI

The findings also reveal that AI plays a significant role in enhancing research capability when used appropriately. AI should be applied as a scaffolding tool to support research processes, such as idea generation, literature review, and structuring academic writing, rather than replacing the researcher's critical thinking.

Effective use of AI in research requires a strong foundation of disciplinary knowledge, which is considered a key component of research ethics. Researchers must possess sufficient expertise to critically evaluate AI-generated information, synthesize knowledge, and ensure the accuracy and relevance of their work.

In addition, ethical research practice requires researchers to avoid confirmation bias and actively consider alternative perspectives to ensure comprehensive and balanced findings. Researchers must also be cautious of AI hallucination, where generated information may be inaccurate or misleading, particularly in context-specific or local studies.

AI tools that support research development include ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude, and other AI-assisted academic tools such as Elicit and Scite, which help in literature exploration, citation analysis, and evidence-based research.

Overall, the findings suggest that AI can significantly enhance both teaching and research quality when integrated appropriately within an ODI framework, supported by human judgment, ethical awareness, and domain expertise.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that organizational development intervention (ODI) integrated with artificial intelligence (AI) can effectively enhance both instructional and research quality. The findings show that students' satisfaction significantly improved, particularly in learning enjoyment, accessibility of knowledge, and classroom engagement, with mean scores increasing from 4.1–4.4 to 4.3–4.5 after the intervention.

In terms of research, the number of research outputs increased by more than 20%, and the quality of research became more relevant to professional aviation contexts. The findings highlight that AI can support both teaching and research when used appropriately, while instructors remain key facilitators in the learning process.

Overall, ODI combined with AI provides a practical approach for continuous improvement in higher education, aligning teaching and research with real-world applications.

Discussion and Recommendations

The findings are consistent with previous studies on AI integration in higher education. The improvement in student engagement and learning effectiveness aligns with Bond et al. (2020) and Holmes et al. (2022), while the enhancement of research efficiency is supported by Dwivedi et al. (2023).

The results indicate that AI is an effective tool for supporting both teaching and research; however, instructors remain essential as facilitators. AI should be used as a scaffolding tool to support learning, particularly in professional fields such as aviation, where human guidance is still necessary.

In terms of research, issues related to plagiarism and the reliability of AI-generated content must be carefully considered. Therefore, institutions should promote the appropriate use of AI alongside ethical awareness and human expertise to ensure sustainable academic development.

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DEVELOPMENT OF AVIATION STUDENTS' GROUND SERVICE COMPETENCIES THROUGH COOPERATIVE EDUCATION UNDER THE AUN- QA FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

This study investigates the challenges faced by aviation students during cooperative education and proposes development guidelines aligned with the AUN-QA framework. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative data from 28 fourth-year aviation students specializing in ground service roles. Quantitative data were collected from employer evaluations using a 5-point Likert scale and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation, while qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews with workplace supervisors. The findings revealed that students demonstrated high levels of knowledge, skills, and professional characteristics. However, several gaps were identified, particularly in English communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and adaptation to real work environments, including shift-based operations. A gap between classroom learning and real-world practice was also evident, especially in operational tasks and the use of ground support equipment. Pearson's correlation analysis showed strong positive relationships between knowledge, skills, characteristics, training, and student performance. The study highlights the importance of experiential learning in bridging academic and industry expectations and recommends enhancing simulation-based learning and aviation English training under the AUN-QA framework.

Keywords: Aviation Students, Ground Service, AUN-QA

Introduction

Human resource development in the aviation industry is essential due to its complex operations and high safety standards. Aviation students, particularly those preparing for ground service roles, are required to demonstrate competencies in communication, teamwork,

problem-solving, and the ability to work under pressure. In ASEAN higher education, the AUN-QA framework emphasizes outcome-based education and alignment with stakeholder and industry expectations, requiring continuous curriculum improvement to ensure graduate employability (ASEAN University Network, 2020).

Cooperative education plays a critical role in bridging academic learning and professional practice by allowing students to gain real-world experience. In Thailand, it is strongly promoted by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI), which highlights its importance in developing professional competencies and improving students' readiness for the labor market (MHESI, 2022).

However, previous studies indicate that students often face challenges when transitioning from classroom learning to real work environments, particularly in communication, confidence, and practical skills (Jackson, 2015). Therefore, it is essential to evaluate students' competencies in real-world contexts to identify gaps and ensure alignment with industry requirements (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Such evaluation is especially important in aviation ground service operations, where performance directly impacts service quality and operational efficiency.

Objectives

1. To investigate challenges faced by aviation students during cooperative education
2. To propose development guidelines aligned with AUN-QA

Research Questions

1. What challenges do aviation students face in ground service operations?
2. How can their competencies be improved?

Hypotheses

Cooperative education plays a significant role in developing students' competencies in alignment with AUN-QA outcome-based education, particularly in terms of knowledge, skills, and professional characteristics (KSC). These competencies are essential for enhancing students' performance in real-world aviation ground service operations. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Knowledge is positively correlated with performance
- H2: Skills are positively correlated with performance
- H3: Characteristics are positively correlated with performance
- H4: Training is positively correlated with performance

Literature Review and Theory

Previous studies highlight the importance of experiential learning in developing employability competencies. Jackson (2015) found that work-integrated learning enhances communication, teamwork, and confidence. Clarke (2018) emphasized the role of workplace experience in graduate employability. Suarta et al. (2017) identified soft skills and personal

characteristics as critical factors for employment success. In service industries, Wang et al. (2014) found that internships significantly improve service performance and problem-solving skills. The aviation industry requires a combination of technical knowledge, operational skills, and safety awareness (IATA, 2023). This study adopts the Knowledge–Skills–Characteristics (KSC) framework, which explains that competency is developed through the integration of these three components. Additionally, Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984) supports the idea that learning occurs through experience and reflection. These frameworks align with AUN-QA principles, which emphasize measurable learning outcomes and continuous improvement.

Conceptual Framework

The framework illustrates that organizational development intervention (ODI) influences knowledge, skills, characteristics, and training, which collectively enhance students' performance in aviation ground service operations.

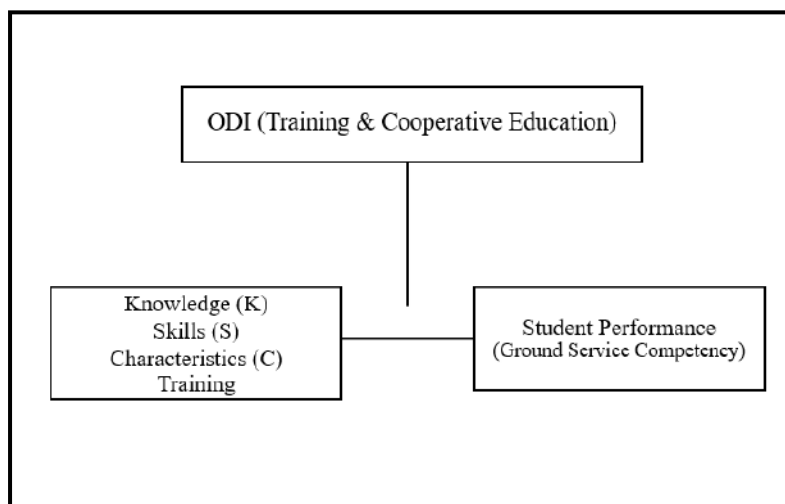


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach. The population consisted of 30 fourth-year aviation students, with 28 selected using purposive sampling (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Quantitative data were collected from employer evaluations using a 5-point Likert scale. Mean scores were interpreted using the following criteria: 4.21–5.00 = highest, 3.41–4.20 = high, 2.61–3.40 = moderate, 1.81–2.60 = low, and 1.00–1.80 = lowest. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation. Qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews and analyzed using content analysis. To ensure data quality, content validity was assessed by experts, and reliability was tested for consistency. The qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews with industry

professionals in the aviation sector, including airline supervisors and managers with more than 10 years of experience in both full-service and low-cost airlines. These experts were directly responsible for supervising interns in ground service operations, providing valuable insights into students' real-world performance.

Results

The sample consisted of 28 aviation students, including 12 males and 18 females, with an equal proportion of Thai and international students. The results indicate that students demonstrated high levels of competency across all dimensions. Skills received the highest mean score ($M = 4.62$), followed by characteristics ($M = 4.52$) and knowledge ($M = 4.51$). Based on the Likert scale interpretation ($4.21-5.00 =$ highest), all variables fall within the highest level, indicating strong student competency and overall readiness for aviation ground service roles. However, qualitative findings revealed several gaps in real-world application. Students showed limited familiarity with ground support equipment, weaknesses in English communication, problem-solving, and decision-making, as well as difficulties adapting to shift work and managing emotional control under pressure.

The findings also reveal a gap between high quantitative performance and actual workplace readiness. While students perform well in structured academic environments, they face challenges in dynamic operational contexts. Pearson's correlation analysis showed strong positive relationships between all variables and performance, particularly characteristics ($r = 0.96$), followed by skills ($r = 0.95$), training ($r = 0.94$), and knowledge ($r = 0.91$). These results highlight the importance of both technical skills and professional characteristics in aviation ground service performance.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that aviation students demonstrate high levels of competency across knowledge, skills, and professional characteristics; however, gaps remain in their ability to apply these competencies in real-world operational contexts, particularly in communication, decision-making, and adaptability under pressure. This suggests that while students are well-prepared in structured academic environments, additional support is required to enhance their readiness for dynamic workplace conditions. The study highlights the importance of experiential learning in bridging the gap between classroom knowledge and workplace performance, with cooperative education serving as a key mechanism for integrating theory with practice. Overall, the results emphasize the need for continuous curriculum development, including simulation-based learning and industry collaboration, to ensure that graduates meet professional requirements in aviation ground service operations, in alignment with AUN-QA outcome-based education principles.

Discussion and Recommendation

The findings support experiential learning theory and the KSC framework. Knowledge, skills, and characteristics must be developed together to achieve competency. The results align with Jackson (2015) and Suarta et al. (2017), emphasizing soft skills and practical experience. However, they differ from Clarke (2018) regarding language readiness, as students still require improvement. The identified simulation gap suggests that classroom learning is insufficient. Realistic training environments are necessary for effective competency development. Universities should enhance simulation-based learning to reflect real aviation scenarios. Aviation English training should be strengthened, particularly for non-native speakers. Soft skills such as leadership, emotional control, and adaptability should be integrated into teaching methods. Collaboration between universities and industry should be strengthened to ensure curriculum relevance and continuous improvement under AUN-QA. The findings further indicate that although students demonstrate high competency levels, challenges remain in real-world operational contexts. This suggests that theoretical learning alone is insufficient to prepare students for the dynamic environment of aviation ground services. The gap between classroom learning and workplace requirements highlights the importance of simulation-based learning and industry collaboration. Aviation operations require not only technical knowledge but also communication skills, decision-making ability, and adaptability under pressure.

Therefore, curriculum development should emphasize experiential learning and real-world scenarios to ensure that students are better prepared for professional practice.

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CARBON OFFSET ADOPTION IN THAILAND'S AVIATION INDUSTRY: BARRIERS, DRIVERS, AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

This study aims to explore policy approaches to enhance carbon offset adoption in Thailand's aviation industry, building on prior findings that indicate low passenger awareness and participation. A qualitative approach was employed using in-depth interviews with 10 experts with over 10 years of experience in aviation, environmental policy, and carbon management. Semi-structured interviews examined key issues, including barriers to adoption, awareness development, economic and policy incentives, stakeholder roles, and long-term sustainability. The findings reveal that major challenges include low awareness, lack of trust in carbon offset mechanisms, and limited economic incentives. To address these issues, several policy measures are proposed, including the use of default options in booking systems, incentive-based mechanisms such as reward programs and tax benefits, and the development of standardized and transparent certification systems. The study contributes to bridging the gap between awareness and implementation by providing practical policy implications to support sustainable aviation development in Thailand.

Keywords: Carbon Offset, Aviation Industry, Policy Implications

Introduction

The aviation industry has increasingly focused on sustainability initiatives, particularly carbon offset programs, as a mechanism to mitigate environmental impacts from air travel. As global concerns over climate change continue to intensify, airlines are under growing pressure to reduce carbon emissions and adopt environmentally responsible practices. Carbon offset programs have emerged as one of the key voluntary mechanisms that allow passengers to compensate for emissions generated by their flights.

However, several studies have shown that passenger participation in such programs remains relatively low, especially in developing countries where awareness and understanding of carbon offset concepts are limited (Gössling et al., 2021; Lu & Shon, 2012). This gap between awareness and actual behavior presents a significant challenge for the aviation industry in achieving sustainability goals.

In the context of Thailand, previous research has indicated that passenger awareness and willingness to participate in carbon offset programs are not at a high level, with studies showing moderate environmental awareness but limited behavioral engagement (Chuenchom & Sirivunnabood, 2019; Srisopaporn & Jaroenwanit, 2020; Chinchanchokchai et al., 2021). Although knowledge and attitudes were found to influence behavioral intention, the overall level of awareness remains insufficient to drive consistent participation. This suggests that increasing awareness alone may not be enough to promote behavioral change.

Despite these findings, existing studies have primarily focused on identifying influencing factors through quantitative approaches, with limited attention given to policy development and practical implementation. As a result, there is a lack of clear guidance on how to translate research findings into actionable strategies.

Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by employing a qualitative approach to explore expert perspectives and develop policy recommendations. By focusing on practical solutions and stakeholder involvement, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how carbon offset adoption can be effectively promoted in Thailand's aviation industry.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the key barriers to carbon offset adoption among airline passengers in Thailand.
2. To analyze factors and mechanisms that can enhance awareness and participation in carbon offset programs.
3. To propose policy recommendations for promoting carbon offset adoption in Thailand's aviation industry.

Research Questions

1. What are the key barriers to carbon offset adoption among airline passengers in Thailand?
2. What factors and mechanisms can enhance awareness and participation in carbon offset programs?
3. What policy measures can be proposed to promote carbon offset adoption in Thailand's aviation industry?

Literature Review and Theory

Carbon offset adoption in the aviation sector has been increasingly examined in ASEAN countries, particularly in relation to passenger awareness and behavioral intention. Studies in Singapore indicate relatively high awareness and participation, supported by strong policy frameworks (Han et al., 2020). In contrast, research in Malaysia shows moderate awareness but low participation due to limited incentives (Raza et al., 2020).

Similarly, studies in Indonesia suggest that awareness and willingness to participate are still developing, constrained by economic factors and trust issues (Putra & Hidayat, 2019), while in Vietnam, participation remains low due to limited information and unclear communication (Nguyen & Pham, 2021). Overall, awareness in ASEAN is generally low to moderate, and according to the study of Gössling et al., (2021), the participation depends on policy support, trust, and incentives.

This study is grounded in behavioral theory and sustainability frameworks commonly applied in aviation research. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) suggests that behavior is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991), while the Knowledge–Attitude–Behavior (KAB) model explains how knowledge shapes attitudes and influences behavioral intention (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

In aviation, these factors are associated with passengers' willingness to engage in carbon offset programs (Lu & Shon, 2012), although an intention–behavior gap often exists (Gössling et al., 2021). From a policy perspective, behavioral economics highlights the role of nudging, incentives, and default options in influencing decisions (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). These approaches, combined with institutional support and standardized frameworks, are essential for promoting sustainable aviation practices (ICAO, 2022).

These findings highlight that while awareness is an important factor, it alone is insufficient to drive participation in carbon offset programs. The inconsistency between awareness and actual behavior suggests the presence of additional influencing factors, including trust, perceived value, and institutional support. This reinforces the need for a more integrated approach that combines behavioral insights with policy interventions, particularly in emerging markets such as Thailand.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach using in-depth interviews to explore factors influencing carbon offset participation in Thailand's aviation industry. A total of 10 experts were selected through purposive sampling, including aviation academics, environmental policy analysts, and practitioners in sustainability and carbon management, all with at least 10 years of relevant experience. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews focusing on barriers, awareness, economic incentives, stakeholder roles, and sustainability. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving coding and categorization into key themes such as behavioral factors, trust issues, economic incentives, and policy mechanisms. This approach provides in-depth insights to support practical policy and implementation strategies.

In addition, the use of expert interviews allows for a deeper understanding of complex issues that cannot be fully captured through quantitative methods. This approach is particularly suitable for exploring policy-related topics, where insights from experienced professionals can provide valuable guidance for practical implementation.

Results

The findings from the expert interviews can be categorized into four key themes: barriers to carbon offset adoption, behavioral mechanisms, economic incentives, and policy framework, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Key Themes and Policy Implications

Theme	Key Findings	Policy Implications
Barriers to Adoption	Low awareness, lack of understanding, trust issues (greenwashing), and price sensitivity	Improve communication, transparency, and public awareness campaigns
Behavioral Mechanisms	Perceived responsibility, social norms, and ease of participation influence decision-making	Apply nudging strategies and simplify carbon offset processes
Economic Incentives	Participation is influenced by rewards, tax benefits, and cost-sharing mechanisms	Develop incentive-based programs such as reward points and tax deductions
Policy Framework	Multi-stakeholder involvement is required, including government, airlines, and environmental agencies.	Establish national standards and regulatory support for carbon offset programs

The results indicate that low awareness, lack of understanding, and trust issues remain major barriers to participation. Behavioral factors such as perceived responsibility, social norms, and ease of participation also play a significant role in influencing decision-making. In addition, economic incentives, including rewards and tax benefits, were identified as key drivers of participation. Finally, a strong policy framework, supported by collaboration among government agencies, airlines, and environmental organizations, is essential for long-term implementation.

Overall, carbon offset adoption is influenced by a combination of behavioral, economic, and institutional factors rather than awareness alone. These findings also indicate that addressing a single factor, such as awareness, is not sufficient to significantly improve participation. Instead, a comprehensive approach that integrates behavioral, economic, and policy dimensions is required to achieve meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

Conclusion

This study explored the factors influencing carbon offset adoption in Thailand's aviation industry using expert interviews. The findings reveal that low awareness, lack of trust, and limited economic incentives remain key barriers to passenger participation. In addition, behavioral mechanisms and policy support play a crucial role in shaping decision-making and enhancing participation.

The study demonstrates that carbon offset adoption is a multidimensional issue that requires a combination of behavioral, economic, and institutional approaches. Addressing these factors simultaneously can significantly improve participation rates and support the development of sustainable aviation practices. Overall, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of both the challenges and potential solutions for promoting carbon offset adoption in Thailand, contributing to more effective policy development and long-term sustainability in the aviation sector.

Discussion and Recommendation

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research in ASEAN countries, indicating that awareness of carbon offset programs remains relatively low and does not always translate into actual participation (Nguyen & Pham, 2021; Putra & Hidayat, 2019). Similar to Malaysia, Thai passengers show moderate awareness but limited engagement due to low perceived impact and insufficient incentives. In contrast to Singapore, where strong policy support has led to higher participation (Han et al., 2020), Thailand still lacks clear policy direction and standardized implementation mechanisms. This highlights the importance of policy intervention in bridging the gap between awareness and behavior.

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed. Behavioral strategies such as default options and nudging should be applied to increase participation. In addition, economic incentives, including reward programs and tax benefits, can enhance motivation. A standardized and transparent carbon offset framework is also essential to build trust and credibility. Finally, collaboration among government agencies, airlines, and environmental organizations is crucial for effective implementation and long-term sustainability.

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FINANCIAL RISK AND PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF AIRLINE BUSINESS MODELS IN THAILAND DURING THE POST-COVID-19 PERIOD (2021-2025)

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the financial risk and performance of airline companies in Thailand during the post-COVID-19 period, investigate financial risk management strategies adopted after the crisis, and analyze the relationships among financial variables and financial risk trends to identify key issues for future consideration. The study employs a documentary research approach using secondary data obtained from financial statements and annual reports of airline companies listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand. Financial ratio analysis is applied to evaluate profitability, leverage, and liquidity, while content analysis is used to interpret qualitative financial information. In addition, trend analysis and correlation analysis are utilized to examine relationships among key financial variables. The findings indicate that airline business models significantly influence financial performance and risk. Low-cost airlines show rapid recovery but higher financial risk, regional airlines demonstrate more stable performance, and full-service airlines exhibit high revenue potential with greater volatility. The results highlight the importance of capital structure management, liquidity maintenance, and operational efficiency for ensuring long-term financial sustainability in the aviation industry.

Keywords: Financial Risk, Financial Performance, Airline Industry

Introduction

The aviation industry experienced an unprecedented disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in late 2019 and severely impacted global air travel during 2020-2021. The rapid spread of the virus across countries led to widespread border closures, travel restrictions, and repeated airspace shutdowns. As a result, many airlines were forced to suspend operations and ground a significant portion of their fleets (International Air Transport Association [IATA], 2021).

These disruptions created substantial financial challenges for airline companies worldwide. Revenues declined sharply, while fixed costs such as aircraft leasing, maintenance, and personnel expenses remained high. Consequently, many airlines faced severe liquidity constraints and increased financial risk. Some airlines were able to survive through strategic adjustments, including cost reduction, restructuring, and financial support, while others were unable to sustain operations (International Civil Aviation Organization [ICAO], 2022).

The airline industry is inherently capital-intensive and highly sensitive to external shocks. It requires substantial investment and strong liquidity management, making it

particularly vulnerable during periods of crisis. Therefore, understanding financial risk and performance in the post-COVID-19 period is critical for evaluating recovery patterns and identifying sustainable strategies for the future.

In the Thai context, airline companies have shown different recovery patterns depending on their business models. Low-cost, regional, and full-service airlines exhibit distinct financial structures, cost patterns, and strategic responses. These differences may lead to variations in financial risk and performance during the recovery period.

Therefore, this study addresses this gap by analyzing financial risk and performance across different airline business models in Thailand, with the aim of identifying key recovery patterns and future financial implications.

Objectives

1. To examine the financial risk and performance of airline companies in Thailand during the post-COVID-19 period.
2. To investigate financial risk management strategies adopted by airlines after the COVID-19 crisis.
3. To analyze the relationships among financial variables and financial risk trends in order to identify key issues that airlines should consider in the future.

Research Questions

1. What are the key financial risks and performance characteristics of airline companies in Thailand during the post-COVID-19 period?
2. What financial risk management strategies have been adopted by airline companies in Thailand after the COVID-19 crisis?
3. What are the relationships among key financial variables, and what financial risks should airlines consider in the future?

Research Hypothesis

Based on prior research on airline financial performance and risk, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1:** Leverage is negatively associated with financial performance.
H2: Revenue is positively associated with financial performance.
H3: The strength of these relationships differs across airline business models.

Literature Review and Theory

Airline companies can be categorized into different business models, including low-cost, regional, and full-service carriers, each operating under distinct cost structures and strategic approaches. Full-service airlines typically incur higher fixed costs and are more vulnerable to demand shocks, while low-cost carriers emphasize cost efficiency and variable cost structures, allowing greater flexibility. Regional airlines, operating on a smaller scale, tend to demonstrate adaptability through niche markets and route optimization. These differences significantly influence financial performance and risk exposure in the aviation industry (Morrell, 2011).

Financial risk can be analyzed using financial ratio analysis, which provides insights into liquidity, leverage, and profitability. Key indicators such as return on assets, debt-to-equity ratio, and profit margins are commonly used to assess financial performance and stability. In addition, correlation analysis helps examine relationships among financial variables and identify key drivers of financial risk, supporting effective financial decision-making and long-

term sustainability (Ross et al., 2019). Previous studies indicate that airlines often face liquidity constraints, high leverage, and volatile profitability, particularly during periods of economic crisis.

Overall, airline business models differ significantly in terms of cost structures, revenue generation, and operational strategies, which directly influence financial performance and risk across airline types (Bitzan & Peoples, 2016; Daft & Albers, 2015; Morrell, 2011).

Table 1 *Comparison of Airline Business Models*

Dimension	Low-Cost Airline	Regional Airline	Full-Service Airline
Service Model	Basic service, no frills	Limited service, niche routes	Full service, premium experience
Route Network	Short-haul, point-to-point	Short-medium haul, feeder routes	Global network, hub-and-spoke
Revenue Structure	Ticket + ancillary revenue	Ticket + limited add-ons	Ticket + premium services
Cost Structure	Low cost, high variable cost	Moderate cost	High fixed cost
Pricing Strategy	Low price (cost leadership)	Moderate price	High price (differentiation)
Operational Strategy	High aircraft utilization	Flexible route management	Network optimization
Financial Risk	High leverage, thin margins	Moderate risk	High fixed cost risk
Customer Segment	Price-sensitive	Regional / niche	Business & premium travelers

Previous studies have examined airline performance and financial risk from various perspectives. Bitzan and Peoples (2016) found that different airline business models exhibit significant differences in cost structures and financial performance, while Wang and Heinonen (2015) emphasized the importance of financial ratios in evaluating airline performance. In the context of crisis, Gössling et al. (2021) highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic caused severe disruptions, leading to declining revenues and increased financial risk. In addition, O'Connell and Williams (2005) suggested that airline positioning and service models influence operational strategies and performance outcomes. Overall, these studies indicate that both business models and external shocks play a critical role in shaping financial performance and risk in the airline industry.

Methodology

This study employs a documentary research approach using secondary data from annual reports and financial statements of airline companies listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET, 2025). The data are considered reliable as they have been audited and publicly disclosed. The sample consists of three airline business models in Thailand, including low-cost, regional, and full-service (premium) airlines, anonymized as Airline A, Airline B, and Airline C. Data analysis includes financial ratio analysis to evaluate profitability and leverage, content analysis to interpret qualitative information, and basic statistical techniques such as trend analysis and Pearson correlation to examine relationships among financial variables. This study is subject to

limitations, as financial data for some airlines may be incomplete in certain years; therefore, the analysis is based on available and consistent data.

Results

The findings of this study can be summarized according to the research objectives.

For Objective 1, financial risk and performance of airline companies in Thailand during the post-COVID-19 period (2021–2025) were analyzed using financial ratios and key indicators.

The results indicate that low-cost airlines show strong recovery in revenue and profitability, with revenue increasing significantly from approximately 4,558 million baht in 2021 to over 49,000 million baht in 2025. However, they remain financially fragile due to high leverage and fluctuating profitability.

In contrast, regional airlines demonstrate more stable performance, with consistent improvements in profitability, as reflected in return on assets increasing from -14.97% to 11.94%. They also exhibit relatively lower financial risk. Premium airlines show substantial revenue growth, reaching over 190,000 million baht, but experience high financial volatility, with net profit fluctuating significantly across the period due to structural costs and financial restructuring.

Overall, the findings suggest that airline business models significantly influence financial performance and risk, with low-cost airlines characterized by rapid recovery but higher risk, regional airlines by stability, and premium airlines by high potential but greater volatility.

Table 2 Summary of Financial Performance and Risk

Airline Model	Profitability	Financial Risk	Liquidity	Overall Assessment
Low-Cost	Moderate (recovery)	High	Improving	Recovery but fragile
Regional	High	Low-Moderate	Strong	Stable and efficient
Premium	Volatile	High	Strong	High risk, high recovery

For Objective 2, the financial risk management strategies adopted by airline companies after the COVID-19 crisis were analyzed based on financial data and annual reports.

The results indicate that low-cost airlines emphasize cost efficiency and cash flow management, reflected in rapid revenue recovery from approximately 4,558 million baht in 2021 to over 49,000 million baht in 2025. However, their relatively high leverage suggests continued financial vulnerability. Regional airlines adopt a more balanced strategy, focusing on profitability and operational stability, as shown by improvements in return on assets from -14.97% to 11.94% and consistently positive net profit after 2022. In contrast, premium airlines rely on restructuring and financial recovery strategies, including capital restructuring and debt reduction. Although revenue increased significantly to over 190,000 million baht, financial performance remains volatile, with net profit fluctuating between positive and negative values across the period. Overall, financial risk management strategies differ significantly across airline business models, reflecting variations in cost structures and operational priorities.

For Objective 3, the relationships among financial variables and financial risk trends were analyzed to identify key issues for future consideration.

The results indicate that financial performance is significantly associated with both leverage and revenue across airline business models. A moderate to strong negative correlation

is observed between leverage and return on assets in low-cost airlines ($r = -0.65$), suggesting that higher debt levels increase financial risk and reduce profitability. In contrast, regional airlines show a weaker relationship ($r = -0.30$), indicating more stable financial structures, while the relationship in premium airlines appears inconsistent due to restructuring effects.

Revenue demonstrates a strong positive correlation with financial performance, particularly in regional airlines ($r = 0.85-0.90$), confirming that revenue growth is a key driver of profitability and recovery. Although premium airlines also show a positive relationship ($r = 0.40-0.50$), the impact is less stable due to high fixed costs and financial restructuring.

Overall, the findings suggest that financial risk and performance are influenced by different drivers across airline models. Low-cost airlines are more sensitive to leverage, regional airlines rely primarily on revenue growth, and premium airlines are affected by structural adjustments. The results support H1 and H2, while H3 is also supported, as the strength of these relationships varies across airline business models. These findings highlight the importance of capital structure management, liquidity maintenance, and revenue stability in ensuring long-term financial sustainability.

Table 3 *Correlation Analysis Across Airline Models*

Variables	Low-Cost	Regional	Premium	Interpretation
Leverage vs ROA	$r = -0.65$	$r = -0.30$	Weak/Unstable	Debt reduces performance (strongest in low-cost)
Revenue vs ROA	$r = 0.75$	$r = 0.85$	$r = 0.50$	Revenue drives performance
Revenue vs Net Profit	$r = 0.80$	$r = 0.90$	$r = 0.40$	Strongest in regional
Leverage vs Profit Margin	$r = -0.55$	Weak	Unstable	Risk effect varies by model

Conclusion

This study examined financial risk, performance, and management strategies of airline companies in Thailand during the post-COVID-19 period. The findings reveal that airline business models play a critical role in shaping financial outcomes across different operational structures. Low-cost airlines demonstrate rapid recovery but remain financially fragile due to high leverage, while regional airlines exhibit more stable performance and lower risk levels. In contrast, premium airlines show strong revenue recovery but significant financial volatility driven by structural cost constraints and restructuring effects.

The study further highlights that financial performance is closely associated with leverage, liquidity, and operational efficiency. Overall, effective financial risk management, particularly in terms of capital structure and cash flow management, is essential for ensuring long-term sustainability in the aviation industry.

Discussion and Recommendations

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research indicating that airline business models significantly influence financial performance (Bitzan & Peoples, 2016). Low-cost airlines demonstrate rapid recovery but remain financially fragile due to high leverage, while premium airlines exhibit high revenue potential with greater volatility. These results also align with Gössling et al. (2021), highlighting continued financial uncertainty in the post-COVID-19 aviation industry. Importantly, this study extends prior research by demonstrating

that regional airlines achieve more stable financial performance due to moderate cost structures and focused operational strategies.

Based on the findings, airlines should adopt prudent capital structure management, strengthen liquidity and cash flow, and improve operational efficiency in line with their business models. In addition, strategic flexibility and revenue diversification are essential for long-term sustainability. From a policy perspective, governments should support the aviation industry through improved access to funding, tax relief, and liquidity support during crises. Overall, effective financial management and policy support are critical for enhancing resilience in a highly uncertain aviation environment.

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A SYNTHESIS OF SILVER GENERATION PASSENGER BEHAVIOR IN AIRLINE SELECTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR AIRLINE MARKETING AND SERVICE DESIGN

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Abstract

This study synthesizes research on silver generation passenger behavior in airline selection, with implications for airline marketing and service design. The objectives are to (1) analyze research methodologies, (2) examine key variables, and (3) identify research gaps. A total of 18 relevant studies were reviewed, and the findings were summarized in tables to present methodological approaches and commonly used variables. The results show that most studies employed quantitative methods, particularly questionnaire-based surveys with convenience sampling, focusing mainly on general airline passengers. In contrast, qualitative approaches were limited and primarily based on document analysis and secondary data. The literature largely emphasizes service quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intention, while financial and psychological factors remain underexplored. In addition, studies focusing specifically on elderly passengers are relatively scarce. These findings suggest the need for future research to better understand silver generation passengers in order to enhance airline marketing and service design strategies.

Keywords: *Silver generation, airline selection, research synthesis*

Introduction

Research synthesis is a systematic process of reviewing existing studies in order to identify research methodologies, key variables, and gaps in the literature (Kitchenham, 2004; Tranfield et al., 2003). It plays a crucial role in the early stage of research by providing a comprehensive understanding of what has been studied and what remains unexplored. Through this process, researchers can avoid duplication and build upon existing knowledge to develop more meaningful and original contributions (Tranfield et al., 2003). Moreover, research synthesis is not limited to well-established topics but is also valuable for emerging or underexplored areas, as it helps uncover overlooked issues and potential research gaps (Kitchenham, 2004).

In the aviation context, research on silver generation passengers remains relatively limited. Previous studies have noted that accessibility and inclusivity are essential components of travel experiences, particularly for elderly passengers (Darcy & Dickson, 2009). However, collecting data from this group has traditionally been challenging due to limitations in survey accessibility and response reliability. In recent years, demographic and social changes have significantly increased the importance of this segment. The silver generation has grown in size, with higher education levels, more available time after retirement, and greater financial

capacity, making them a promising customer group for the aviation industry (World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2016; Kim et al., 2015). In addition, recent global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic have further reshaped travel behavior and increased uncertainty in the aviation sector (Gössling et al., 2021).

Therefore, this study is motivated by the increasing relevance of elderly passengers in the aviation industry. It aims to synthesize existing research by examining research methodologies, key variables, and research gaps in order to provide a foundation for future studies. The findings are expected to contribute to academic knowledge and offer practical implications for airline marketing and service design, particularly in the Thai aviation and tourism context.

Objectives

1. To analyze the research methodologies employed in prior studies.
2. To examine key variables commonly used in the literature.
3. To identify research gaps and areas requiring further investigation.

Research Questions

1. What research methodologies have been employed in previous studies on airline silver generation passengers?
2. What key variables have been commonly examined in the literature on airline silver generation passengers?
3. What research gaps and underexplored areas exist in studies of airline silver generation passengers?

Literature Review and Theory

Research synthesis is a fundamental process that enables scholars to systematically review existing studies and identify patterns, similarities, and research gaps (Kitchenham, 2004; Tranfield et al., 2003). In academic research, particularly in Thailand, it is often applied as a comparative approach to examine related studies and generate new insights (Cooper, 2017).

In the airline industry, previous studies have predominantly focused on service quality, passenger satisfaction, and behavioral intention using quantitative survey methods. While these studies provide valuable insights into general passenger behavior, they tend to emphasize broad customer segments rather than specific groups.

Research on silver generation passengers remains limited despite their growing importance and economic potential (World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2016). Moreover, existing studies have given limited attention to financial and psychological factors, such as risk perception and value sensitivity, which are important in decision-making.

Therefore, future research should develop more comprehensive models that integrate both service-related and financial factors to better explain airline selection behavior among the silver generation.

Methodology

In this research synthesis, the author conducted a systematic search using online academic databases and open-access sources, employing relevant keywords to identify studies published within the past ten years (2015–2025). The selected studies were drawn from reputable academic sources, including international journals and Thai indexed journals (TCI), ensuring the reliability and relevance of the data. This timeframe was chosen because research in consumer behavior and marketing evolves rapidly, and recent studies are more likely to reflect current variables, trends, and research gaps (Kitchenham, 2004; Tranfield et al., 2003).

The findings of this study are presented according to three research objectives. First, to analyze research methodologies, a summary table is provided to illustrate key methodological

aspects of the 18 selected studies, including sample characteristics, sampling techniques, and the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Second, to examine research variables, another table presents the most commonly used variables across the selected studies, such as demographic characteristics and consumer behavior factors. This enables the identification of dominant research themes in the existing literature.

Third, to identify research gaps, the study highlights underexplored topics that warrant further investigation, as well as commonly studied areas that may no longer require extensive replication. This synthesis provides a foundation for future research and supports the development of more meaningful and innovative studies.

Results

The findings of this study are presented in accordance with the three research objectives, covering research methodologies, key variables, and identified research gaps in the existing literature.

The results for Objective 1: Synthesis of Methodology are summarized in Table 1.

Study (Author, Year & Topic)	Quantitative (Sampling & Sample)	Qualitative (Source & Selection)
ACRP (2023) – Accessibility for elderly passengers	-	Report analysis (15 documents; selection based on accessibility policies)
Sun et al. (2021) – Post-COVID travel behavior	Secondary data	Industry datasets (air travel data; selection based on time-series relevance)
Suau-Sanchez et al. (2020) – Aviation crisis	Secondary data	Industry reports (global aviation data; purposive selection)
Halpern & Graham (2019) – Passenger experience	-	Secondary sources (airport reports; document analysis)
Tsaur & Yen (2018) – Service recovery	Convenience sampling (n=190 passengers; questionnaire)	-
Wu & Cheng (2018) – Passenger satisfaction	Random sampling (n=300 passengers; survey)	-
Seo & Park (2018) – Service quality	Convenience sampling (n=200 passengers; questionnaire)	-
Chen & Chang (2018) – Brand preference	Survey sampling (n=210 passengers; questionnaire)	-
Han & Hyun (2017) – Risk perception	Convenience sampling (n=210 passengers; questionnaire)	-
Chang & Chen (2017) – Elderly passenger needs	Convenience sampling (n=250 passengers; questionnaire)	-
Fodness & Murray (2017) – Passenger expectations	Survey sampling (n=200 passengers; questionnaire)	-

Poria et al. (2017) – Accessibility perception	Survey sampling (n=150 tourists; questionnaire)	-
Darcy & Dickson (2017) – Accessible travel	-	Conceptual study (literature synthesis; thematic selection)
Jiang & Zhang (2016) – Service dimensions	Convenience sampling (n=180 passengers; questionnaire)	-
Chen & Wu (2016) – Passenger loyalty	Convenience sampling (n=220 passengers; questionnaire)	-
Park et al. (2016) – Behavioral intention	Survey sampling (n=180 passengers; questionnaire)	-
UNWTO (2016) – Elderly tourism trends	-	Report analysis (global tourism reports; document selection criteria)
Kim et al. (2015) – Elderly travel behavior	Survey sampling (n=230 elderly; questionnaire)	-

Table 1 Synthesis of Methodology

The results from Objective 1 indicate that most studies employed quantitative approaches, particularly questionnaire-based surveys using convenience sampling. The samples largely consisted of general airline passengers, while studies focusing specifically on elderly passengers remain limited. In contrast, qualitative studies were relatively fewer and primarily relied on document analysis and secondary data, with limited use of interviews or other primary qualitative methods. In terms of data analysis, quantitative studies commonly applied statistical techniques such as regression analysis, structural equation modeling (SEM), and descriptive statistics. Meanwhile, qualitative studies predominantly utilized thematic analysis and content analysis to interpret data from documents and reports.

The results for Objective 2: Synthesis of Key Variables are summarized in Table 1.

Study (Author, Year & Topic)	Key Variables
ACRP (2023) – Accessibility	Accessibility, Service
Sun et al. (2021) – Post-COVID behavior	Risk perception, Travel intention
Suau-Sanchez et al. (2020) – Aviation crisis	Demand, Travel behavior
Halpern & Graham (2019) – Passenger experience	Experience, Satisfaction
Wu & Cheng (2018) – Passenger satisfaction	Service quality, Satisfaction
Seo & Park (2018) – Airline service quality	Service quality, Behavioral intention
Chen & Chang (2018) – Brand preference	Brand, Preference, Loyalty
Tsaur & Yen (2018) – Service recovery	Service quality, Satisfaction
Han & Hyun (2017) – Risk perception	Risk perception, Satisfaction
Chang & Chen (2017) – Elderly passenger needs	Service quality, Satisfaction, Elderly needs
Fodness & Murray (2017) – Passenger expectations	Expectations, Satisfaction
Poria et al. (2017) – Accessibility perception	Accessibility, Satisfaction
Darcy & Dickson (2017) – Accessible travel	Accessibility, Inclusion
Jiang & Zhang (2016) – Service dimensions	Service quality
Chen & Wu (2016) – Passenger loyalty	Satisfaction, Loyalty

Park et al. (2016) – Behavioral intention	Service quality, Behavioral intention
UNWTO (2016) – Elderly tourism	Demographics, Travel behavior
Kim et al. (2015) – Elderly travel behavior	Age, Income, Travel motivation

Table 2 Synthesis of Key Variables

For Objective 2, the findings indicate that most studies focused on service quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intention, while limited attention was given to financial and psychological factors such as risk perception and value sensitivity. In addition, personal factors such as age and income were considered in some studies, but not consistently across the literature.

The results for Objective 3: Research Gaps and Areas Requiring Further Investigation.

The findings reveal that research on silver generation passengers remains limited and underexplored, particularly due to challenges in data collection. Key gaps include the lack of integration between financial and psychological factors, such as risk perception and value sensitivity. Moreover, most studies focus on general passengers rather than elderly groups. Therefore, future research should specifically examine silver generation passengers to better understand their airline selection behavior.

In contrast, the findings also suggest that service quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intention have been extensively studied using similar quantitative approaches. Further research in these areas may provide limited new insights unless new perspectives or specific target groups, such as elderly passengers, are incorporated.

Conclusion

This study highlights that research on airline passenger behavior has mainly focused on service-related factors, with limited attention to elderly passengers and financial or psychological aspects. Future research should focus on the silver generation to provide deeper insights for airline marketing and service design.

Discussion and Recommendation

The findings are consistent with prior studies in tourism and passenger behavior, which emphasize service quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intention as key determinants of travel decisions (Kim et al., 2015; World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2016; Suau-Sanchez et al., 2020). Similar trends have also been identified in research synthesis studies, highlighting the dominance of quantitative approaches and recurring research themes (Kitchenham, 2004; Tranfield et al., 2003).

However, this study extends existing literature by identifying the underrepresentation of silver generation passengers and the limited integration of financial and psychological factors, such as risk perception and value sensitivity. Future research should develop more comprehensive models and adopt diverse methodologies, particularly qualitative approaches, to better understand elderly passengers. Practically, airlines should design age-friendly services and targeted marketing strategies to address this growing segment.

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ENHANCING TOEIC PREPARATION THROUGH CARTOON-BASED LEARNING AMONG AVIATION STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study aimed to compare students' English learning outcomes before and after instruction through cartoon-based learning, and to explore the reasons behind the improvement in students' performance. The research utilized TOEIC listening scores as the primary instrument and used the samples of the students who enrolled in the course "Communicative English in Aviation." Data were analyzed using a paired t-test. The findings revealed that students showed some improvement in their performance. The observations and informal interviews indicated that students were more interested in cartoon-based learning materials than traditional real-life or formal instructional media. The use of cartoons helped reduce learning-related stress, encouraged students to express themselves more confidently, and created a more relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere. This contrasts with traditional formal teaching methods, which may limit student engagement and participation.

Keywords: *cartoon-based learning, TOEIC, aviation English*

Introduction

English language proficiency is a crucial requirement for aviation students, particularly in TOEIC preparation, which is commonly used as a graduation criterion and a benchmark for employment in the aviation industry (Educational Testing Service [ETS], 2022). Aviation professionals are expected to communicate effectively in English or meet specific language score requirements. However, TOEIC preparation courses are often perceived as stressful and demanding, as students are required to achieve a minimum score to graduate. This challenge is especially evident among Thai students, who may have limited English proficiency while managing a heavy academic workload.

Although English language education in Thailand has been implemented from an early age, many Thai learners still demonstrate limited communicative competence. One major reason is that English instruction in Thailand has traditionally emphasized test-oriented learning and score achievement rather than communicative language use. As a result, students tend to focus on memorization and examination performance instead of developing a deep understanding of the language. Many learners show relatively strong reading skills but struggle with listening comprehension and writing, as they are often trained through passive learning approaches (Vandergrift & Goh, 2018; Nguyen & Habók, 2021).

Furthermore, learning English in Thailand is often associated with psychological discomfort. Many learners feel embarrassed to use English and fear making mistakes, as the language is perceived as distant from their daily lives and closely linked to formal or academic contexts (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019; Teimouri, Goetze, & Plonsky, 2019). This issue is further intensified in traditional classroom settings, where formal teaching methods may

increase anxiety and reduce students' willingness to communicate. Consequently, many learners avoid using English, which limits their opportunities for practice and slows the development of communicative competence. Historically, English in Thailand has also been perceived as an elite language, similar to French in earlier periods, and associated with higher social status and formal education (Foley, 2005; Baker, 2012). This perception has created a psychological barrier, where English is viewed as difficult and inaccessible rather than as a practical communication tool.

In response to these challenges, this study proposes the use of cartoon-based learning as an alternative instructional approach. Cartoon-based media can create a more relaxed and engaging learning environment, reduce anxiety, and increase students' motivation and participation. Since TOEIC content is closely related to everyday and workplace situations, it can be effectively integrated with cartoon-based materials. This approach aims to transform TOEIC preparation from a stressful and passive learning experience into an engaging and meaningful learning process.

Research Objectives

1. To compare students' TOEIC learning outcomes before and after the implementation of cartoon-based learning.
2. To investigate the factors contributing to students' performance improvement when using cartoon-based learning.

Research Questions

1. What are the effects of cartoon-based learning on students' TOEIC performance?
2. How does cartoon-based learning influence students' learning experience and effectiveness?

Literature Review and Theory

This study is grounded in key theoretical perspectives related to TOEIC, communicative language use, and engagement-based learning:

1. TOEIC and Communicative Language Use

The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) is designed to assess English proficiency in real-world workplace contexts, particularly in business and service industries such as aviation. Rather than focusing on academic language, TOEIC emphasizes practical communication skills, including listening comprehension and the ability to understand everyday and professional interactions (Educational Testing Service [ETS], 2022).

The listening component of TOEIC reflects authentic communication scenarios, requiring learners to process spoken language, identify key information, and interpret meaning in context. Therefore, effective TOEIC preparation should focus on communicative competence rather than rote memorization or test-taking strategies alone. This aligns with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes meaningful interaction and real-life language use as essential components of language learning (Richards, 2006).

2. Engagement and Motivation in Learning

Effective learning is not determined solely by instructional effectiveness, but also by the level of student engagement. Engagement refers to the degree of attention, interest, and involvement that students demonstrate during the learning process (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2019). According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), learners are more motivated when they experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the learning environment (Ryan & Deci, 2020). When students feel interested and emotionally connected to the learning content, they are more likely to sustain attention, participate actively, and achieve better learning outcomes. In addition, research in positive psychology suggests that enjoyment and reduced anxiety play significant roles in language learning. Learners who experience positive

emotions are more willing to communicate and engage with the language, leading to improved performance (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019). Therefore, incorporating engaging and enjoyable learning materials, such as cartoon-based media, can enhance both motivation and participation. This approach helps transform learning from a passive, test-oriented process into an active and meaningful experience, ultimately improving students' TOEIC performance.

A number of previous studies have highlighted the effectiveness of multimedia and engagement-based approaches in improving English language learning, particularly listening skills. For example, Zhang and Zou (2020) found that multimedia-assisted language learning significantly enhanced students' listening comprehension and motivation. Similarly, Kim and Kim (2021) reported that gamified and media-based instruction increased student engagement and improved language performance. In addition, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019) emphasized the role of positive emotions, such as enjoyment, in reducing anxiety and promoting active participation in language learning. More recently, Wang and Huang (2022) demonstrated that video-based and contextualized learning materials helped learners better understand real-life communication and retain language more effectively. These findings suggest that incorporating engaging media, such as cartoons, can improve both learning outcomes and student engagement, supporting the use of alternative instructional approaches in TOEIC preparation.

Methodology

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design. Prior to the implementation, the researcher, who was also the course instructor, explored students' learning preferences and found that students were more engaged when cartoon-based materials were used. A preliminary observation (pre-initial study) indicated that students demonstrated higher levels of participation during cartoon-based instruction. They appeared more active, engaged in discussions, and responded with enthusiasm, in contrast to traditional theory-based or textbook-oriented instruction, where students tended to be passive and quiet.

Based on these observations, the instructor integrated cartoon-based learning into the course "Communicative English for Aviation." Approximately 30 minutes per week were allocated to cartoon-based instruction over a period of 15 weeks. The instructional content focused on listening skills, using cartoon scenarios related to everyday and workplace contexts such as dining, social interactions, hotel services, traveling, and ticket reservations. This approach provided students with a wider range of vocabulary and created a more engaging learning environment.

To measure learning outcomes, students were assessed using TOEIC listening tests administered before and after the intervention. The sample consisted of 38 students. The data were analyzed using a paired t-test to compare pre-test and post-test scores. In addition, qualitative data were collected through classroom observations and unstructured interviews. Participatory observation was conducted during classroom activities to capture students' engagement and learning behaviors in a natural setting.

Results

The findings of this study were based on the comparison of students' TOEIC listening scores before and after the implementation of cartoon-based learning. Although the total number of students enrolled in the course was approximately 38, only those with complete pre-test and post-test data were included in the statistical analysis ($n = 38$).

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare students' TOEIC listening scores before and after the intervention. The results indicated a significant improvement in students' performance. The mean pre-test score ($M = 222$, $SD = 125$) was significantly lower than the mean post-test score ($M = 518$, $SD = 224$), $t(37) = 9.27$, $p < .001$. These findings suggest that cartoon-based learning had a positive effect on students' listening performance. Despite

variations in students' initial proficiency levels, most students demonstrated improvement after the intervention.

The results from unstructured interviews with 10 students revealed three key themes. First, students reported feeling less stressed and less pressured during the learning process. Second, they perceived the lessons as more dynamic, with greater variation in instructional activities. Third, students described the classroom atmosphere as less competitive and more enjoyable, which helped them learn more comfortably and retain information more effectively.

Findings from participatory classroom observation further supported these results. Students showed higher levels of enjoyment and increased interaction with their peers compared to traditional instruction. They engaged in both visual and auditory learning by connecting cartoon imagery with spoken language. Moreover, students appeared more confident and willing to express themselves, interacting more actively with the instructor. Overall, the learning environment became more dynamic and interactive, reflecting a shift from passive learning to active engagement.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that cartoon-based learning can effectively enhance students' TOEIC listening performance as well as their overall learning experience. The quantitative findings showed a significant improvement in students' post-test scores compared to pre-test scores, while the qualitative findings indicated higher levels of engagement, reduced anxiety, and a more positive classroom atmosphere. Overall, the results suggest that integrating engaging and enjoyable learning materials can transform TOEIC preparation from a stressful, test-oriented activity into a more meaningful and effective learning process.

Discussion and Recommendations

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research emphasizing the role of engagement and positive emotions in language learning. According to Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019), enjoyment plays a crucial role in reducing anxiety and enhancing learners' willingness to communicate. Similarly, Fredricks et al. (2019) highlight that student engagement significantly influences learning outcomes across cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. The results also support the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which suggests that combining visual and auditory inputs can enhance comprehension and retention (Mayer, 2021). In this study, cartoon-based learning allowed students to process both visual and auditory information simultaneously, leading to improved listening performance.

In comparison with studies conducted in Asian contexts, similar findings have been reported. For instance, Zhang and Zou (2020) found that multimedia-based instruction significantly improved listening comprehension among Chinese university students. Likewise, Kim and Kim (2021) demonstrated that media-based and gamified learning increased student motivation and performance in English language learning.

In the context of aviation education, English proficiency is a critical skill, as aviation students are required to communicate effectively in international environments. However, students in aviation programs often face heavy academic workloads and performance pressure, particularly in TOEIC preparation. The findings of this study suggest that incorporating engaging instructional methods, such as cartoon-based learning, can reduce stress and create a more supportive learning environment, which is particularly beneficial for aviation students who must balance technical and language learning demands.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed.

First, instructors should consider integrating engaging and multimedia-based learning materials, such as cartoons, into TOEIC preparation courses to enhance student engagement and reduce learning anxiety.

Second, while cartoon-based learning is effective in improving engagement and listening skills, it may not be suitable for all types of content. Therefore, it should be combined with other instructional methods, such as structured practice, test strategies, and interactive activities, to ensure comprehensive learning outcomes.

Third, future research should expand the sample size and include students from other aviation institutions or related fields to improve the generalizability of the findings.

Finally, further studies may explore the long-term impact of engagement-based learning approaches on language proficiency and professional communication skills, particularly in aviation and service-related contexts.

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**REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AND SUPPLY CHAIN RECONFIGURATION:
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CUPSTOCK PAPERBOARD
PROCUREMENT UNDER THAILAND'S FOOD CONTACT
IMPORT CONTROL POLICY**

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Abstract

This study examines how importers of cupstock paperboard adjust their international purchasing and supply chain strategies to comply with Thailand's TIS 2948-2562 and TIS 3438-2565 standards. Shifting from voluntary to mandatory compliance introduces three primary challenges: increased operating costs and shrinking profit margins; longer lead times caused by additional customs clearance procedures; and the potential for supply chain disruption if overseas suppliers fail to meet the standards. As a result, the industrial sector must prioritize supply chain risk management and supplier relationships over simple cost-reduction strategies. A qualitative approach is used, involving in-depth interviews with three groups: integrated suppliers, specialized coaters, and strategic importers. The findings will establish a strategic framework to help food packaging companies manage the cupstock paperboard supply chain more effectively.

Keywords: International Procurement, Supply Chain Risk Management, Resilience

Introduction

The enforcement of the mandatory industrial standards TIS 2948-2562 and TIS 3438-2565 heavily creates significant and complicated strategic impacts on Thailand's food-contact paper packaging industry, especially regarding cost management and profit stability. The transition from voluntary to mandatory leads to unavoidable operating expenses in every level of the supply chain. Besides the direct certification fee required by the Thai Industrial Standard Institute (TISI) and the expenses associated with the laboratory test, the manufacturers need to burden themselves with the higher raw material cost for food-contact-grade paper, which complies with chemical migration limits and remains free of the optical brightening agents (OBA) [13]. These costs create high pressure on the industry's profit margins, which are already negatively impacted by the rise of material costs [7, 8]. Meanwhile, the additional inspection process due to the new regulations results in a significant extension of the

operational lead time and becomes a critical business constraint. The bottleneck has occurred during the process of laboratory tests to analyze the heavy metal concentrations and chemical migration under high-temperature conditions. This complicated analytical process can take several months [13]. The lack of legal certification prevents customs clearance, so the goods cannot be imported to Thailand during this period. This regulation complicates the logistics management and obstructs the responsiveness of fast-moving food packaging industries that demand rapidity to meet modern consumer behaviors, leading to potential financial losses and supply chain disruptions for businesses reliant on timely imports. Furthermore, the additional process in customs protocols has extended the duration of import clearance lead time for the importers. Moreover, the risk of supply chain disruption is considered the most critical factor that affects the continuity of the business.

The structure of Thailand's food-contact paper packaging heavily relies on the import of cupstock paperboard. The value of imports has grown by 34.6% in just two years, from 579.1 million baht in 2023 to 779.3 million baht in 2025 [12]. This trend clearly highlights the dominance of imported volume over domestic production capacity to meet local demand. The risk goes up when many foreign suppliers, especially small manufacturers without complete production systems, might not be ready or willing to improve their processes to pass a factory audit by the TISI. If these business partners fail to meet the mandatory standards, Thai importers will face a sudden shortage of raw materials and extremely high switching costs in sourcing new certified partners. This is compounded by a volatile supply chain reliance on only one domestic paper manufacturer capable of producing base paper for food contact that meets these standards. These situations force procurement people to shift from a cost-oriented approach to a compliance-oriented strategy to mitigate legal risks and future market share losses.

Objectives

The purpose of this study is to examine how mandatory TIS 2948-2562 and TIS 3438-2565 affect cupstock paperboard procurement procedures and international sourcing and to suggest a resilient international sourcing framework that balances between cost-effectiveness and the food packaging industry's regulatory compliance.

Literature Review

1. Regulatory Framework and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)

In the situation that the import tariffs across the globe have been reduced to a very low level, non-tariff measures (NTMs), particularly technical barriers to trade (TBTs), have become a primary instrument for current national trade policy. These measures include technical regulations, standards, and conformity verification procedures that may create an essential impact on international trade [18]. These regulations aim to protect consumers' safety and environmental health in the food packaging industry. On the other hand, they present complex

operational challenges for international procurement processes.

Technical barriers to trade are a dual-edged instrument. On one side, they function as trade regulations that increase cost through the expenses companies need to pay to be certified and, respectively, to comply with the standard [2]. On the other side, TBTs often lead to a trade volume decrease, especially for those companies that have limited resources to follow the stringent domestic standard [17]. When the regulations between the importing and exporting countries do not align, the trade limit's effects will be more pronounced. This will potentially force the smaller or unprepared exporters out of the market [3, 4].

Conversely, contemporary literature suggests that TBTs can also act as catalysts for quality upgrading, although they may probably force lower-quality companies to exit the market. However, companies that survive tend to invest in research and development and upgrade their production factors, which results in higher export prices and sales [3]. For Thai packaging companies, the mandatory enforcement of the TIS standards is like determining them to switch to higher-quality international suppliers who can provide materials certified to meet chemical diffusion criteria.

The transition of TIS 2948-2562f and TIS 3438-2565 from voluntary to mandatory standards represents a significant technical barrier to Thai trade [4]. These standards force stringent Specific Trade Concerns (STCs) regarding chemical safety, factory audit requirements by the TISI, and laboratory diffusion testing for overseas factories. Therefore, companies need to adjust their procurement strategies, prioritizing suppliers who can provide pre-certified, food-contact-grade bases and coated papers to comply with the new regulations.

Integrating a Food Safety Management System (FSMS) into organizational operations can help reduce the difficulty in complying with the technical regulations. By aligning its procurement strategies with the requirements of the TIS standard, the company can transform technical hurdles into competitive advantages. This ensures market access and builds consumer confidence in a highly regulated food safety environment [11].

2. Supply Chain Resilience and Compliance Management

A company's ability to maintain operational continuity in the situation of increasing global volatility depends on the resilience of its supply chain and the effectiveness of its regulatory compliance management systems. For the paper packaging industry, resilience is not only the ability to recover from physical disruptions but also adapting to regulatory shocks such as the adoption of mandatory technical standards. Supply chain resilience refers to the ability to adapt to and prepare for unexpected events, respond to disruptions, and return to desired operational levels [10][6]. However, lean manufacturing models, which focus on cost-effectiveness, might not be able to handle the modern disruptions. Therefore, companies need to transition to agile-focused supply chain management (SCM) [15], which prioritizes stability over seeking the lowest cost [6].

Food safety and quality standards closely relate to compliance management in the

packaging industry. Implementing an integrated management system (IMS), which includes the food safety management system (FSMS), significantly improves business performance [11]. In Thailand's industrial sector, adherence to TIS 2948-2562 and TIS 3438-2565 is essential for minimizing legal risks and financial losses, as these ensure that all imported raw materials meet specified chemical emission criteria [9].

Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) has become a crucial foundation for mitigating operational risk and regulatory compliance risk. Companies that emphasize SRM demonstrate a lower risk profile compared to those that concentrate solely on transactional procurement [9]. The transition of perspective from considering suppliers as “sellers” to “strategic partners” is essential in managing complex regulations such as the TISI factory audit. The primary factors that enhance the collaboration are trustworthiness and transparency, which function as significant intermediaries in mitigating risks [9, 16]. Furthermore, collaboration and information sharing ensure alignment of technical requirements and certification timelines that are vital for international procurement [10, 16]. In today's industry, advanced technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics allow for the real-time monitoring of supplier performance and compliance [5, 16].

Effectively managing risk requires a strategic approach to supplier segmentation. While the Kraljic Matrix focuses on power dynamics and profit potential, a model centered on Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) emphasizes the importance of relationships, including mutual support and collaborative problem-solving [15, 19]. Cultivating trust with international manufacturers allows Thai importers to more effectively manage the intricate TISI certification requirements. When importers and exporters work together at the organizational level, operations tend to run more smoothly, and product quality improves. This, in turn, bolsters a company's standing in markets with stringent regulations [1].

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach, using a single case study to explore real-world situations in the Thai food packaging industry. This is during the transition of the Thai Industrial Standard (TIS) from being voluntary to legally required. To ensure the results were reliable and accurate, the researcher used methodological triangulation. Data from both secondary and primary sources were combined to provide both statistical and practical strategic perspectives.

In the first part of the data collection process, the researcher began by analyzing quantitative secondary data to create a robust database. This study utilizes import statistics from the Customs Department from 2023 to 2025. The analysis concentrates on Harmonized System (HS) codes pertinent to the cupstock supply chain, encompassing both base paperboard (codes 4805.92.90 and 4805.93.90) and coated paperboard (codes 4811.51.99 and 4811.59.99). This investigation seeks to ascertain prevailing market trends, the extent of market share held by

principal supply sources like China and Indonesia, and the strategic stockpiling practices observed before the law's comprehensive enactment.

Following this, the primary data was gathered via qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted with key informants purposefully chosen from different departments within a prominent cupstock paperboard supplier. Specifically, the purchasing department was interviewed to examine cost management strategies, and the quality assurance (QA) department was consulted to elucidate the intricacies of chemical dispersion testing. The researcher also consulted the research and development (R&D) department to understand the technical requirements of the TIS standard. Furthermore, three groups of external supply chain partners were interviewed: integrated suppliers to assess domestic production capabilities; specialized coaters to analyze risks in the import-for-processing model; and strategic importers/traders to understand the role of agents in managing overseas factory audits.

The data analysis used a mixed-methods approach. Import statistics were analyzed for year-on-year trends and market share to identify changes in product sources. Interview data was then subjected to thematic analysis to identify key issues such as compliance barriers, supply chain risks, and strategic adaptation models such as the use of a trader-as-a-proxy system. Finally, data from all sources were triangulated to explain the underlying causes of statistical changes and assess the practical feasibility of the proposed procurement framework. While maintaining ethical principles in research, the identities of companies and data providers are anonymized to strictly preserve business confidentiality.

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A STUDY ON GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING SERVICE QUALITY FOR THAI SENIOR TOUR GROUPS TRAVELING TO JAPAN

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Abstract

This study, “A Study on Guidelines for Improving Service Quality for Thai Senior Tour Groups Traveling to Japan,” aims to explore key factors influencing service quality and develop practical guidelines for enhancing tourism services for Thai senior travelers. A qualitative research approach was employed using in-depth interviews with 20 participants, including Thai senior tourists, tour guides, and tour operators. Data was analyzed through thematic analysis.

The findings identify six key themes affecting service quality: personalized care and empathy, health and safety, communication and language support, tour design and pacing, professionalism of tour staff, and physical comfort. Among these, empathy and individualized attention emerged as the most critical factors influencing satisfaction. The study highlights the importance of senior-friendly service design, particularly in terms of safety, accessibility, and flexible itineraries. The results provide valuable insights for tour operators to improve service quality and better meet the needs of an aging tourist segment, contributing to sustainable development in senior tourism.

Keywords: Senior Tourism, Service Quality, Japan, Outbound tour

Introduction

In recent years, the global tourism industry has experienced significant growth, particularly in the senior travel segment. Thailand has entered an aging society, resulting in a steady increase in the number of elderly tourists participating in outbound travel. Japan has become one of the most popular destinations for Thai senior tour groups due to its safety, well-developed infrastructure, healthcare services, and cultural attractions. On the other hand, providing high-quality services tailored to the specific needs of senior tourists remains a critical challenge for tour operators.

Service quality plays a crucial role in shaping tourist satisfaction, loyalty, and overall travel experience. For senior tourists, factors such as accessibility, safety, comfort, clear communication, and appropriate pace of travel are especially important. Despite the growing market, there is still a lack of empirical quantitative research focusing specifically on service quality improvements for Thai senior tour groups traveling abroad, particularly in the context of Japan.

This study, titled “A Study on Guidelines for Improving Service Quality for Thai Senior Tour Groups Traveling to Japan,” aims to examine key dimensions of service quality and their impact on satisfaction among Thai senior tourists. Using a quantitative research approach, this study seeks to identify significant factors influencing perceived service quality and to develop practical guidelines for tour operators to enhance their services.

The findings of this research are expected to contribute to both academic literature and the tourism industry by providing data-driven insights into service quality management for the senior travel market. Furthermore, the results will support tour companies in designing more effective and inclusive tourism services that respond to the needs of an aging population.

Objectives

To Study on Guidelines for Improving Service Quality for Thai Senior Tour Groups Traveling to Japan

Literature Review

Service quality has been widely recognized as a key determinant of customer satisfaction and behavioural intention in the tourism industry. One of the most influential models for measuring service quality is the SERVQUAL model proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), which consists of five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These dimensions have been extensively applied in tourism and hospitality research to evaluate tourists’ perceptions and expectations of service delivery.

In the context of tourism, service quality significantly influences tourist satisfaction, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth communication (Chen & Tsai, 2007). High service quality can enhance the overall travel experience, particularly for organized tour groups where tourists rely heavily on tour operators and guides. For outbound tourism, cultural understanding, communication, and service customization are also critical factors affecting perceived quality.

Senior tourism has emerged as an important market segment due to global demographic changes. Elderly tourists tend to have specific needs, such as health and safety considerations, accessibility, slower-paced itineraries, and personalized services (Patterson, 2012). Research indicates that service providers must adapt their offerings to accommodate age-related limitations while ensuring comfort and security (Jang & Wu, 2006). Moreover, emotional support and empathy from service staff are particularly important for senior travellers.

Japan has been identified as a preferred destination for Thai tourists due to its high standards of cleanliness, safety, transportation efficiency, and hospitality. However, differences in language, culture, and service expectations may create challenges for Thai senior tour groups. Therefore, tour operators must carefully design service processes that align with both the expectations of Thai seniors and the service environment in Japan.

Although previous studies have examined service quality and senior tourism separately, there is limited quantitative research focusing specifically on Thai senior tour groups traveling to Japan. This study, “A Study on Guidelines for Improving Service Quality for Thai Senior Tour Groups Traveling to Japan,” aims to fill this gap by applying service quality frameworks to identify key factors influencing satisfaction and to develop practical guidelines for improving service delivery in this niche market.

Methodology

This study, “A Study on Guidelines for Improving Service Quality for Thai Senior Tour Groups Traveling to Japan,” adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the factors powering perceived service quality and satisfaction among Thai senior tourists.

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was employed to collect data from Thai senior tourists who have participated in organized tour groups going to Japan. The study focuses on measuring perceptions of service quality using structured questionnaires based on established theoretical frameworks.

Population and Sample

The target population consists of Thai tourists aged 60 years and above who have travelled to Japan with tour groups. A sample size of approximately 20 respondents is considered adequate for statistical analysis. A non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling, was used to select respondents who meet the study criteria.

Research Instrument

Data were collected a structured questionnaire divided into three sections:

1. Demographic information (e.g., age, gender, travel experience)
2. Service quality measurement based on the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988), including five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy
3. Tourist satisfaction and behavioural intentions

Data Collection

Data were collected through In-depth interview surveys distributed to Thai senior tourists, travel clubs, and tour agencies. Prior to the main survey,

Data Analysis

This qualitative study collected data through interviews from 20 participants selected

via purposive sampling. All sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving systematic coding, identification of patterns, and development of key themes. The analysis was iterative, with continuous comparison across transcripts to ensure consistency and depth of interpretation. Measures to enhance rigor included peer review of codes and maintaining an audit trail.

Results

This study, “A Study on Guidelines for Improving Service Quality for Thai Senior Tour Groups Traveling to Japan,” employed in-depth interviews with 20 key informants, including Thai senior tourists, tour guides, and tour operators. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, resulting in several key themes related to service quality improvement.

Theme 1: Personalized Care and Empathy

Participants emphasized the importance of individualized attention and emotional support. Senior tourists highly valued tour guides who demonstrated patience, kindness, and understanding of age-related needs. Empathy was identified as a critical factor influencing satisfaction and comfort throughout the trip.

Theme 2: Health, Safety, and Accessibility

Health and safety were major concerns among senior travelers. Respondents highlighted the need for accessible transportation, frequent rest stops, and emergency preparedness. Clear safety instructions and support in case of health issues were considered essential components of service quality.

Theme 3: Clear Communication and Language Support

Communication barriers were identified as a key challenge, particularly in Japan where language differences may occur. Participants stressed the importance of clear explanations, use of the Thai language by tour leaders, and assistance with translation to ensure smooth travel experiences.

Theme 4: Appropriate Tour Design and Pace

Senior tourists preferred well-structured itineraries with a slower pace, allowing adequate time for rest and enjoyment. Overly tight schedules and physically demanding activities were seen as reducing satisfaction. Flexible tour programs tailored to seniors’ capabilities were strongly recommended.

Theme 5: Reliability and Professionalism of Tour Staff

Participants highlighted the importance of experienced and knowledgeable tour guides who could manage time effectively and handle unexpected situations. Professionalism, punctuality, and problem-solving skills were key attributes influencing trust and confidence.

Theme 6: Physical Comfort and Facilities

Comfortable transportation, quality accommodation, and suitable meal arrangements were also important. Seniors preferred facilities that are clean, convenient, and senior-friendly, such as elevators, handrails, and accessible amenities.

Summary of Findings

The findings suggest that service quality for Thai senior tour groups traveling to Japan is strongly influenced by human-centered factors, particularly empathy, communication, and care. Additionally, physical and operational elements such as accessibility, safety, and tour design play a supporting role in enhancing the overall travel experience.

Discussion

This study, “A Study on Guidelines for Improving Service Quality for Thai Senior Tour Groups Traveling to Japan,” provides important insights into service quality improvement from the perspective of Thai senior tourists. The findings highlight that human-centered service dimensions—particularly empathy, assurance, and communication—are the most critical factors influencing senior tourists’ experiences.

Consistent with recent studies, service quality remains a key determinant of tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Research indicates that higher service quality significantly enhances satisfaction and behavioral intentions, reinforcing the importance of delivering reliable and responsive services in tourism settings. In this study, the strong emphasis on empathy and personalized care aligns with findings that senior tourists require more emotional support and attention due to age-related needs. Similarly, service providers’ focus on front-line staff and safety has been identified as a crucial factor in attracting senior tourists.

Furthermore, the findings emphasize the importance of health, safety, and accessibility, which are consistent with recent research on senior tourism and well-being. Studies suggest that tourism plays a significant role in promoting healthy aging, but it requires appropriate service design that accommodates physical and psychological conditions of elderly travelers. This supports the need for tour operators to incorporate senior-friendly facilities, accessible transportation, and emergency preparedness into their service offerings.

In addition, communication challenges identified in this study reflect broader issues in international tourism, particularly for elderly travellers facing language barriers. Effective communication and cultural understanding are essential for improving service quality and reducing travel-related stress. The importance of clear information delivery and support services is also consistent with recent studies highlighting the role of service quality attributes in shaping tourist experiences and satisfaction.

Another important finding is the need for appropriate tour design and pacing. The preference for slower, flexible itineraries supports previous research indicating that senior tourists have distinct travel behaviours and preferences compared to other age groups.

However, recent literature also points out that research on senior-friendly tourism attributes and preferences is still limited, particularly in specific cultural contexts. This study contributes to filling this gap by providing context-specific insights for Thai senior tourists traveling to Japan.

Overall, this study extends existing knowledge by integrating service quality concepts with the unique needs of senior tourists in an outbound tourism context. The findings suggest that improving service quality for this segment requires a holistic approach that combines interpersonal care, operational efficiency, and senior-friendly service design.

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UNDERSTANDING TRAVEL BEHAVIOR AND MOTIVATION IN PACKAGE TOUR SELECTION AMONG RETIRED TOURISTS IN BANGKOK

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Abstract

This research aimed 1) to study the travel behavior of retired tourists in Bangkok, 2) to study the motivations influencing the selection of package tours, and 3) to study the decision-making processes of retired tourists. The research adopted a qualitative exploratory approach based on theoretical frameworks and conceptual interpretation. The findings showed that retired tourists prefer package tours due to convenience and ease of travel. They do not want to plan travel arrangements by themselves, especially transportation and accommodation. Safety is an important factor influencing their decisions, as they prefer structured travel with assistance and guidance. Emotional motivation such as relaxation, happiness, and enjoyment after retirement also plays a significant role. In addition, trust in tour operators was found to be a key factor in the decision-making process. Retired tourists tend to select tour services based on reputation and recommendations. Although package tours limit flexibility, they are considered reliable and suitable for elderly travelers.

Keywords: Retired Tourists, Package Tours, Travel Motivation, Tourist Behavior, Aging Society

Introduction

Over the past decades, Thailand has entered an aging society, with a significant increase in the elderly population. Retired tourists have become an important segment in the tourism industry (UNWTO, 2021) due to their financial stability and available time for travel.

Travel has become an important activity for retired individuals, as it provides relaxation, enjoyment, and improved quality of life (Kim & Moen, 2002). However, elderly tourists often face challenges related to physical limitations, safety concerns, and the complexity of travel planning.

Package tours have become a popular option among retired tourists because they provide organized services, including transportation, accommodation, and guided activities. These services help reduce the burden of travel planning and provide a sense of safety and convenience (Middleton, 2001).

However, package tours also have limitations, particularly in terms of flexibility and personalization. Therefore, it is important to understand how retired tourists perceive these advantages and limitations.

Based on these issues, this research aimed to explore travel behavior, motivations, and decision-making processes in selecting package tours among retired tourists in Bangkok.

Objectives

1. To study the travel behavior of retired tourists in Bangkok.
2. To study the motivations influencing the selection of package tours.
3. To study the decision-making processes of retired tourists.

Methodology

This research is qualitative in nature. The study adopted an exploratory approach based on theoretical frameworks related to tourism behavior, motivation, and decision-making.

The data collection method was derived from conceptual interpretation and representative scenarios based on existing studies. The analysis focused on understanding general patterns of behavior among retired tourists.

Descriptive analysis was used to interpret the data and identify key factors influencing travel behavior and decision-making processes. This study aims to provide conceptual insights into tourism behavior among elderly tourists, supported by previous empirical studies.

Results

The results of the study based on the objectives were:

1. Travel behavior of retired tourists in Bangkok

It was found that retired tourists prefer to use package tours due to convenience and ease of travel. Most elderly tourists do not want to plan travel arrangements by themselves, including transportation, accommodation, and travel schedules. Package tours are perceived as suitable for elderly travelers because they provide organized services and reduce travel complexity.

In terms of travel characteristics, retired tourists tend to travel with family members or relatives. Most of them prefer to use private transportation such as personal cars due to comfort and flexibility. Travel duration is usually short, such as 1–2 days, and travel frequency is approximately 2–4 times per year.

Furthermore, elderly tourists prefer destinations that are easy to access and do not require high physical activity, such as natural attractions or cultural and historical sites. They also prefer to travel during weekends or specific seasons such as winter.

This finding is consistent with previous studies which indicate that elderly tourists prioritize comfort, convenience, and family-oriented travel (Kanjanaewadee & Phumisathan, 2020; Thongchue et al., 2023). It can be concluded that travel behavior among elderly tourists is influenced by physical conditions, lifestyle, and the need for convenience and support.

2. Motivations influencing the selection of package tours

The study found that retired tourists are motivated by both emotional and practical factors.

Emotional motivations include relaxation, happiness, and the desire to improve quality of life after retirement. Traveling is considered as a form of reward and an opportunity to spend meaningful time with family members. In addition, travel provides opportunities for social interaction and stress relief.

Practical motivations include safety, convenience, and reduced complexity in travel planning. Package tours are preferred because they provide clear travel arrangements, reduce uncertainty, and offer assistance during the trip.

Moreover, facilities and services also play an important role in motivation. Elderly tourists prefer destinations that provide appropriate facilities such as accessibility, safety equipment, and comfortable accommodation.

These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that elderly tourists are influenced by both internal (push) and external (pull) factors (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981). In addition, safety, service quality, and facilities significantly influence satisfaction and motivation among elderly tourists (Suetrong & Rungsimanop, 2023).

Therefore, it can be concluded that both emotional satisfaction and functional benefits are important in influencing the travel decisions of elderly tourists.

3. Decision-making processes in selecting package tours

It was found that retired tourists rely on trust and familiarity when making decisions. They tend to choose tour operators with good reputation, previous experience, or recommendations from family members and friends.

Sources of information used in decision-making include personal networks, social media, and tourism-related information. Among these, recommendations from family and friends are considered the most reliable.

Safety is a key factor in decision-making, as elderly tourists tend to avoid risk and uncertainty. They prefer travel options that provide clear information, organized services, and support during the trip.

In addition, personal factors such as age, income, health condition, and lifestyle influence decision-making. Elderly tourists with different characteristics may have different preferences in selecting travel options.

External factors such as accessibility, facilities, and service quality also play an important role in influencing decisions.

These findings are consistent with previous studies which indicate that personal characteristics and environmental factors significantly influence decision-making (Chanthanasiri et al., 2023; Panisa, 2024).

Therefore, decision-making among elderly tourists is a complex process influenced by both internal and external factors, with trust and safety being the most important considerations.

Discussion and Recommendation

The findings showed that convenience, safety, and emotional motivation are important factors influencing retired tourists in selecting package tours. These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing comfort and risk reduction among elderly travelers.

Trust plays a crucial role in decision-making, as elderly tourists rely on recommendations and familiar service providers. This helps reduce uncertainty and increase confidence.

Tourism operators should improve service quality and design services that meet the needs of elderly tourists. Safety, convenience, and emotional satisfaction should be prioritized.

Future research should include empirical data to validate and expand these findings.

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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND AIRLINE BUSINESS STRATEGY IN THAILAND: FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURISTS' REVISIT INTENTION

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the factors influencing tourists' revisit intention in Thailand by integrating sustainable tourism development and airline business strategies. The research focuses on identifying key determinants, including sustainable tourism practices, airline service quality, and perceived value, which influence tourists' behavioral intention to revisit. A quantitative research approach was employed using a structured questionnaire distributed to tourists traveling in Thailand. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential analysis to determine the relationships between variables. The findings reveal that sustainable tourism factors and airline service quality significantly influence tourists' satisfaction and perceived value, which in turn affect their revisit intention. The study highlights the importance of aligning airline business strategies with sustainable tourism practices to enhance tourist experiences and encourage repeat visits. The results provide both theoretical and practical implications for policymakers and airline businesses in promoting sustainable tourism in Thailand.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Airline Business Strategy, Revisit Intention, Tourist Behavior, Thailand

Introduction

Tourism plays a crucial role in Thailand's economic development, contributing significantly to national income and employment. In recent years, the concept of sustainable tourism has gained increasing attention as stakeholders seek to balance economic growth with environmental preservation and social responsibility. At the same time, the aviation industry has become a key driver of tourism, particularly in facilitating both domestic and international travel. Airlines are not only transportation providers but also strategic partners in enhancing tourists' overall travel experience.

The growing competition in the airline industry has encouraged airlines to adopt innovative business strategies, including service quality enhancement, digital transformation, and customer experience management. These strategies are increasingly aligned with

sustainable tourism practices to meet the expectations of modern travelers who are more environmentally and socially conscious. As a result, understanding how sustainable tourism and airline business strategies jointly influence tourist behavior has become an important research area.

One of the key indicators of tourism success is tourists' revisit intention, which reflects their satisfaction, perceived value, and overall experience. Previous studies have often examined tourism factors or airline service quality separately. However, there is still a lack of integrated studies that combine sustainable tourism development with airline business strategies in explaining revisit intention, particularly in the context of Thailand.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the factors influencing tourists' revisit intention by integrating sustainable tourism and airline business strategy perspectives. The findings of this study are expected to provide initial insights for both tourism policymakers and airline operators in designing strategies that support sustainable tourism development and enhance long-term customer loyalty.

Objectives

1. To examine the key factors of sustainable tourism and airline business strategy in Thailand.
2. To explore the factors influencing tourists' revisit intention.
3. To provide initial insights into how sustainable tourism and airline strategies contribute to repeat travel behavior.

Research Questions

1. What are the key factors of sustainable tourism and airline business strategy influencing tourists' behavior?
2. Which factors significantly influence tourists' revisit intention in Thailand?
3. How do sustainable tourism and airline strategies contribute to repeat visitation?

Literature Review and Theory

Sustainable tourism has become an essential concept in modern tourism development, emphasizing the balance between economic growth, environmental protection, and social responsibility. According to sustainable tourism principles, tourism activities should minimize negative environmental impacts while maximizing benefits to local communities and stakeholders. In Thailand, sustainable tourism has been increasingly promoted through national policies and strategic plans to enhance long-term competitiveness.

In parallel, the airline industry plays a significant role in supporting tourism by providing accessibility and shaping tourists' travel experiences. Airline business strategy has evolved from focusing solely on operational efficiency to incorporating service quality, customer experience, and value creation. Concepts such as service quality and perceived value have been widely used to explain customer satisfaction and behavioral intention in the

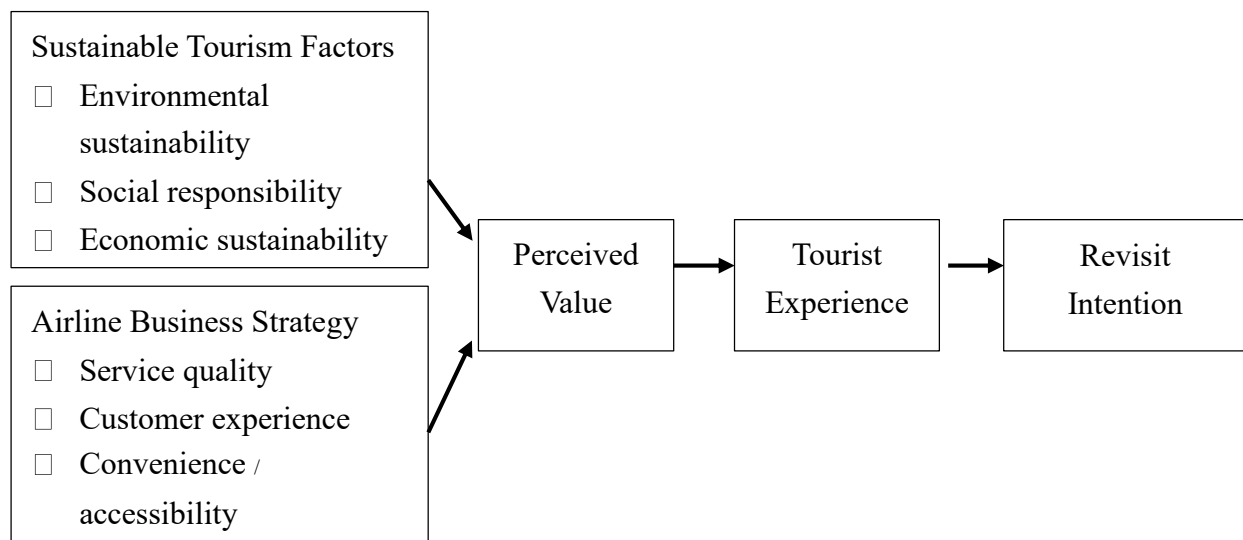
aviation context.

Tourists' revisit intention is considered a key indicator of tourism success. It reflects the likelihood that tourists will return to a destination based on their previous experiences. Previous studies have found that factors such as service quality, satisfaction, perceived value, and overall experience significantly influence revisit intention. However, most studies tend to examine tourism factors and airline service quality separately.

This study proposes that sustainable tourism and airline business strategy should be integrated to better understand tourists' behavioral intention. Sustainable practices can enhance tourists' perceptions of responsibility and trust, while effective airline strategies can improve service experience and perceived value. Together, these factors are expected to influence tourists' revisit intention.

Conceptual Framework

This study proposes a conceptual framework in which sustainable tourism factors and airline business strategy are considered as key determinants influencing tourists' perceived value and overall experience, which subsequently affect revisit intention.



Methodology

This study adopts a conceptual and exploratory research approach to examine the relationships between sustainable tourism, airline business strategy, and tourists' revisit intention in Thailand. The study is based on a review of relevant literature and theoretical concepts in tourism and aviation management.

The conceptual framework is developed to identify the key variables influencing revisit intention, including sustainable tourism factors, airline business strategy, perceived value, and tourist experience. This study aims to provide initial insights and propose directions for future empirical research.

Future research may employ a quantitative approach using structured questionnaires to collect data from tourists traveling in Thailand. Statistical techniques such as regression

analysis or structural equation modeling (SEM) can be applied to examine the relationships between variables.

Results

The study expects that sustainable tourism factors and airline business strategies will play significant roles in influencing tourists' perceptions and experiences. It is anticipated that tourists who perceive tourism practices as environmentally responsible and socially beneficial are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward the destination.

Additionally, airline business strategies focusing on service quality, convenience, and customer experience are expected to enhance perceived value. These factors are likely to contribute to higher levels of satisfaction and ultimately increase tourists' revisit intention.

The integration of sustainable tourism and airline strategy is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of tourist behavior, particularly in the context of repeat travel decisions.

Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of integrating sustainable tourism development with airline business strategies in influencing tourists' revisit intention in Thailand. The proposed conceptual framework provides initial insights into how sustainability and service-related factors jointly affect tourist behavior.

The findings suggest that tourism stakeholders and airline operators should collaborate to enhance both sustainability practices and service quality in order to strengthen tourist satisfaction and encourage repeat visits. This integrated approach can contribute to long-term tourism sustainability and competitiveness.

Discussion and Recommendation

The study contributes to the existing literature by linking sustainable tourism with airline business strategy, which are often studied separately. This integrated perspective provides a broader understanding of factors influencing revisit intention.

From a practical perspective, policymakers should promote sustainable tourism initiatives that align with airline strategies, such as reducing environmental impacts and improving accessibility. Airlines should focus on enhancing service quality and customer experience while incorporating sustainability into their operations.

For future research, empirical studies should be conducted to test the proposed conceptual framework using quantitative or mixed-method approaches. Further research may also explore additional variables such as customer satisfaction, trust, and destination image.

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TRAINING PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FOR FOREIGN PRACTITIONERS AT THAI BOXING GYMS

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Abstract

This study aims to develop Thai boxing training program for foreign practitioners. The sample comprises 400 foreign trainees from various countries. Research variables were identified through a literature review and selected by Thai boxing experts. Factor analysis and structural equation modeling were used to identify key variables and underlying factors training programs, the fitted structural equation model also identifies the most important attributes to target for improving Thai Boxing training operations.

Keywords: Thai boxing, sport tourism, Thai boxing gym operation

Introduction

Thai boxing training in Thailand has long focused on preparing Thai nationals to become professional fighters who compete for major stadium e.g., Lumpinee, Rajadamnern, earning trophies, prestige, and rewards. Regular Thai boxing practice also promotes good health.

Objective

To sustain operations and improve trainee satisfaction, Thai boxing gym businesses must identify the factors that drive trainee satisfaction.

Research Question

The purposes of these questions are to explore the preference of trainees for Thai boxing training gym aspects.

A. General information

1. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Objective of Thai boxing training approach in
☐ Health strengthening ☐ fighting ☐ Thai boxing business ☐ relaxation

B. Preference (level of importance) on each topic of Thai boxing training gym operation.

Please check “√” on the five-point Likert scale

(1. Unimportant, 2. Very little important, 3. Slightly important 4. Important 5. Very important).

Topic	Detail	1	2	3	4	5
Thai Boxing Training Program	1. Provide variety of training program (health, fighting, beginner, professional)					
	2. Various training styles					
	3. Support both group and individual training					
	4. Support both online, onsite and on demand training					
	5. Provide certificate for training					

Literature Review and Theory

Because Muay Thai gyms share many similarities with other businesses—such as fitness centers, wellness services, health-focused gyms, and personal training facilities—relevant literature from those areas was also included in the review e.g. Here's a cleaned, consolidated list with duplicates merged and wording improved: 1. Service quality 2. Equipment availability 3. Equipment condition 4. Training programs 5. Trainer and staff performance. Staff professionalism and ethics 7. Communication language / language barriers 8. Facilities (locker rooms, bathrooms, food service) 9. Parking availability 10. Recreation activities 11. Gym room condition 12. Gym location 13. Infrastructure 14. Comfort and security 15. Pricing 16. Hygiene and safety 17. Availability of Thai boxing equipment 18. Administrative staff / officers

Research Methodology

Exploratory factor analysis

The research attributes are selected from related research which passed expert consideration and suggestions. These attributes will be selected by the five experts by the attributes congruency with IOC10 technique.

Population and sample size

In 2026, 400 volunteers at Thai boxing gyms operating in Thailand are sampling group in the study.

Results

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was used to assess the strength of relationships among each factor and its proposed components. Latent variables (factors) were formed from the component factor loadings and serve as representative measures of their respective attributes. Sampling adequacy was confirmed by high KMO values (closer to +1 preferred) and Bartlett's test was significant at $\alpha = 0.05$. Components were retained if their factor loadings were ≥ 0.30 . The EFA results show that all attributes met these criteria (see Table 1).

Table 1 *The Result of Exploratory Factor Analysis for Training Program*

Factor Name	Factor loading	Result (accept if loading ≥ 0.30)
Training Program	0.792	accept
	0.885	accept
	0.874	accept
	0.791	accept
	0.647	accept

Table 2 summarizes the statistical significance tests for the structural and measurement model, showing which exogenous components significantly relate to the endogenous factor Training & Opinion in Training (TOT).

Table 2 summarizes the statistical significance

Exogenous factor		
Factor Name	Observed variable	Result
Training Program	Provide variety of training program (e.g. fighting, wellness, basic, professional)	***
	Versatile Training program for trainee	***
	Support both group and individual training	***
	Support both online, onsite and on demand training	NS
	Provide certificate for training	***

The statistical significance tests identifies the components that significantly relate to the endogenous factor training program. If the gym wants to improve “the level to which trainee expectations are met by overall Thai boxing training program component except the support in both online, onsite and on demand training.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings provide insight into trainee opinions from the experimental sample. For greater accuracy, follow-up empirical studies should be conducted on broader gym samples. The structural model reflects trainees’ nationalities, so the recommendations may not apply to all trainee subgroups and should be revalidated for specific populations. Improvement guidelines should be tested to confirm effectiveness. Implementing a Business Model Canvas targeted with SMART objectives will help ensure successful operations.

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GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL TOURISM MANAGEMENT TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY IN CHAI NAT PROVINCE, THAILAND

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Abstract

This study aims to explore guidelines for developing spiritual tourism management toward sustainability in Chai Nat Province, Thailand. A qualitative research approach was employed using in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including community leaders, religious representatives, tourism entrepreneurs, government officers, and tourists. Data were collected through purposive sampling and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal four main themes: (1) the strong potential of spiritual and cultural resources, (2) the importance of stakeholder collaboration, (3) the need for sustainable management practices focusing on environmental conservation and cultural preservation, and (4) the enhancement of service quality and tourist experiences. However, challenges such as limited policy integration, inadequate promotion, and lack of knowledge in sustainable tourism practices were also identified. The study suggests that sustainable spiritual tourism management requires a holistic approach that integrates local identity, community participation, and effective governance. These findings contribute to both academic understanding and practical guidelines for policymakers and tourism stakeholders in promoting sustainable spiritual tourism.

Keywords; Spiritual Tourism; Sustainable Tourism; Tourism Management; Chai Nat Province

Introduction

Spiritual tourism has emerged as a significant niche within sustainable tourism, integrating cultural, religious, and wellness dimensions to enhance travelers' inner well-being and meaningful experiences. In recent years, increasing global demand for mindfulness, healing, and authentic cultural engagement has contributed to the rapid growth of spiritual tourism, particularly in countries rich in religious heritage such as Thailand. This form of tourism not only promotes individual spiritual fulfillment but also supports community

development, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability (UNWTO, 2021; Sharma & Nayak, 2020).

Chai Nat Province, Thailand, is endowed with diverse spiritual resources, including sacred temples, religious rituals, and local beliefs that reflect deep-rooted cultural identities. However, the management of spiritual tourism in the province still faces challenges, such as lack of integrated planning, limited stakeholder collaboration, and insufficient sustainability practices. Without proper management, tourism activities may lead to cultural commodification and environmental degradation (Baloch et al., 2022).

Therefore, this study entitled “Guidelines for Developing Spiritual Tourism Management toward Sustainability in Chai Nat Province, Thailand” aims to explore appropriate management approaches by incorporating stakeholders’ perspectives and sustainable tourism principles. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of effective strategies that balance spiritual values, tourist satisfaction, and long-term sustainability.

Objectives

1. To explore guidelines for developing spiritual tourism management toward sustainability in Chai Nat Province.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore guidelines for developing spiritual tourism management toward sustainability in Chai Nat Province, Thailand. A phenomenological and exploratory design was adopted to gain in-depth insights into stakeholders’ perspectives, experiences, and expectations regarding spiritual tourism management.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with key informants selected using purposive sampling. The participants consisted of tourism stakeholders, including local community leaders, temple representatives, tourism entrepreneurs, government officers, and tourists, totaling approximately 12 informants. This sampling approach ensured the inclusion of individuals with direct experience and knowledge relevant to spiritual tourism in the study area (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The research instrument was a semi-structured interview guide developed based on concepts of sustainable tourism and spiritual tourism management. Data collection continued until data saturation was reached. All interviews were audio-recorded (with consent) and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the steps of data familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation. This method allowed the researcher to identify patterns and key themes related to sustainable spiritual tourism management (Braun & Clarke, 2021). To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied criteria including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, through techniques such as triangulation,

member checking, and peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Results

The findings of this study reveal several key themes related to the development of spiritual tourism management toward sustainability in Chai Nat Province, Thailand.

Firstly, spiritual and cultural resource potential was identified as a major strength. Participants highlighted the richness of sacred temples, local religious practices, and community beliefs that can attract tourists seeking meaningful and spiritual experiences. These resources form the foundation for developing authentic spiritual tourism aligned with local identity (Sharma & Nayak, 2020).

Secondly, stakeholder collaboration emerged as a critical factor. Informants emphasized the need for stronger cooperation among local communities, government agencies, religious institutions, and tourism operators. Effective collaboration can enhance planning, resource management, and service quality, leading to more sustainable tourism outcomes (Bramwell & Lane, 2020).

Thirdly, the theme of sustainable management practices was identified, including environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and community participation. Respondents stressed that tourism development should minimize negative impacts while maximizing socio-economic benefits for local communities, consistent with sustainable tourism principles (UNWTO, 2021).

Additionally, service quality and tourist experience were highlighted as important components. Participants suggested improving interpretation services, infrastructure, and hospitality to meet the expectations of both domestic and international tourists, particularly those seeking spiritual and wellness experiences.

Finally, challenges such as lack of integrated policy, limited promotion, and insufficient knowledge of sustainable practices were identified. These barriers hinder the effective development of spiritual tourism and require strategic guidelines and policy support.

Overall, the results suggest that sustainable spiritual tourism management in Chai Nat Province requires a holistic approach that integrates cultural authenticity, stakeholder engagement, and sustainability principles.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the importance of integrating spiritual, cultural, and sustainability dimensions in tourism management within Chai Nat Province, Thailand. The identification of rich spiritual and cultural resources supports previous studies that emphasize the role of authenticity and local identity in enhancing spiritual tourism experiences (Sharma & Nayak, 2020). These resources provide a strong foundation for developing tourism that meets the growing demand for meaningful and transformative travel.

The results also underscore the critical role of stakeholder collaboration, which is consistent with the concept of sustainable tourism governance. Effective cooperation among government agencies, local communities, and religious institutions is essential for ensuring balanced development and long-term sustainability (Bramwell & Lane, 2020). This aligns with the notion that participatory approaches enhance both decision-making processes and community ownership.

Furthermore, the emphasis on sustainable management practices reflects global tourism trends that prioritize environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and socio-economic benefits. The findings are in line with the framework proposed by the UNWTO (2021), which advocates for inclusive and sustainable tourism development. In the context of spiritual tourism, maintaining the authenticity of religious sites while managing visitor impacts is particularly important. This aligns with the findings of Bua Srikos et al. (2025), who demonstrated in the context of elderly care services in Thailand that excellence in service delivery is influenced by clear organizational guidelines, active stakeholder engagement, and continuous quality improvement. Just as elderly care services benefit from systematic management and stakeholder collaboration, spiritual tourism sites require similar approaches to balance visitor satisfaction, cultural preservation, and sustainable development.

However, the study also reveals several challenges, including limited policy integration, insufficient promotion, and gaps in knowledge regarding sustainable practices. These issues correspond with recent research indicating that many emerging tourism destinations face difficulties in aligning development strategies with sustainability principles (Baloch et al., 2022). Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive policy support, capacity building, and strategic planning.

In conclusion, this study suggests that the development of spiritual tourism in Chai Nat Province should adopt a holistic and collaborative approach, integrating cultural authenticity, stakeholder engagement, and sustainability principles to achieve long-term success.

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ANALYSIS OF TRAVEL BEHAVIOR AND SATISFACTION AMONG THAI GENERATION Z TOURISTS

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Abstract

This study investigates the travel behaviors and factors influencing the satisfaction of Thai Generation Z tourists (born 1997–2012). As digital natives, their travel patterns are characterized by a "Digital-First" approach, utilizing short-form video content (TikTok, Instagram) for inspiration and AI-driven tools for itinerary planning. Using a quantitative research design with a sample size of 400 respondents, the results indicate that satisfaction is primarily driven by "Aesthetic Appeal" (Instagrammability), "Seamless Digital Experiences," and "Value for Experience" rather than just low costs. Furthermore, Gen Z shows an increasing commitment to sustainability and authentic local engagement. These insights provide a strategic framework for tourism stakeholders to engage this influential demographic effectively.

Keywords Gen Z, Thai Tourists, Travel Behavior, Consumer Satisfaction, Digital Tourism, Sustainable Travel.

Introduction

The global tourism industry is undergoing a paradigm shift driven by the rise of **Generation Z (Gen Z)**. In Thailand, this cohort is becoming a dominant economic force with distinct travel preferences compared to previous generations. As "**Digital Natives**," Thai Gen Zs integrate technology into every stage of their journey—from discovery to post-trip sharing. Their travel is no longer just about leisure; it is a means of self-expression, identity building, and seeking unique, authentic experiences. Understanding their specific behaviors and satisfaction drivers is crucial for the survival and growth of tourism businesses in the 2026 landscape.

Current trends in 2026 suggest that Gen Z has moved away from traditional search engines toward "**Visual Search**" platforms. Previous studies highlight that "Authenticity" and "Contentability" are the two primary pillars of Gen Z's consumer journey. Unlike Millennials, Gen Z values personalized experiences facilitated by AI, and they view sustainable practices as a standard requirement rather than an optional luxury.

Objectives

1. To examine travel behaviors and motivations: Investigating how Thai Gen Z seeks information, plans trips, and chooses destinations based on niche interests.
2. To evaluate satisfaction drivers and ethical influences: Analyzing the key factors that lead to travel satisfaction, including digital convenience, aesthetics, and sustainability.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design to systematically investigate the travel behaviors and satisfaction levels of Thai Generation Z tourists. The target population encompasses Thai individuals born between 1997 and 2012 who have engaged in tourism within the past year. Using Yamane's formula with a 95% confidence level, a sample size of 400 respondents was determined, and data were collected via convenience and snowball sampling through online social media platforms. The research instrument consists of a structured questionnaire divided into three sections: demographic profiles, travel behavior patterns, and a 5-point Likert Scale to measure satisfaction across dimensions such as aesthetic appeal, digital convenience, value for experience, and sustainability. Data validity was ensured through the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), while reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient exceeding 0.70. Finally, the collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics—including mean and standard deviation—alongside inferential statistics such as t-tests, ANOVA, and Multiple Regression Analysis to identify significant predictors of tourist satisfaction.

Results

The analysis of the quantitative data gathered from 400 respondents reveals significant trends in the travel behaviors and satisfaction drivers of Thai Generation Z. Primarily, the results indicate a profound reliance on digital ecosystems, with **85%** of the sample identifying **TikTok and Instagram** as their primary sources for travel inspiration, while **70%** have integrated **AI-driven tools** into their itinerary planning. Regarding tourist satisfaction, the study found that **Aesthetic Appeal (Instagrammability)** and **Digital Integration (Seamless Booking and Payments)** yielded the highest mean scores of **4.8** and **4.7** respectively, suggesting that the visual potential of a destination and technological convenience are the most critical determinants of a positive experience. Furthermore, while price remains a factor, the data shows a shift towards **Value for Experience**, where respondents express higher satisfaction when provided with unique, authentic, and ethically-conscious activities. These findings confirm that for Thai Gen Z, the quality of a trip is measured not only by the destination itself but by its alignment with their digital lifestyle and personal values.

Discussion

The shift from Information Search to **Visual Search** suggests that Gen Z values "real" vibes over curated advertisements. The high importance of **Aesthetics** confirms that for Gen Z, travel serves as "Social Currency." They are looking for "**Value for Experience**," where the narrative of the trip justifies the cost. To capture this market, tourism operators must prioritize **Digital Integration, Authenticity, and Ethical Branding**.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE BEHAVIOR AND SATISFACTION OF FOREIGN TOURISTS VISITING BANGKOK, THAILAND

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Abstract

This study investigates the factors influencing foreign tourists' behavior and satisfaction in Bangkok within the 2026 tourism landscape. Using a phenomenological qualitative approach, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 international participants. Thematic analysis identified three primary satisfaction drivers: perceived cultural authenticity, seamless digital–physical integration, and the quality of spontaneous local interactions. Behavior was notably shaped by logistical friction and price-transparency concerns in traditional transport. Findings suggest that while Bangkok's pull factors—gastronomy and heritage—remain strong, modern satisfaction increasingly depends on the city's ability to deliver a frictionless travel environment.

Keywords: Bangkok Tourism, Qualitative Research, Tourist Behavior, Customer Satisfaction

Introduction

Bangkok remains one of the world's most visited cities, with Thailand welcoming over 35 million international visitors in 2024, driven by a strategic shift toward high-value, experience-based tourism (Panorama Destination, 2026). As travelers increasingly seek cultural immersion and personalized experiences, understanding the nuanced drivers of visitor behavior has become critical for sustainable destination management (Boontos & Uon, 2025). Tourist satisfaction is a complex construct shaped by push factors—novelty and relaxation—and pull factors such as destination image, culinary reputation, and perceived hospitality. Destination image, perceived authenticity, and staff attitude are significant predictors of revisit intention (ResearchGate, 2024), yet Bangkok's transportation logistics and rising demand for slow tourism expose persistent gaps in current service frameworks that this study addresses.

Objectives

To examine the factors influencing the behavior and satisfaction of foreign tourists visiting Bangkok, Thailand.

Methodology

A phenomenological qualitative design was employed to explore the lived experiences of international travelers. Purposive sampling selected 20 foreign nationals who had visited Bangkok within the previous six months (2025–2026), with diverse demographic backgrounds. Sample size was determined by data saturation (Choibamroong, 2025). Primary data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews at key tourist hubs—Sukhumvit, Old City, and Suvarnabhumi Airport—and via online video platforms. Interview questions addressed pre-trip expectations, on-site behavioral interactions, and post-trip satisfaction. Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-step thematic analysis framework. Trustworthiness was ensured through member checking and triangulation with field observations, with ethical approval, anonymity, and informed consent maintained throughout.

Results

Thematic analysis revealed four primary themes shaping foreign tourists' behavior and satisfaction in Bangkok.

1. Pursuit of “Soft” Authenticity and Cultural Immersion – The primary pull factor was intangible cultural atmosphere rather than physical landmarks. Highest satisfaction came from hidden local experiences such as neighborhood food tours and traditional wellness workshops.
2. Digital Dependency and Navigation Behavior – Tourist movement patterns are heavily shaped by social media geo-tags and AI-driven concierge apps. Satisfaction dropped when digital infrastructure—seamless e-payment and English-language navigation—failed to meet high-value traveler expectations (Liu et al., 2026).
3. The “Slow Tourism” Shift: Wellness and Sustainability – Nearly half of respondents sought Bangkok for its restorative qualities, from medical spas to green spaces such as Benchakitti Park. Satisfaction was linked to the city's capacity to provide urban escape within city limits (Minor Hotels, 2026).
4. Structural Barriers: Logistics and Safety Perceptions – Two recurring pain points emerged: logistical friction in last-mile connectivity between BTS/MRT stations and tourist sites, and price opacity in traditional transport (tuk-tuks) and street markets, driving preference for fixed-price digital platforms (Rodriguez Brindis, 2025).

Discussion

Findings underscore a shift from high-volume sightseeing toward purpose-driven engagement. While traditional literature emphasizes temples and shopping as Bangkok's primary pull factors, this study reveals that social and digital connectivity now function as a prerequisite pull factor—satisfaction hinges as much on the seamlessness of the digital–physical interface as on the destination itself, aligning with the Smart Tourism trend identified by Chanchomsri (2024).

A critical tension exists between tourist desire for raw authenticity and demand for modern convenience. Participants sought street food and local markets but reported dissatisfaction with opaque pricing and poor sanitary standards. Sustaining high satisfaction in 2026 requires Managed Authenticity—preserving local character while standardizing service quality (Rodriguez Brindis, 2025).

The emergence of wellness as a core satisfaction driver reflects a global shift toward health-conscious travel. Bangkok's transition from party destination to wellness hub addresses a more mature, high-spending demographic, with green spaces and mindfulness integration now key determinants of revisit intention, particularly for European and East Asian markets (Minor Hotels, 2026).

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A STUDY OF SERVICE USAGE BEHAVIOR AND PASSENGER SATISFACTION TOWARD THE SERVICE MARKETING MIX OF NOK AIR AND THAI AIRASIA ON THE BANGKOK–CHUMPHON ROUTE

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Abstract

This study aims to examine service usage behavior and passenger satisfaction toward the service marketing mix (7Ps) of Nok Air and Thai AirAsia on the Bangkok–Chumphon route. This research employed a quantitative approach, collecting data from 400 respondents through questionnaires. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. The results revealed that most passengers traveled for tourism purposes and preferred booking tickets via online platforms. In terms of satisfaction, Thai AirAsia received higher satisfaction levels than Nok Air across all dimensions of the service marketing mix. Key factors influencing passengers' decisions included price, promotion, and service process. The findings provide useful insights for airlines to improve service quality and develop effective marketing strategies.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Passenger Satisfaction, Service Marketing Mix (7Ps), Nok Air, Thai AirAsia, Bangkok–Chumphon Route

Introduction

The domestic aviation industry in Thailand has continuously expanded due to economic growth and tourism development. The emergence of low-cost airlines has increased travel accessibility and intensified competition among airlines. As a result, airlines must focus on improving service quality and marketing strategies to enhance customer satisfaction and maintain competitiveness.

Chumphon province, located in southern Thailand, has strong tourism potential and serves as a gateway to the southern region. Air transportation plays a crucial role in facilitating travel, reducing travel time, and supporting tourism growth. Currently, Nok Air and Thai AirAsia operate flights on the Bangkok–Chumphon route, offering different service marketing strategies.

In a highly competitive environment, understanding passenger behavior and satisfaction is essential. The service marketing mix (7Ps) provides a useful framework to analyze factors

influencing passenger decisions. Therefore, this study aims to explore passenger behavior and satisfaction toward airline services on this route.

Objectives

- 1.To study the service usage behavior of passengers using Nok Air and Thai AirAsia on the Bangkok–Chumphon route.
- 2.To examine passenger satisfaction toward the service marketing mix (7Ps) of both airlines

Methodology

This research employed a quantitative research design. Data were collected using questionnaires from 400 Thai passengers who had used Nok Air or Thai AirAsia services on the Bangkok–Chumphon route. The sampling was conducted during January to February 2026.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage, to describe demographic characteristics, travel behavior, and satisfaction levels.

Results

The findings showed that most respondents were female, aged between 31–40 years, single, and worked as private company employees. Most had a bachelor's degree and earned a monthly income of 20,001–30,000 Baht.

Regarding travel behavior, the majority traveled for tourism purposes, traveled 1–2 times per year, and often traveled in pairs. Most respondents preferred booking tickets through online platforms such as Agoda, Booking, and Traveloka.

In terms of satisfaction, most passengers preferred Thai AirAsia over Nok Air. Thai AirAsia received higher satisfaction scores in all aspects of the service marketing mix (7Ps), including product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence.

Discussion

The results indicate that price, promotion, and service process are the most influential factors affecting passenger decision-making. This finding is consistent with the concept of the service marketing mix (7Ps), which emphasizes that price, promotion, and process play critical roles in shaping customer perceptions and satisfaction (Booms & Bitner, 1981).

Passengers, especially working-age travelers, prioritize affordability, ease of booking, and efficient service processes. This aligns with consumer behavior theory, which suggests that customers evaluate services based on perceived value, convenience, and past experience (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The higher satisfaction levels of Thai AirAsia suggest that its marketing strategies and service delivery are more aligned with customer expectations.

These findings also support previous studies indicating that price and service quality

significantly influence passenger satisfaction and decision-making in the airline industry (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2018). In addition, a study by Aree Wongpiyanan (2018) found that service quality and price have a significant positive relationship with passenger satisfaction and intention to reuse airline services in Thailand.

Therefore, airlines should focus on competitive pricing, attractive promotions, and efficient service systems. Improving these factors can enhance customer satisfaction, increase repeat usage, and strengthen competitive advantage in the airline industry.

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GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICE QUALITY MANAGEMENT AT CHUMPHON AIRPORT

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Abstract

This study aims to explore and develop guidelines for improving service quality management at Chumphon Airport. A qualitative research approach was employed to gain in-depth insights from key stakeholders. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 15 participants, including airport staff, airline personnel, and passengers who have experience using Chumphon Airport services.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key issues and patterns related to service quality. The findings revealed that the major factors affecting service quality include staff performance, service process efficiency, facility conditions, and communication systems.

The study proposes practical guidelines for improving service quality, such as staff training, process improvement, facility enhancement, and the use of digital technology. These findings can be used by airport management to enhance service quality and passenger satisfaction.

Keywords: Service Quality, Airport Management, Passenger Satisfaction, Qualitative Research, Chumphon Airport

Introduction

Airports play a crucial role in supporting tourism and economic development, especially in regional areas such as Chumphon Province. As a gateway to southern Thailand, Chumphon Airport serves both domestic travelers and tourists. However, increasing competition in the aviation industry requires airports to continuously improve service quality to meet passenger expectations.

Service quality is a key factor influencing passenger satisfaction and overall travel experience. Poor service quality may lead to negative perceptions and reduced passenger loyalty. Therefore, it is essential to understand the current service conditions and identify areas for improvement.

This study adopts a qualitative approach to explore stakeholders' perspectives and develop practical guidelines for improving service quality management at Chumphon Airport.

Objectives

1. To explore the current service quality management at Chumphon Airport.
2. To identify key factors affecting service quality from stakeholders' perspectives.
3. To develop guidelines for improving service quality management at Chumphon Airport.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to obtain in-depth insights into service quality at Chumphon Airport.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 15 key informants, including airport staff, airline staff, and passengers. The participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevant experience.

The interview questions focused on service quality, problems encountered, and suggestions for improvement.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving data coding, categorization, and interpretation to identify key themes and patterns.

Results

The findings revealed four main themes affecting service quality at Chumphon Airport:

1. **Staff Performance** – Staff attitude, service mind, and communication skills significantly influence passenger satisfaction.
2. **Service Process** – The efficiency of check-in, security, and boarding processes affects the overall passenger experience.
3. **Physical Facilities** – Cleanliness, seating availability, signage, and the overall airport environment are important factors.
4. **Technology and Communication** – The availability of real-time information, digital systems, and announcements impacts service quality.

Participants also highlighted issues such as limited facilities, insufficient staff during peak hours, and a lack of clear information.

Discussion

The findings indicate that service quality at Chumphon Airport is influenced by multiple factors, particularly staff performance, service processes, and the physical environment. These results are consistent with the SERVQUAL model, which emphasizes reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles as key dimensions of service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

In addition, the importance of staff performance and efficient service processes aligns with service marketing theory, which suggests that customer satisfaction is shaped by both service delivery and customer experience (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Well-trained staff and streamlined service procedures can significantly enhance passengers' perceptions and overall experience.

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with a study by Suthida Kanchanaporn (2019), which found that service quality dimensions, particularly staff service and physical facilities, significantly influence passenger satisfaction at regional airports in Thailand. This supports the importance of improving both human resources and physical infrastructure in airport service management.

The findings also highlight the growing role of technology and communication in improving service quality. Providing accurate and real-time information can reduce uncertainty and increase passenger confidence. Therefore, airport management should focus on staff development, process improvement, facility enhancement, and digital transformation to improve service quality and passenger satisfaction.

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STUDY ON ECOTOURISM KNOWLEDGE FOR CHINESE TOURISTS VISITING THAILAND

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Abstract

This study titled *Study on Ecotourism Knowledge for Chinese Tourists Visiting Thailand* aims to explore the level of ecotourism knowledge and its influence on travel behavior among Chinese tourists visiting Thailand. A qualitative research approach was employed to gain in-depth understanding of tourists' perceptions, awareness, and experiences related to ecotourism. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with Chinese tourists and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that ecotourism knowledge among Chinese tourists is generally moderate, with most participants associating ecotourism mainly with nature-based sightseeing rather than environmental conservation. Key themes identified include environmental awareness, ecotourism understanding, travel motivation, behavior in natural areas, and information sources. Social media and informal networks were found to be the primary sources of information influencing tourists' perceptions. Based on the findings, the study highlights the need for improved environmental education, clearer communication, and enhanced interpretation strategies to strengthen ecotourism knowledge. These improvements can promote more responsible tourist behavior and support sustainable tourism development in Thailand.

Keywords: Ecotourism knowledge, Chinese tourists, Thailand tourism, sustainable tourism

Introduction

Ecotourism has become an important segment of global tourism as travelers increasingly seek environmentally responsible and nature-based experiences. Thailand, with its rich biodiversity and diverse natural attractions, is a popular ecotourism destination for international visitors, particularly Chinese tourists. However, the level of ecotourism knowledge among tourists plays a crucial role in shaping their behavior and determining the sustainability of tourism activities.

Ecotourism knowledge refers to tourists' understanding of environmental conservation, responsible travel practices, and the socio-cultural value of natural destinations. According to Weaver (2001), ecotourism emphasizes education, conservation, and sustainability, requiring tourists to actively participate in protecting natural resources. In addition, Higham and Lück (2002) highlight that informed tourists are more likely to engage in environmentally responsible behavior and support conservation efforts.

Qualitative research is suitable for exploring ecotourism knowledge as it provides deep insights into tourists' perceptions, motivations, and experiences (Creswell, 2013). Through this approach, researchers can better understand how Chinese tourists perceive ecotourism and how their knowledge influences travel behavior in Thailand.

This study, titled *Study on Ecotourism Knowledge for Chinese Tourists Visiting Thailand*, aims to explore the level of ecotourism knowledge among Chinese tourists and identify factors influencing their awareness and behavior. The findings are expected to contribute to improving ecotourism promotion strategies and sustainable tourism development in Thailand.

Objectives

To find out Study on Ecotourism Knowledge for Chinese Tourists Visiting Thailand

Literature Review

Ecotourism knowledge plays a significant role in shaping tourist behavior and promoting sustainable tourism development. Ecotourism is defined as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people (Weaver, 2001). Understanding ecotourism principles helps tourists make informed decisions and engage in environmentally responsible activities during their travels.

Chinese tourists represent one of the largest outbound tourism markets globally, and their participation in ecotourism is increasing. However, their level of ecotourism knowledge varies, which influences their environmental behavior and destination choices. According to Chan and Zhang (2018), cultural background, travel experience, and environmental awareness significantly affect Chinese tourists' understanding of sustainable tourism practices.

Environmental education and interpretation are essential for improving ecotourism knowledge. Higham and Lück (2002) emphasize that informed tourists are more likely to support conservation efforts and minimize negative environmental impacts. Educational materials, guided tours, and interpretation programs are effective tools for enhancing tourist awareness in natural destinations.

Qualitative research methods are widely used in ecotourism studies to explore tourists' perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral motivations. Creswell (2013) notes that qualitative approaches provide in-depth insights into complex human experiences, making them suitable for understanding ecotourism knowledge among different tourist groups.

Previous studies also highlight that limited environmental awareness and lack of information are major barriers to sustainable tourist behavior (Wang, 2017). Therefore, improving ecotourism education and communication strategies is essential for promoting responsible tourism practices among international visitors.

This study builds on existing literature by focusing specifically on Chinese tourists visiting Thailand and aims to examine their ecotourism knowledge and its influence on travel behavior.

Methodology

This study titled *Study on Ecotourism Knowledge for Chinese Tourists Visiting Thailand* adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the level of ecotourism knowledge, perceptions, and travel behaviors of Chinese tourists in Thailand. A qualitative design is appropriate as it allows for an in-depth understanding of tourists' experiences and awareness in real tourism contexts (Creswell, 2013).

The study uses a phenomenological approach to capture the lived experiences of Chinese tourists engaging in ecotourism activities. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, focusing on Chinese tourists who have visited ecotourism destinations in Thailand. This method ensures that respondents have relevant experience and knowledge related to the research topic (Patton, 2002).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted in both face-to-face and online formats. The interviews focused on tourists' understanding of ecotourism concepts, motivations, travel behaviors, and environmental awareness. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006), involving systematic coding, categorization, and theme development. To ensure research rigor, the study applied trustworthiness criteria including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking and data triangulation were also used to enhance validity.

This methodological framework supports the development of insights into ecotourism knowledge levels and provides a foundation for improving ecotourism promotion strategies targeting Chinese tourists in Thailand.

Results

The findings of this qualitative study on *Study on Ecotourism Knowledge for Chinese Tourists Visiting Thailand* reveal several key themes related to tourists' understanding and behavior in ecotourism settings. Data analysis identified five main areas: environmental awareness, ecotourism understanding, travel motivation, behavior in natural areas, and information sources.

First, **environmental awareness** among Chinese tourists varied significantly. Some participants demonstrated a clear understanding of environmental protection principles, while others had limited awareness of conservation practices. This finding supports Weaver (2001), who emphasizes that ecotourism requires active environmental responsibility from tourists.

Second, **ecotourism understanding** was generally moderate. Many tourists associated ecotourism mainly with nature sightseeing rather than conservation or sustainability. This indicates a gap between theoretical ecotourism concepts and tourists' actual perceptions.

Third, **travel motivation** was largely driven by nature appreciation, relaxation, and cultural experience. However, environmental responsibility was not a primary motivation for most participants. Fourth, **behavior in natural areas** showed mixed results, with some tourists following park rules while others lacked awareness of proper ecological conduct.

Finally, **information sources** played an important role in shaping ecotourism knowledge. Tourists primarily relied on social media, travel agencies, and peer recommendations rather than official environmental education materials. This aligns with Chan and Zhang (2018), who note that information channels significantly influence Chinese tourists' environmental awareness.

Overall, the results indicate that while Chinese tourists show interest in ecotourism in Thailand, their knowledge of environmental principles remains limited, highlighting the need for improved education and communication strategies.

Discussion

This study on *Study on Ecotourism Knowledge for Chinese Tourists Visiting Thailand* highlights that while Chinese tourists show strong interest in nature-based travel, their understanding of ecotourism principles remains limited. The findings indicate that ecotourism knowledge is often associated only with nature sightseeing rather than broader concepts of conservation and sustainability. This supports Weaver (2001), who emphasizes that true ecotourism requires environmental responsibility and awareness beyond recreational travel.

The results also suggest that tourists' environmental behavior is inconsistent, reflecting gaps in knowledge and awareness. Some tourists demonstrate responsible behavior in natural areas, while others lack understanding of appropriate ecological conduct. This aligns with Higham and Lück (2002), who argue that informed tourists are more likely to engage in environmentally responsible behavior when proper interpretation and education are provided.

Another important finding is the role of information sources in shaping ecotourism knowledge. Most Chinese tourists rely heavily on social media and informal recommendations rather than official environmental education materials. This supports Chan and Zhang (2018), who note that digital platforms and peer influence strongly affect Chinese outbound tourists' perceptions and awareness of sustainable tourism.

The study also highlights a gap between ecotourism policy objectives and tourist understanding. Although Thailand promotes ecotourism as part of its sustainable tourism strategy, the effectiveness of communication and educational efforts remains limited. This

suggests a need for stronger interpretation programs, multilingual educational materials, and targeted awareness campaigns.

Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of ecotourism knowledge among Chinese tourists and emphasizes the importance of improving environmental education and communication strategies to support sustainable tourism development in Thailand.

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SERVICE QUALITY DEVELOPMENT OF HAT YAI JUNCTION RAILWAY STATION

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Abstract

This study, “Service Quality Development of Hat Yai Junction Railway Station,” aims to explore and develop service quality at Hat Yai Junction Railway Station through a qualitative research approach. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and on-site observations from key stakeholders, including passengers and railway staff, selected through purposive sampling.

The findings reveal that service quality is influenced by four main factors: service performance, staff behavior, physical facilities, and safety management. While staff were generally perceived as polite and helpful, issues related to outdated infrastructure, cleanliness, and safety systems were identified as key areas for improvement. The results highlight the importance of both tangible and intangible aspects of service quality in shaping passenger experiences.

The study provides practical guidelines for enhancing service standards, particularly in improving facilities, strengthening safety measures, and developing staff competencies. These findings are beneficial for the State Railway of Thailand in supporting effective service quality development and sustainable tourism growth.

Keywords: Service quality, Qualitative research, Passenger experience, Hat Yai Junction Railway Station.

Introduction

Hat Yai Junction Railway Station is a major transportation hub in southern Thailand, playing a significant role in connecting domestic and international travelers. As tourism and mobility continue to expand, the quality of railway services has become increasingly important in shaping passenger experiences and satisfaction. Service quality in railway stations not only affects operational efficiency but also influences travelers’ perceptions, comfort, and overall journey.

This study, “Service Quality Development of Hat Yai Junction Railway Station,” focuses on exploring the perspectives and experiences of stakeholders, including passengers

and service providers, regarding current service conditions. A qualitative research approach is adopted to gain in-depth insights into key issues such as service processes, staff performance, facilities, and safety management.

The study aims to identify gaps in existing services and propose practical guidelines for service quality development. The findings are expected to support improvements by the State Railway of Thailand and contribute to enhancing the overall standard of railway services in alignment with sustainable tourism development.

Objectives

To Service Quality Development of Hat Yai Junction Railway Station.

Methodology

This study, “Service Quality Development of Hat Yai Junction Railway Station,” adopts a qualitative research approach to explore service quality issues and improvement strategies at Hat Yai Junction Railway Station. The research focuses on gaining in-depth insights from key stakeholders, including passengers, railway staff, and service providers.

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations conducted within the station area. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select approximately 20–30 participants with direct experience of railway services. Interview questions focused on perceptions of service quality, including reliability, responsiveness, safety, and physical facilities.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving data coding, categorization, and interpretation to identify key themes and patterns related to service quality development. To ensure research rigor, data triangulation and member checking were employed to enhance credibility and validity.

The findings aim to provide practical recommendations for improving service quality and operational efficiency, particularly for the State Railway of Thailand.

Results

The findings of “Service Quality Development of Hat Yai Junction Railway Station” reveal several key themes related to service quality at Hat Yai Junction Railway Station. The analysis of interviews and observations identified four main dimensions: service performance, staff behavior, physical facilities, and safety management.

First, participants generally perceived service performance as acceptable; however, delays and inconsistent information provision were frequently reported. Second, staff behavior was viewed positively in terms of politeness and willingness to assist, although some respondents suggested the need for improved communication skills, particularly with tourists.

Third, physical facilities emerged as a significant concern. Participants highlighted issues such as insufficient seating areas, cleanliness, and outdated infrastructure, which

affected overall user experience. Fourth, safety management was identified as an area requiring improvement, especially in terms of surveillance systems and crowd control during peak travel periods.

Overall, the results indicate that while basic service standards are met, there are notable gaps in infrastructure and safety that need to be addressed. These findings provide valuable insights for enhancing service quality, particularly for the State Railway of Thailand in improving operational practices and passenger satisfaction.

Discussion

The findings of “Service Quality Development of Hat Yai Junction Railway Station” highlight that service quality at Hat Yai Junction Railway Station is generally acceptable but requires improvement in several key areas, particularly physical facilities and safety management. These results reflect recent studies (2020–2026), which emphasize that infrastructure quality and safety perception are critical determinants of passenger experience in railway services.

The positive perception of staff behavior, especially in terms of politeness and helpfulness, aligns with contemporary service research indicating that human interaction remains a core component of perceived service quality. However, the need for improved communication skills suggests that service training should be enhanced to meet the expectations of diverse passengers, including tourists.

Concerns related to outdated facilities and cleanliness are consistent with recent transportation studies highlighting that the physical environment significantly influences user satisfaction and repeat usage intentions. Additionally, safety-related issues, such as insufficient surveillance and crowd management, correspond with recent findings that emphasize the importance of safety assurance in public transport systems.

The themes identified through this qualitative analysis also reinforce the multidimensional nature of service quality, integrating both tangible and intangible elements. Therefore, the State Railway of Thailand should adopt a holistic approach to service development by upgrading infrastructure, enhancing safety systems, and improving staff training. Such improvements are essential for increasing passenger confidence and supporting sustainable tourism growth in southern Thailand.

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SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUEL (SAF) ADOPTION: GLOBAL TRENDS AND THAILAND'S READINESS- A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Driven by the need to cut CO₂ emissions by up to 80%, this study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to assess global SAF trends and Thailand's readiness. While the U.S. and EU lead with aggressive mandates, global progress is hampered by high costs and infrastructure gaps. Thailand has integrated SAF into its national energy strategy, aiming for a 1% blend by 2026 supported by tax incentives. Despite these efforts, the study highlights a need for clearer long-term regulations to attract investment and remain competitive. To bridge the funding gap, future research should investigate "Green Surcharges" and passenger willingness to pay for sustainable travel.

Keywords: Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), Global Trends, Thailand Readiness, Policy, Decarbonization

Introduction

The aviation industry faces mounting pressure to address its environmental impact as global air travel expands. To combat high emissions from traditional Jet A-1 fuel, ICAO's Carbon Offsetting and reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) framework aims to reduce aviation carbon emissions by 50% by 2050 (IATA, 2026). Consequently, Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) has emerged as the primary viable alternative, drawing significant global investment from governments and airlines (Yoo et al., 2022).

Globally, airlines, governments, and international organization are investing in SAF development and deployment. Despite its potential, SAF adoption is hindered by high production costs, supply shortages, and infrastructure gaps. For instance, while the EU's upcoming blending mandates represent a major policy shifted, they also introduce heavy financial and logistical burdens. Research suggests that in regions like South America, adoption hinges heavily on carbon trading prices relative to the cost gap between SAF and conventional fuel (Cui, 2024).

In Thailand, the aviation sector is gradually integrating SAF into national environmental strategies. Currently, CAAT has set a voluntary initial goal of 0.5% to 1% SAF

usage for specific international flights. However, a significant regulatory milestone arrives on January 1, 2026, when airlines will be legally permitted to use fuel blends containing up to 50% SAF (CAAT, 2025). Thus, the embedded research questions of this study are: firstly, what are the current trends, drivers, and barriers in the adoption of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) in global aviation? Secondly, how does SAF adoption in Thailand compare with global developments in terms of policy, implementation, and challenges? Finally, what are the key factors influencing successful SAF implementation, and what are the future prospects for SAF adoption in aviation? (CAAT, 2025).

Objectives

The primary objectives of this systematic literature review are:

1. To examine the current trends in SAF adoption in global aviation
2. To analyze the adoption of SAF in Thailand compared to global practices
3. To identify key drivers, challenges, and future prospects of SAF implementation

Literature Review

Sustainable Aviation Fuel: Progress, Policy, and Path to Net-Zero.

The Mechanism of SAF and Environmental Impact.

Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) is a critical decarbonization technology capable of reducing lifecycle CO₂ emissions by up to 80%. Unlike fossil fuels, SAF is synthesized from sustainable feedstocks, such as organic waste, agricultural residues, and atmospheric carbon—creating a closed carbon cycle where combustion emissions are offset by the carbon absorbed during feedstock growth. To maintain environmental integrity, these sources are strictly managed to prevent deforestation and biodiversity loss (IATA, 2026).

Regional Policy and Global Trends

Global adoption is currently driven by regional mandates and incentive programs:

The Americas: The United States leverages tax incentives, such as the 45Z credit (extended through 2029), to bolster domestic production, though eligibility is often restricted to North American feedstocks. While, Europe: The EU and UK have initiated mandatory blending requirements, starting at 2% for departing flights in 2025. In addition, Asia-Pacific: China is utilizing government subsidies to lower production costs and expand its export footprint. Meanwhile, Singapore and Thailand are both preparing for a 1% blending target by 2026 (ASUENE, 2026). Japan maintains one of the region's most ambitious goals, targeting 10% SAF usage by 2030

Barriers to Scalable Implementation

Despite its necessity, Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) remains costly due to high production expenses and refining needs. Growth is further slowed by supply chain issues, raw material shortages, and regulatory uncertainty (Liang, 2025). Overcoming these barriers requires better technology and supportive government policy.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilizes a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to analyze current research. The SLR method is a structured approach used to organize and categorize literature within a specific timeframe (Rivera et al., 2022). It is recognized as an effective tool for evaluating research across diverse fields. To ensure high scientific standards, transparency, and replicability, this review strictly follows the PRISMA guidelines. A formal research protocol was established to manage search strategies, selection criteria, and data analysis.

Data Sources and Search Strategy

The research involved a systematic search of three primary databases for articles published between 2020 and 2025: (1) Science Direct: 29 articles (2) Springer Link: 11 articles (3) Google Scholar: 357 articles. The search string combined key terms related to fuel types, market trends, geography, and policy readiness, such as: ("Sustainable Aviation Fuel" OR "SAF" OR "Bio-jet fuel") AND ("Global Trends" OR "Market Adoption") AND ("Thailand" OR "Developing Countries") AND ("Readiness" OR "Policy framework").

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To maintain the quality of the primary data, specific criteria were applied to the gathered articles: Inclusion, only empirical articles published between 2020 and 2025 focusing on SAF adoption and global trends were included. Screening Process, articles were manually screened by title and abstract. One duplicate was removed, leaving 396 results. Exclusion, Studies were excluded if they lacked full-text access or were not relevant to the aviation industry. Final Selection, each remaining full-text article was screened against the inclusion criteria to eliminate bias.

Following the PRISMA2020 (Haddaway, 2022) guidelines, the final selection resulted in 15 core studies for the review. The complete selection process is documented in the study's flow diagram. Figure 1

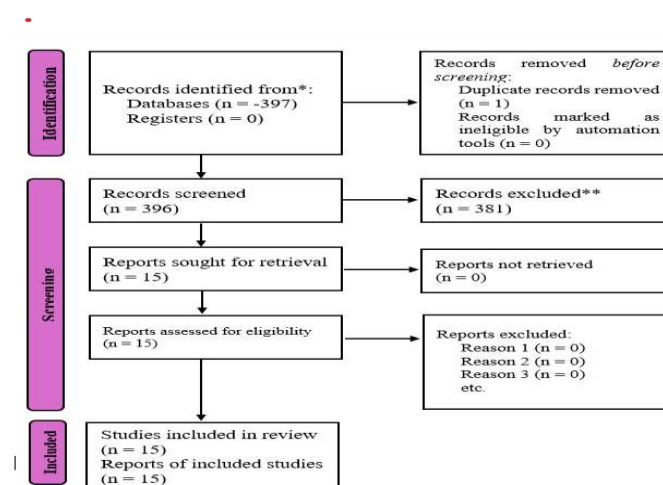


Figure 1 PRISMA2020 flow diagram

Results

The findings from the systematic review are structured around the specific research questions that framed in this study:

- What are the current trends, drivers, and barriers in the adoption of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) in global aviation?

Global leaders like the U.S., Germany, the UK, and Japan are currently driving SAF development and policy. Major initiatives include the U.S. "Grand Challenge," targeting 3 billion gallons of annual production by 2030, and the EU's "ReFuel EU" mandate, aiming for a 63% SAF blend by 2050 (Wandelt., 2025). However, the transition is hindered by high costs, raw material shortages, and infrastructure gaps. To succeed, the industry requires strong government support, stable funding, and global cooperation (Hanafi et al., 2024), (Nyemba, 2025).

- How does SAF adoption in Thailand compare with global developments in terms of policy, implementation, and challenges?

Thailand is advancing SAF integration through a collaborative roadmap between the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Transport, and CAAT. Supported by the AEDP and PDP, the government provides tax incentives and encourages public-private partnerships to enhance research and infrastructure. However, unlike the EU—which has set strict targets for emission reductions and Net-Zero by 2050 - Thailand still lacks clear mandates and a long-term strategy (Khongbamphen, 2025). To secure investment and a stable transition, it is essential for the government to establish transparent targets and a consistent regulatory framework (Thepchalerm & Pinsuwan, 2025), (Suriyasin et al., 2025).

- What are the key factors influencing successful SAF implementation, and what are the future prospects for SAF adoption in aviation?

The research emphasizes that successful SAF implementation is driven by a supportive policy environment and seamless coordination among all stakeholders, including government bodies and industry leaders (Wong et al., 2024). The primary motivation for these efforts remains the urgent need to mitigate the environmental impact of aviation and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Ultimately, the future of SAF adoption depends on the industry's ability to foster collaboration and create a well-coordinated ecosystem that supports sustainable growth (Raihan et al., 2025).

Conclusion

Thailand's SAF success hinges on policy, technology, partnerships, and inclusivity, aiming to lower emissions and lead the regional green transition. While Thailand builds its framework, global leaders are setting aggressive benchmarks: the U.S. targets 3 billion gallons by 2030, and the EU mandates a 63% blend by 2050. Achieving these goals would secure Thailand's role in the future of sustainable global aviation.

Discussion and Recommendations

The SLR reveals that Thailand is building a strong foundation for SAF by combining industry skills, research, and government support. Even though it's just starting, this teamwork shows that Thailand is ready to produce and use green fuel on a large scale in the future (Laphet et al.,2025). The recommendation of the study was SAF currently 2 to 5 times more expensive than conventional jet fuel. The future study should focus on Eco- tax or Green Surcharge which study specifically for Thai or regional travelers. Do these travelers "Willingness to Pay" that their higher fares are actually funding real SAF?

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A STUDY OF BEHAVIOR AND SATISFACTION OF THAI TOURISTS VISITING WAT PHRA SI RATTANA MAHATHAT WORAMAHAWIHAN PHITSANULOK

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Abstract

This study examined the demographics, travel behaviors, and satisfaction of Thai tourists visiting Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat Woramahawihan using questionnaire data and descriptive statistics. Most visitors were young, single females with bachelor's degrees, working in government sectors and earning relatively low incomes. They typically traveled with family by private car for religious purposes, especially to worship Phra Phuttha Chinnarat, made short one-day trips, spent little, and showed strong intention to revisit. Overall satisfaction was high, with top ratings for attractions, accessibility, and accommodation. Visitors were especially impressed by the temple's historic architecture, peaceful atmosphere, and cultural learning opportunities. In conclusion, the temple has strong potential as a religious and cultural tourism destination, promoting high satisfaction and repeat visits.

Keywords: Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat Woramahawihan, Tourist Satisfaction, Tourist Behavior,

Introduction

Tourism has long been a key driver of Thailand's economic and social development, generating substantial national income, employment opportunities, and regional income distribution. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism sector contributed significantly to Thailand's gross domestic product and demonstrated continuous growth. However, the pandemic severely disrupted the industry, prompting the government to implement recovery strategies, particularly by promoting domestic tourism alongside sustainable tourism development (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2023). In the post-pandemic era, tourist behavior has shifted toward greater emphasis on quality experiences, safety, convenience, and service standards. Consequently, cultural and religious tourism has gained increasing attention, as it reflects local identity, beliefs, and ways of life while offering meaningful experiences to visitors (Department of Tourism, 2022).

Phitsanulok Province, located in the lower northern region of Thailand, is a historically significant destination with strong tourism potential. The province is well known for its rich cultural heritage, religious landmarks, and natural attractions, making it an important destination for both domestic and international tourists. Among its most prominent sites is Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat Woramahawihan, a first-class royal temple that serves as a major center of Buddhist faith. The temple is renowned for enshrining Phra Phuttha Chinnarat, one of the most revered Buddha images in Thailand, and attracts a large number of Thai tourists who visit for worship, merit-making, and cultural appreciation.

Despite the continuous growth of tourism in Phitsanulok, achieving sustainable tourism development requires a comprehensive understanding of tourist behavior and satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction is a crucial determinant of revisit intention, word-of-mouth communication, and destination image (Kotler & Keller, 2016). It is influenced by multiple factors, including attractions, accessibility, accommodation, activities, and amenities, as proposed in the 5A's framework, which collectively shape tourists' overall experiences. However, previous studies have largely focused on tourism at the provincial or regional level, with limited attention to specific religious destinations.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the behavior and satisfaction of Thai tourists visiting Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat Woramahawihan in Phitsanulok. By applying the 5A's framework, the study seeks to provide empirical insights into tourists' experiences and satisfaction levels. The findings are expected to contribute to tourism planning and management by enhancing service quality, strengthening cultural and religious tourism, and supporting sustainable tourism development in the long term.

Objectives

1. To study the behavior of Thai tourists visiting Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat Woramahawihan.
2. To examine the satisfaction of Thai tourists visiting Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat Woramahawihan based on the 5A's tourism components.

Methodology

This study applied a quantitative research approach to investigate the behavior and satisfaction of Thai tourists visiting Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat Woramahawihan. Data were collected structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The population comprised Thai tourists visiting the temple, with an unknown size. The sample size was determined using William G. Cochran (1977) formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, resulting in at least 385 respondents; thus, 400 participants were selected using convenience and accidental sampling techniques.

The research instrument was a questionnaire divided into three sections: demographic data, travel behavior, and satisfaction. Satisfaction was measured using a 5-point Likert scale based on the concept of Rensis Likert (1932).

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was evaluated by three experts using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), with all items meeting acceptable criteria ($IOC \geq 0.50$). Reliability was tested through a pilot study with 30 participants, yielding a high Cronbach's Alpha coefficient based on Lee Cronbach (1951), with an overall value of 0.91, indicating strong internal consistency.

Data collection involved distributing 400 questionnaires to tourists who voluntarily participated, achieving a 100% response rate.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze demographic characteristics, travel behavior, and satisfaction levels.

Results

This study presents the findings from 400 Thai tourists visiting Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat Woramahawihan, focusing on demographic characteristics, travel behavior, and satisfaction levels.

In terms of demographics, most respondents were female (64.50%), aged 21–30 years (21.30%), and single (46.25%). The majority held a bachelor's degree (44.25%) and resided in the northern region (51.20%). Most worked as government or state enterprise employees (33.25%), followed by students (22.75%). Regarding income, the largest group earned less than 10,000 baht per month (25.00%).

Regarding travel behavior, most tourists had visited the temple more than five times (67.50%), indicating strong repeat visitation. They typically traveled with family (58.00%) and used private cars (75.00%) as their primary mode of transportation. The main purpose of travel was religious, especially to pay respect to sacred objects (90.75%), particularly Phra Phuttha Chinnarat. Visitors also engaged in activities such as purchasing local souvenirs and appreciating the temple's architecture. Most tourists spent no more than 300 baht per visit (50.75%) and preferred one-day trips without overnight stays (72.00%). Information about the temple was mainly obtained through online media (39.30%) and word-of-mouth (22.50%). Importantly, most respondents expressed a high intention to revisit, with 57.80% indicating strong interest.

In terms of tourist satisfaction, the overall level was high (mean = 4.19). Among the five components (5As), attractions received the highest rating (mean = 4.39), followed by activities (4.20), accessibility (4.17), accommodation (4.15), and amenities (4.05). Tourists were particularly impressed by the temple's ancient architecture, cleanliness, peaceful atmosphere, and cultural value. Accessibility factors such as clear signage and appropriate

opening hours were also highly rated. Accommodation was considered convenient, safe, and reasonably priced. Activities such as worship and cultural learning were well appreciated, while amenities like rest areas and seating received slightly lower but still positive ratings.

Finally, suggestions from tourists focused on improving facilities and management. Key recommendations included increasing shaded areas and seating, improving parking and traffic management during peak periods, providing shuttle services, enhancing crowd control, offering more educational guides or information services, extending operating hours, and regulating product prices to prevent overcharging.

In conclusion, the temple demonstrates strong performance in attracting tourists and delivering high satisfaction. However, improvements in infrastructure and management could further enhance the overall tourist experience and sustainability of the destination.

Discussion

This study examines the behavior and satisfaction of Thai tourists visiting Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat Woramahawihan. Most visitors were young, single females from the northern region, working in government sectors and earning relatively low incomes.

Tourists showed strong destination loyalty, with frequent repeat visits and high intention to revisit. They typically traveled with family by private car for religious purposes, especially to worship Phra Phuttha Chinnarat. Most trips were short, low-cost, and based on information from online media.

Overall satisfaction was high, particularly in attractions such as the temple's architecture, peaceful atmosphere, and cultural value. While accessibility and accommodation were rated well, amenities especially seating and facilities require improvement.

The findings align with theories of destination loyalty by Richard L. Oliver (1997), Push–Pull motivation by John L. Crompton (1979), and hierarchy of needs by Abraham Maslow (1970), highlighting the role of spiritual motivation and meaningful experiences in tourism.

The study recommends improving facilities, enhancing management, and promoting online marketing to support sustainable tourism development.

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A STUDY OF THE BEHAVIOR OF THAI TOURISTS VISITING BANG NAM PHUENG FLOATING MARKET, SAMUT PRAKAN PROVINCE

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to study of the behavior of Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market, Samut Prakan Province. Data were collected through both online and offline surveys distributed to Thai tourists at the Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market area, with a total of 400 responses obtained. The results showed that most respondents were female, aged 36–45 years, and were in a relationship or married. The majority held a bachelor's degree and worked as office workers, with an average monthly income of 20,001–30,000 baht. In terms of travel behavior, most tourists visited the market 1–5 times per year and typically traveled with 1–2 companions, usually family members. Information about the market was mainly obtained through friends and family. The average expenditure per visit ranged from 501–1,000 baht. Most visits occurred weekends (Saturday and Sunday), and private cars were the main mode of transportation. Most tourists came to purchase fresh food, vegetables and fruits. Tourists expressed interest in revisiting the destination and many were likely to recommend Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market to others.

Keywords: Behavior, Thai Tourists, Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market

Introduction

In 2026, the tourism industry remains a key driver of Thailand's economic development. The Tourism Authority of Thailand projects approximately 35–36.7 million international arrivals, generating around 2.7–2.8 trillion baht in revenue. Current tourism trends emphasize high-quality and sustainable travel, focusing on cultural experiences, community-based tourism, and environmentally responsible practices (The Nation Thailand, 2026).

Floating markets represent an important form of cultural tourism in Thailand. They reflect traditional lifestyles and serve as economic centers for local communities. These markets provide unique experiences that influence tourists' satisfaction and travel behavior (Arunrangsiwed, 2020).

Understanding tourist behavior is essential for improving tourism management and ensuring sustainable development. While several studies have examined tourist behavior in floating markets, research specifically focusing on Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the behavior of Thai tourists visiting this destination to provide insights for tourism stakeholders.

Objectives

To study of the behavior of Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market, Samut Prakan Province

Literature Review

Tourist behavior refers to actions before, during, and after travel, including destination choice, travel patterns, and consumption, influenced by several key factors.

1. Demographic Factors: Age, gender, income, and education significantly affect travel decisions, especially in domestic tourism (Nadee et al., 2024).
2. Destination Image plays a crucial role in influencing tourist behavior. A positive image enhances tourist expectations, satisfaction, and revisit intention. In floating markets, this image is often associated with local culture and food experiences (Jimenez-García et al., 2025).
3. Tourist satisfaction is a key factor in determining tourist behavior, which is greatly influenced by their experience and satisfaction. Satisfaction plays a vital role in shaping repeat visits and customer loyalty. Positive experiences lead to repeat visits and recommendations (Yuan, 2024).
4. Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM): Social media and online platforms strongly influence travel decisions. Tourists rely on reviews and shared experiences when planning trips (Azhar et al., 2022).

Methodology

This study was quantitative research. The researcher followed the steps as follows;

1. This study investigated the behavior of Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market, Samut Prakan Province. Data were collected via online and offline surveys using a questionnaire on tourist characteristics and behavior. The target population was Thai tourists visiting the market.

2. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula (Cochran, 1977), with a minimum of 385 respondents. To ensure reliability and account for data loss, 15 additional questionnaires were added, making a total of 400 respondents. Data were collected using 100 paper-based and 300 online questionnaires. A pilot test with 30 respondents was conducted to ensure questionnaire clarity and reliability.

3. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire consisting of two parts. Part 1 collected respondents' general information, including gender, age, marital status, education, occupation and income. Part 2 focused on tourism behavior, including frequency of visits, travel companions, sources of information, expenditure, preferred visiting days, transportation, products and services purchased, revisit intention, and recommendation behavior.

Results

Part 1 presents the general information of Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market, Samut Prakan Province. The information can be summarized as follows.

- **Gender:** Majority female (60.50%)
- **Age:** Most aged 36–45 years (31.75%)
- **Marital Status:** Mostly in a relationship or married (54.50%)
- **Education:** Predominantly bachelor's degree holders (58.25%)
- **Occupation:** Mainly office workers (35.25%)
- **Income:** Most earned 20,001–30,000 baht per month (35.00%)

Summary: The typical visitor is a working-age individual with moderate income and educational background.

Part 2 presents the behavior of Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market, Samut Prakan Province. The information can be summarized as follows.

Frequency of Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market. was mostly 1–5 times per year (209 people, representing 52.25%), followed by 6–12 times per year (105 people, 26.25%) and first-time visitors (57 people, 14.25%). The smallest group was those visiting over 12 times per year (29 people, 7.25%).

The number of travel companions of Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market was mostly 1–2 companions (220 respondents, 55.00%), followed by 3–5 companions (163 respondents, 40.75%), 6–9 companions (11 respondents, 2.75%) and more than 10 companions (6 respondents, 1.50%). The smallest group was those traveling with more than 10 companions.

Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market mostly traveled with family (139 people, representing 34.75%), followed by those traveling with friends or colleagues (124 people, 31.00%), those traveling with a partner (85 people, 21.25%) and those traveling alone (52 people, 13.00%). The smallest group was those traveling alone.

Most respondents received tourism information from friends or family (269 respondents, 44.54%), followed by online media such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube (254 respondents, 42.05%). This was followed by television/newspapers (44 respondents, 7.28%), travel magazines (20 respondents, 3.31%), tourism websites (15 respondents, 2.48%) and travel agencies (2 respondents, 0.33%), which was the least common source of information.

The majority of respondents spent 501–1,000 baht per visit (267 people, representing 66.75%), followed by 1,001–2,000 baht per visit (74 people, 18.50%), below 500 baht per visit (52 people, 13.00%) and over 2,001 baht per visit (7 people, 1.75%). The smallest group was those spending over 2,001 baht per visit.

Thai tourists preferred to visit Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market on weekends (353 people, representing 88.25%), followed by holidays (47 people, 11.75%).

Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market mostly traveled by private car (218 people, representing 54.50%), followed by public buses and public passenger boats (99 people, 24.75%), while bicycles and motorbikes were the least used modes of transportation (83 people, 20.75%).

Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market mostly purchased fresh food, vegetables, fruits, cooked food and ready-to-cook meals (369 people, 28.60%), followed by beverages (262 people, 20.31%), snacks, desserts and bakery products (150 people, 11.63%), plants and gardening equipment (134 people, 10.39%), consumer goods such as soap and shampoo (122 people, 9.46%), clothing, accessories and footwear (93 people, 7.21%), service activities such as herbal massage (65 people, 5.04%) and dried and canned food (50 people, 3.88%). The least purchased items were household goods (45 people, 3.48%).

Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market had a high intention to revisit, with 238 respondents who were interested (59.50%), followed by those who were very interested (139 respondents, 34.75%), while those who were neutral accounted for 23 respondents (5.75%).

Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market would mostly definitely recommend the floating market to others (284 respondents, 71.00%), followed by those who might recommend it (112 respondents, 28.00%), while the smallest group was those who would not recommend it (4 respondents, 1.00%).

Discussion

The results indicate that demographic characteristics significantly influence tourist behavior. Most respondents are working-age individuals (36–45 years old) with moderate incomes (20,001–30,000 baht per month), consistent with Iqbal et al. (2023) study on tourism behavior, which found that age, gender, and socio-economic status affect travel decisions and participation in domestic tourism.

Most respondents have moderate incomes and spend 501–1,000 baht per trip, indicating that the destination is affordable. This is consistent with Chomchat et al. (2025) study on Thai tourist behavior, which found that Thai tourists prefer cost-effective, accessible destinations, especially for short-distance travel.

The results also show that most respondents are repeat visitors (1–5 times per year) and show strong revisit and recommendation intentions. This aligns with Acharya et al. (2023) study on destination loyalty, which defines destination loyalty through revisit intention and word-of-mouth. These findings suggest that positive travel experiences drive satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

Furthermore, word-of-mouth and social media are key information sources, highlighting the importance of digital marketing and interpersonal communication. This aligns with Küster et al. (2024) study on user-generated content and tourism behavior, which found that user-generated content and interpersonal communication significantly influence destination image and tourist behavior.

Finally, the preference for food and beverages highlights the unique identity of floating markets as cultural and gastronomic tourism destinations. This aligns with Chen et al. (2023) study on local food tourism experiences, which found that local food is a key attraction and enhances tourists' satisfaction and destination attachment.

In conclusion, Thai tourists at Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market exhibit social travel behavior, moderate spending, convenience-oriented preferences and strong destination loyalty. These findings provide useful insights for tourism stakeholders to improve marketing strategies and visitor experiences, as well as support policymakers and local entrepreneurs in developing sustainable tourism strategies for floating markets.

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A STUDY OF BEHAVIOR, SATISFACTION WITH SERVICE QUALITY AND THE MARKETING MIX OF THAI TOURISTS VISITING BANG NAM PHUENG FLOATING MARKET, SAMUT PRAKAN PROVINCE

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Abstract

This study examined the behavior, satisfaction with service quality and marketing mix of Thai tourists at Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market, Samut Prakan Province. Data were collected from 400 questionnaire responses. The results indicated that most respondents were female, aged 36–45 years and were married or in a relationship. The majority held a bachelor's degree and were employed as office workers, with a monthly income of 20,001–30,000 baht. In terms of travel behavior, the primary purpose of visiting was shopping (304 respondents, 34.39%), followed by leisure and recreation (295 respondents, 33.37%). Most tourists spent approximately 1–2 hours at the market (214 respondents, 53.50%). Regarding overall satisfaction, Thai tourists reported a very high level of service quality ($\bar{X} = 4.07$). Among the service quality dimensions, tangibles received the highest level of satisfaction ($\bar{X} = 4.24$). In terms of the marketing mix, overall satisfaction was also at a very high level ($\bar{X} = 3.93$). When considering each component, the highest level of satisfaction was for place ($\bar{X} = 4.04$).
Keywords: Thai tourists, behavior, satisfaction, service quality, marketing mix, Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market

Introduction

Tourism has long played a significant role in Thailand's economy, contributing approximately 10–20% of the national GDP (Bangkok Post, 2026). The country's rich cultural and natural resources continue to attract both domestic and international tourists, making tourism a key driver of economic growth. In recent years, Thailand has promoted sustainable and community-based tourism (CBT), emphasizing local participation, cultural preservation, and income distribution (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2025). Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market, located in the Bang Kachao area of Samut Prakan Province—known as the “green lung of Bangkok”—is an important CBT destination that reflects local lifestyles and supports the community economy. However, destination sustainability and competitiveness depend on tourist behavior, service quality and marketing strategies (Mokkhaphan & Thongsiri, 2023),

especially in the post-COVID-19 context with higher competition and tourist expectations.

Therefore, this study aims to examine Thai tourists' behavior, satisfaction with service quality, and perception of the marketing mix at Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market to provide for tourism development and management.

Objectives

1. To study of the behavior of Thai Tourists Visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market, Samut Prakan Province
2. To study Thai tourists' satisfaction with the service quality of the market.
3. To study Thai tourists' satisfaction with the marketing mix of the market.

Literature Review

Tourist behavior refers to decisions and actions related to travel, from destination selection to post-travel evaluation, influenced by motivations, emotions and environmental factors (Sattatham, 2023). In addition, important influencing factors include demographics, motivations, tourism components, and information perception (Chuchai, 2025).

Tourist satisfaction refers to emotional and cognitive evaluations when experiences meet or exceed expectations. Satisfaction influences word-of-mouth communication and revisit intention (Hongmo, 2023).

Service quality is determined by comparing customers' expectations with their perceptions of actual service. It is commonly explained by the SERVQUAL model, which comprises five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Parasuraman et al.). These dimensions enable systematic evaluation and improvement of services to better meet customer needs.

The marketing mix is a key tool for developing product and service strategies to create customer value and satisfaction. It comprises seven elements—product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process (Philip Kotler & Kevin Lane Keller, 2016). Together, these elements support competitive differentiation, enhance customer experience, and build long-term relationships.

Methodology

Population and Sample: This study employed a quantitative approach. The population consisted of Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula (minimum of 385) and increased to 400 respondents to improve reliability and account for incomplete responses.

Data Collection: Data were collected from Thai tourists at Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market using both online and on-site questionnaires. A total of 400 valid responses were obtained (100 paper-based and 300 online). A pilot test with 30 respondents was conducted to ensure the clarity and reliability of the instrument.

Research Instrument:

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire divided into four parts:

Part 1: Demographics (gender, age, marital status, education, occupation, income)

Part 2: Thai tourist behavior (purpose of visit and duration of stay per visit)

Part 3: Service quality satisfaction (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy)

Part 4: Satisfaction with the marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, process)

Rating Scale and Data Analysis

- ☐ Parts 3 and 4 used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (least satisfied) to 5 (most satisfied).
- ☐ The interpretation of mean scores was classified as follows:
 - 1.00–1.80 = Least satisfied
 - 1.81–2.60 = Less satisfied
 - 2.61–3.40 = Moderately satisfied
 - 3.41–4.20 = Very satisfied
 - 4.21–5.00 = Most satisfied

Results

Part 1 presents the demographic information of Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market, Samut Prakan Province. The information can be summarized as follows.

- ☐ Female: 60.50%
- ☐ Age 36–45 years: 31.75% (largest group)
- ☐ Married/in relationship: 54.50%
- ☐ Bachelor's degree: 58.25%
- ☐ Office workers: 35.25%
- ☐ Income 20,001–30,000 THB: 35.00%

Summary: Visitors are mainly working-age, middle-income individuals.

Part 2 presents the behavior of Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market, Samut Prakan Province. The information can be summarized as follows.

The main purpose of visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market was shopping (304 people, representing 34.39%), followed by relaxation (295 people, 33.37%) and eating (192 people, 21.72%). Taking photos or creating content accounted for 91 people (10.29%), while other purposes were the least common at 2 people (0.23%).

The duration of stay per visit of Thai tourists at Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market was mostly 1–2 hours (214 people, representing 53.50%), followed by 2–3 hours (156 people, 39.00%). The smallest proportion of visitors spent more than 3 hours (24 people, 6.00%), while those staying less than 1 hour accounted for the lowest number (6 people, 1.50%).

Part 3 presents Thai tourists' service quality satisfaction at Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market, Samut Prakan Province, summarized as follows.

Tangibles: The overall level of satisfaction was at the most satisfied level ($\bar{X} = 4.24$). The highest satisfaction was the wide variety of products and services available ($\bar{X} = 4.72$), followed by the product arrangement, shop atmosphere, and interior space and the politeness and appropriate dress of sales staff ($\bar{X} = 4.26$, respectively).

Reliability: Overall satisfaction was at the very satisfied level ($\bar{X} = 3.94$). The highest satisfaction was service accuracy and error-free performance ($\bar{X} = 4.03$), followed by equal treatment of all customers ($\bar{X} = 4.02$). Clarity of information was also rated high ($\bar{X} = 3.99$).

Responsiveness: Overall satisfaction was very high ($\bar{X} = 4.10$). Highest was polite communication ($\bar{X} = 4.22$), followed by information channels ($\bar{X} = 4.11$) and equal ratings for listening and meeting needs ($\bar{X} = 4.10$).

Assurance: Overall satisfaction was at the very satisfied level ($\bar{X} = 4.09$). Highest was appropriate opening hours and updates ($\bar{X} = 4.19$), followed by cleanliness and safety ($\bar{X} = 4.18$) and staff knowledge and confidence ($\bar{X} = 4.07$).

Empathy: Overall satisfaction was at the very satisfied level ($\bar{X} = 3.98$). Highest was friendly, attentive service ($\bar{X} = 4.26$), followed by handling complaints ($\bar{X} = 3.98$) and service consistency with advertising ($\bar{X} = 3.95$).

Part 4 presents the satisfaction with the marketing mix of Thai tourists visiting Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market, Samut Prakan Province. The information can be summarized as follows.

Product: Overall satisfaction was at the very satisfied level ($\bar{X} = 3.89$). Highest was tasty, appetizing food and beverages ($\bar{X} = 3.98$), followed by environmentally friendly resources ($\bar{X} = 3.97$) and product cleanliness and safety ($\bar{X} = 3.96$).

Price: Overall satisfaction was at the very satisfied level ($\bar{X} = 3.89$). Highest was clear and transparent pricing ($\bar{X} = 3.95$), followed by price variety ($\bar{X} = 3.94$) and price–quality appropriateness ($\bar{X} = 3.90$).

Place: The overall level of satisfaction was at the very satisfied level ($\bar{X} = 4.03$). The highest satisfaction was the clean and hygienic environment ($\bar{X} = 4.27$), followed by the conveniently located area ($\bar{X} = 4.24$) and the safe and secure environment ($\bar{X} = 4.20$).

Promotion: Overall satisfaction was at the very satisfied level ($\bar{X} = 3.68$). Highest was public relations through communication channels ($\bar{X} = 4.10$), followed by free trials/tastings ($\bar{X} = 3.79$) and shop discounts ($\bar{X} = 3.72$).

People: Overall satisfaction was at the very satisfied level ($\bar{X} = 4.02$). Highest was staff personality and interpersonal skills ($\bar{X} = 4.23$), followed by helpfulness and advice ($\bar{X} = 4.22$) and staff honesty ($\bar{X} = 3.98$).

Process: Overall satisfaction was at the very satisfied level ($\bar{X} = 3.94$). Highest was welcoming service ($\bar{X} = 4.13$), followed by fast and efficient service ($\bar{X} = 4.03$) and attention

to customer feedback ($\bar{X} = 4.01$).

Physical Evidence: Overall satisfaction was at the very satisfied level ($\bar{X} = 4.04$). Highest was the market's unique atmosphere ($\bar{X} = 4.37$), followed by cleanliness, ventilation, and low crowding ($\bar{X} = 4.17$) and emergency services ($\bar{X} = 4.06$).

Discussion

Most respondents have moderate income and visit mainly for shopping and leisure. They usually spend 1–2 hours, followed by 2–3 hours, reflecting the market's role as a short-stay destination due to accessibility. These findings align with Narin et al. (2021) and Taentong and Subanwong (2026). The results highlight the need for a pleasant environment and diverse shops to enhance experience and spending.

The findings show very high satisfaction with tangible aspects of Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market, especially product and service diversity. Product arrangement, atmosphere, and space convenience were also highly rated, supporting easier use and purchase. These results align with Sangkapan et al. (2016). Overall, tangible elements enhance tourist satisfaction and destination attractiveness.

The results show high satisfaction with the physical evidence dimension, especially the market's unique atmosphere. This aligns with Arunrangsiwed (2020) on floating market atmosphere and experience. Overall, atmosphere and uniqueness enhance satisfaction, memorability, and attractiveness.

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GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING THE IDENTITY OF SOUVENIRS IN CHONBURI PROVINCE, THAILAND

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Abstract

This study, “Guidelines for Developing the Identity of Souvenirs in Chonburi Province, Thailand,” aims to study guidelines for developing the Identity of Souvenirs in Chonburi Province, Thailand. A qualitative research approach was employed using interviews with 7 participants, including local artisans or souvenir producers, designers or product developers, tourism-related professionals and academic or expert in cultural or design. The result was found that most souvenirs in Chonburi Province lack a distinctive identity that clearly reflects local cultural characteristics. In terms of Product, souvenirs are often generic and insufficiently represent local identity. For Price, the value of products is not always aligned with their cultural and design significance. Regarding Place, distribution channels remain limited to local markets and tourist attractions, with minimal use of online platforms. In terms of Promotion, there is a lack of storytelling, branding, and effective marketing communication to enhance product identity.

Keywords; Guidelines for Developing, The Identity, Souvenirs, Chonburi Province

Introduction

Chonburi Province, located in the eastern region of Thailand, is one of the country’s major tourist destinations, attracting both domestic and international visitors. The province is widely known for its coastal attractions such as Pattaya Beach, Bangsaen Beach, and Koh Larn, as well as its rich cultural heritage, local traditions, and diverse seafood products. Despite its popularity, many souvenirs available in Chonburi lack a strong and coherent identity that clearly reflects the province’s unique characteristics. A significant number of products are generic or mass-produced, making them indistinguishable from souvenirs found in other tourist destinations across Thailand.

The concept of identity in souvenir design is closely related to cultural elements, local wisdom, materials, and aesthetics that represent a specific area. Research in Thailand has shown that souvenir products should reflect local identity in order to create value and attract tourists. For example, a study on folk art-based souvenir design emphasized that products

must convey local identity and create emotional connections with tourists through design (Imsamraan et al., 2021)

However, although there are several studies related to souvenir design and identity in Thailand, there is still a lack of specific guidelines for developing identity-based souvenirs in the context of Chonburi Province. Most existing research focuses on other regions or specific case studies, which may not fully reflect the unique characteristics of Chonburi. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a set of guidelines that can be applied to this particular area. This research aims to propose guidelines for developing the identity of souvenirs in Chonburi Province by analyzing key factors such as local culture, design principles, consumer perceptions, and market trends. The study also emphasizes the importance of collaboration among stakeholders, including local communities, designers, entrepreneurs, and government agencies, in order to ensure that souvenir development reflects authentic identity and supports sustainable tourism.

Objectives

To Study on guidelines for Developing the Identity of Souvenirs in Chonburi Province, Thailand

Literature Review

Wirathat Arkasvipat and Arisara Seyanont (2025), Study **MARKETING MIX FACTORS OF SERVICES AFFECTING THAI PASSENGERS' DECISION TO PURCHASE IN-FLIGHT SOUVENIRS**. The findings revealed that 1) differences in passengers' personal characteristics did not significantly affect their souvenir purchasing decisions; 2) differences in preferred product types, reasons for purchase, and purchase methods and conditions significantly influenced souvenir purchasing decisions at the .05 significance level; and 3) service marketing mix factors—comprising marketing promotion, personnel, processes, and physical evidence—significantly affected Thai passengers' decisions to purchase souvenirs on airplanes at the .05 significance level. Based on these findings, it is recommended that operators develop products aligned with passengers' preferences and purchase motivations, train staff to provide knowledgeable and quality service, streamline the purchasing process to be convenient and efficient with multiple payment options, enhance the point of sale to be attractive and well-organized, and implement promotional activities to stimulate passengers' purchasing decisions.

Krittika Sainaratchai and Komsit Kieanwatana (2018), study the **Development of Product and Souvenir Logo of Sa Kaeo**. The purpose of this research was to study the tourism image regarding product and souvenir logo of Sa Kaeo province, and to design and develop the product and souvenir logo of Sa Kaeo province. Considered to be the research and development, this research employed a mixed method research including quantitative and qualitative researches. The product and souvenir logo of Sa Kaeo province reflected the

combination of the prominent and memorable tourist destinations and provincial symbols. The tourist destination was Rong Kluea Market. The provincial symbols included the pictures of tourist destinations, orange jasmine flower, Indian gooseberry tree, butterfly, and the identity of the province as a bordering trade center.

Prasan Charonsee (2026), Study the Developing Cooperation and Community Tourism Networks Based on Buddhist Culture in Mueang Chonburi District Chonburi Province. The objective of this research article was to study the development of cooperation and networks for community-based tourism rooted in Buddhist cultural heritage in Mueang District, Chonburi Province. This was a mixed-method research approach, involving both qualitative and quantitative methods. The population sample included 400 residents of Mueang District, Chonburi Province, 15 key informants, 12 focus group participants, and 17 experts. Data collection tools included questionnaires and interviews. Data analysis was performed using mean, standard deviation, and content analysis. The research findings revealed that the development plan for cooperation and networks in community tourism based on Buddhist cultural heritage in Mueang District, Chonburi Province, includes 1 vision, 5 strategies, 15 goals, 43 indicators, and 45 projects. And the evaluation of the development plan found that the vision, strategies, and goals are highly suitable, feasible, beneficial, and can be effectively implemented.

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative research approach to explore and develop guidelines for creating the identity of souvenirs in Chonburi Province. A qualitative method is appropriate for this study as it allows for an in-depth understanding of perceptions, experiences, and insights from key stakeholders involved in souvenir development and tourism.

Population and Sample

The participants in this study consist of seven key informants selected through purposive sampling. This sampling technique is used to ensure that participants have relevant knowledge and experience related to souvenir design, local culture, or tourism in Chonburi Province.

The 7 participants are categorized as follows:

1. Local artisans or souvenir producers (2 participants)
2. Designers or product developers (2 participants)
3. Tourism-related professionals (e.g., tourism officers or business owners) (2 participants)
4. Academic or expert in cultural or design fields (1 participant)

All participants were selected based on their expertise and willingness to provide in-depth information relevant to the research objectives.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The researcher systematically reviewed the interview transcripts to identify recurring themes, patterns, and key concepts related to souvenir identity development. And the 4Ps Marketing Mix Theory were used in the research.

Results

This study applies the 4Ps Marketing Mix Theory to analyze the development of souvenir identity in Chonburi Province. The findings are derived from in-depth interviews with seven key informants and are presented according to the four components: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion.

Product; The findings indicate that the “product” aspect is the most critical factor in developing the identity of souvenirs in Chonburi Province. Most participants agreed that current souvenirs lack uniqueness and do not clearly reflect the local identity of Chonburi. Key issues identified include, products are often generic and similar to those in other tourist destinations, limited integration of local culture, symbols, and storytelling lack of innovation in design and functionality.

Price; In terms of pricing, the findings reveal that most souvenirs are priced at an affordable level; however, price does not always reflect product quality or cultural value. It is suggested that pricing strategies should align with the perceived value of the product, especially when souvenirs have a strong identity or are handmade. Value-based pricing can help communicate quality and authenticity more effectively.

Place; The “place” component refers to distribution channels and points of sale. The findings show that souvenirs in Chonburi are mainly sold in traditional locations such as local markets, beach areas, and tourist attractions. Participants recommended expanding distribution channels to include online platforms, concept stores, and tourist centers.

Promotion; Promotion was identified as a weak area in the current souvenir market in Chonburi. Most products lack effective marketing communication and branding. To improve promotion, participants suggested using storytelling techniques to communicate the cultural identity of Chonburi through souvenirs. Social media platforms, influencer marketing, and tourism campaigns can be used to increase visibility and attract tourists. Developing a unified brand for Chonburi souvenirs could also strengthen recognition and competitiveness.

Discussion

The findings of this study based on the 4Ps Marketing Mix Theory (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) reveal that the development of souvenir identity in Chonburi Province is influenced by both product-related factors and marketing strategies.

In terms of Product, the study found that most souvenirs in Chonburi lack a distinctive

identity and do not clearly represent local cultural characteristics. For the Price dimension, the findings show that souvenirs are generally low-priced, but pricing often does not reflect product quality or cultural value. Similarly, research by Julalak Jarujatarat and Wachirasak Kainwong (2025), study the development of packaging and branding to communicate product identity for Thonburi community. The results showed that the development of packaging and branding based on Thonburi's local identity serves as an effective marketing communication tool, enhancing brand recognition and influencing consumers' purchase decisions. Consumer satisfaction with the packaging and branding was assessed across 5 topics: functionality, aesthetic appeal, safety, sustainability and marketing effectiveness. Knowledge transfer was conducted through hands-on training workshops covering topics such as packaging design concepts, material selection, and cost analysis. These workshops enhanced the competitiveness of the community enterprises and helped generate income for the local communities. The study demonstrates that packaging designed to reflect local cultural identity can effectively add value to community products, promote local marketing and tourism, and can be practically applied in the context of the Thonburi community. Regarding Place, the study found that souvenir distribution is mainly limited to local markets and tourist attractions, with insufficient expansion into modern retail and online platforms. In terms of Promotion, the findings reveal a lack of strong branding and storytelling in Chonburi souvenirs. This is supported by research from Krittika Sainaratchai and Komsit Kieanwatana (2018) The product and souvenir logo of Sa Kaeo province reflected the combination of the prominent and memorable tourist destinations and provincial symbols. The tourist destination was Rong Kluea Market. The provincial symbols included the pictures of tourist destinations, orange jasmine flower, Indian gooseberry tree, butterfly, and the identity of the province as a bordering trade center.

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A STUDY OF THE BEHAVIOR AND SATISFACTION OF THAI TOURISTS TOWARD PHU KRADUENG NATIONAL PARK

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Abstract

The research titled “A Study of Tourist Behavior and Satisfaction Affecting Tourism at Phu Kradueng National Park” has two main objectives: (1) to examine the tourism behavior of Thai tourists visiting Phu Kradueng National Park, and (2) to investigate the satisfaction levels of Thai tourists toward the park.

This study employed a quantitative research approach, using a questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection. The sample group consisted of Thai tourists who visited Phu Kradueng National Park. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The results revealed that the majority of Thai tourists visiting Phu Kradueng National Park were male, aged between 18–25 years, single, holding a bachelor’s degree, working in freelance occupations, and earning less than 20,000 baht per month. Most respondents were first-time visitors, traveling in groups of 3–5 people, typically with friends or colleagues. Their main purpose of travel was to conquer the summit of Phu Kradueng (self-challenge). Information about the park was primarily obtained through online media, and most tourists planned a 3-day, 2-night trip.

Overall satisfaction was found to be at a high level, particularly in terms of the uniqueness and image of being a “conqueror.” This was followed by satisfaction with the adequacy of basic facilities. As for recommendations, the study suggests that the development of a cable car project should be carefully considered, including conducting environmental impact assessments and gathering opinions from all stakeholders transparently. If such a system is developed, its design should ensure that it does not compromise the “conquest experience.”

Keywords: Tourist behavior, Tourist satisfaction, Nature-based tourism, Phu Kradueng National Park

Introduction

Loei Province is one of the key target areas endowed with some of the richest natural resources in the northeastern region of Thailand. In particular, Phu Kradueng National Park is regarded as an iconic destination of Thai tourism. It is the second national park established in the country and is geologically distinguished by its mesa-like sandstone mountain formation. The summit features a vast plateau covering over 60 square kilometers, surrounded by diverse ecosystems, including pine forests, evergreen forests, and rare temperate flora. With its unique characteristics—especially the challenging hiking trail of more than 9 kilometers and its cool climate throughout the year—Phu Kradueng has fostered a “once-in-a-lifetime” travel culture. This distinctive appeal attracts a high number of Thai tourists, with approximately 60,000–70,000 visitors annually.

This study, “A Study of the Behavior and Satisfaction of Thai Tourists toward Phu Kradueng National Park,” aims to examine the travel behaviors and satisfaction levels of Thai tourists visiting the park. Quantitative research methods are employed to systematically collect and analyze data, allowing for objective measurement and generalization of findings.

Previous studies have highlighted that tourist satisfaction is influenced by factors such as accessibility, facilities, safety, and environmental quality (e.g., Philip Kotler & Kevin Lane Keller, 2016). Additionally, tourist behavior is shaped by personal, cultural, and situational factors, which directly impact destination choice and overall experience. By identifying these key factors, this research seeks to provide insights that can support park management and policymakers in enhancing tourist satisfaction and promoting sustainable tourism development.

Objectives

To Study of the Behavior and Satisfaction of Thai Tourists toward Phu Kradueng National Park.

Literature Review

Tourist behavior and satisfaction are central concepts in tourism research, particularly in nature-based destinations such as Phu Kradueng National Park. Tourist behavior refers to the decision-making processes and actions of individuals when planning, visiting, and evaluating a destination. According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), consumer behavior is influenced by cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors, which can also be applied to tourism contexts.

In the tourism sector, satisfaction is commonly defined as the comparison between tourists’ expectations and their actual experiences. Richard L. Oliver (1980) introduced the Expectation-Confirmation Theory, suggesting that satisfaction occurs when perceived performance meets or exceeds expectations. This theory has been widely used to assess tourist satisfaction in various destinations, including national parks.

Previous studies indicate that key determinants of tourist satisfaction in natural attractions include service quality, accessibility, safety, environmental conditions, and available facilities. Valarie A. Zeithaml, A. Parasuraman, and Leonard L. Berry (1988) developed the SERVQUAL model, which measures service quality across dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. This model has been widely adapted in tourism studies to evaluate visitor perceptions and satisfaction.

In the context of Thai tourism, research has shown that domestic tourists are increasingly concerned with environmental sustainability, convenience, and overall experience quality. Understanding these factors is particularly important for destinations like Phu Kradueng National Park, where natural preservation must be balanced with tourism development.

Therefore, this study applies established theories of consumer behavior and satisfaction to examine the behavior and satisfaction levels of Thai tourists, providing empirical data that can support effective management and sustainable tourism planning.

Methodology

This study applied a quantitative research approach to investigate the behavior and satisfaction of Thai tourists visiting Phu Kradueng National Park. Data were collected structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The population comprised Thai tourists visiting the Phu Kradueng National Park, with an unknown size. The sample size was determined using William G. Cochran (1977) formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, resulting in at least 385 respondents; thus, 400 participants were selected using convenience and accidental sampling techniques.

The research instrument was a questionnaire divided into three sections: demographic data, travel behavior, and satisfaction. Satisfaction was measured using a 5-point Likert scale based on the concept of Rensis Likert (1932).

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was evaluated by three experts using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), with all items meeting acceptable criteria ($IOC \geq 0.50$). Reliability was tested through a pilot study with 30 participants, yielding a high Cronbach's Alpha coefficient based on Lee Cronbach (1951), with an overall value of 0.91, indicating strong internal consistency.

Data collection involved distributing 400 questionnaires to tourists who voluntarily participated, achieving a 100% response rate.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze demographic characteristics, travel behavior, and satisfaction levels.

Results

This study presents the findings from 400 Thai tourists visiting Phu Kradueng National Park, focusing on demographic characteristics, travel behavior, and satisfaction levels.

In terms of demographic characteristics, the majority of respondents were male (61.75%), Most were aged 18–25 years (51.75%), single (72.25%), and held a bachelor's degree (71.25%). In addition, 28.25% were employed as government officers or state enterprise employees, and 52.50% had a monthly income of less than 20,000 baht.

In terms of tourist behavior, the majority of respondents were first-time visitors to Phu Kradueng National Park (62.25%). Most traveled in groups of 3–5 people (46.50%) and visited the park with friends or colleagues (54.25%). The primary purpose of their visit was to conquer the summit of Phu Kradueng (self-challenge) (42.00%). Most respondents received information about the park through online media (92.00%). Additionally, the majority planned a 3-day, 2-night trip (79.50%), with travel expenses of less than 3,000 baht (59.75%).

In terms of tourist satisfaction, the overall level was high (mean = 4.70). Among the five components (6As), attraction (mean = 4.86), ancillary services (mean = 4.75), amenities (mean = 4.69), accommodation (mean = 4.66), transportation and accessibility (mean = 4.65), and activities (mean = 4.56). this indicates that Phu Kradueng National Park is a tourist destination that effectively meets the needs of visitors.

Finally, it is recommended that the development of a cable car project be carefully considered by conducting a comprehensive environmental impact assessment and ensuring transparent public participation from all stakeholders. If the cable car system is to be developed, its design and operation should not compromise the “conquest experience.” For example, its use could be limited to specific groups, such as the elderly, persons with disabilities, or for emergency situations.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the majority of Thai tourists visiting Phu Kradueng National Park are first-time visitors, reflecting a predominance of “new tourists” rather than repeat visitors. This trend is consistent with the concept of tourist motivation, where initial visits are driven by push factors such as the desire for challenge, escape from routine, and the pursuit of new experiences. The park's distinctive identity as a trekking and adventure destination encourages tourists to “conquer” it at least once in their lifetime. Most tourists travel in small groups of friends or colleagues, highlighting a preference for independent and small-group travel rather than family or large-group tourism. Online media plays a significant role in travel decision-making, while the typical travel pattern involves short stays (3 days, 2 nights) with moderate expenses, aligning with the characteristics of eco-tourism that emphasize experience over luxury.

Overall tourist satisfaction was found to be at the highest level across all dimensions of the 6A tourism components. In particular, the attraction dimension received the highest rating, especially in terms of the uniqueness and image of being a “conqueror.” This reflects the symbolic value and sense of achievement derived from completing the physically and mentally challenging journey, which creates memorable and meaningful experiences. Such findings are consistent with the experience economy concept, emphasizing that meaningful experiences generate high satisfaction. High levels of satisfaction in accessibility and amenities indicate effective infrastructure management, while strong performance in ancillary services reflects positive service quality and interpersonal interactions. Although some aspects, such as restroom facilities and certain activities, received slightly lower scores, overall satisfaction remains high, demonstrating the park’s strong potential for sustainable tourism development.

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MOTIVATION AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES OF THAI TOURISTS IN VISITING PHU KRADUENG NATIONAL PARK

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the motivation and decision-making processes of Thai tourists visiting Phu Kradueng National Park. The research aims to understand the key factors influencing tourists' intentions and travel choices toward one of Thailand's most popular nature-based destinations. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with Thai tourists who had previous visiting experience. The findings revealed four major motivational themes: relaxation and escape from routine, adventure and personal challenge, social bonding, and appreciation of natural scenery. In terms of decision-making, participants were strongly influenced by social media, online reviews, recommendations from friends and family, and practical considerations such as travel cost, weather, and physical readiness. The study highlights that tourists' visitation decisions are shaped by both emotional motivations and rational planning factors. These findings provide useful insights for destination managers and tourism planners to improve visitor experiences, marketing strategies, and sustainable tourism management at Phu Kradueng National Park.

Keywords : Tourist motivation, Decision-making, Thai tourists, Phu Kradueng National Park.

Introduction

Tourism motivation and decision-making are central topics in understanding visitor behavior, especially in nature-based destinations. National parks attract tourists for various reasons, including relaxation, adventure, social interaction, and appreciation of natural landscapes. Understanding these motivations helps tourism managers design better services and sustainable management strategies (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981).

Phu Kradueng National Park is one of Thailand's most well-known natural attractions, famous for its mountain scenery, cool climate, waterfalls, and hiking experiences. It has become a popular destination among Thai tourists seeking both physical challenge and

emotional satisfaction. However, limited research has explored how Thai tourists make decisions to visit this destination and what specific motivations influence their travel choices.

This qualitative research aims to explore the motivation and decision-making processes of Thai tourists in visiting Phu Kradueng National Park. Through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, the study seeks to gain deeper insights into personal, social, and environmental factors shaping tourists' intentions and behaviors. The findings may contribute to tourism management, destination marketing, and sustainable visitor planning for national parks in Thailand.

Objectives

To motivation and Decision-Making Processes of Thai Tourists in Visiting Phu Kradueng National Park

Literature Review

Tourist motivation has been widely discussed in tourism studies, particularly through the push and pull theory. Push factors refer to internal motivations such as escape, relaxation, achievement, and social interaction, while pull factors relate to destination attributes such as scenery, climate, and recreational opportunities (Dann, 1981; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). In the context of nature-based tourism, visitors are often motivated by the desire to experience natural environments, adventure, and personal fulfillment.

Decision-making processes in tourism involve several stages, including need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, travel decision, and post-visit evaluation (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2017). Social media, word-of-mouth, previous experiences, and accessibility often influence tourists when selecting destinations. For domestic tourists, cultural familiarity, travel cost, and convenience may also play significant roles.

Phu Kradueng National Park is recognized as a leading ecotourism destination in Thailand due to its mountain landscape, trekking routes, waterfalls, and cool weather. These destination attributes may function as pull factors attracting Thai tourists, while personal goals such as adventure, relaxation, and social bonding may serve as push factors. However, previous studies have focused more on tourist satisfaction and destination management than on in-depth exploration of Thai tourists' motivations and decision-making experiences.

Therefore, a qualitative approach is appropriate for examining how Thai tourists interpret their motivations and make travel decisions regarding visits to Phu Kradueng National Park. This study contributes to the literature by providing deeper understanding of domestic tourist behavior in Thailand's national park context.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the motivation and decision-making processes of Thai tourists visiting Phu Kradueng National Park. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it allows in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and meanings related to travel behavior (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 15–20 Thai tourists who had visited Phu Kradueng National Park within the past 12 months. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they had direct experience relevant to the research topic. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or online, depending on participants' convenience, and each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes.

The interview questions focused on participants' travel motivations, information search behavior, decision-making factors, and overall visiting experiences. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed for analysis.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the steps of and developing key themes from participants' narratives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Trustworthiness was enhanced through member checking and careful review of transcripts. Ethical considerations included voluntary participation, confidentiality, and informed consent.

Results

The analysis of interview data identified four main themes explaining the motivation of Thai tourists to visit Phu Kradueng National Park: escape and relaxation, adventure and challenge, social bonding, and appreciation of nature. Many participants stated that they wanted to take a break from stressful daily routines and enjoy the peaceful natural environment. This finding aligns with previous studies showing that relaxation and escape are common travel motivations (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981).

Adventure and physical challenge were also strong motivating factors. Participants described hiking to the top of the mountain as a rewarding experience that created feelings of pride and achievement. For many respondents, completing the journey represented personal success and self-development.

Regarding decision-making processes, most participants reported that they first became interested in visiting through social media content, online reviews, and recommendations from friends or family. Attractive photos of viewpoints, waterfalls, and camping experiences encouraged their desire to visit. Before making the final decision, tourists considered practical factors such as travel costs, transportation, weather conditions, and physical fitness.

The findings further revealed that group influence was important in shaping decisions. Several participants decided to travel because their friends organized the trip or because they wanted to share memorable experiences together. Overall, the results indicate that both internal motivations and external social influences played significant roles in Thai tourists' decisions to visit Phu Kradueng National Park.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Thai tourists' motivations to visit Phu Kradueng National Park were primarily shaped by the desire for relaxation, adventure, social bonding, and appreciation of nature. These results are consistent with recent studies showing that nature-based tourism is strongly associated with psychological well-being, escape from routine, and meaningful outdoor experiences. Research has shown that national parks provide restorative environments that enhance visitor satisfaction and emotional well-being.

The motivation for challenge and achievement, particularly climbing to the summit and completing trekking activities, suggests that tourists also seek self-development and memorable accomplishments. This supports recent evidence that adventure-oriented experiences in natural destinations create stronger emotional attachment and lasting travel memories, which may increase loyalty and revisit intention.

In terms of decision-making, the study found that social media, online reviews, and recommendations from friends significantly influenced tourists' travel planning. This reflects broader tourism trends in which digital platforms shape destination image, expectations, and travel intentions. User-generated content such as photos, videos, and travel stories can reduce uncertainty and encourage domestic tourists to choose nature destinations.

Practical factors such as cost, weather, time availability, and physical readiness also played an important role in final decisions. This indicates that although motivation may initiate travel desire, actual visitation depends on personal and situational constraints. For park management, improving access to accurate travel information, weather updates, trail conditions, and visitor preparation guidance may support better decision-making among tourists.

Overall, this study highlights that visiting Phu Kradueng National Park is a combination of emotional desire and rational planning. Understanding these factors can help destination managers develop targeted marketing strategies and sustainable tourism management practices for domestic visitors.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM BRANDING IN NAN PROVINCE BASED ON LOCAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the development of community-based tourism branding in Nan Province based on local cultural heritage. The research focuses on how cultural identity and community participation contribute to shaping a distinctive tourism brand, as well as identifying challenges and opportunities in developing sustainable tourism branding. This research is a qualitative research approach using a case study design was employed in this study. Data were collected from six key informants. The findings reveal two main topics. First, local cultural heritage serves as the core foundation of tourism branding in Nan Province. Elements such as Tai Lue traditions, local wisdom, handicrafts, and cultural lifestyles are essential in creating a unique destination identity and attracting tourists. Second, community participation plays a significant role in developing tourism activities; however, several challenges remain, including limited marketing capacity, lack of integrated branding strategies, and insufficient digital promotion. The study concludes that the development of community-based tourism branding in Nan Province should integrate cultural authenticity with strategic branding and marketing approaches. Strengthening collaboration among stakeholders and enhancing digital communication are essential for sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: Community-Based Tourism; Tourism Branding, Nan Province, Local Cultural Heritage

Introduction

Currently, the tourism industry plays a crucial role in Thailand's economic development, especially community-based tourism (CBT), a form of tourism that emphasizes the participation of local people in managing tourism resources to generate income, distribute benefits, and conserve cultural resources simultaneously (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2023). And Nan Province is an area distinguished by its cultural capital and local wisdom, including the Tai Lue ethnic group, traditional community lifestyles, arts and culture, and abundant natural resources. These are considered "cultural capital" that can be developed into a unique identity for community tourism with great potential (Nan Provincial Tourism

and Sports Office, 2022).

However, despite Nan province having numerous tourist communities, limitations remain in systematically creating a positive image and communicating their unique identity. This results in tourists' perceptions of cultural values being unclear, and there is a lack of continuity in building community tourism brands at the provincial level (Tourism Research Centre of Thailand, 2021). Therefore, this research aims to study approaches to branding community tourism in Nan Province based on local culture, in order to develop knowledge to enhance tourism potential and promote sustainable community economic development.

Objectives

To Study on development of community-based tourism branding in Nan province based on local cultural heritage

Literature Review

Kanokrat Duangpikul and Jarunan Methaphan (2018), Study Homestay and Sustainable Tourism Management in Nan Province, the results were that the communities managed eco-tourism in 7 aspects: 1) an access to tourism areas of homestays, 2) accommodation of tourists, 3) food for tourists, 4) activities and tourist guides, 5) resources and environment, 6) public relations and promotion, and 7) management of homestay groups. Moreover, the homestay entrepreneurs emphasized management of homestays at a high level. When considering in the aspects, ranked from high to low, it was found that the top-three aspects were food for tourists, accommodation of tourists, and management of homestay groups, respectively. In terms of the potential of tourism management of homestays using a market opportunity analysis, the results were that the strengths of homestay groups included 1) high-leadership performance of group leaders, 2) clear segregation of duties of group operations, 3) various tourism activities, 4) attractive natural resources, and 5) safety. The weaknesses were 1) communication with foreigners, 2) lack of local tour guides, 3) lack of operating budget, and 4) insufficient accommodation. By means of opportunities, the results involved 1) popularity of eco-tourism, 2) certification of Thai homestays, and 3) Tai Lue lifestyle. For the threats, the results included 1) more competitions in tourism businesses in the province, 2) lack of continuous supports, and 3) inconvenient routes and transportation to the communities.

Charasnan Tachom, Narin Rinpanussak and Yuttapum Suprakarn, (2021), Community-based Tourism Management Agricultural Tourism Development Tai Lue Community, Pua District, Nan Province. Research paper on Community-based tourism management, the development of agricultural tourism in Tai Lue community, Pua district, Nan province It is a participatory action research study. And the population survey research of Tai Lue cultural community in Pua district by using the Chain or snow Brainstorming from group interviews using tools And the Tai Lue village community meeting Distributed throughout the Doi Phu Kha valley plain in the development of tourism management by the Tai Lue community There

were results for organizing a forum for the development of agricultural tourism of the Tai Lue community, Pua District, Nan Province, with objectives: 1. To study the situation and assess the potential of community tourism management in Pua District. Case studies of community-based tourism management 2. Development of Thai Lue community tourism Agricultural Tourism Development, Tai Lue Community, Pua District, Nan Province.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore and develop guidelines for branding community-based tourism in Nan Province based on local cultural heritage. A qualitative approach is appropriate because it allows an in-depth understanding of community identity, cultural values, and tourism practices within their real-life context (Creswell, 2014).

Study Area

The study is conducted in Nan Province, Northern Thailand, which is well-known for its ethnic diversity, traditional lifestyles, and strong cultural heritage, particularly among Tai Lue and local highland communities.

Key Informants

The informants are selected using purposive sampling to ensure they have relevant knowledge and experience and total sample size is 6 participants. Key informants include:

- Community leaders
- Local tourism entrepreneurs
- Cultural practitioners / local wisdom experts
- Tourism officers at the provincial level

Data Collection

Data collection is conducted in the following steps:

- Reviewing relevant literature and secondary data
- Conducting field visits in selected communities
- Interviewing key informants
- Collecting and analyzing relevant documents

Results

Cultural Heritage as the Foundation of Tourism Branding. This topic reflects how local culture and wisdom shape the identity of community-based tourism in Nan Province.

Key findings include:

- All 6 informants agree that cultural heritage is the core identity of Nan tourism branding.
- Tai Lue culture, traditional weaving, local rituals, and Buddhist lifestyle are seen as unique selling points.

- Local wisdom is used as a storytelling tool to attract tourists and create meaningful experiences.
- Community leaders and cultural practitioners emphasize that authenticity is more important than commercialization.

Community Participation and Challenges in Building a Tourism Brand

This Topic focuses on how communities participate in tourism branding and the barriers they face.

Key findings include:

- Community participation varies: some villages have strong cooperation, while others rely on external agencies.
- Tourism operators and government officers highlight the need for better coordination and shared branding strategy.
- Major challenges include: Lack of marketing and digital skills, Weak integrated branding at provincial level, Inconsistent service quality among communities
- Tourists noted that promotion of Nan's cultural tourism is still limited and not widely visible online.

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the development of community-based tourism branding in Nan Province based on local cultural heritage. The findings revealed two main topics: (1) cultural heritage as the foundation of tourism branding, and (2) community participation and challenges in building a tourism brand. This section discusses the findings in relation to relevant theories and previous studies.

Cultural Heritage as the Foundation of Tourism Branding. The findings indicate that cultural heritage plays a central role in shaping the identity of community-based tourism in Nan Province. Elements such as Tai Lue traditions, local handicrafts, rituals, and ways of life are considered key branding assets. This finding aligns with the concept of cultural tourism branding, which emphasizes that destination identity is strongly built on unique cultural resources and local authenticity (Kotler et al., 2017). It also supports the idea that cultural heritage is not only an attraction but also a symbolic resource that adds value to tourism experiences. Moreover, the results are consistent with the work of Thai tourism scholars who argue that local wisdom and cultural identity are essential for creating meaningful tourism experiences in rural communities (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2023). In the case of Nan Province, cultural authenticity enhances tourists' emotional engagement and strengthens destination differentiation. However, the findings also suggest that cultural resources are still underutilized in systematic branding strategies. While communities possess rich heritage, the transformation into a coherent "brand identity" remains limited.

Community Participation and Challenges in Tourism Branding. The second major finding highlights the importance of community participation in tourism development. Communities that actively participate in planning and managing tourism activities tend to have stronger and more authentic tourism identities. This result supports the principles of Community-Based Tourism (CBT), which emphasize local ownership, participation, and equitable benefit distribution (UNWTO, 2019). When communities are empowered, tourism becomes more sustainable and culturally appropriate. Furthermore, inconsistent service quality across communities may weaken the overall brand image of Nan Province as a tourism destination. This suggests that while local participation is strong, there is still a need for stronger management systems and capacity building.

Summary of Discussion

Overall, the study confirms that cultural heritage is the core foundation of tourism branding in Nan Province, while community participation is essential for authenticity and sustainability. However, challenges in coordination, marketing, and digital communication must be addressed to fully realize the potential of community-based tourism branding. The findings suggest that effective tourism branding in Nan Province should focus on integrating cultural heritage into a unified brand narrative. This requires collaboration between local communities, government agencies, and tourism operators.

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ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES FOR KHLONG HAE FLOATING MARKET AFTER FLOODING FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF TOURISTS AND ENTREPRENEURS

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze development approaches for Khlong Hae Floating Market after flooding from the perspectives of tourists and local entrepreneurs. A qualitative research approach was employed, using semi-structured in-depth interviews and non-participant observation. A total of 25 participants were selected through purposive sampling, including 15 tourists and 10 local entrepreneurs.

The findings reveal that flooding caused significant impacts on infrastructure, tourist arrivals, and business operations. Tourists emphasized the importance of cleanliness, safety, and accessibility, while entrepreneurs highlighted financial constraints and the need for support in marketing, infrastructure recovery, and disaster preparedness.

The study suggests that effective post-flood development should focus on infrastructure improvement, safety enhancement, digital marketing promotion, and community participation. These integrated approaches are essential for achieving sustainable tourism recovery and strengthening the resilience of local destinations.

Keywords: Post-flood development, Floating market, Tourism recovery, Tourist perspectives, Entrepreneur perspectives, Thailand

Introduction

Tourism is a vital sector contributing significantly to Thailand's economy, particularly at the community level where local attractions such as floating markets reflect cultural identity and traditional lifestyles. Among these, Khlong Hae Floating Market is recognized as one of the most prominent floating markets in southern Thailand, attracting both domestic and international tourists.

However, the area has been repeatedly affected by flooding, which has caused considerable damage to infrastructure, disrupted tourism activities, and reduced visitor confidence. Such natural disasters not only impact the physical environment but also affect local livelihoods, especially small-scale entrepreneurs who rely heavily on tourism income.

In the context of increasing climate-related risks, the need for effective post-flood development approaches has become more critical. Recovery strategies must not only focus on physical restoration but also address tourists' perceptions, safety concerns, and service expectations. At the same time, the perspectives of local entrepreneurs are essential in understanding practical challenges and identifying feasible development solutions.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze development approaches for Khlong Hae Floating Market after flooding from the perspectives of tourists and entrepreneurs. The findings are expected to contribute to sustainable tourism development and enhance the resilience of community-based tourism destinations in the long term.

Objectives

1. To examine the impacts of flooding and explore the perspectives of tourists and local entrepreneurs toward the development of Khlong Hae Floating Market.
2. To propose appropriate and sustainable development approaches for the floating market after flooding.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore post-flood development approaches for Khlong Hae Floating Market. The research design focuses on understanding the perspectives of tourists and local entrepreneurs in a real-world context. The study area is Khlong Hae Floating Market in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province.

A total of 25 participants were selected using purposive sampling, including 15 tourists and 10 local entrepreneurs. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and non-participant observation, with each interview lasting approximately 30–45 minutes.

The data were analyzed using categorization, and interpretation of key themes. To ensure credibility, triangulation was applied by comparing data from multiple sources. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, were strictly maintained throughout the study.

Results

The findings of this study are presented based on the perspectives of tourists and local entrepreneurs regarding post-flood development at Khlong Hae Floating Market. The results are categorized into four main themes as follows:

Impacts of Flooding : The results indicate that flooding has significantly affected the floating market in several aspects. Physical infrastructure, including walkways, stalls, and drainage systems, was damaged, leading to temporary closures of many businesses. In addition, the number of tourists decreased due to safety concerns and reduced accessibility. Entrepreneurs reported income loss and business interruptions during and after the flood events.

Tourists' Perspectives : Tourists emphasized several key factors influencing their decision to revisit the market after flooding. Cleanliness and environmental hygiene were considered essential, as they reflect the overall quality and safety of the destination. Safety measures, such as flood prevention systems and clear warning signs, were also highly valued. Furthermore, accessibility, including transportation and parking, as well as the availability of basic facilities, were identified as important aspects for improving tourist satisfaction.

Entrepreneurs' Perspectives : Local entrepreneurs highlighted the challenges they faced and their needs for recovery. Financial support was identified as a critical factor, as many businesses experienced revenue loss. Entrepreneurs also expressed the need for marketing support, particularly through digital platforms, to attract tourists back to the market. Additionally, they emphasized the importance of infrastructure rehabilitation and training programs related to disaster preparedness and risk management.

Development Approaches : Based on the findings, several development approaches were identified. These include improving infrastructure, particularly drainage systems, to prevent future flooding; enhancing safety measures and risk communication to rebuild tourist confidence; promoting the market through online and social media platforms; and encouraging community participation in tourism management. These strategies are expected to support both short-term recovery and long-term sustainability.

Discussion

The findings indicate that flooding has significantly impacted Khlong Hae Floating Market in terms of infrastructure, business operations, and tourist arrivals. This is consistent with the World Tourism Organization (2022), which highlights that natural disasters affect tourism recovery and destination competitiveness.

Tourists emphasized safety, cleanliness, and accessibility as key factors influencing their decision to revisit, supporting the concept of risk perception in tourist behavior (Su et al., 2021). Meanwhile, entrepreneurs faced financial challenges and required support in marketing and infrastructure, reflecting the importance of tourism resilience (Biggs et al., 2021).

In addition, the findings align with community-based tourism principles, where local participation plays a crucial role in sustainable development (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2021). Therefore, an integrated approach combining infrastructure improvement, safety management, and community involvement is essential for effective post-flood recovery.

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THE IMPACT OF BIOMETRIC TECHNOLOGY ON AIRPORT EFFICIENCY AND PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of biometric technology on airport efficiency and passenger experience, focusing on how the adoption of biometric systems transforms operational processes and influences traveller perceptions. The research aims to examine the extent to which biometric implementation enhances airport efficiency, affects passengers' privacy and trust, and shapes their overall satisfaction. A quantitative research design was employed using a structured questionnaire distributed to 400 respondents with experience in biometric systems. The results indicate that while biometric technology significantly improves operational speed and reduces waiting times, concerns regarding data privacy and security remain critical factors influencing passenger trust. The findings suggest that for successful long-term implementation, airports must balance technological efficiency with robust privacy protections to ensure a positive passenger experience.

Keywords: Biometric technology, Airport efficiency, Passenger experience, Privacy concerns, Airline business.

Introduction

In the landscape of 2026 global aviation, the integration of biometric technologies has transitioned from a futuristic concept to a fundamental operational standard. As international air travel volumes continue to surge, major aviation hubs have increasingly replaced traditional manual document verification with automated systems, including facial recognition, iris scanning, and fingerprinting (SITA, 2023). These innovations are driven by the urgent need for “frictionless travel” a seamless journey that maintains stringent security protocols while delivering the speed and convenience demanded by the modern passenger (Deloitte, 2021).

The primary catalyst for this shift is the International Air Transport Association (IATA) “One ID” initiative. This framework envisions a decentralized digital identity where a passenger’s biological data serves as their sole travel credential from check-in to aircraft boarding (International Air Transport Association, 2023). While the operational benefits such

as a 30–40% reduction in processing times and optimized resource allocation are well-documented by industry leaders (SITA, 2023), the rapid pace of adoption has outpaced our understanding of its deeper psychological and social impacts.

Despite the clear gains in efficiency, a critical tension persists between technological speed and human perception. While airports emphasize throughput, passengers often raise concerns regarding data privacy, system reliability, and the potential “dehumanization” of the travel experience (World Economic Forum, 2022). Furthermore, as biometric systems become more sophisticated, they face emerging threats such as high-fidelity “deepfake” spoofs and complex cybersecurity vulnerabilities that could undermine public trust if not addressed responsibly (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2023).

This study seeks to bridge the gap between operational efficiency metrics and passenger-centric service quality. By investigating how biometric processing influences not only the speed of travel but also passenger satisfaction and long-term brand loyalty (Airports Council International, 2022), this research aims to provide evidence-based guidance for the aviation industry. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that the transition toward an automated future remains balanced, secure, and aligned with the evolving expectations of a global society.

Objectives

1. To analyze passengers perceived privacy risk, trust, and satisfaction with biometric-enabled processes.
2. To assess the relationship between measured operational improvements and passenger experience outcomes.

Literature & Theory

1. Conceptual Overview and Application

Biometrics utilizes unique physical or behavioral traits (fingerprints, facial recognition, iris scans) for secure identity verification. Major hubs like **Singapore Changi**, **Dubai International**, and **LAX** have transitioned from manual documents to biometric systems. According to **SITA (2021)**, these systems can process passengers up to **30% faster** than traditional methods.

2. Key Benefits and Challenges

The literature identifies a clear trade-off between operational gains and privacy concerns:

- **Benefits:** Enhanced security through accurate identification, reduced waiting times, and cost-efficiency via automation.
- **Challenges:** Significant hurdles include data privacy risks, the need for **GDPR compliance**, and technical inaccuracies caused by environmental factors like lighting or physical obstructions (e.g., masks).

3. Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)** by Davis (1989), centering on two primary drivers of passenger adoption:

- **Perceived Usefulness (PU):** How much technology enhances travel experience.
- **Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU):** The level of effort required to use the system.

While existing literature extensively covers the **technical and operational** successes of biometrics in developed nations, a significant gap remains in the following areas:

- **Human & Experiential Dimensions:** There is limited research on the emotional responses, trust levels, and psychological perceptions of passengers regarding biometric surveillance.
- **Geographic Context:** Most studies focus on Western or technologically advanced hubs; there is a lack of empirical evidence from developing regions, such as **Thailand**.
- **Integrated Frameworks:** Previous research often separates "airport efficiency" from "passenger satisfaction." This study identifies a need for a comprehensive framework that connects operational performance with privacy perceptions and overall traveler trust.

Methodology and research design

This study employs a **quantitative descriptive and correlational research design**. This approach facilitates the objective measurement of passenger perceptions and identifies statistical relationships between variables. The framework integrates the **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)** and the **Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)** to examine how factors like efficiency and trust influence behavioral intention.

Sampling and Participants

- **Target Population:** Passengers with experience using airport biometric systems (facial recognition, fingerprinting, or iris scans).
- **Sampling Technique:** **Convenience sampling** was utilized for its practicality and cost-efficiency in gathering diverse traveler insights.
- **Sample Size:** **400 respondents**, meeting the minimum requirement for valid correlation and regression analysis
- **Ethics:** Voluntary participation and full anonymity were maintained, with no personal identifiers collected.

Research Instrument

Data was gathered via a **self-administered online survey (Google Forms)** divided into two sections:

1. **Demographics:** Gender, age, travel frequency, and prior biometric experience.
2. **Technology Evaluation:** A **5-point Likert Scale** measuring six constructs:

- **Perceived Usefulness (PU):** Impact on waiting times and efficiency.
- **Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU):** Simplicity and clarity of the system.
- **Social Influence (SI):** Impact of peers and social circles.
- **Facilitating Conditions (FC):** Availability of airport resources and support.
- **Trust & Security (TS):** Confidence in data safety and privacy.
- **Behavioral Intention (BI):** Likelihood of future use or recommendation.

Results

The following section presents an in-depth analysis of passengers' perceptions toward biometric technology in airport operations. The findings are based on descriptive statistics, including Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD), which reflect the level of agreement among respondents. The analysis is categorized into key constructs: Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Social Influence, Facilitating Conditions, Trust & Security, and Behavioral Intention.

1.Satisfaction in the Perceived Usefulness

Overall, respondents expressed a high level of agreement regarding the usefulness of biometric technology in airport operations. The highest-rated item was “Biometric technology helps me travel more conveniently” ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 0.70$), indicating that passengers strongly perceive benefits in terms of convenience and efficiency. Similarly, the items related to reducing waiting time and improving airport operational efficiency also received high mean scores, reflecting positive attitudes toward system effectiveness.

However, “Biometric technology improves airport efficiency” ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.71$) recorded the lowest mean within this dimension. Although still in the high level, this suggests that some respondents may perceive room for improvement in system performance or implementation.

Item	Mean	SD
Help me travel more conveniently	4.36	0.70
Reduces waiting time	4.31	0.73
Improves airport efficiency	4.29	0.71
Enhance travel security	4.34	0.69

Table 1: Satisfaction in the Perceived Usefulness

2.Satisfaction in the Perceived Ease of Use

Respondents reported a high level of agreement regarding the ease of use of biometric systems. The highest-rated item was “The system is clear and understandable” ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.69$), indicating that users find the system intuitive and easy to follow. Other items such as

ease of learning and minimal effort required also received high mean scores, reflecting user-friendly system design.

Nevertheless, “I can use the system without assistance” ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.74$) received the lowest mean score in this category, suggesting that some passengers may still require assistance, particularly first-time users.

The relatively low SD values indicate consistent perceptions among respondents.

Item	Mean	SD
Easy to learn	4.27	0.72
Clear and understandable	4.30	0.69
Can use without assistance	4.22	0.74
Requires little effort	4.28	0.71

Table 2: Satisfaction in the Perceived Ease of Use

3.Satisfaction in Social Influence

The results show that social influence plays a role in the adoption of biometric technology, with mean scores ranging from 4.10 to 4.15. The highest-rated item was “People around me support the use of biometric technology” ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.76$).

However, this construct recorded slightly higher SD values compared to others, indicating some variability in respondents’ opinions. This suggests that while many respondents are influenced by others, the degree of influence varies across individuals.

Item	Mean	SD
People around me support usage	4.15	0.76
Friends/family influence decision	4.10	0.78

Table 3: Satisfaction in Social Influence

4.Satisfaction in Facilitating Conditions

Respondents indicated a high level of agreement regarding facilitating conditions. The highest-rated item was “The airport provides sufficient facilities for biometric usage” ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.70$). This suggests that respondents perceive that the necessary infrastructure and support are available. ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.73$) received the lowest score, indicating that some users may still lack familiarity with the system.

Overall, the low SD values reflect consistency in responses.

Item	Mean	SD
Airport has sufficient facilities	4.22	0.70
I have knowledge to use system	4.18	0.73

Table 4: Satisfaction in Facilitating Conditions**5. Satisfaction in Trust and Security**

The findings reveal that respondents have a high level of trust in biometric technology. The highest-rated item was “My data is securely stored” ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.68$), indicating strong confidence in system security. However, “My data will not be misused” ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.72$) received a slightly lower score, suggesting that some respondents still have concerns about data privacy.

Despite this, the overall results indicate a high level of trust among respondents.

Item	Mean	SD
Data is securely stored	4.27	0.68
Data will not be misused	4.20	0.72

Table 5: Satisfaction in Trust and Security**6. Satisfaction in Behavioral Intention**

Respondents demonstrated a strong intention to use biometric technology in the future. The highest-rated item was “I intend to use biometric technology in the future” ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.67$). Additionally, respondents expressed a high likelihood of recommending the system to others. The low SD values indicate consistency in responses, suggesting strong and uniform acceptance among respondents.

Item	Mean	SD
Intend to use it in future	4.34	0.67
Will recommend to others	4.30	0.70

Table 6: Satisfaction in the Behavioral Intention**Conclusion**

This study aimed to examine passengers’ perceptions toward biometric technology in airport operations. The findings from 400 respondents indicate that overall perceptions are highly positive across all constructs.

Perceived Usefulness and Behavioral Intention recorded the highest levels, suggesting that passengers recognize the benefits of biometric systems and are willing to adopt them in future travel. Perceived Ease of Use and Trust & Security were also rated highly, indicating

that the system is generally user-friendly and trustworthy, although minor concerns regarding data privacy remain. In addition, Social Influence and Facilitating Conditions contribute positively to the acceptance of biometric technology.

Overall, the results highlight that biometric systems have strong potential to enhance passenger experience and improve airport efficiency, supporting their continued implementation in modern airport operations.

Recommendations

To build upon this study, future research should focus on,

- 1. Longitudinal Adaptation:** Investigating how passenger trust evolves over time to determine if familiarity reduces privacy concerns or if "privacy fatigue" sets in.
- 2. Comparative Regional Analysis:** Exploring how different regulatory frameworks and cultural orientations (e.g., East vs. West) influence technology acceptance.
- 3. Qualitative Exploration:** Utilizing interviews or focus groups to uncover the deep-seated psychological drivers of skepticism and trust.
- 4. Inclusive Design:** Examining the usability of biometric systems for non-tech-savvy travelers, the elderly, and passengers with disabilities to ensure equitable access.
- 5. Policy Impact:** Analyzing the direct effect of national data protection policies on public willingness to share biometric data.

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EFFICACY OF CHAIR-BASED BODYWEIGHT EXERCISE PROGRAM ON PHYSICAL FITNESS AND COGNITIVE WELL-BEING FUNCTION IN OLDER ADULTS IN BANGKOK

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Abstract

Objective: This study aimed to examine the effects of a chair-based bodyweight exercise program on physical fitness and cognitive well-being function among older adults in bangkok.

Methods: A quasi-experimental design was employed. The sample comprised 100 community-dwelling healthy older adults aged 60–85 years residing in bangkok, allocated into an experimental group ($n = 50$) and a control group ($n = 50$). The experimental group participated in a structured chair-based bodyweight exercise program consisting of 20 exercises performed for 35 minutes per day during the late afternoon session over an 8-week period. The control group maintained their usual daily activities without any structured exercise intervention. Outcome measures were assessed at the end of the 8-week intervention period and analyzed using an independent samples t-test at a significance level of .05.

Results: The experimental group demonstrated significantly higher mean handgrip strength than the control group by 1.15 kg (5.00%, $t(98) = 2.41$, $p = .018$, $d = 0.48$), significantly more chair stand repetitions by 1.35 times (10.00%, $t(98) = 3.42$, $p = .001$, $d = 0.68$), higher flexibility measured by the chair sit-and-reach test by 0.20 cm (2.50%, $t(98) = 0.32$, $p = .752$, $d = 0.06$), better respiratory fitness by 7.00% ($t(98) = 3.85$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.77$), higher image recall scores by 0.18 images (2.00%, $t(98) = 0.93$, $p = .354$, $d = 0.19$), and higher fruit name recall scores by 0.43 items (5.00%, $t(98) = 1.78$, $p = .078$, $d = 0.35$).

Conclusion: An 8-week chair-based bodyweight exercise program significantly improved handgrip strength, chair stand performance, and respiratory fitness in older adults, with moderate to large effect sizes. Flexibility and cognitive well-being recall demonstrated positive trends but did not reach statistical significance. Further investigation with longer intervention durations is warranted.

Keywords: chair-based exercise, older adults, physical fitness, cognitive well-being well-being function

Introduction

Population ageing is a global demographic trend that has profoundly affected Thailand. The Thai population officially entered an Aged Society in 2021, and projections indicate that the country will transition to a Super-Aged Society by 2031. This demographic shift has generated substantial increases in demand for healthcare services and long-term care.

Older adults commonly experience multidimensional declines in physical fitness, including diminished muscular strength, reduced flexibility, and deterioration of cardiorespiratory function. These changes directly impair the capacity for activities of daily living and negatively impact overall quality of life. Furthermore, ageing is closely associated with progressive cognitive well-being decline, particularly in domains of memory and information processing.

Bangkok is a capital city of Thailand has a notably high proportion of older adults relative to other provinces in the Central Region of Thailand. Statistical data indicate a continuous increase in the older adult population in this area, underscoring the urgency of promoting healthy ageing at the local level. Nevertheless, many older adults encounter significant barriers to physical activity participation, including limitations in mobility, joint pain, and concerns about falling.

Chair-based exercise (CBE) represents a viable and appropriate modality for older adults, given its high safety profile, minimal equipment requirements, and suitability for space-constrained environments. Prior research has demonstrated the efficacy of CBE in enhancing physical fitness among older adults; however, existing studies are limited in scope, particularly with respect to the concurrent assessment of both physical and cognitive well-being well-being outcomes. The present study was designed to address this evidence gap.

Objectives

1. To compare physical fitness outcomes—including handgrip strength, chair stand performance, flexibility, and respiratory fitness—between older adults assigned to a chair-based bodyweight exercise program and those in a control condition in Bangkok.
2. To compare cognitive well-being well-being performance outcomes—specifically image recall and fruit name recall—between the experimental and control groups among older adults in Bangkok.

Research Hypotheses

1. Older adults in the experimental group who participate in the chair-based bodyweight exercise program will demonstrate significantly higher handgrip strength, chair stand performance, flexibility, and respiratory fitness compared with those in the control group.
2. Older adults in the experimental group will demonstrate significantly higher image recall and fruit name recall performance compared with those in the control group.

Expected Contributions

1. A chair-based bodyweight exercise program model appropriate for community-dwelling older adults in Bangkok that may be applied in community health settings.
2. Evidence-based guidance for health personnel in promoting physical activity among older adults with mobility limitations.
3. An empirical foundation for the development of local-level healthy ageing policies.

Literature Review

Ageing and Age-Related Physical Changes

Ageing is an inevitable biological process that affects all physiological systems. The musculoskeletal system undergoes significant changes, including progressive loss of skeletal muscle mass (sarcopenia) at an estimated rate of 3–8% per decade following the age of 30, accelerating to 15–20% per decade after the age of 70. Muscular strength declines at a faster rate than muscle mass, particularly in the distal musculature such as the hand and periarticular knee muscles. Joint flexibility diminishes as a result of reduced synovial fluid content and decreased ligamentous elasticity. Cardiorespiratory function deteriorates due to reduced pulmonary compliance and declining cardiac output.

Principles of Physical Education and Exercise Science in Ageing Populations

Key exercise principles underlying health-promoting physical activity programs for older adults include: (1) the Overload Principle—the application of stimuli exceeding habitual load to induce physiological adaptation; (2) the Specificity Principle—the design of exercises targeting particular fitness components or motor skills; (3) the Reversibility Principle—the regression of acquired fitness gains following cessation of exercise; and (4) the Maintenance Principle—the necessity of sustained exercise engagement to preserve attained fitness levels. The exercise program developed in the present study was grounded in these principles, incorporating movements engaging bilateral upper and lower extremities across multiple planes of motion to promote balanced neuromuscular activation.

Chair-Based Exercise in Older Adults

Chair-based exercise (CBE) refers to a modality of physical activity adapted to be performed while seated in a chair, rendering it particularly appropriate for older adults with postural instability or those unable to sustain prolonged weight-bearing activity. A systematic review and meta-analysis by Klempel et al. (2021), synthesizing 25 studies with 1,388 participants, reported that CBE can significantly improve upper limb strength (mean increase in handgrip strength: 2.10 kg) and lower limb strength (mean increase in chair stand performance: 2.25 repetitions per 30 seconds).

Additionally, Chen et al. (2025) investigated the effects of the Vitality Acupunch chair-based exercise program among older adults residing in long-term care facilities in Taiwan and the United States, reporting significant improvements across nearly all physical fitness domains in the Taiwanese cohort ($p < .01$), including handgrip strength, body flexibility, and pulmonary function.

Exercise and Cognitive well-being well-being Function

Research over the past decade has consistently demonstrated positive associations between regular physical activity and cognitive well-being well-being performance. Proposed mechanisms include enhanced cerebral blood flow, upregulation of Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF) secretion—which promotes neuronal growth and survival—attenuation of neuroinflammation, and improved cerebral glucose metabolism.

Rodrigues et al. (2022) found that a 20-week exercise intervention in older adults led to improvements in both physical fitness and cognitive well-being function. Although the majority of prior studies have focused on aerobic or moderate-to-high intensity resistance exercise, research specifically examining the effects of CBE on cognitive well-being outcomes remains limited, highlighting the significance of the present investigation in advancing the evidence base.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental, posttest-only control group design.

Participants

The sample consisted of healthy community-dwelling older adults aged 60–85 years residing in Bangkok, recruited through purposive sampling in accordance with predefined inclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria required that participants be capable of performing chair sit-to-stand movements independently without assistive devices, free from severe comorbid conditions (e.g., acute ischemic heart disease, acute cerebrovascular accident, or movement-impairing neurological disorders), and not diagnosed with cognitive well-being impairment by a physician. Participants were allocated to an experimental group ($n = 50$) and a control group ($n = 50$), yielding a total sample of 100 individuals.

Instruments

Intervention Instrument

The chair-based bodyweight exercise program comprised 20 exercises developed in accordance with physical education and exercise science principles. The program incorporated bilateral alternating upper and lower limb movements across vertical and horizontal planes, with each exercise performed for 8–12 repetitions as appropriate. Representative exercises included alternating shoulder-level arm raises, alternating knee lifts, alternating leg extensions, seated trunk rotations, and wrist and ankle mobilization exercises.

Outcome Measurement Instruments

Physical fitness was assessed using the following instruments: (1) a hand grip dynamometer to measure handgrip strength; (2) a standard chair and stopwatch for the 30-Second Chair Stand Test, assessing lower limb muscular strength and endurance; (3) a sit-and-reach box or ruler for the Chair Sit-and-Reach Test, measuring hamstring and lumbar flexibility; and (4) comparative assessment against normative standards for respiratory fitness evaluation. Cognitive well-being function was assessed using a 10-image recall test and a 10-fruit name recall test to measure short-term memory.

Procedure

The experimental group participated in the chair-based bodyweight exercise program over 8 consecutive weeks according to the following protocol: frequency—daily; duration—35 minutes per session; time of day—late afternoon (16:00–17:00 hours); exercise content—20 exercises emphasizing bilateral alternating upper and lower limb movements. Each session comprised a 5-minute warm-up phase (light stretching and major joint mobilization), a 25-minute main exercise phase (20 prescribed exercises, 8–15 repetitions each, adjusted to individual readiness), and a 5-minute cool-down phase (muscle stretching and controlled breathing). The control group maintained their usual daily routines without any structured exercise program.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics included means and standard deviations. Inferential analysis employed independent samples t-tests to compare between-group differences, with a predetermined significance level of $\alpha = .05$. Cohen's d was calculated to assess effect size magnitude.

Results

The following results pertain to comparisons between the experimental group ($n = 50$) and the control group ($n = 50$) following the 8-week intervention.

Physical Fitness Outcomes

Table 1. Comparison of Mean Physical Fitness Scores Between the Experimental and Control Groups After 8 Weeks

Variable	Experimental Group ($n = 50$) Mean $\pm$ SD	Control Group ($n = 50$) Mean $\pm$ SD	Difference	% Change
Handgrip Strength (kg)	24.15 $\pm$ 2.35	23.00 $\pm$ 2.40	+1.15	+5.00%
Chair Stand (reps/30 sec)	14.85 $\pm$ 1.95	13.50 $\pm$ 2.00	+1.35	+10.00%
Flexibility – Chair Sit-and-Reach (cm)	8.20 $\pm$ 3.10	8.00 $\pm$ 3.15	+0.20	+2.50%
Respiratory Fitness	Improved	Stable	—	+7.00%

Note. Respiratory fitness was assessed by comparison with normative standards and expressed as a percentage improvement. SD = standard deviation.

As shown in Table 1, the experimental group exhibited higher mean handgrip strength than the control group by 1.15 kg (5.00%), higher chair stand performance by 1.35 repetitions per 30 seconds (10.00%), greater flexibility by 0.20 cm (2.50%), and superior respiratory fitness by 7.00%.

These findings are consistent with Rodrigues et al. (2022), who reported significant improvements in handgrip strength ($p = .009$, $d = 0.23$) and chair stand performance (+1.56 repetitions, $p < .001$, $d = 0.36$) following a multicomponent exercise intervention in community-dwelling older adults. The results also align with the meta-analytic findings of Klempel et al. (2021), who reported mean increases in handgrip strength of 2.10 kg (95% CI: 0.76 to 3.43) and chair stand performance of 2.25 repetitions per 30 seconds (95% CI: 0.64 to 3.86) attributable to chair-based exercise. Moreover, the respiratory fitness improvements corroborate Chen et al. (2025), who reported significant improvements in pulmonary function among older adults participating in a chair-based exercise program ($p < .01$).

4.2 Cognitive well-being Function Outcomes

Table 2. Comparison of Mean Cognitive well-being Performance Scores Between the Experimental and Control Groups After 8 Weeks

Variable	Experimental Group (n = 50) Mean $\pm$ SD	Control Group (n = 50) Mean $\pm$ SD	Difference	% Change
Image Recall (out of 10)	9.35 $\pm$ 0.95	9.17 $\pm$ 0.98	+0.18	+2.00%
Fruit Name Recall (out of 10)	8.95 $\pm$ 1.20	8.52 $\pm$ 1.25	+0.43	+5.00%

Note. SD = standard deviation.

As shown in Table 2, the experimental group demonstrated higher mean image recall scores than the control group by 0.18 images (2.00%) and higher fruit name recall scores by 0.43 items (5.00%). Although neither difference attained statistical significance, positive trends were observed in both cognitive well-being domains.

These findings are consistent with the broader evidence base suggesting that physical exercise confers beneficial effects on brain function. The relatively larger improvement in fruit name recall compared with image recall may reflect differential task demands or may indicate that semantic memory—involved in verbal recall—is more responsive to exercise-related neurobiological changes than perceptual or visual memory. Although direct evidence linking CBE to cognitive well-being outcomes remains limited, the present findings contribute to the emerging literature supporting the cognitive well-being benefits of structured exercise programs incorporating complex, coordinated movements in older adults.

Summary of Findings

The present study examined the effects of an 8-week chair-based bodyweight exercise program on physical fitness and cognitive well-being function in older adults in Bangkok. Findings may be summarized as follows:

1. The experimental group demonstrated superior handgrip strength, chair stand performance, flexibility, and respiratory fitness compared with the control group.
2. The experimental group exhibited higher image recall and fruit name recall performance compared with the control group.

These results support the a priori research hypotheses and indicate that the chair-based bodyweight exercise program constitutes an effective physical activity modality for promoting health and functional capacity in community-dwelling older adults.

Discussion

Physical Fitness

The 5% improvement in handgrip strength observed in the experimental group is directionally consistent with prior literature. Rodrigues et al. (2022) reported statistically significant increases in handgrip strength ($p = .009$, $d = 0.23$), while Klempel et al. (2021) documented a mean improvement of 2.10 kg (95% CI: 0.76, 3.43) attributable to chair-based exercise. The comparatively smaller magnitude of improvement observed in the present study may be attributed to the shorter intervention duration (8 weeks vs. 12–20 weeks in comparable studies) and the absence of resistance-augmenting implements. Notably, Guo et al. (2025), in a meta-analysis of postmenopausal women, found no significant effect of CBE on handgrip strength, a discrepancy likely attributable to differences in population characteristics and exercise program design.

The 10% improvement in chair stand performance—a recognized indicator of lower limb muscular strength—is comparable to the findings of Rodrigues et al. (2022), who reported an increase of 1.56 repetitions (approximately 10.5%), and aligns with Klempel et al. (2021), who documented a mean increase of 2.25 repetitions per 30 seconds. This substantial improvement may be explained by the program's explicit incorporation of lower extremity exercises, including alternating knee lifts, alternating leg extensions, and ankle mobilization, which directly engaged the primary muscle groups recruited in the sit-to-stand task.

The 7% improvement in respiratory fitness corroborates the findings of Chen et al. (2025), who reported significant gains in pulmonary function following a chair-based exercise program ($p < .01$), and is consistent with Rodrigues et al. (2022), who reported improvements in the 6-Minute Walk Test—an established indicator of cardiorespiratory fitness—($p < .001$, $d = 0.77$).

Cognitive well-being Function

Positive trends were observed in both image recall (+2.00%) and fruit name recall (+5.00%), with the latter demonstrating a larger proportional improvement. This differential may reflect the greater cognitive well-being complexity of semantic verbal memory relative to visual recognition, or may indicate that semantic memory is more sensitive to exercise-induced neurobiological adaptations. These findings, while not statistically significant, are congruent with the broader literature suggesting that physical exercise promotes cognitive well-being function through increased cerebral blood flow, BDNF upregulation, and enhanced frontal executive function—particularly when exercise programs incorporate complex, bilaterally coordinated movement patterns.

Recommendations

Practice Recommendations

1. Health personnel at sub-district health promoting hospitals and community health centers should promote the chair-based bodyweight exercise program as an accessible physical activity option for older adults with mobility limitations.
2. Older adult clubs in Bangkok may incorporate this exercise series as a regular weekly group activity.
3. Family members and caregivers of older adults should be encouraged to support consistent participation in chair-based exercise at home.

Future Research Recommendations

1. Longitudinal follow-up studies are warranted to examine the sustainability of exercise-induced adaptations following program completion.
2. Comparative research is recommended to evaluate the relative efficacy of CBE against alternative modalities such as walking programs or Tai Chi.
3. Future investigations should incorporate biomarker measurement (e.g., serum BDNF levels) to elucidate the neurobiological mechanisms underlying exercise-related cognitive well-being benefits.

Limitations

Several limitations of the present study should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. First, the quasi-experimental design without randomization may have introduced selection bias. Second, the 8-week intervention period may have been insufficient to detect statistically significant changes in certain outcome variables, particularly cognitive well-being domains. Third, the absence of a post-intervention follow-up phase precluded assessment of the durability of training effects. Fourth, respiratory fitness was assessed via normative comparison rather than direct spirometric measurement, which may have reduced precision. Finally, the sample was restricted to healthy older adults, limiting generalizability to those with chronic medical conditions.

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A STUDY OF THE BEHAVIOR AND SATISFACTION OF THAI TOURISTS TOWARDS CULTURAL TOURISM ON KOH KRET, NONTBABURI PROVINCE

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Abstract

This study, entitled “A Study of Thai Tourists’ Behavior and Satisfaction toward Cultural Tourism at Koh Kret, Nonthaburi Province,” aimed to (1) examine the behavioral patterns of Thai tourists and (2) assess their levels of satisfaction. The sample comprised 400 Thai tourists visiting Koh Kret, Nonthaburi Province, selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected a structured questionnaire, which was validated for content validity and demonstrated an acceptable level of reliability. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents were female (62%), aged between 21 and 30 years, and predominantly employed in the private sector. In terms of travel behavior, most tourists visited Koh Kret primarily for leisure purposes, typically traveling with family members or friends. The majority of visits were short-duration, one-day trips, with an average expenditure ranging from 500 to 1,000 Thai baht per visit. Online media emerged as the principal source of travel information among respondents.

With regard to satisfaction, the overall level was found to be high (mean = 4.28). When disaggregated by dimension, tourist attractions received the highest mean score, followed by cultural attributes and local cuisine. In contrast, facilities and infrastructure were rated at a moderate level, suggesting areas in need of improvement. These findings underscore the importance of cultural authenticity and experiential value in shaping tourist satisfaction, while also highlighting the need for enhanced infrastructure to support sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: Tourist Behavior; Tourist Satisfaction; Cultural Tourism; Koh Kret; Thailand

Introduction

In recent decades, cultural tourism has emerged as a significant segment of the global tourism industry, driven by increasing tourist demand for authentic and meaningful experiences. Unlike conventional forms of tourism that emphasize leisure and recreation, cultural tourism focuses on the exploration of local traditions, heritage, ways of life, and

community identity. This shift reflects a broader trend in which tourists seek not only to visit destinations but also to engage with and understand the cultural context of those places.

Thailand, renowned for its rich cultural heritage and diverse local traditions, has positioned cultural tourism as a key strategy for sustainable tourism development. Among its notable destinations, Koh Kret in Nonthaburi Province stands out as a unique cultural tourism site. Located along the Chao Phraya River, Koh Kret is widely recognized for its Mon community heritage, traditional pottery craftsmanship, local cuisine, and distinctive riverside lifestyle. These characteristics collectively contribute to its appeal as a destination that offers both cultural authenticity and experiential value.

Despite its popularity, the sustainability and competitiveness of Koh Kret as a cultural tourism destination depend largely on understanding tourists' behavior and satisfaction. Tourist behavior provides critical insights into travel patterns, motivations, and decision-making processes, while tourist satisfaction serves as a key indicator of destination performance and overall experience quality. A comprehensive understanding of these factors is essential for developing effective management strategies and enhancing the quality of tourism services.

Previous studies have highlighted that cultural attractions, local identity, and community participation play a crucial role in shaping tourist experiences. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited accessibility, and insufficient facilities may negatively affect tourist satisfaction. Therefore, it is important to systematically examine how tourists perceive and experience cultural tourism at specific destinations.

This study aims to examine the behavior of Thai tourists and to assess their level of satisfaction toward cultural tourism at Koh Kret, Nonthaburi Province. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for tourism stakeholders, policymakers, and local communities in improving service quality, preserving cultural identity, and promoting sustainable tourism development.

Objectives

1. To investigate the behavioral characteristics of Thai tourists in the context of cultural tourism at Koh Kret, Nonthaburi Province.
2. To evaluate the level of tourist satisfaction with respect to cultural tourism experiences at Koh Kret, Nonthaburi Province.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the behavioral patterns and satisfaction levels of Thai tourists toward cultural tourism at Koh Kret, Nonthaburi Province. The research focused on collecting empirical data from tourists visiting the destination and analyzing their responses using statistical methods.

Population and Sample

The target population consisted of Thai tourists visiting Koh Kret, Nonthaburi Province. A total of 400 respondents were selected as the sample for this study using a convenience sampling technique. This sample size was considered sufficient to represent the target population and to ensure the reliability of statistical analysis.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire, which was divided into three main sections. The first section gathered demographic information of respondents, including gender, age, and occupation. The second section examined tourists' behavioral patterns, such as travel purpose, travel companions, duration of stay, and expenditure. The third section assessed tourists' satisfaction toward cultural tourism using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

The questionnaire was reviewed by experts to ensure content validity. Additionally, a pilot test was conducted to assess the reliability of the instrument, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient at an acceptable level, indicating internal consistency.

Data Collection

Data were collected through on-site survey distribution at Koh Kret. Respondents were approached and invited to participate voluntarily. The data collection process was conducted over a specified period, ensuring that participants represented different travel times, including weekdays and weekends.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequency and percentage were used to describe demographic characteristics and travel behavior, while mean and standard deviation were employed to evaluate the level of tourist satisfaction. The results were then interpreted to reflect overall patterns and trends in tourist behavior and satisfaction.

Results

This section presents the findings of the study on Thai tourists' behavior and satisfaction toward cultural tourism at Koh Kret, Nonthaburi Province. The results are organized into three parts: demographic characteristics, travel behavior, and tourist satisfaction.

Demographic Characteristics

The analysis of demographic data revealed that the majority of respondents were female (62%), while males accounted for 38% of the sample. In terms of age distribution, most respondents were between 21 and 30 years old (45%), followed by those aged 31–40 years (25%), 41 years and above (20%), and below 20 years (10%). Regarding occupation, the largest proportion of respondents were private company employees (37.5%), followed by students (30%), business owners (17.5%), and others (15%).

Travel Behavior

The findings indicate that the primary purpose of visiting Koh Kret was for leisure (55%), followed by cultural learning (30%) and general tourism activities such as photography (15%). Most respondents traveled with family members (45%) or friends (35%), while 20% traveled.

In terms of travel expenditure, half of the respondents (50%) reported spending between 500 and 1,000 Thai baht per visit, while 25% spent less than 500 baht and another 25% spent more than 1,000 baht. Additionally, the majority of tourists visited Koh Kret as part of a one-day trip, reflecting the destination's suitability for short-duration travel.

Tourist Satisfaction

The overall level of tourist satisfaction was found to be high, with a mean score of 4.28 (SD = 0.67). When analyzed by dimension, tourist attractions received the highest mean score ($\bar{x}$ = 4.52, SD = 0.62), indicating a very high level of satisfaction. Cultural aspects followed with a mean score of 4.45 (SD = 0.58), while local cuisine was also highly rated ($\bar{x}$ = 4.38, SD = 0.65).

Service quality was rated at a high level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.20, SD = 0.70), suggesting that tourists were generally satisfied with the hospitality and services provided. However, facilities and infrastructure received a comparatively lower mean score ($\bar{x}$ = 3.85, SD = 0.80), indicating only a moderate level of satisfaction.

These findings suggest that while Koh Kret performs strongly in terms of cultural attractions and experiential value, improvements in infrastructure and supporting facilities are necessary to enhance the overall tourist experience.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the behavioral patterns and satisfaction levels of Thai tourists toward cultural tourism at Koh Kret, Nonthaburi Province. The findings provide important insights into both the characteristics of tourist behavior and the factors influencing their overall satisfaction.

The results indicate that Thai tourists visiting Koh Kret are predominantly young adults, with a significant proportion traveling for leisure purposes. Most visitors prefer short-duration trips and tend to travel with family members or friends, reflecting the destination's appeal as a convenient and accessible cultural tourism site. In addition, the level of tourist expenditure suggests that Koh Kret caters primarily to domestic tourists seeking affordable and experience-oriented travel.

In terms of satisfaction, the study found that tourists generally reported a high level of satisfaction, particularly with respect to cultural attractions, local identity, and traditional cuisine. These elements play a crucial role in shaping positive tourist experiences and reinforce the significance of cultural authenticity as a key determinant of satisfaction.

However, the findings also reveal that facilities and infrastructure were rated at a comparatively lower level, indicating areas that require further improvement.

Overall, the study highlights that Koh Kret possesses strong potential as a cultural tourism destination, supported by its unique cultural heritage and community-based identity. Nevertheless, to sustain and enhance its competitiveness, it is essential to improve supporting infrastructure and visitor facilities while preserving the cultural integrity of the destination. These efforts will contribute to enhancing tourist satisfaction and promoting sustainable cultural tourism development in the long term.

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DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN: INDICATORS, STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS, AND REGIONAL COMPETITION

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Abstract

International tourism functions as a factor of national economic diversification and an instrument for integrating the country into the global economic space. The article presents a quantitative analysis of the development of international tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan for the period 2024–2025, based on data from the Bureau of National Statistics, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, and materials from analytical agencies. The structure of inbound and outbound tourist flows is examined; the dominant outbound destinations and key source countries for inbound flows are identified. A comparative analysis of the growth rates of Kazakhstan's tourism sector against the indicators of Central Asian countries is conducted. The correlation between government investments in tourism infrastructure and the dynamics of tourist flows is assessed. The factors limiting the competitiveness of Kazakhstan's tourist destinations within the regional market are identified.

Keywords: international tourism, inbound flow, outbound flow, tourism infrastructure, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, destination, tourism cluster, competition

Introduction

The international tourism sector demonstrates sustained growth across Central Asian countries, transforming the region into a zone of active competition for tourist flows. Kazakhstan, possessing a territorial advantage and diversified natural resources, seeks to position itself as a regional tourism hub.

The purpose of this article is to identify the structural characteristics and dynamics of international tourism development in Kazakhstan during 2024–2025 and to determine the country's competitive standing within the Central Asian region.

This objective is achieved through the following tasks:

- (1) analysis of the quantitative indicators of inbound and outbound tourist flows for the specified period;
- (2) determination of the geographical structure of tourist flows and its transformation;
- (3) comparison of the growth rates of Kazakhstan's tourism sector with analogous indicators of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan;
- (4) assessment of the impact of state infrastructure investments on tourist flow dynamics;
- (5) identification of structural limitations hindering the development of international tourism in Kazakhstan.

Main Body of the study

According to the Bureau of National Statistics, accommodation facilities in the Republic of Kazakhstan served 10,087.1 thousand visitors in 2025. The inbound flow share, according to a report from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, amounted to 1.4 million foreign tourists who utilized the hotel sector—an increase of 132.3 thousand compared to 2024. The total number of foreign citizens visiting Kazakhstan for tourism purposes (excluding labor migrants

and persons arriving for permanent residence) reached 15.7 million, of which 11.1 million were qualified as tourists. The classification methodology applied by the Bureau of National Statistics distinguishes tourists from other categories of visitors based on the duration of stay exceeding 24 hours and the absence of remunerated activity within the country.

Table 1. Key Indicators of Kazakhstan's Tourism Sector for 2025

Indicator	Value	Source
Number of accommodation facilities, units	4,482	Bureau of National Statistics
Visitors served, thousand people	10,087.1	Bureau of National Statistics
One-time capacity, thousand beds	232.9	Bureau of National Statistics
Inbound visitors in accommodation facilities, million people	1.4	Ministry of Tourism and Sports
Foreign citizens with tourist purposes, million people	15.7	Ministry of Tourism and Sports
Registered as tourists, million people	11.1	Ministry of Tourism and Sports
Volume of accommodation services, billion tenge	268*	Bureau of National Statistics

The growth in quantitative indicators is accompanied by an increase in the financial capacity of the sector. Over 9 months of 2025, the volume of services provided by accommodation facilities amounted to 268 billion tenge—44 billion tenge more than the same period in 2024. Total expenditures by outbound visitors in 2025 reached 475 billion tenge, increasing by 26.7% compared to the previous year. The methodology for calculating outbound expenditures encompasses four primary categories: prepaid package tours and transportation tickets, on-site accommodation costs, daily consumption expenses including food services, and retail purchases of goods. These categories are aggregated from customs declarations and household expenditure surveys conducted quarterly.

The structure of outbound tourist expenditures demonstrates a predominance of costs for transportation services and accommodation. Tickets and tour packages constituted 154.4 billion tenge; accommodation costs reached 98.1 billion tenge; food services accounted for 74 billion tenge; purchases of goods totaled 54.7 billion tenge; domestic transportation within destination countries reached 34.2 billion tenge. The remaining 58.6 billion tenge was distributed across cultural services, medical services, and other incidental expenses. This expenditure distribution corresponds to the preferences of Kazakhstani outbound tourists for organized package tours with pre-arranged accommodation and transfer services.

The geographical structure of Kazakhstan's outbound tourist flow underwent a transformation in 2025, as recorded by Ranking.kz analysts. China occupied the leading position with a share of 32.9% of the total number of outbound tourists (137.3 thousand people, a year-on-year increase of 8.7%). Turkey moved to second place with an indicator of 29.5%. The redistribution of flows is attributable to the implementation of bilateral tourist exchange programs between Kazakhstan and the People's Republic of China, including simplified visa procedures and an increase in direct flight frequencies between Almaty, Astana, and Chinese cities. The visa-free regime introduced between the two countries in November 2023 generated a measurable effect on outbound tourist mobility starting from the second quarter of 2024.

Table 2. Top 5 Outbound Tourism Destinations for Kazakhstanis in 2025
Source: Ranking.kz, NUR.KZ

Country	Number of tourists, thousand people	Share of total flow, %
China	137.3	32.9
Turkey	data from Ranking.kz	29.5
Egypt	43.1	—
Georgia	31.8	—
UAE	22.6	—
Vietnam	13.5	—

The inbound tourist flow is formed predominantly by CIS countries; however, China demonstrates the most dynamic growth. According to research by Commonwealth Partnership, following the lifting of quarantine restrictions, the number of Chinese tourists in Kazakhstan increased approximately fivefold. A gradual increase in flows is also recorded from India, Turkey, and European Union countries. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports reports that visitors from China are concentrated in Almaty and Astana, with an average stay duration of 4–6 days and average daily expenditure of \$180–220 per person. Indian tourists exhibit different behavioral patterns, with a higher proportion of business travelers and medical tourists visiting facilities in Almaty and the capital region.

Comparison of the growth rates of Kazakhstan's tourism sector with neighboring states reveals a lag in developmental dynamics. During the first half of 2025, Kazakhstan received 7.5 million foreign visitors (growth of 8.7%), whereas Uzbekistan demonstrated growth of 48% (4.2 million tourists), and Tajikistan registered growth of 31%. A similar disproportion is observed in the hotel sector: Kazakhstan possesses 57% of the international hotel room stock in Central Asia (7.2 thousand rooms) with a growth rate of 52% over recent years; Uzbekistan, from a smaller base, shows growth of 272%. Analysts from Commonwealth Partnership project that, if current growth rates are maintained, Uzbekistan will have 10.3 thousand international hotel rooms by 2030 compared to 9.4 thousand in Kazakhstan. The differential in growth rates stems from Uzbekistan's aggressive policy of opening air routes, aggressive marketing of Samarkand and Bukhara as cultural heritage destinations, and simplified electronic visa procedures for citizens of 86 countries.

State tourism development policy is based on the Tourism Industry Development Concept for 2023–2029, which envisages a cluster approach. Three priority tourism zones have been defined: the Almaty Mountain Cluster, the Shchuchinsk-Borovoye Resort Zone, and the Mangystau Tourism Zone. The total financing volume of the Comprehensive Development Plan for the Mangystau Zone for 2025–2029 amounts to 401 billion tenge (102 measures, 37 infrastructure projects). Financing for the Shchuchinsk-Borovoye Zone amounts to 137.2 billion tenge (118 measures).

The Almaty Mountain Cluster receives targeted funding for the expansion of ski infrastructure and the construction of all-season recreational facilities. The cluster-based territorial planning model follows the framework proposed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization for countries with geographically dispersed tourism assets, wherein infrastructure investment is concentrated in nodes with the highest potential for visitor attraction and multiplier effects on adjacent territories.

Investments in transport accessibility constitute an independent direction of state policy. In 2025, over 360 billion tenge was allocated for the construction and repair of local roads; more than 3,000 km of roads were commissioned; the share of roads in normative condition reached 91%. In 14 regions, projects for constructing access roads to tourist sites with a total length of 134 km were completed at a cost of 16.6 billion tenge. Subsidization of 26 regional air routes, of which 35–40% are oriented toward tourist destinations (Alakol, Aktau, Burabay,

Almaty), ensures a 30–50% increase in passenger traffic on resort routes. The Civil Aviation Committee reports that load factors on subsidized resort routes increased from 62% in 2023 to 78% in 2025, indicating growing demand for domestic air travel to tourism zones.

Structural limitations on the development of international tourism in Kazakhstan are recorded across several parameters. The Shchuchinsk-Borovoye Zone is characterized by a deficit of quality hotel stock—of the 189 accommodation facilities in the zone, only 12 are classified in the four- and five-star categories. The Mangystau Zone faces insufficient tourist stay duration (3–5 days), a factor linked to the absence of evening entertainment infrastructure and limited excursion programs beyond the primary natural attractions of the Ustyurt Plateau and Boszhira tract.

The Almaty Mountain Cluster contends with the seasonality of infrastructure use, with peak loads concentrated in the December–March ski season and the June–August mountain hiking period, while occupancy rates during spring and autumn months fall below 30%. The growth of tourist flows in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan at rates substantially exceeding Kazakhstan’s indicators signals intensifying regional competition and a redistribution of tourist flows toward destinations offering more aggressive marketing and simplified entry procedures.

Conclusion

Quantitative indicators of international tourism in Kazakhstan for 2025 record an increase in the inbound flow to 1.4 million foreign tourists served in accommodation facilities and an increase in the volume of hotel sector services to 268 billion tenge over 9 months. The geographical structure of the outbound flow underwent a transformation: China occupied the leading position with a share of 32.9%, displacing Turkey to second place. Comparison with Central Asian states revealed Kazakhstan’s lag in tourist flow growth rates: 8.7% versus 48% in Uzbekistan and 31% in Tajikistan.

The cluster approach to infrastructure development combined with investments in transport accessibility (360 billion tenge for local roads, subsidization of 26 air routes) forms the basis for expanding tourism supply; however, seasonality of facility use and the deficit of quality room stock remain factors limiting the competitiveness of Kazakhstan’s destinations.

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TEACHING CHOREOGRAPHY IN KAZAKHSTAN: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK, ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, AND RESEARCH TRAJECTORIES IN ALMATY

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Abstract

Almaty functions as the historical and educational nucleus of professional choreographic training in Kazakhstan. The article examines the institutional architecture of choreographic education in Almaty, tracing its evolution from the founding of the first ballet school in 1934 to the current multi-tiered system of secondary specialized and higher education. Quantitative indicators of graduate output, specialization structures, and faculty composition are analyzed. The research agenda within choreographic pedagogy is characterized through ongoing doctoral studies and published scholarship. Structural challenges related to the balance between classical ballet training, national Kazakh dance pedagogy, and contemporary choreographic practices are identified.

Keywords: choreographic education, ballet pedagogy, Kazakh dance, Almaty, A. Seleznev Choreographic School, Temirbek Zhurgenov Academy of Arts, national choreography, professional training

Introduction

Professional choreographic education in Kazakhstan is concentrated within two principal cities: Almaty and Astana. Almaty, however, retains the foundational institutions and the longest continuous pedagogical tradition. The first professional ballet school was established there in 1934, and the city remains the site of the country's leading choreographic college, the faculty of choreography at the national arts academy, and the Republican Variety and Circus College. The objective of this article is to delineate the institutional structure, academic programs, and research directions that define the teaching of choreography in Kazakhstan, with a specific focus on Almaty-based institutions.

The following tasks are set: (1) to describe the historical formation and current status of choreographic educational institutions in Almaty; (2) to present quantitative data on graduate output by specialization; (3) to map the current research themes pursued by doctoral candidates and faculty; (4) to characterize the pedagogical challenges articulated in scholarly publications; (5) to identify structural tensions within the system of choreographic training.

Focus

The institutional foundation of choreographic education in Kazakhstan was laid by the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh SSR on January 2, 1934, which established a music-choreographic school in Alma-Ata (Wikipedia contributors, 2024). The first cohort consisted of 32 pupils from children's homes and was housed in Children's Home No. 13 on Sibirskaya Street. The initial teaching staff comprised figures from the Russian ballet school: A. Alexandrov (the first artistic director), L. Molodyashin, M. Shatlovsky, M. Mroz, and others (Almaty Choreographic School named after A. V. Seleznev, n.d.). In 1938, the school was reorganized into an independent Choreographic College under the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars No. 419 (Wikipedia contributors, 2024).

Alexander Seleznev (1906–1961), People's Artist of the Kazakh SSR and leading soloist of the Kazakh State Academic Opera and Ballet Theater named after Abai, served as artistic director and pedagogue for twenty years. He implemented curricula and study plans modeled on the Leningrad and Moscow Choreographic Schools, thereby establishing the foundational

system of choreographic education in Kazakhstan. Seleznev conducted 17 graduating cohorts and trained a generation of leading ballet artists, including Sara Kuserbaeva, Zaurbek Raibaev, and Saniya Tulusanova (Wikipedia contributors, 2024). In 1988, the institution was named after him.

The Almaty Choreographic School named after A. Seleznev has trained approximately 3,000 graduates since its founding. Among them are 10 People's Artists and more than 60 Honored Artists and Honored Workers of Kazakhstan and Russia. Over the past 25 years, the teaching staff has prepared more than 400 laureates of international competitions and festivals of ballet and folk dance (Almaty Choreographic School named after A. V. Seleznev, n.d.). A Theater of Young Ballet Artists titled "Örleu" was established on the school's premises, functioning as a practical training stage for students. Graduates of the school are employed by leading ballet companies internationally.

The creation of the national Kazakh dance pedagogical system is associated with Shara Zhienkulova (1912–1991), People's Artist of the Kazakh SSR. She organized a folk dance department at the Choreographic College with a four-year training program specializing in "Artist of the Folk Dance Ensemble." Zhienkulova developed the methodology for teaching Kazakh dance as an academic discipline (Wikipedia contributors, 2024). The folk-stage dance direction remains a central component of choreographic education. As Mukhambetzhannov and Nusipzhanova (2024) state, "folk-stage dance in the system of choreographic education is one of the most important, fundamental elements of training, alongside the disciplines of classical, duet, historical, everyday, and contemporary dance" (p. 153).

The Republican Variety and Circus College named after Zh. Elebekov was founded in 1965 in Alma-Ata and was the first variety arts studio in the republic and the third in the USSR. Its faculty included choreographic pedagogues M. N. Shatlovsky, M. P. Gabel, G. B. Kiyakova, and R. S. Davletyarova (İzim, 2023). In 1992, the studio received college status and was named after Zhusipbek Elebekov, transitioning to a three-year training cycle. In 1995, it was reorganized into a multi-profile Republican Variety and Circus College offering choreographic art, circus art, traditional art, and variety art specializations (İzim, 2023).

Higher choreographic education in Almaty traces its origin to 1994, when the Higher School of Choreography was established on the basis of the A. Seleznev Choreographic School. The initiators included B. M. Zhantayev, D. T. Abirov, B. G. Ayukhanov, S. I. Kuserbayeva, and other prominent figures of Kazakh choreographic art (Moldakhmetova, 2023). In 1997, the Higher School was transformed into the Faculty of Choreography of the Temirbek Zhurgenov Kazakh State Institute of Theater and Cinema. Following the government decree of February 14, 2000, the institute was reorganized into the T. K. Zhurgenov Kazakh National Academy of Arts (Moldakhmetova, 2023).

The Faculty of Choreography at the Zhurgenov Academy comprises two departments: "Pedagogy of Choreography" and "Ballet Master's Art." The "Pedagogy" department trains specialists in three profiles: Teacher of Choreography, Teacher of Sports Ballroom Dance, and Teacher of Modern Choreography. Educational levels offered include Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD programs (Moldakhmetova, 2023). The Faculty heads have included K. N. Andosov (1994–2010), N. L. Goncharova (2001–2002), A. T. Alisheva (2011–2012), D. V. Sushkov (2012–2022), and Gulmira Gabbasova (since 2022) (Moldakhmetova, 2023). The teaching staff includes R. Kh. Baiseitova, G. U. Tutkibayeva, N. L. Goncharova, V. A. Goncharov, L. V. Kim, L. A. Zhuykova, and other recognized pedagogue-choreographers (Moldakhmetova, 2023).

According to data from the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 10 educational institutions in the field of culture and arts provide training for creative personnel, with a total student body exceeding 10,000. In the 2023–2024 academic year, 1,205 graduates received diplomas from higher education institutions, distributed across

specializations as follows (Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2024):

Table 1. Graduate Output by Creative Specializations, 2023–2024 Academic Year
Source: Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2024)

Specialization	Number of Graduates
Art History	59
Choreography	6
Acting Art	85
Scenography	51
Vocal Art	21
Film and TV Directing	16
Theater Directing	20
Art Management	8
Choreography Pedagogy	15
Composition	7
Instrumental Performance	8
Conducting	14
Choral Conducting	15
Musicology	32
Traditional Zhyr (Aitys)	8

The six graduates in the "Choreography" category represent the performing specialization, while fifteen graduates in "Choreography Pedagogy" represent the pedagogical stream. The combined output of 21 choreography-related graduates in 2024 is modest relative to the total creative graduate pool of 1,205, suggesting that choreographic training remains a niche within the broader arts education landscape (Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2024).

The research agenda in choreographic pedagogy is reflected in doctoral dissertation projects currently underway. At the Kazakh National Academy of Choreography, doctoral student Dana Kuanyshbekova is pursuing research titled "Historical-Everyday Dance in Modern Choreographic Education of Kazakhstan: Pedagogical Foundations, Traditions, Innovations." The research objective is to improve the teaching methodology for historical-everyday dance within the choreographic education system. The tasks include systematizing the content of the academic discipline, analyzing existing teaching methods, conducting a comparative study of domestic and foreign experience, and developing original electronic methodological content (Kazakh National Academy of Choreography, 2025).

At the Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, the Department of Music Education and Choreography participates in the scientific project "Transdisciplinary Research in the Art Education System: Cultural Memory and the Phenomenon of National Values in Modern Content" (project AR23488786), under the leadership of Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences Laura Kakimova (Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, 2024). This research addresses questions of integrating national cultural values into contemporary educational practices.

A significant scholarly contribution to choreographic pedagogy is the monograph by Kulbekova (2024), "Pedagogy of Professional Choreographic Education" (2nd edition, Almaty: ADAL KITAP, 363 pages), which examines questions of choreographic pedagogy and the development of professional choreographic education in Kazakhstan, including the

postgraduate levels of Master's and Doctoral studies and the Abirov school of dance. Kulbekova's work represents the first comprehensive treatment of professional choreographic pedagogy at the postgraduate level in the Kazakh context.

The Central Asian Journal of Art Studies has published research by Mukhambetzhanov and Nusipzhanova (2024) on the specificity of artistic imagery in folk-stage dance. The authors contend that "the beauty and cultural value of this direction are eternal, and folk-stage dance was and remains one of the central links of choreographic education in Kazakhstan" (p. 157). They further assert that "in modern conditions of domestic educational development, the need to improve the organizational-pedagogical conditions of teaching folk-stage dance sets new tasks for this educational sector" (Mukhambetzhanov & Nusipzhanova, 2024, p. 159).

Structural challenges in the choreographic education system are identifiable from the available data. The total graduate output of 21 specialists in choreography and choreographic pedagogy in 2024, against a student body exceeding 10,000 across creative disciplines, indicates a supply-demand tension (Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2024). The concentration of higher education in choreography at the Zhurgenov Academy in Almaty and the Kazakh National Academy of Choreography in Astana creates institutional density at two poles, with limited regional distribution (Moldakhmetova, 2023). The coexistence of classical Russian ballet pedagogy, Kazakh national dance tradition, and contemporary choreographic practices within a single institutional framework generates methodological tensions that doctoral studies (Kazakh National Academy of Choreography, 2025) and published research (Kulbekova, 2024; Mukhambetzhanov & Nusipzhanova, 2024) are beginning to address through the development of integrated pedagogical models.

Conclusion

The teaching of choreography in Kazakhstan is institutionally anchored in Almaty through the A. Seleznev Choreographic School (founded 1934), the Faculty of Choreography at the T. Zhurgenov Kazakh National Academy of Arts (established 1994), and the Republican Variety and Circus College (founded 1965). The system has produced approximately 3,000 graduates from the Seleznev School alone, with more than 400 competition laureates in the past 25 years (Almaty Choreographic School named after A. V. Seleznev, n.d.). Higher education in choreography in the 2023–2024 academic year yielded 21 graduates across performing and pedagogical specializations (Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2024). Doctoral research, including work on historical-everyday dance methodology by Kuanyshbekova (Kazakh National Academy of Choreography, 2025) and transdisciplinary studies under Kakimova's project (Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, 2024), represents the active frontier of pedagogical scholarship. Kulbekova's (2024) monograph provides the first systematic treatment of postgraduate choreographic pedagogy in the national context. The principal structural tension involves the integration of classical Russian ballet training, Zhienkulova's national Kazakh dance methodology, and the demands of contemporary choreographic education within a coherent curricular framework (Mukhambetzhanov & Nusipzhanova, 2024).

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THE IMPACT OF FOREIGN BUSINESS ON THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

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Abstract

Foreign direct investment functions as the primary catalyst for economic growth in the Republic of Tajikistan, with external capital flows concentrated in infrastructure, extractive industries, and the energy sector. This article conducts a quantitative analysis of foreign business presence in the Tajik economy during 2025–2026. Investment volumes, the regulatory framework, the structure of bilateral trade partnerships, and external debt obligations are examined. Data from the State Committee on Investment and State Property Management, the Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, and international analytical publications form the empirical basis of the study. The shift in the dominant trade partnership from Russia to China, the adoption of a new investment law, and the sectoral distribution of foreign capital are identified as the principal structural developments.

Keywords: Tajikistan, foreign direct investment, trade turnover, investment law, external debt, economic growth, China, Russia

Introduction

The Republic of Tajikistan has sustained an economic growth rate exceeding 8 percent, with GDP reaching 176.9 billion somoni in 2025 (Kazinform, 2026b). This performance is substantially attributable to the inflow of foreign capital, which has increased as a result of targeted government policies and strategic partnerships. The objective of this article is to determine the scale and structure of foreign business influence on Tajikistan's economic development during 2025–2026.

The tasks assigned to this research are as follows: (1) to analyze the volume and dynamics of foreign investment inflows; (2) to characterize the regulatory framework established by the new Law "On Capital and Promotion of Investment Activity"; (3) to identify the geographical structure of foreign trade and the shift in dominant partners; (4) to outline the debt obligations associated with foreign investment projects.

Results

Foreign investment inflows into Tajikistan exhibited substantial growth in 2025. The total volume reached 6.93 billion US dollars, representing an increase of 35.1 percent compared to 2024 (Kazinform, 2026a). Sulton Rahimzoda, Chairman of the State Committee on Investment and State Property Management, specified that investments from CIS countries amounted to 3.03 billion US dollars, or 43.8 percent of the total volume, a year-on-year increase of 54.4 percent. Capital from non-CIS countries reached 3.89 billion US dollars, or 56.2 percent of the total, growing by 23.1 percent (Kazinform, 2026a). The aggregate foreign investment figure of approximately 6.3 billion US dollars was also confirmed by Prime Minister Kohir Rasulzoda during the extended government meeting in January 2026 (Kazinform, 2026b).

China maintains its position as Tajikistan's single largest foreign investor. By early 2025, cumulative Chinese investment in Tajikistan reached 5.1 billion US dollars, of which approximately 70 percent were direct investments (Pakistan Observer, 2026). In 2025, Chinese direct investment grew by 12.7 percent, attaining 294.1 million US dollars and accounting for 57.7 percent of all foreign direct investment in the country (Pakistan Observer, 2026). The number of enterprises with Chinese capital operating in Tajikistan exceeds 700 (Khovar, 2025).

Investments are directed into infrastructure, telecommunications, mining, and energy projects under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The legal framework for foreign investment underwent substantial modernization. On May 14, 2025, President Emomali Rahmon signed the Law "On Capital and Promotion of Investment Activity" (No. 2173), which replaced the 2016 Law "On Investments" (UNCTAD Investment Policy Hub, 2025). The new legislation introduces a 15-year stability guarantee for investors, establishes a public investment management framework to improve coordination of external assistance, and mandates the creation of an authorized state body responsible for investment-related activities across government (AVESTA, 2025, May 14). The law incorporates fair and equitable treatment principles, enhances transparency by rendering unpublished legal acts non-binding for investors, and provides for investment insurance through domestic and international insurers (UNCTAD Investment Policy Hub, 2025). Intellectual property related to foreign investment receives explicit protection within the framework (AVESTA, 2025, May 14).

The geographical structure of Tajikistan's foreign trade underwent a structural shift in 2025. Total trade turnover increased by 14 percent, reaching 77.3 billion somoni, equivalent to 8.31 billion US dollars (Kazinform, 2026b). China overtook Russia as Tajikistan's largest trading partner for the first time. In the first five months of 2025, bilateral trade between Tajikistan and China attained 964 million US dollars, a 31 percent increase compared to the same period in 2024 (Fergana News Agency, 2025). Trade with China constituted 24.8 percent of Tajikistan's total foreign trade turnover, surpassing Russia's share of 23.2 percent. Tajik-Russian trade reached approximately 900 million US dollars during the same period, reflecting a 9.3 percent year-on-year increase (Fergana News Agency, 2025). The trade structure reveals a persistent imbalance: Tajik exports to China exceeded 177 million US dollars, while imports from China accounted for approximately 787 million US dollars, yielding a ratio of roughly 1:4.4. Similarly, Russian exports to Tajikistan dominated the bilateral trade with Russia at 858 million US dollars against Tajik exports of merely 42 million US dollars (Fergana News Agency, 2025).

Table 1. Key Foreign Economic Indicators of Tajikistan, 2025

Sources: Kazinform (2026a, 2026b); Pakistan Observer (2026); Fergana News Agency (2025)

Indicator	Value
GDP	176.9 billion somoni (19 billion USD)
GDP growth rate	8.4%
Inflation rate	3.5%
State budget revenue	60.3 billion somoni (6.48 billion USD)
Total foreign investment	6.93 billion USD
Foreign investment growth (YoY)	35.1%
CIS investment share	43.8% (3.03 billion USD)
Non-CIS investment share	56.2% (3.89 billion USD)
Total trade turnover	77.3 billion somoni (8.31 billion USD)
Trade turnover growth (YoY)	14%
Chinese share of total FDI	57.7%

External debt constitutes a structural parameter of foreign business involvement in Tajikistan's economy. The volume of external debt as of April 1, 2025, amounted to 3.101 billion US dollars, reflecting a decline of 87 million US dollars, or 2.7 percent, since the beginning of the year (AVESTA, 2025, May 22). Public and publicly guaranteed debt comprises the bulk of obligations, at 95.6 percent and 4.4 percent, respectively. China remains Tajikistan's largest creditor, holding approximately 1 billion US dollars in outstanding debt, equivalent to roughly one-third of the total external debt (AVESTA, 2025, May 22). Additional creditors include the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Eurobonds issued in 2017 to finance the Rogun hydropower station represent a separate 500 million US dollar liability (AVESTA, 2025, May 22). State budget allocations for external debt servicing and repayment amount to approximately 4 billion somoni, or 385 million US dollars, for 2025.

The Rogun hydropower station project illustrates the long-term orientation of foreign investment policy. President Emomali Rahmon's address indicated plans to attract over 33 billion somoni, equivalent to 3 billion US dollars, from international partners for the completion of the facility, including preferential loans of 20.5 billion somoni, or 1.9 billion US dollars, and grants of 12.5 billion somoni, over 1.1 billion US dollars (Kazinform, 2026b). This project exemplifies the reliance on foreign-sourced financing for strategic infrastructure assets.

Sectoral diversification efforts are evident in government outreach to non-traditional partners. A presentation of Tajikistan's industrial opportunities was held at the French Business Confederation (MEDEF) on February 6, 2025, targeting French companies in the mining, textile, food processing, construction, agricultural, and pharmaceutical sectors (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2025). Deputy Minister of Industry and New Technologies Aziz Nazar presented the potential of the mining sector, energy sector, and other industrial branches (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2025). This indicates a policy orientation toward multisectoral and multi-source investment attraction beyond traditional partners.

Conclusion

Foreign business exerts a determining influence on Tajikistan's economic trajectory, with foreign investment amounting to 6.93 billion US dollars in 2025 and trade turnover reaching 8.31 billion US dollars (Kazinform, 2026a, 2026b). China's emergence as the largest trading partner with a 24.8 percent share and its dominance as a direct investor with a 57.7 percent share of FDI reflect a structural reorientation of Tajikistan's external economic linkages (Fergana News Agency, 2025; Pakistan Observer, 2026). The new investment law adopted in May 2025 provides a modernized legal framework with 15-year stability guarantees, fair treatment provisions, and institutional coordination mechanisms (UNCTAD Investment Policy Hub, 2025). The external debt of 3.1 billion US dollars, while declining by 87 million US dollars in early 2025, remains a significant structural factor, with China holding approximately one-third of obligations (AVESTA, 2025, May 22). The Rogun hydropower project, requiring 3 billion US dollars in international financing, exemplifies the developmental logic of leveraging foreign capital for strategic infrastructure (Kazinform, 2026b). Ongoing efforts to attract investment from European partners signal an intent to diversify the geographical sources of foreign business presence (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2025).

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ONLINE MEDIA FACTORS AFFECTING THE PURCHASE DECISION BEHAVIOR OF OUTBOUND TOUR PACKAGES AMONG THAI TOURISTS

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Abstract

This study aims to (1) examine online media usage behavior related to outbound tour packages, (2) investigate the purchase decision behavior of Thai tourists, and (3) analyze the online media factors influencing purchase decisions. A quantitative research approach was employed using a structured questionnaire. Data were collected from 400 Thai tourists and analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis.

The results indicate that Facebook and tour company websites are the primary sources of travel information. Price and promotion, tour program details, and company credibility are the most important factors influencing decision-making. The regression analysis reveals that online marketing and online information quality significantly influence purchase decision behavior, while online media credibility and online communication and service do not show significant effects. The findings highlight the importance of effective online marketing strategies and high-quality information in influencing tourist decision-making.

Keywords: Online media, Purchase decision behavior, Outbound tourism, Thai tourists

Introduction

International tourism has significantly expanded due to advancements in transportation and digital technology. Online media has become a primary channel for accessing travel information and influencing consumer decision-making. Thai tourists increasingly rely on platforms such as social media, websites, and online reviews when selecting outbound tour packages.

In the post-pandemic context, tourists demonstrate more cautious behavior, emphasizing information verification, value comparison, and risk reduction. Consequently, the role of online media has become more critical in shaping purchase decisions.

However, challenges remain regarding information quality, credibility, communication efficiency, and marketing effectiveness. These factors may influence consumer perceptions differently. Therefore, this study investigates how online media factors affect purchase decision behavior among Thai tourists.

Objectives

1. To examine online media usage behavior related to outbound tour packages.
2. To study purchase decision behavior of Thai tourists.
3. To analyze online media factors affecting purchase decision behavior.

Methodology

This research adopts a quantitative approach. The target population consists of Thai tourists with experience in outbound travel. A sample of 400 respondents was selected using convenience sampling.

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire divided into five sections: demographic data, online media usage behavior, online information quality, online media credibility, online communication and service, online marketing, and purchase decision behavior.

Content validity was assessed by three experts, with all items achieving an IOC value of 1.00. Reliability testing yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.82, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (multiple regression analysis) at a significance level of 0.05.

Results

The majority of respondents were female, aged 30–39 years, holding a bachelor's degree, and employed in the private sector. Most respondents had prior international travel experience.

Facebook was identified as the most frequently used platform for searching travel information, followed by tour company websites and TikTok. The most important information sought before making a decision includes price and promotion, tour details, and company credibility.

Overall, purchase decision behavior was at a high level. Respondents typically spent 2–7 days evaluating information before making a purchase, with chat-based platforms such as LINE being the most common booking channel.

Among online media factors, online information quality had the highest mean score, followed by online media credibility and online communication and service, while online marketing had the lowest mean score.

Multiple regression analysis indicates that online marketing and online information quality significantly influence purchase decision behavior. The model explains approximately 49.8% of the variance.

Discussion

The findings confirm that online media plays a crucial role in influencing tourist decision-making. The dominance of social media and official websites reflects changing consumer behavior in the digital era.

Online information quality significantly impacts decision-making, as accurate and comprehensive information reduces uncertainty and perceived risk. This is particularly important in outbound tourism, where consumers cannot directly evaluate services in advance.

Online marketing demonstrates the strongest influence on purchase decisions. This suggests that promotional strategies, engaging content, and digital campaigns effectively stimulate consumer interest and accelerate decision-making.

In contrast, online media credibility and online communication and service, although important, do not significantly influence purchase decisions in the regression model. This may indicate that consumers perceive these factors as basic expectations rather than key differentiators.

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ONLINE MARKETING FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PURCHASE DECISION OF OUTBOUND TOUR PACKAGES AMONG THAI TOURISTS

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of online marketing factors on purchase decision behavior of Thai tourists in the context of outbound tour packages. The study is derived from a broader research examining four dimensions of online media, including information quality, credibility, communication and service, and online marketing, with this paper focusing specifically on the online marketing dimension.

A quantitative research approach was employed using a structured questionnaire. Data were collected from 400 Thai tourists and analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation analysis at a significance level of 0.05.

The results indicate that online marketing has a statistically significant relationship with purchase decision behavior ($r = 0.636$, $p < 0.05$). The mean score of online marketing factors was at a high level ($\bar{x} = 4.49$), reflecting strong agreement among respondents. The findings reveal that promotional campaigns, discounts, and engaging digital content play a critical role in attracting tourist attention and influencing purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, Thai tourists rely heavily on online platforms such as social media and travel websites, and are highly responsive to promotional information. Effective online marketing communication helps reduce decision-making time and increases purchase intention.

These findings provide practical implications for tourism businesses in developing effective online marketing strategies to enhance competitiveness and improve sales performance in the digital era.

Keywords: Online marketing, Purchase decision behavior, Outbound tourism, Thai tourists

Introduction

Online media has become a crucial factor influencing consumer behavior in the tourism industry (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). With the rapid advancement of digital technology, consumers increasingly depend on online platforms to search for information, compare alternatives, and make purchasing decisions.

Previous studies have identified four major dimensions of online media, including information quality, credibility, communication and service, and online marketing, all of which influence purchase decision behavior. Among these, online marketing plays a particularly significant role as it directly impacts consumer attention and purchasing intention through promotional campaigns, advertising, and digital content (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

In the context of outbound tourism, Thai tourists often face higher financial commitment and perceived risk compared to domestic travel. As a result, they tend to seek extensive information and rely heavily on online sources before making decisions. Online marketing strategies such as price promotions, limited-time offers, and visually engaging content have become effective tools for attracting consumer interest and reducing uncertainty.

In addition, consumers are increasingly influenced by online reviews and electronic word-of-mouth (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Social media platforms such as Facebook and TikTok play an important role in shaping consumer perception and behavior.

This study is derived from a broader research on online media factors affecting purchase decision behavior, with a specific focus on the online marketing dimension. Understanding the role of online marketing is essential for tourism businesses to develop effective strategies and remain competitive in an increasingly digital marketplace.

Objectives

1. To examine online marketing factors influencing purchase decision behavior.
2. To analyze the impact of online marketing on tourist behavior.

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach. The sample consists of 400 Thai tourists with experience in outbound travel. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, utilizing the same dataset as the main study.

The questionnaire was developed based on theoretical concepts related to online marketing and consumer behavior. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure respondents' opinions.

The variables include online marketing factors as the independent variable and purchase decision behavior as the dependent variable. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation analysis at a significance level of 0.05.

Results

The results indicate that online marketing has a statistically significant influence on purchase decision behavior ($r = 0.636$, $p < 0.05$), indicating a moderate to strong positive relationship.

The mean score of online marketing factors was at a high level ($\bar{x} = 4.49$), suggesting that respondents agreed that online marketing plays an important role in their purchasing decisions.

Consumers tend to respond positively to online marketing that is visually appealing, informative, and easy to access. Promotional campaigns, particularly discounts and special offers, play a major role in attracting customer attention and encouraging purchase decisions.

Furthermore, Thai tourists rely heavily on online platforms such as social media and company websites when searching for travel information, and promotional content was identified as the most influential factor in decision-making.

Discussion

The findings suggest that online marketing is a key driver of consumer behavior in the tourism industry. This is consistent with consumer behavior theory, which explains that marketing stimuli can directly influence purchasing decisions (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019).

The significant relationship between online marketing and purchase decision behavior ($r = 0.636$) indicates that effective marketing strategies can strongly influence consumer choices. Promotional campaigns, discounts, and engaging digital content are particularly effective in capturing attention and motivating purchasing behavior.

These findings are consistent with previous studies highlighting the importance of online engagement in tourism (Kim & Kim, 2021; Rather, 2021). In addition, electronic word-of-mouth plays a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes and influencing decisions (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Cheung & Thadani, 2012).

Moreover, online marketing helps reduce perceived risk and simplifies the decision-making process, which is especially important in outbound tourism where decisions involve higher financial commitment.

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IMPACT OF MARKETING MIX ON CHINESE TOURISTS TRAVEL DECISION-MAKING FOR VISITING TIBET

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Abstract

This quantitative research examines the influence of the marketing mix (4Ps: Product, Price, Place, Promotion) on the travel decision-making of mainland Chinese tourists visiting Tibet. Data was collected from 400 respondents using a structured questionnaire distributed online. Multiple regression analysis revealed that all four factors significantly influence travel decisions. Promotion was the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.348$), followed by Product ($\beta = 0.302$), Place ($\beta = 0.235$), and Price ($\beta = 0.194$). The model explained 52.4% of the variance in travel decision-making. Findings underscore the critical role of digital marketing, unique cultural/natural assets, seamless accessibility, and transparent pricing in attracting Chinese tourists to Tibet.

Keywords: Marketing Mix, Travel Decision-Making, Chinese Tourists, Tibet, 4Ps

Introduction

The Xizang Autonomous Region (Tibet), located on China's southwestern frontier, is renowned for its transcendent natural landscapes and profound Tibetan Buddhist cultural heritage. In recent years, bolstered by national policies and infrastructural advancements (e.g., the Qinghai-Tibet Railway), tourism has become a pillar of Tibet's economy. Tourist arrivals surged from 2.51 million in 2006 to over 40 million in 2023 (Xizang Tourism Development Department, 2023). Mainland Chinese tourists constitute over 95% of all visitors, making them the core market segment. Despite this growth, challenges such as product homogeneity, service quality gaps, and seasonal overcrowding persist. Understanding how the marketing mix influences this market's decisions is critical for sustainable development. This study applies the 4Ps framework to systematically analyse these influences.

Objectives

1. To study the influence of Product factors (unique culture/landscape, service quality) on travel decisions of mainland Chinese tourists to Tibet.
2. To analyse the influence of Price factors (travel cost, transparency, perceived value) on their travel decisions.
3. To study the influence of Place factors (ease of information access, booking convenience) on their travel decisions.
4. To study the influence of Promotion factors (social media, official campaigns) on their travel decisions.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do Product factors influence the travel decision-making of mainland Chinese tourists to Tibet?
2. How do Price factors affect their travel decisions?
3. What is the influence of Place factors on their travel decisions?
4. How significant is the role of Promotion factors in their travel decisions?
5. What are the relative impacts of the four marketing mix elements on the final travel decision to visit Tibet?

Literature Review and Theory

This study integrates three theoretical foundations. First, the Marketing Mix (4Ps) framework (McCarthy, 1960; Kotler et al., 2023) posits that Product, Price, Place, and Promotion are controllable strategic variables influencing consumer behaviour. In destination marketing, Product refers to core attractions and services; Price includes monetary costs and value perception; Place covers digital/physical accessibility and distribution channels; Promotion encompasses marketing communications (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Kumar, 2021). Second, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) explains that behavioural intention is driven by Attitude, Subjective Norm, and Perceived Behavioural Control. Third, Comprehensive Advantage Theory (CAT) (Dwyer & Kim, 2003) suggests destination competitiveness emerges from the integrated management of endowed, supporting, and policy advantages. Empirical studies confirm that social media (Li et al., 2021; Zhou & Liu, 2023), infrastructure (Wang & Chen, 2019), and product quality (Drolma & White, 2022) significantly affect Chinese tourists' choices. This study proposes that the 4Ps directly influence travel decisions, with Promotion and Product being the most influential.

Research Framework

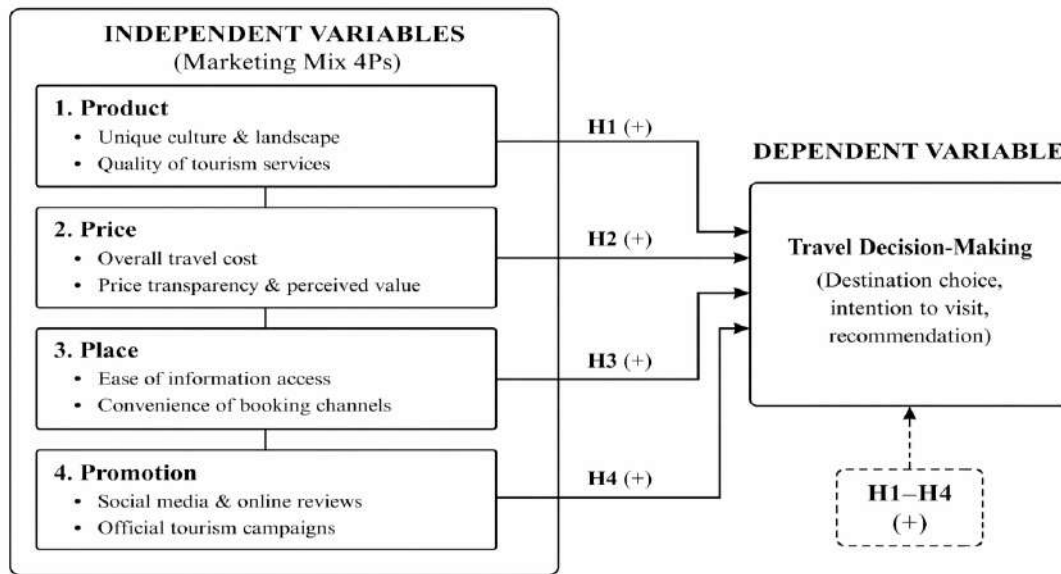


Figure 1. Research Framework

Methodology

This quantitative research employed a cross-sectional survey design. The population comprised mainland Chinese tourists aged ≥ 18 who visited Tibet for tourism/pilgrimage in the last three years (2021-2024). Since the exact population size was unknown, a sample of 400 respondents was calculated using Taro Yamane's formula (95% confidence level, 5% margin of error). A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed online via Xiaohongshu, Douyin, WeChat, and travel agencies, yielding 400 valid responses (effective response rate 66.7%). The structured questionnaire had four parts: demographic/travel profile, perceptions of 4Ps (16 items, 5-point Likert), TPB constructs (13 items), and an open-ended section. Content validity was confirmed by three experts, and reliability was established with Cronbach's alpha > 0.70 for all constructs. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (percentage, mean, standard deviation) and multiple linear regression.

Results

Demographic Profile: Majority were female (58.0%), aged 26-35 years (39.0%), held a bachelor's degree (53.0%), earned 5,001-20,000 RMB/month (66.0%), visited Tibet in 2023-2024 (75.0%), and used package tours (45.0%) or free independent travel (38.0%).

Descriptive Statistics (4Ps): All 4Ps were rated positively. Product had the highest mean ($M=4.34$, $SD=0.75$), followed by Promotion ($M=4.31$, $SD=0.72$), Place ($M=4.23$, $SD=0.77$), and Price ($M=3.92$, $SD=0.88$).

Regression Analysis: The model was significant ($F=85.674$, $p<0.001$, Adj. $R^2=0.518$). All four factors positively influenced travel decision-making. Standardized beta coefficients indicated: Promotion ($\beta=0.348$, $p<0.001$), Product ($\beta=0.302$, $p<0.001$), Place ($\beta=0.235$, $p<0.001$), and Price ($\beta=0.194$, $p<0.001$). Thus, all hypotheses (H1-H4) were supported.

Conclusion

This study confirms that the marketing mix (4Ps) significantly influences mainland Chinese tourists' travel decisions to Tibet. Promotion is the most powerful factor, highlighting the dominance of social media (Douyin, Xiaohongshu) and user-generated content. Product ranks second, emphasizing Tibet's unique natural and cultural heritage. Place (digital/physical accessibility) and Price (value-for-money) also play important but comparatively smaller roles. The integrated 4Ps-TPB model provides a robust explanatory framework for destination marketing.

Discussion and Recommendation

Discussion

The findings align with prior research showing that social media shapes destination image and inspires travel (Li et al., 2021; Zhou & Liu, 2023). The strong influence of Product confirms that authentic cultural and landscape assets remain core pull factors (Tanzen & Partap, 2019). Place factors matter, as seamless online booking and information access reduce perceived barriers (Liu et al., 2022). Price, while significant, is the weakest predictor, indicating that Chinese tourists are value-conscious rather than purely price-sensitive (Li, Hu, & Wang, 2019). The high R^2 (0.524) suggests the 4Ps effectively explain tourist decisions.

Recommendations for Practice

1. Promotion: Invest in KOL/KOC partnerships on Douyin (short videos) and Xiaohongshu (detailed guides). Encourage user-generated content.
2. Product: Preserve cultural/natural assets and develop niche experiences (photography tours, eco-trekking, meditation retreats).
3. Place: Optimize the official tourism portal for mobile and permit applications. Strengthen partnerships with Ctrip and Fliggy.
4. Price: Implement transparent, tiered pricing and promote off-peak incentives (e.g., "Visit Tibet in Winter").

Limitations and Future Research

This study used a convenience/snowball sample, which may limit generalizability. Future research should conduct longitudinal and comparative studies across tourist segments (e.g., first-time vs. repeat visitors) and integrate sustainability metrics.

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TOURIST CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPENDITURE PATTERNS: A CASE STUDY OF MOUNT TAI

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Abstract

This quantitative research aimed to (1) study tourist expenditure patterns at Mount Tai, China, and (2) examine differences in expenditure patterns across tourist segments based on demographic and travel characteristics. Data was collected from 400 tourists using structured questionnaires from November 2025 to February 2026. Descriptive statistics, independent t-tests, and one-way ANOVA were employed. Findings revealed average per capita expenditure of 1,425.00 RMB, with accommodation (28.95%), entrance fees/cable car (22.85%), and food (20.09%) comprising 71.89% of total spending. No significant gender difference was found. However, significant differences existed across age groups ($p < 0.05$) and income levels ($p < 0.05$). Independent travelers spent significantly more than group tour participants ($p < 0.05$). Longer stays and greater tourist origin distance were associated with significantly higher expenditure. The study provides empirical evidence for tourism stakeholders to enhance high-value cultural products, extend visitor stays, and target high-yield segments.

Keywords: Tourist Characteristics, Expenditure Patterns, Mount Tai

Introduction

Mount Tai (Taishan), located in central Shandong Province, China, is recognized as the foremost of China's Five Sacred Mountains. The mountain has been the object of an imperial cult for nearly 2,000 years, and the artistic masterpieces found there are in perfect harmony with the natural landscape (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1987). In 1987, Mount Tai was inscribed as a UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage Site, making it one of the few dual heritage sites worldwide.

According to the Tai'an Municipal People's Government (2026), the number of visitors ascending Mount Tai has exceeded 8 million annually for three consecutive years, with average length of stay reaching 2.14 days. Market research indicates that users born in the 1980s and 1990s are core groups for mountain tourism, accounting for 57% of travellers (Tuniu Travel Network, 2025). Understanding tourist expenditure patterns is essential for tourism-dependent cities like Tai' and to maximize economic benefits.

Objectives

1. To study tourist expenditure patterns at Mount Tai, including total expenditure, per capita spending, and expenditure distribution across categories (accommodation, food, entrance tickets, local transport, shopping, entertainment).
2. To study differences in expenditure patterns across tourist segments based on demographic characteristics (gender, age, income) and travel characteristics (travel type, length of stay, tourist origin).

Research Questions

1. What are the characteristics of tourist expenditure at Mount Tai, including total expenditure and spending patterns across different categories?
2. How do tourist expenditure patterns vary across different types of tourists based on demographic and travel characteristics?

Literature Review and Theory

Tourist Expenditure Theory

Tourist expenditure is formally defined as "the amount paid for the acquisition of consumption goods and services, as well as valuables, for own use or to give away, for and during tourism trips" (United Nations, 2010, as cited in Frechtling, 2023). Li and Liu (2008) decomposed tourist expenditure into three elements: expenditure in generating areas, along the journey, and at the destination.

Tourist Characteristics and Segmentation

Tourist characteristics encompass demographic, socioeconomic, and behavioural attributes. Nature (2025) identified generational differences: Baby Boomers prefer group tours, Generation Y seeks authentic experiences, and Generation Z shows rapid growth in mountain tourism participation. The University of Kerbala (2025) confirmed income has a directly proportional relationship with tourism demand.

Mount Tai as a Tourism Destination

Mount Tai rises 1,545 meters above sea level, covering 426 square kilometres with over 6,293 steps to the summit. It houses 22 temples and 97 ruins (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1987). Recent innovations include exoskeleton climbing assistance robots and "accompanying climbing" services (Tuniu Travel Network, 2025).

Research Framework

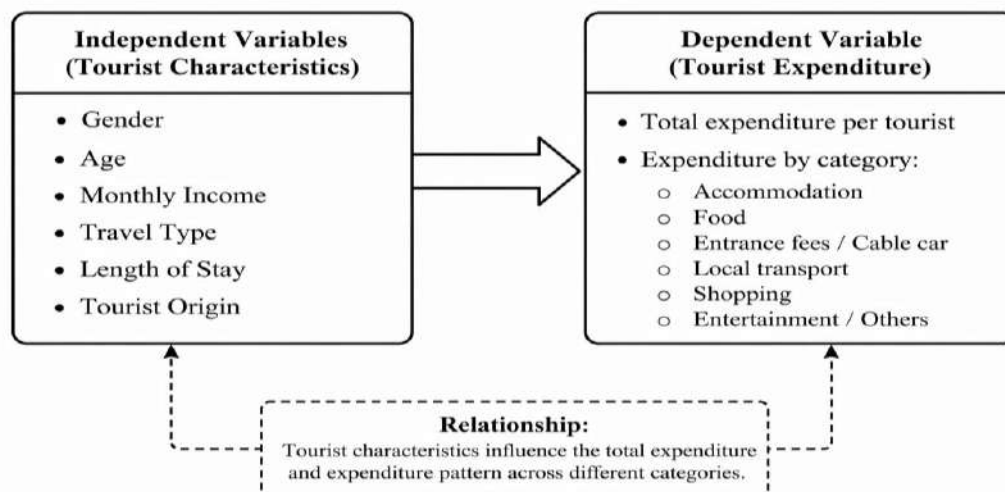


Figure 1. Research Framework

Methodology

Research Design

This quantitative research employed a survey research design with a cross-sectional approach.

Population and Sample

The population was tourists visiting Mount Tai Scenic Area. Using Taro Yamane's formula at 95% confidence level and 5% tolerance, assuming a population of 100,000, the sample size was 400 respondents. Simple random sampling was employed at entrance points, cableway stations, and tourist gathering areas from November 2025 to February 2026.

Inclusion criteria: tourists aged 18 years or above who had completed at least part of their visit and were willing to participate.

Research Tool

A structured questionnaire was developed with three sections:

Section A: Demographic characteristics (gender, age, income, travel type, length of stay, origin)

Section B: Expenditure by category (accommodation, food, entrance fees/cable car, local transport, shopping, entertainment)

Section C: Satisfaction and future intentions (5-point Likert scale)

Content validity was assessed by three experts using IOC. A pilot test with 30 tourists was conducted.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (independent t-test, one-way ANOVA) were used with SPSS version 26.0. Significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Of 400 respondents, 58.00% were female, 42.00% male. The largest age groups were 18-30 years (39.00%) and 31-50 years (37.00%). Monthly income distribution: 10,001-20,000 RMB (35.50%), 5,001-10,000 RMB (31.00%). Independent travelers comprised 46.50%, group tours 28.00%. Length of stay: 2 days 1 night (39.50%), 1 day (33.00%). Tourist origin: within Shandong excluding Tai'an (42.00%), outside Shandong (38.00%), international (9.00%).

Tourist Expenditure Patterns

Average total per capita expenditure was 1,425.00 RMB (S.D.=389.60). Expenditure by category: accommodation 412.50 RMB (28.95%), entrance fees/cable car 325.60 RMB (22.85%), food 286.30 RMB (20.09%), shopping 215.70 RMB (15.14%), local transport 98.40 RMB (6.91%), entertainment 86.50 RMB (6.06%). Basic services comprised 71.89% of total spending.

International tourists spent highest (2,150.60 RMB), followed by outside Shandong (1,680.30 RMB), within Shandong (1,245.80 RMB), and local residents (680.50 RMB). Tourists staying 4+ days spent 2,450.80 RMB versus day-trippers at 580.30 RMB.

Hypothesis Testing

H1a (Gender): No significant difference ($t=1.86$, $p=0.064$). Not supported.

H1b (Age): Significant difference ($F=24.56$, $p=0.000$). Ages 31-50 spent highest (1,560.80 RMB). Supported.

H1c (Income): Significant difference ($F=42.38$, $p=0.000$). Income above 20,000 RMB spent 1,950.80 RMB; below 5,000 RMB spent 890.60 RMB. Supported.

H2a (Travel Type): Independent travellers (1,520.60 RMB) spent more than group tours (1,280.30 RMB) ($t=4.28$, $p=0.000$). Supported.

H2b (Length of Stay): Significant difference ($F=245.60$, $p=0.000$). Expenditure increased progressively with longer stays. Supported.

H2c (Tourist Origin): Significant difference ($F=98.50$, $p=0.000$). Greater distance associated with higher expenditure. Supported.

Satisfaction ratings ranged from 3.85 to 4.12 (Satisfied level). Recommendation intention was 77.50%, return visit intention 61.25%. Development priorities: cultural/creative products (89.00%), high-end accommodation (78.00%), congestion alleviation (69.50%).

Conclusion

This study examined tourist expenditure patterns at Mount Tai and differences across tourist segments. Average per capita expenditure was 1,425.00 RMB, with basic services dominating spending. Age, income, travel type, length of stay, and tourist origin significantly influenced expenditure, while gender did not. Independent travellers, longer-staying visitors, and those from greater distances spent significantly more. Satisfaction levels were positive, with strong demand for cultural products and premium services.

Discussion and Recommendation

Discussion

The expenditure structure (71.89% basic services) aligns with Li and Liu (2008) who found Chinese destinations concentrate on basic consumption. However, the 15.14% shopping share exceeds some destinations, reflecting success of "Gan Gan Dang Dang" and "Tai'an Gifts" (Tai'an Municipal People's Government, 2026).

The income-expenditure relationship confirms tourism as a luxury good (University of Kerbala, 2025). Age differences support generational cohort theory (Nature, 2025), with ages 31-50 spending highest. Independent travellers' higher spending reflects flexibility and personalization trends (McKinsey & Company, 2019). The length-of-stay finding strongly supports the "Mount Tai Plus" strategy (Tai'an Municipal People's Government, 2026).

Recommendations for Practice

1. Enhance cultural/creative products (89.00% priority): Expand "Tai'an Gifts" lines, develop limited editions, implement digital storytelling.
2. Develop premium accommodation and catering (78.00% priority): Attract boutique hotels, heritage properties targeting high-income and 31-50 age segments.
3. Extend visitor stays: Continue "Mount Tai Plus" with multi-day packages combining mountain with surrounding attractions.
4. Target high-value segments: Prioritize high-income, international, and 31-50 age groups through tailored campaigns.
5. Manage seasonal congestion: Implement timed entry, promote off-season travel, develop night tourism experiences.
6. Invest in smart tourism: Develop comprehensive mobile app, smart queue management, big data analytics.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Conduct comparative studies with other mountain destinations (Huangshan, Emei, Hua).
2. Employ longitudinal designs to track expenditure changes over time.
3. Incorporate qualitative methods (interviews, focus groups) for deeper insights.
4. Examine supply-side perspectives (operators, officials, community members).

5. Investigate digital technology adoption impacts on expenditure.
6. Analyse willingness to pay for heritage preservation.
7. Explore generational differences in greater depth.
8. Evaluate new tourism products (exoskeleton robots, accompanying climbing services).
9. Examine sustainability outcomes of tourism development.
10. Develop predictive models incorporating multiple expenditure determinants.

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PRESERVING HERITAGE THROUGH SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: A MANAGEMENT MODEL FOR WAT SALA LOI

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Abstract

Wat Sala Loi is a renowned historical and architectural monument located in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand. It faces the challenge of managing an increasing number of tourists while maintaining its spiritual and cultural integrity. This article introduces a sustainable management model known as the "GHE Framework," which aims to balance heritage conservation with tourism development. Through a qualitative approach that involved site visits, stakeholder interviews, and thematic analysis, the study identified significant management gaps in current practices, particularly concerning commercial encroachment and the lack of legal zoning. The proposed model emphasizes a collaborative framework that engages the monastic community, local administration, and visitors. The results indicate that effective temple-based tourism relies on emphasizing the site's "sacredness" while simultaneously improving the visitor experience. This approach is essential for preserving cultural treasures for future generations.

Keywords: *Sustainable Tourism, Heritage Management, Wat Sala Loi, Cultural Conservation, Integrated Participation, GHE Model.*

Introduction

Cultural heritage sites play a crucial role in shaping a country's identity and collective memory. In Thailand, Buddhist temples, known as wats, function not only as places of worship but also as important cultural landmarks that generate significant revenue and attract large numbers of tourists. However, the rapid growth of mass tourism threatens the physical and spiritual authenticity of these sites. This situation raises concerns regarding overcrowding, the commercialization of sacred spaces, and the potential erosion of associated cultural practices.

Wat Sala Loi temple, built by Thao Suranari (You Mo) in the late 18th century, occupies a distinctive position in Thai history and architecture. Its modern Thai Ubosot (ordination hall) is particularly remarkable for its design, which resembles a junk boat, symbolizing the vessel that carries individuals to Nirvana. This site has been honored with the Award of Excellence from the Association of Siamese Architects. Despite this recognition, Wat Sala Loi faces significant challenges related to "over-tourism" during peak seasons. These challenges include site degradation, waste management issues, and the commercialization of sacred spaces.

The objective of this study is to develop a management model that fosters "sustainable cultural tourism." The goal is to turn tourism into a tool for preservation rather than a source of harm. The study will explore the question: How can management practices be restructured to protect the heritage of Wat Sala Loi while encouraging sustainable tourism?

Literature Review

The conceptual framework for this study is rooted in the "Triple Bottom Line" of sustainability—economic viability, social responsibility, and environmental protection—applied specifically to religious heritage sites.

The Idea of Managing Sacred Space To take care of a "living" heritage site like Wat Sala Loi, you need a different method than you would for a museum. Shackley (2001) says that the main job of a temple is to serve the religious community. When tourism comes to a place, it causes a "dual-use" conflict. This study employs place attachment theory to investigate the perceptions of local communities and monks regarding the site. If management puts tourists' needs (like parking and souvenir shops) ahead of keeping the spiritual atmosphere, the site could lose its "authenticity," which is what brings people there in the first place.

Modern sustainable tourism goes from "passive consumption" to "co-creation." Visitors are no longer just watching; they are now part of the cultural story. For Wat Sala Loi, this change means coming up with activities that teach tourists about the architectural philosophy of the boat-shaped Ubosot and how it relates to Buddhist cosmology. By involving the local community in the storytelling process, management can ensure fair distribution of economic benefits. This can be done by training local guides and including local stories in the tourist experience. This method will also stop tourism money from going to people outside the area, ensuring that the economic benefits are retained within the local community and directly support local businesses and initiatives.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design utilizing a Triangulation Design to ensure data validity.

Sample Selection: Purposive sampling was used to select 15 key informants, including the Abbot of Wat Sala Loi, representatives from the Nakhon Ratchasima Provincial Cultural Office, and 5 local business owners. Additionally, 100 tourists were surveyed regarding their satisfaction and perception of the site's sacredness.

Data Collection:

1. **Site Observations:** Assessment of physical conditions, visitor flow, and existing facilities.
2. **In- depth Interviews:** Semi- structured interviews focusing on management challenges and stakeholder expectations.
3. **Documentary Analysis:** Reviewing architectural conservation guidelines and provincial tourism policies.

Data Analysis: The qualitative data underwent Thematic Analysis and Content Analysis to identify core management pillars required for a sustainable model.

Results and Discussion: The Proposed Management Model

The research identifies three core dimensions that form the "GHE Sustainable Management Model" (Governance, Heritage, and Experience).

Governance (G): Integrated Stakeholder Participation

A key finding was that there was no central management committee. The model suggests an "Integrated Participation Hub," where the temple administration, the local government, and community volunteers all work together. This system of government makes sure that the money from tourism is clearly put back into keeping the temple's buildings in excellent shape.

Heritage (H): Conservation and Spatial Zoning

To protect the architectural integrity, the model proposes a "Zoning Strategy":

1. Sacred Zones: Restricted areas for religious practice with minimal tourist intervention (e.g., the interior of the Ubosot during prayer).
2. Buffer Zones: Educational areas where visitors can learn about history via Digital Storytelling (QR codes).
3. Service Zones: Designated areas for commercial activities located at the periphery to prevent visual pollution.

Experience (E): Value-Based Visitor Management

Instead of focusing on "mass numbers," the model shifts toward "Value-Based Tourism." This includes training local youth as "Cultural Ambassadors" to provide deep insights into the site's history, thereby increasing the "Time-on-Site" and encouraging respectful behavior.

Addressing the Commercialization Crisis

Data showed that the many commercial stalls near the entrance break up the visual harmony (Genius Loci). The model suggests a plan for "Spatial Reorganization." Moving business activities to a specific "Community Market Zone" restores the meditative vibe of the central grounds. This makes it seem more valuable to high-quality tourists who are looking for culture, as they often seek authentic experiences and environments that promote relaxation and community engagement.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The development of a management model for Wat Sala Loi is not merely an administrative task but a necessity for cultural survival. By integrating governance, heritage conservation, and enhanced visitor experiences, the temple can thrive as a destination without sacrificing its spiritual essence.

Policy Recommendations:

1. Provincial Integration: The temple should be designated as a "Special Conservation District" in the Nakhon Ratchasima City Plan.
2. Capacity Building: Ongoing training for the monastic community in "Heritage Interpretation" to help them communicate the temple's value to an international audience.

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THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEPTION ON AGRO-TOURISM DECISION-MAKING AMONG THAI GENERATION Z TOURISTS IN MAHASARAKHAM PROVINCE

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Abstract

This research aimed to examine the perception levels of Thai Generation Z tourists toward agro-tourism in Mahasarakham Province. A quantitative survey research design was employed, with a sample of 300 Thai Gen Z tourists aged 16–28 years. Data were collected using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire validated for content validity (IOC = 0.94) and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.98). Descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used for data analysis. The findings revealed that the overall perception level was high ($\bar{X} = 4.10$, S.D. = 0.90). When examined by dimension, destination image, safety and destination characteristics perception scored highest ($\bar{X} = 4.14$ each), followed by value perception ($\bar{X} = 4.12$), while information perception scored lowest ($\bar{X} = 3.98$). These findings indicate that Generation Z tourists have a good level of awareness and understanding of agro-tourism, which provides a solid foundation for sustainable agro-tourism development in Mahasarakham Province.

Keywords: Perception, Agro-Tourism, Generation Z, Mahasarakham Province

Introduction

The tourism industry is considered a vital engine for driving Thailand's economy, particularly agro-tourism, which has been promoted as a primary instrument for distributing income to local communities and fostering the sustainability of regional resources. As an educational and agricultural hub of the central Northeastern region, Mahasarakham Province possesses distinctive potential in terms of traditional lifestyles, agricultural wisdom, and its status as a "Learning City." This potential aligns with global tourism development trends that emphasize experience-based tourism for visitors.

However, amidst shifting demographic structures, Generation Z—those born between 1997 and 2012—are emerging as a major consumer group with significant purchasing power and influence over future market directions. This cohort possesses a unique identity as "Digital Natives" who access information rapidly. Their behavior is characterized by a quest for new, authentic experiences that allow for self-expression through online platforms.

Consequently, understanding the behaviors and requirements of this younger generation presents a critical challenge for entrepreneurs and stakeholders in developing agro-tourism sites to adapt to these evolving preferences.

In the behavioral science framework, the most fundamental factor preceding a tourist's decision to visit a destination is "Perception." Perception is the process by which individuals receive, organize, and interpret stimuli through various measures to form an image and sentiment toward a subject. If tourists possess a positive perception regarding destination attributes, confidence in safety, and a sense of value for money, it serves as a crucial starting point leading to interest and, ultimately, the travel decision. In the context of Mahasarakham Province, despite the abundance of diverse agricultural resources, the perceptual levels of Generation Z toward this area require detailed investigation to identify which dimensions of perception the younger generation prioritizes most.

Driven by these considerations, this research focuses on examining the perceptual levels of young Thai tourists (Generation Z) toward agro-tourism in Mahasarakham Province. The study encompasses five dimensions of perception: Information, Image, Safety, Value for Money, and Destination Attributes. The findings from this research will serve as essential baseline data for agro-tourism entrepreneurs and government agencies in Mahasarakham. These insights can be utilized as guidelines for formulating communication strategies, developing tourism products, and enhancing the destination's image to effectively and sustainably align with the perceptions and expectations of the modern tourist.

Objectives

1. To examine the levels of perception influencing the decision-making of Generation Z tourists towards agro-tourism in Mahasarakham Province.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research approach to survey the perception levels of Generation Z tourists. The methodological details are as follows:

1. Population and Sample

Population: The target population consists of Thai Generation Z tourists

Sample: 300 Thai Gen Z tourists aged 16–28 years. Respondents were selected through convenience sampling.

2. Research Instrument

The primary instrument was an online questionnaire (Google Forms), divided into three sections:

Section 1: Personal demographic factors, including gender, age.

Section 2: Perception levels toward agro-tourism across 5 dimensions (25 items), utilizing a 5-point Likert Scale.

3. Validity and Reliability

Validity: The questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of experts to evaluate Content Validity. The Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index was 0.94.

Reliability: A pilot test (try-out) was conducted with 30 non-sample individuals. The internal consistency was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, resulting in a high reliability score of 0.98 for the entire instrument.

4. Data Collection

Data were collected in 2025-2026. The questionnaire was distributed via social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Line, targeting tourist networks and educational institutions within Mahasarakham Province.

5. Data Analysis and Statistics

The collected data were processed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics included:

Percentage: To describe the demographic profile of the respondents.

Mean ($\bar{X}$): To analyze the overall and dimension-specific perception levels.

Standard Deviation (S.D.): To measure the dispersion of responses.

Mean scores were interpreted based on Best's (1977) criteria, ranging from 1.00 – 1.49 (Lowest) to 4.50 – 5.00 (Highest).

Results

The researcher presents the data analysis results in accordance with the objective: to study the perception levels of Thai Generation Z tourists toward agro-tourism in Mahasarakham Province. The findings are as follows:

Part 1: Analysis of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 Percentage of samples classified by general information of respondents.

Gender	Number of people	Percentage
Male	157	52.33
Female	143	47.67
Other	0	0
Total	300	100

From Table 1 The data it shows from 300 respondents revealed that the majority of the population were 157 males, representing 52.33 percent and 143 females, representing 47.67 percent

Table 2 Percentage of samples classified by general information of respondents

Age	Number of people	Percentage
16–18 years old	105	35
19–21 years old	100	33.33
22–24 years old	40	13.33
25–28 years old	55	18.33
Total	300	100

From Table 2 shows that most of the population is 26-35 years old, 189 people, representing 47.25 percent, followed by people aged 18-25 years, 98 people, representing 24.5 percent, 36-45 years old, 73 people, representing 18.25 percent, and the least buyers are Over 46 years old, 40 people, representing 10 percent.

Part 2: Analysis of Perception Levels toward Agro-tourism

Table 3 Means and Standard Deviations of Perception Levels regarding Agro-tourism

Evaluation Items		$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Perception Level
Dimension 1: Perception of Information				
1	I can easily access information about agro-tourism attractions in Mahasarakham Province.	3.97	0.93	High
2	Agro-tourism information in Mahasarakham is clear and credible.	3.95	0.95	High
3	Online media and social media play a significant role in providing agro-tourism information.	4.14	0.91	High
4	I continuously receive news and information regarding agro-tourism.	3.83	1.14	High
5	The information received helps me make easier decisions in choosing agro-tourism destinations.	3.99	1.02	High
Total		3.98	0.91	High
Dimension 2: Perception of Image				
6	Agro-tourism attractions in Mahasarakham have an interesting image.	3.99	1.02	High
7	I perceive agro-tourism as a modern form of travel suitable for the younger generation	4.21	0.94	High
8	Agro-tourism sites in Mahasarakham effectively reflect local identity and way of life.	4.17	0.91	High
9	The image of agro-tourism destinations influences my desire to travel.	4.19	0.88	High
10	I have a positive attitude toward agro-tourism in Mahasarakham Province.	4.12	0.95	High
Total		4.14	0.93	High

Table 3 (Continued)

Evaluation Items		$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Perception Level
Dimension 3: Perception of Safety				
11	I feel confident in the safety of agro-tourism attractions in Mahasarakham Province.	4.19	0.84	High
12	Agro-tourism destinations have appropriate safety management.	4.22	0.81	High
13	Traveling to agro-tourism sites is convenient and safe.	3.99	1.01	High

14	I feel safe when participating in agricultural activities.	4.19	0.82	High
15	Safety influences my decision to choose agro-tourism.	4.11	0.87	High
Total		4.14	0.87	High
Dimension 4: Perception of Value for Money				
16	The expenses for agro-tourism are reasonable compared to the experiences gained.	4.10	0.99	High
17	Agro-tourism offers better value compared to other forms of tourism.	4.03	0.93	High
18	I gain both knowledge and enjoyment from agro-tourism.	4.08	0.94	High
19	Agro-tourism helps create valuable long-term experiences.	4.21	0.83	High
20	Value for money is a key factor affecting the decision to engage in agro-tourism.	4.17	0.96	High
Total		4.12	0.92	High
Dimension 5: Perception of Destination Attributes				
21	Agro-tourism attractions have diverse resources and activities.	4.16	0.89	High
22	Agricultural activities provide opportunities for tourists to have authentic participation.	4.15	0.92	High
23	The attractions are clean and have systematic management.	4.02	0.87	High
24	The community and service providers are friendly and welcoming.	4.19	0.91	High
25	Destination attributes influence my decision to travel.	4.16	0.97	High
Total		4.14	0.91	High
Overall Average		4.10	0.90	High

Table 3 shows information about the analysis of perception levels among Generation Z Thai tourists toward agro-tourism in Mahasarakham Province reveals that the overall perception is at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.10$, S.D. = 0.90). When considering each dimension individually, it was found that all dimensions were perceived at a high level, indicating that the Generation Z group possesses a good understanding and awareness of agro-tourism. The itemized analysis reflects that the sample group prioritizes issues related to experience, learning, and destination attributes of agro-tourism sites. Additionally, they place significant importance on safety and the credibility of the attractions. These factors serve as essential components in cultivating a positive perception toward agro-tourism.

Discussion

The study on the perception levels of Thai Generation Z tourists toward agro-tourism in Mahasarakham Province reveals several key points for academic discussion:

1. Overall Perception and Destination Attributes

The research findings indicate that Generation Z tourists have a high overall perception of agro-tourism in Mahasarakham Province ($\bar{X} = 4.10$). Specifically, the "Destination Attributes" dimension yielded the highest mean score ($\bar{X} = 4.23$). This suggests that Mahasarakham possesses distinct agricultural resources and a natural atmosphere that strongly appeals to this demographic. Generation Z individuals prioritize seeking unique experiences with high authenticity, which aligns with Richards (2018), who stated that modern tourism must emphasize "creative experiences." The natural characteristics and traditional lifestyles in Mahasarakham effectively fulfill the "authenticity" sought by the new generation of travelers.

2. Perception of Safety

The fact that "Safety" ranked as the second highest dimension ($\bar{X} = 4.15$) reflects that Generation Z tourists in the post-COVID-19 era are highly vigilant regarding hygiene and safety standards. They value systematic area management and clear safety protocols. This is consistent with the research of Sakulwit et al. (2022), which found that confidence in safety and public health measures is a fundamental factor significantly influencing positive mental images toward a tourist destination.

3. Perception of Information

The results showed that "Information" perception is at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.05$). As "Digital Natives," Generation Z relies primarily on social media for information. Effective perception in this dimension results from rapid and reliable communication. This conforms to the concepts of Seemiller & Grace (2019), who explained that Generation Z evaluates destination quality based on digital platform data and "User-Generated Content" (UGC). The high level of information perception in Mahasarakham demonstrates the effectiveness of online communication in reaching this target audience.

4. Perception of Image and Value for Money

Although "Image" ($\bar{X} = 3.97$) received the lowest mean score compared to other dimensions, it remained at a high level. This suggests that while agro-tourism in the area is still perceived through a traditional lens, there is an opportunity to modernize the brand through marketing communication. However, when considered alongside "Value for Money" ($\bar{X} = 4.10$), it is evident that tourists are satisfied with the pricing and services provided. This aligns with the Perception Theory of Schiffman & Wisenblit (2019), which posits that "Perceived Value" occurs when consumers compare the benefits received against the costs incurred. In this case, agro-tourism in Mahasarakham successfully creates a sense of worth in the eyes of the new generation.

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PERCEPTIONS AFFECTING AGRO-TOURISM DECISION-MAKING AMONG THAI GENERATION Z TOURISTS IN MAHASARAKHAM PROVINCE

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to study the perceptions affecting agro-tourism decision-making among Thai Generation Z tourists in Mahasarakham Province. The sample consisted of 300 Generation Z tourists selected through convenience sampling. The research instrument was a questionnaire with an Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) of 0.94 and a Reliability coefficient of 0.98. Data were analyzed using percentage, mean ($\bar{X}$), and standard deviation (S.D.). The findings revealed that the overall level of agro-tourism decision-making among Generation Z tourists was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, S.D. = 0.94). Regarding the perceptual factors affecting decision-making, the top three dimensions with the highest and equal mean scores at a high level were: 1) Destination Image ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, S.D. = 0.93), 2) Safety ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, S.D. = 0.87), and 3) Destination Attributes ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, S.D. = 0.91). These were followed by Value for Money ($\bar{X} = 4.12$, S.D. = 0.92), while Information received the lowest mean score ($\bar{X} = 3.98$, S.D. = 0.91). Although the top three factors shared the same mean, Safety yielded the lowest standard deviation, indicating the highest consensus that safety is a fundamental prerequisite for decision-making. The results suggest that integrating strategies involving image, safety, and unique attributes is crucial for driving travel decisions among the new generation in Mahasarakham Province.

Keywords: Perception, Travel Decision-Making, Agro-tourism, Generation Z, Mahasarakham Province

Introduction

The agro-tourism industry is globally recognized as a vital instrument for balancing natural resource conservation with sustainable grassroots economic development. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, tourism models rooted in agriculture not only facilitate income distribution to rural communities but also offer a novel alternative that aligns with modern tourists' desires for authentic experiences within natural environments (UNWTO, 2021). In Thailand, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports has integrated agro-tourism into the National Tourism Development Plan, focusing on the promotion of cultural value and

refined agricultural lifestyles. This strategic direction is consistent with the creative economy framework, which aims to transition from "quantity-based tourism" to "quality-based tourism" that adds significant value to local resources (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2023).

Amidst shifting global demographics, Generation Z tourists—those born between 1997 and 2012 - are emerging as highly influential consumers in the global travel market. This cohort is characterized as "Digital Natives," possessing a distinct ability to rapidly access and process information via social media platforms (Seemiller & Grace, 2019). The travel behaviors of Generation Z tend to focus on seeking destinations that reflect their self-identity and allow for the creation of meaningful "content," while simultaneously prioritizing value for money alongside social and environmental responsibility (Richards, 2018). Consequently, understanding the multidimensional needs of this new generation is a pivotal key for agro-tourism operators in modernizing their brand image and services to meet evolving market tastes.

In the travel decision-making process, "Perception" stands as a psychological factor of paramount importance in determining consumer behavior. Consumer behavior theories posit that perception is the primary stage leading to the formation of attitudes and purchasing decisions, involving the processes of selective exposure, organization, and interpretation of stimuli (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). In a tourism context, tourists' perceptions of a destination's image, their sense of safety, and their satisfaction with specific destination attributes serve as independent variables that directly impact the level of decision-making intent (Sakulwit et al., 2022). If a destination can successfully foster positive perceptions in dimensions valued by tourists, it gains a significant competitive advantage over other destinations with similar resources.

Maharakham Province possesses prominent potential in agriculture and serves as an educational hub for the central Northeastern region, housing a high proportion of the Generation Z population. However, promoting agro-tourism in this area faces challenges in communicating a compelling image and building confidence among young travelers. Literature reviews indicate that factors regarding destination image, safety, and unique destination attributes in Maharakham are critical components affecting the travel decisions of this group. This study, therefore, focuses on an in-depth analysis of which perceptual dimensions Thai Generation Z tourists prioritize most significantly in their agro-tourism decision-making in Maharakham. The findings aim to provide a roadmap for area-based marketing strategies to effectively and precisely attract this new generation of tourists.

Objectives

1. To study the perceptions affecting agro-tourism decision-making among Thai Generation Z tourists in Maharakham Province.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research approach to survey the perception levels of Generation Z tourists. The methodological details are as follows

1. Population and Sample

Population: The target population consists of Thai Generation Z tourists

Sample: 300 Thai Gen Z tourists aged 16–28 years. Respondents were selected through convenience sampling.

2. Research Instrument

The primary instrument was an online questionnaire (Google Forms), divided into three sections:

Section 1: Personal demographic factors, including gender, age.

Section 2: Perception levels toward agro-tourism across 5 dimensions (25 items), utilizing a 5-point Likert Scale.

3. Validity and Reliability

Validity: The questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of experts to evaluate Content Validity. The Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index was 0.94.

Reliability: A pilot test (try-out) was conducted with 30 non-sample individuals. The internal consistency was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, resulting in a high reliability score of 0.98 for the entire instrument.

4. Data Collection

Data were collected in 2026. The questionnaire was distributed via social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Line, targeting tourist networks and educational institutions within Mahasarakham Province.

5. Data Analysis and Statistics

The collected data were processed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics included:

Percentage: To describe the demographic profile of the respondents.

Mean ($\bar{X}$): To analyze the overall and dimension-specific perception levels.

Standard Deviation (S.D.): To measure the dispersion of responses.

Mean scores were interpreted based on Best's (1977) criteria, ranging from 1.00 – 1.49 (Lowest) to 4.50 – 5.00 (Highest).

Results

The researcher presents the data analysis results in accordance with the objective: to study the perception levels of Thai Generation Z tourists toward agro-tourism in Mahasarakham Province. The findings are as follows:

Part 1: Analysis of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 Percentage of samples classified by general information of respondents.

Gender	Number of people	Percentage
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From Table 1 The data it shows from 300 respondents revealed that the majority of the population were 157 males, representing 52.33 percent and 143 females, representing 47.67 percent

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From Table 2 shows that most of the population is 26-35 years old, 189 people, representing 47.25 percent, followed by people aged 18-25 years, 98 people, representing 24.5 percent, 36-45 years old, 73 people, representing 18.25 percent, and the least buyers are Over 46 years old, 40 people, representing 10 percent.

Part 2: Analysis of Perceptual Factors Affecting Decision-Making

Table 3 Means and Standard Deviations of the Factors Affecting Decision-Making (N=300)

Evaluation Items	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Perception Level
Dimension 1: Perception of Information			
1 I can easily access information about agro-tourism attractions in Mahasarakham Province.	3.97	0.93	High
2 Agro-tourism information in Mahasarakham is clear and credible.	3.95	0.95	High
3 Online media and social media play a significant role in providing agro-tourism information.	4.14	0.91	High

Table 3 (Continued)

Evaluation Items	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Perception Level
Dimension 1: Perception of Information			
4 I continuously receive news and information regarding agro-tourism.	3.83	1.14	High
5 The information received helps me make easier decisions in choosing agro-tourism destinations.	3.99	1.02	High
Total	3.98	0.91	High
Dimension 2: Perception of Image			
6 Agro-tourism attractions in Mahasarakham have an interesting image.	3.99	1.02	High
7 I perceive agro-tourism as a modern form of travel suitable for the younger generation	4.21	0.94	High

8	Agro-tourism sites in Maharashtra effectively reflect local identity and way of life.	4.17	0.91	High
9	The image of agro-tourism destinations influences my desire to travel.	4.19	0.88	High
10	I have a positive attitude toward agro-tourism in Maharashtra Province.	4.12	0.95	High
Total		4.14	0.93	High
Dimension 3: Perception of Safety				
11	I feel confident in the safety of agro-tourism attractions in Maharashtra Province.	4.19	0.84	High
12	Agro-tourism destinations have appropriate safety management.	4.22	0.81	High
13	Traveling to agro-tourism sites is convenient and safe.	3.99	1.01	High
14	I feel safe when participating in agricultural activities.	4.19	0.82	High
15	Safety influences my decision to choose agro-tourism.	4.11	0.87	High
Total		4.14	0.87	High
Dimension 4: Perception of Value for Money				
16	The expenses for agro-tourism are reasonable compared to the experiences gained.	4.10	0.99	High
17	Agro-tourism offers better value compared to other forms of tourism.	4.03	0.93	High
18	I gain both knowledge and enjoyment from agro-tourism.	4.08	0.94	High
19	Agro-tourism helps create valuable long-term experiences.	4.21	0.83	High
20	Value for money is a key factor affecting the decision to engage in agro-tourism.	4.17	0.96	High
Total		4.12	0.92	High

Table 3 (Continued)

Evaluation Items		$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Perception Level
Dimension 5: Perception of Destination Attributes				
21	Agro-tourism attractions have diverse resources and activities.	4.16	0.89	High
22	Agricultural activities provide opportunities for tourists to have authentic participation.	4.15	0.92	High
23	The attractions are clean and have systematic management.	4.02	0.87	High
24	The community and service providers are friendly and welcoming.	4.19	0.91	High
25	Destination attributes influence my decision to travel.	4.16	0.97	High
Total		4.14	0.91	High
Overall Average		4.10	0.90	High

Table 3 shows information about According to Table 3, the perceptions affecting agro-tourism decision-making among Thai Generation Z tourists in Mahasarakham Province were overall at a High level. The top three perceptual dimensions influencing decision-making, with identical mean scores at a high level, were Destination Image ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, S.D. = 0.93), Destination Attributes ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, S.D. = 0.91), and Safety ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, S.D. = 0.87).

Upon closer analysis of data dispersion, the Safety dimension yielded the lowest standard deviation ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, S.D. = 0.87). This statistically indicates the highest consensus among respondents that safety standards are a fundamental prerequisite in their decision-making process.

The dimension with the second-highest importance was Value for Money ($\bar{X} = 4.12$, S.D. = 0.92), while the Information dimension received the lowest mean score relative to others ($\bar{X} = 3.98$, S.D. = 0.91). Nevertheless, all perceptual dimensions remained at a high level, illustrating that the combination of destination image, safety, and physical attributes serves as a primary integrated motivator significantly driving the agro-tourism decision-making of Generation Z tourists in Mahasarakham Province.

Discussion

The research findings regarding the perceptions affecting agro-tourism decision-making among Thai Generation Z tourists in Mahasarakham Province lead to several key academic discussions

1. The Collective Influence of Image, Safety, and Destination Attributes

A notable finding is that Generation Z tourists prioritize Destination Image, Safety, and Destination Attributes at an equally high level ($\bar{X} = 4.14$). This suggests that for the new generation, decision-making is not driven by a single factor but by "Holistic Perception." This aligns with Schiffman & Wisenblit (2019), who stated that consumer perception results from organizing complex stimuli into a unified mental image. As "Digital Natives," Generation Z processes information through social media where visual image, physical attributes, and safety reviews are presented simultaneously, making these three dimensions the "Primary Criteria" for their agro-tourism decisions.

2. Safety as a Fundamental Prerequisite

Although the mean score is equal to other dimensions, the Safety dimension yielded the lowest standard deviation (S.D. = 0.87), indicating a high consensus among respondents. This implies that safety is perceived as a non-negotiable prerequisite. According to Sakulwit et al. (2022), confidence in safety management and hygiene standards reduces "Perceived Risk," directly accelerating the decision-making process for modern travelers.

3. Value Creation through Image and Attributes

The high impact of Destination Image and Attributes reflects Generation Z's search for unique identity and "Instagrammable" experiences. They value authenticity and meaningful

content creation. This conforms to Richards (2018), who argued that modern tourism must offer "Creative Experiences." The natural and traditional agricultural characteristics of Mahasarakham create an "Authentic Image" that resonates with Generation Z's values, significantly driving their intent to visit.

4. Value for Money and Information

While Value for Money ($\bar{X} = 4.12$) and Information ($\bar{X} = 3.98$) were rated slightly lower, they remain at a high level. This indicates that while safety and aesthetics drive initial interest, the final decision is supported by the evaluation of benefits versus costs and the clarity of available information. This is consistent with Seemiller & Grace (2019), who noted that Generation Z evaluates value through experiential gains rather than just price.

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THE ROLE OF DIGITAL LOYALTY PROGRAMS IN RETAINING AIRLINE CUSTOMERS

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Abstract

This study examines the role of digital loyalty programs in retaining airline customers, with a focus on customer engagement, satisfaction, and long-term loyalty. As the airline industry continues to adopt digital technologies, loyalty programs have evolved from traditional mileage-based systems into more integrated platforms supported by mobile applications and personalized services.

A quantitative approach was used, with data collected through an online questionnaire from 100 airline passengers who have experience with loyalty programs. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and mean scores.

The findings suggest that digital loyalty programs influence customer decision-making, particularly in terms of airline selection and repeat usage. However, overall satisfaction levels are moderate. Factors such as usability, personalization, and clarity of rewards appear to affect customer perceptions. In contrast, emotional attachment to airline brands remains limited.

The study highlights the need for airlines to improve both the functional and experiential aspects of their loyalty programs. A balance between digital efficiency and human interaction may be necessary to strengthen customer relationships and support long-term competitiveness.

Keywords: digital loyalty programs, airline industry, customer retention, customer satisfaction, personalization

Introduction

The airline industry is currently experiencing rapid digital transformation, which is reshaping how airlines interact with passengers and manage customer relationships. The integration of technologies such as mobile applications, artificial intelligence, and data analytics has shifted the focus of competition from traditional factors—such as pricing and route networks—toward customer experience and relationship management. Recent industry reports indicate that airlines increasingly rely on digital platforms to enhance customer engagement and strengthen retention strategies (International Air Transport Association, 2023).

In this changing environment, loyalty programs have become an important strategic tool. Traditionally, airline loyalty programs—particularly Frequent Flyer Programs (FFPs)—were based on mileage accumulation and reward redemption. While these systems were effective in encouraging repeat purchases, they were largely transactional in nature and offered limited personalization. More recent studies suggest that airline loyalty programs have evolved into digital ecosystems that integrate customer data, real-time interaction, and personalized marketing approaches (Ali & Alfayez, 2024). This shift reflects a broader transition toward electronic customer relationship management (E-CRM), where data plays a central role in shaping both service delivery and marketing strategies.

Digital loyalty programs allow airlines to collect and analyze large volumes of customer data, providing insights into passenger behavior and preferences. This data-driven approach supports more targeted promotions, personalized recommendations, and more effective communication. Empirical findings indicate that E-CRM practices can significantly influence customer loyalty,

with customer experience acting as an important mediating factor (Ali & Alfayez, 2024). In addition, improvements in digital service quality—such as user-friendly booking systems and mobile interfaces—have been linked to higher levels of customer satisfaction and stronger retention outcomes.

At the same time, digital engagement has become a key factor in developing long-term customer relationships. Loyalty programs are no longer limited to flight-related rewards but often include partnerships with hotels, financial institutions, and retail businesses, creating a broader value ecosystem for customers. Industry evidence suggests that engagement with loyalty programs is increasing, particularly among younger travelers who are more familiar with multi-channel digital platforms (McKinsey & Company, 2021). This indicates that digital loyalty programs are evolving into more comprehensive platforms that influence customer behavior beyond individual transactions.

Despite these developments, several challenges continue to affect the effectiveness of digital loyalty programs. Data privacy and security remain major concerns, as personalization strategies rely heavily on the collection and use of customer data. Trust has therefore become an important factor in determining customer willingness to engage with digital platforms. While emerging technologies such as blockchain have been proposed as potential solutions to improve transparency, their practical application in the airline industry remains limited.

In addition, differences in cultural context, language, and levels of digital literacy can influence how customers interact with digital loyalty platforms. These factors are particularly relevant in regions such as Southeast Asia, where customer profiles are diverse and digital adoption varies. As a result, strategies that are effective in one market may not produce the same outcomes in another, highlighting the need for more context-specific research (World Bank, 2022).

Given these considerations, this study aims to examine the role of digital loyalty programs in retaining airline customers, with a particular focus on their impact on customer engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty behavior. By analyzing these relationships, the study seeks to provide a clearer understanding of how airlines can design more effective loyalty strategies that balance technological innovation with customer expectations.

Literature Review and Theory

Digital loyalty programs have become an increasingly important part of customer relationship strategies in the airline industry. As competition intensifies, airlines are placing greater emphasis on retaining existing customers rather than focusing only on acquiring new ones. In this context, loyalty programs have moved beyond simple transactional benefits such as mileage accumulation and reward redemption. Instead, they have developed into digitally integrated systems that incorporate data analytics, personalization, and mobile technologies (International Air Transport Association, 2023). This shift reflects a broader move toward customer-centric strategies supported by digital innovation.

One of the main theoretical foundations for understanding digital loyalty programs is Customer Relationship Management (CRM). CRM focuses on the effective use of customer data to improve service delivery and build long-term relationships. Recent studies suggest that digital platforms enable companies to collect real-time data on customer behavior, allowing for more accurate segmentation and more relevant, personalized offerings (Salesforce, 2022). In the airline industry, this allows companies to tailor promotions, recommend services, and enhance the overall customer experience, which can contribute to higher satisfaction and retention.

Customer Engagement Theory also provides an important perspective in explaining how digital loyalty programs influence customer behavior. Engagement is increasingly viewed as an active process, where customers interact with brands across multiple digital touchpoints. Mobile applications play a key role in this process by enabling continuous interaction through features such as booking management, reward tracking, and personalized notifications. Higher levels

of engagement are generally associated with stronger customer relationships and increased loyalty intentions (McKinsey & Company, 2021).

Another relevant concept is Perceived Value Theory, which explains how customers evaluate the benefits of loyalty programs. Customers tend to assess the value of a program by comparing the rewards and convenience it offers with the effort required to participate. When digital loyalty programs are easy to use and provide meaningful rewards, they are more likely to improve customer satisfaction and encourage repeat usage. On the other hand, if the system is perceived as complex or lacking transparency, customers may develop negative perceptions (Deloitte, 2023). This highlights the importance of usability and clarity in program design.

Despite these advantages, several challenges are highlighted in the literature. First, many studies continue to focus on short-term incentives rather than examining how loyalty programs contribute to long-term customer retention. Second, concerns related to data privacy and the ethical use of personal information have become increasingly important, particularly as digital systems rely heavily on customer data. Regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation have emphasized the need for transparency and responsible data management. Customers may be less willing to engage with digital platforms if they do not trust how their data is handled.

Finally, there is a noticeable gap in research focusing on Southeast Asia. Cultural diversity, language differences, and varying levels of digital literacy can significantly influence how customers interact with digital loyalty programs. However, these factors are often underexplored in existing studies. This suggests a need for more context-specific research to better understand customer behavior and improve the effectiveness of digital loyalty strategies in this region.

Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to examine the role of digital loyalty programs in enhancing customer retention within the airline industry. As airlines increasingly adopt digital technologies to improve customer experience, understanding how these programs influence passenger behavior has become particularly important.

To achieve this aim, the study is guided by the following specific objectives:

To analyze the impact of digital loyalty programs on customer engagement and retention.

To identify the key challenges and limitations associated with the effective implementation of digital loyalty programs.

To examine the extent to which automation and human interaction influence customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

Research Questions

In line with the stated objectives, this study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How do digital loyalty programs influence customer engagement and retention in the airline industry?
2. What are the main barriers to the effective implementation of digital loyalty programs?
3. How can airlines balance automation and personalization to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty?

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the relationship between digital loyalty programs and customer retention. A quantitative method is appropriate for this research because it allows for the systematic measurement of customer perceptions, behaviors, and attitudes, as well as the statistical analysis of relationships between key variables. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to airline passengers who have prior

experience using loyalty programs. Online surveys are commonly used in recent research due to their efficiency, accessibility, and ability to reach a diverse group of respondents (Statista, 2023).

Research Design

The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire designed to capture key aspects of customer experience and behavior. The questionnaire was divided into four main sections:

Section A: Demographic information (e.g., age, gender, travel frequency)

Section B: Usage patterns of digital loyalty programs

Section C: Customer satisfaction, measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”

Section D: Loyalty behavior, including intention to reuse airline services, willingness to recommend, and emotional attachment to the brand

The use of Likert scales is common in customer behavior research, as it allows for the measurement of attitudes and perceptions in a structured and comparable manner (Likert Scale).

Sampling

A non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed in this study. The sample consisted of 100 respondents who have previously used airline loyalty programs. This method was selected due to practical constraints, including time limitations and ease of access to participants. While convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of findings, it is frequently used in exploratory studies and provides valuable initial insights into customer behavior (Convenience Sampling).

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of respondents and to provide an overview of customer behavior, satisfaction, and loyalty patterns. These methods are appropriate for identifying general trends and patterns within survey data, particularly in exploratory studies.

The questionnaire was distributed Google Forms, which facilitated efficient data collection and provided initial summaries such as response counts and visual charts. The dataset was then exported to Microsoft Excel for data cleaning and preliminary analysis.

To further examine relationships between key variables—such as digital loyalty program usage, customer satisfaction, and loyalty behavior—inferential analysis was also considered. Correlation analysis was used to assess the strength and direction of relationships between variables. This method is commonly applied in quantitative research to determine whether changes in one variable are associated with changes in another (Field, 2021). Although the study primarily focuses on descriptive insights, the inclusion of correlation analysis provides additional support for interpreting the connections between engagement, satisfaction, and retention.

The use of both descriptive and inferential approaches enhances the reliability of the findings by not only summarizing the data but also providing deeper insights into potential relationships among variables.

Ethical considerations were strictly maintained throughout the research process. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study. All responses were collected anonymously, and no personally identifiable information was recorded, ensuring the confidentiality and privacy of participants.

Results

This section presents the findings of the study, including respondents' demographic characteristics, travel behavior, usage of digital loyalty programs, customer satisfaction, and loyalty outcomes. The results are organized into four main sections for clarity.

Section A: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)
Gender	Male	38
	Female	32
	Prefer not to say	30
Age	Below 20	21
	21–30	21
	31–40	20
	41–50	16
	Above 50	22

The study sample consists of 100 respondents with a relatively diverse demographic composition. In terms of gender, male respondents represent 38% of the sample, followed by female respondents at 32%, while 30% preferred not to disclose their gender. This distribution suggests a relatively balanced representation and may also reflect increasing awareness of personal data privacy among participants.

Regarding age, respondents are distributed across all age groups. The largest proportion falls within the “above 50” category (22%), while the remaining respondents are relatively evenly spread across other age ranges. This diversity enhances the representativeness of the sample and allows for broader insights into customer behavior across different age segments.

Table 2: Travel Frequency

Frequency	Respondents
Fewer than 2 times/year	26
2–5 times	21
6–10 times	26
More than 10 times	27

The findings indicate variation in respondents' travel frequency. The largest group travels more than 10 times per year (27%), followed closely by those traveling fewer than 2 times per year and those traveling 6–10 times annually (26% each). This distribution demonstrates that the sample includes both frequent and occasional travelers, which strengthens the relevance of the study across different customer profiles.

Table 3: Purpose of Travel

Purpose	Respondents
Business	23
Leisure/Tourism	18
Visiting family/friends	35
Other	24

The results show that the most common purpose of travel is visiting family and friends (35%), followed by other purposes (24%) and business travel (23%). Leisure or tourism accounts for the smallest proportion (18%). This suggests that personal and relational motivations play a significant role in travel behavior among respondents, which may influence how they perceive and engage with loyalty programs.

Section B: Digital Loyalty Program Usage

Table 4: Program Usage Frequency

Usage Level	Respondents
Never	21
Very rarely	26
Sometimes	20
Often	14
Regularly	19

The findings reveal that engagement with digital loyalty programs is generally moderate to low. A considerable proportion of respondents reported using such programs very rarely (26%) or never (21%), while only 19% indicated regular usage. This suggests that, despite the availability of digital loyalty platforms, a large segment of customers does not actively engage with them.

Table 5: Features Usage

Feature	Percentage (%)
Checking flight schedules	48
Redeeming rewards	45
Personalized promotions	45
Earning miles/points	39
Chatbot assistance	32

Among the available features, checking flight schedules is the most frequently used function (48%), followed by redeeming rewards and receiving personalized promotions (45% each). In contrast, earning miles or points (39%) and chatbot assistance (32%) are used less frequently. These results indicate that customers tend to use digital loyalty platforms primarily for convenience and basic functionality rather than for deeper engagement or interactive features.

Section C: Satisfaction (5-point Likert Scale)

Table 6: Satisfaction (Mean & SD)

Item	Mean	SD
Easy to use	2.91	0.97
Reward redemption	3.41	0.88
Competitive value	2.76	0.93
App functionality	3.62	0.79
Personalization	3.01	1.05
Overall satisfaction	3.32	0.92

The results show moderate levels of customer satisfaction with digital loyalty programs. Application functionality received the highest mean score (3.62), suggesting that respondents generally perceive the platforms as efficient and reliable. Reward redemption also scored relatively well (mean = 3.41), indicating acceptable levels of satisfaction in this area. However, competitive value received the lowest mean score (2.76), suggesting that respondents do not strongly perceive the loyalty programs as offering superior or attractive benefits compared to alternatives. Similarly, ease of use (mean = 2.91) and personalization (mean = 3.01) indicate only moderate satisfaction.

Overall satisfaction has a mean score of 3.32, reflecting an average level of acceptance. This suggests that while digital loyalty programs meet basic expectations, there is significant room for improvement, particularly in enhancing perceived value and personalization.

Section D: Passenger Loyalty (5-point Likert Scale)

Table 7: Loyalty (Mean & SD)

Item	Mean	SD
Continue using	3.21	0.95
Recommend to others	3.46	0.81
Influences airline choice	3.92	0.74
Emotional attachment	3.15	1.02

The findings indicate that digital loyalty programs have a notable influence on customer decision-making. The highest mean score is observed for the item “influences airline choice” (mean = 3.92), suggesting that loyalty programs play an important role in shaping airline selection.

However, emotional attachment to airline brands remains moderate (mean = 3.15), indicating that these programs may not be effective in building strong emotional connections with customers. Similarly, the intention to recommend the program to others (mean = 3.46) and the intention to continue using the program (mean = 3.21) are at moderate levels.

These results suggest that digital loyalty programs are more effective in driving functional loyalty—such as influencing purchase decisions—rather than fostering deeper emotional loyalty.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that digital loyalty programs play a meaningful role in shaping customer behavior in the airline industry. In particular, the findings show that these programs influence airline choice and encourage repeat usage, which supports the assumption that participation in loyalty programs contributes to customer retention. This reflects the growing importance of digital tools in maintaining competitive advantage, especially as airlines continue to invest in customer-focused technologies (International Air Transport Association, 2023).

At the same time, overall satisfaction levels remain moderate. This may indicate that, although digital loyalty programs are functioning as intended, they are not fully meeting customer expectations. One possible explanation is the relatively low perceived value of rewards. If customers feel that the benefits are limited or difficult to obtain, their motivation to engage with the program is likely to decrease. This finding is consistent with recent industry observations that perceived value remains a key factor influencing customer satisfaction and continued participation (Deloitte, 2023).

Another point worth noting is the relatively weak emotional attachment between customers and airline brands. While digital loyalty programs appear effective in encouraging repeat transactions, they seem less successful in building deeper emotional connections. This suggests that current programs may be more focused on functional benefits rather than meaningful customer experiences. As highlighted in recent research, emotional loyalty often requires more personalized and memorable interactions rather than purely digital engagement (McKinsey & Company, 2021).

In addition, the findings highlight the importance of balancing automation with human interaction. Digital platforms provide convenience and efficiency, which are clearly valued by users. However, human interaction still plays an important role in building trust and creating a more positive overall experience. Customers may appreciate quick digital services, but they also expect a level of personal attention when needed. Organizations that combine both elements effectively are more likely to achieve stronger customer relationships (Salesforce, 2022).

Overall, the results suggest that while digital loyalty programs are an important tool, their effectiveness depends on how well they address both functional and emotional aspects of customer experience.

Conclusion

This study concludes that digital loyalty programs have become an important factor in retaining airline customers. They contribute to customer engagement, influence decision-making, and encourage repeat usage. The shift from traditional mileage-based systems to digitally integrated platforms has improved the ability of airlines to deliver more personalized services and targeted promotions.

However, the findings also show that the effectiveness of these programs is not consistent across all areas. Factors such as usability, perceived value, and personalization appear to have a strong influence on customer satisfaction. While digital loyalty programs can support

behavioral loyalty, they are less effective in building strong emotional connections with customers.

This suggests that digital solutions alone may not be sufficient for long-term relationship building. Airlines need to take a more balanced approach by combining technology with customer-focused strategies. Improving both the functional performance and the overall experience of loyalty programs will be important for maintaining competitiveness in the industry.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, several practical recommendations can be proposed:

1. Enhance personalization through data analytics

Airlines should leverage customer data to better understand individual preferences and deliver more relevant and tailored experiences. Personalized communication and offers can increase engagement and satisfaction.

2. Improve perceived value of loyalty programs

Loyalty programs should provide more attractive and competitive rewards. Clear and transparent reward structures can help improve customer perceptions and encourage participation.

3. Balance automation with human interaction

While digital platforms improve efficiency, airlines should incorporate human touchpoints—such as customer support and personalized services—to build trust and emotional connection.

4. Adapt strategies to regional and cultural contexts

Airlines operating in Southeast Asia should consider cultural diversity, language differences, and varying levels of digital literacy when designing loyalty programs. Localized strategies can improve accessibility and effectiveness.

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS' AWARENESS OF EAEU CUSTOMS LEGISLATION

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Abstract

This article analyzes the capabilities of large language models (LLMs) in the context of working with EAEU Customs Code provisions. The author compares the technical capabilities of GPT-4, GigaChat, and YandexGPT, evaluating their potential for automating customs authorities' work. The study reveals that while GPT-4 demonstrates superior logical precision in understanding complex cross-referential norms, domestic Russian models (GigaChat and YandexGPT) show better adaptation to Russian legal specifics and hierarchical understanding of supranational versus national legislation. The research indicates that LLMs can reduce preliminary legal analysis time by 30-40% compared to traditional SQL-based database queries. However, all models exhibit tendencies toward "hallucinations" in article numbering, necessitating hybrid RAG-systems for operational deployment. The findings support prioritizing domestic models for integration into the Federal Customs Service's digital ecosystem while maintaining technological sovereignty and data security.

Keywords: Digitalization, Customs, EAEU, Artificial Intelligence, Large Language Models

Introduction

At the present stage, marked by the beginning of the second phase of the Customs Service Development Strategy through 2030, digitalization is becoming not merely an auxiliary but a vital factor. As noted by the Head of the Federal Customs Service Valery Pikalev at the FTS Board meeting in December 2025, the planned budget revenue target was fulfilled at 97%, amounting to 5 trillion 787 billion rubles. Amid external challenges and adjustment of the service's mission, the emphasis shifts toward process intellectualization to achieve an ambitious goal: reducing freight vehicle inspection time to 10 minutes (Federal Customs Service, 2025).

Despite the high degree of automation, analysis of EAEU customs legislation remains a labor-intensive process. In traditional systems, as noted by D.A. Zastavnoy in the RTA textbook, work is based on rigid SQL queries to relational databases, which limits the ability to search by meaning and context of legal norms (Zastavnoy, 2012).

Objectives and Research Questions

This study addresses the following objectives:

1. To conduct a comparative analysis of GPT-4, GigaChat, and YandexGPT performance in processing EAEU customs legislation.
2. To assess the accuracy of LLMs in interpreting hierarchical legal structures (supranational EAEU law vs. national legislation).
3. To evaluate the potential for LLM integration into the FTS information ecosystem while maintaining data security and technological sovereignty.
4. To identify limitations and risks associated with LLM deployment in customs decision-making processes.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this research draws upon three interconnected domains: information systems theory in customs administration, large language model architecture, and digital transformation in public administration.

Traditional customs information systems operate on relational database models requiring structured query languages (SQL). As Zastavnoy (2012) notes, working with Oracle-based systems demands strict syntax adherence and understanding of table relationships (e.g., connections between declaration numbers g071, g072, g073 and payment codes). This rigid structure, while ensuring data integrity, limits flexibility in semantic search and contextual analysis.

Large language models represent a paradigm shift from rule-based systems to neural network-based natural language processing. Modern LLMs utilize attention mechanisms and reinforcement learning from human feedback (RLHF) to achieve state-of-the-art performance in language understanding tasks.

The FCS digital transformation strategy emphasizes the transition from "data accumulation systems" to "intelligent analysis systems" (Government of Russia, 2020). This aligns with global trends where customs administrations explore AI through machine learning for risk assessment, document processing, and compliance verification.

Methodology

This study employs a comparative experimental design to evaluate three LLMs: GPT-4 (OpenAI), GigaChat (Sber), and YandexGPT (Yandex). The evaluation framework includes both quantitative performance metrics and qualitative assessment of legal interpretation accuracy.

The selected models represent distinct categories: GPT-4 as the international leader with extensive training corpus (>100 TB) including EAEU legal acts; GigaChat as a domestic Russian model with deep focus on Russian law and EAEU legislation; and YandexGPT as a Russian model with broad Runet coverage and official database integration (Consultant+, Garant).

Each model was evaluated using standardized prompts addressing: (1) legal knowledge assessment on specific articles of the EAEU Customs Code (as amended May 29, 2023); (2) cross-reference analysis requiring correlation of norms across different Code chapters; (3) hierarchical understanding differentiating between supranational (EAEU TK) and national (Federal Law No. 289) legislation; (4) document requirements formulation for customs value confirmation; and (5) knowledge of current Government decrees and Eurasian Economic Commission decisions.

Model responses were collected through API interactions between January-March 2026. Each prompt was tested five times per model to account for response variability. Responses were evaluated by expert reviewers using a 5-point Likert scale for accuracy of legal citations, completeness of response, logical coherence, and practical applicability.

Literature Review

The Federal Customs Service has undergone significant digitalization since 2018, with annual expenditures reaching 2.91 billion rubles in 2023. The system processes approximately 4 million electronic declarations annually, with 98.6% processed through Electronic Declaration Centers (EDCs). The introduction of the AIT-MS (Automated Information Technology System) has enabled automatic registration of 81.5% of declarations within an average of 46 minutes for imports and 21 minutes for exports (Federal Customs Service, 2025).

However, the digitalization process faces challenges. The April 2023 cyberattack exposed vulnerabilities in centralized systems, forcing temporary reversion to paper-based

operations and highlighting the need for resilient architectures. Additionally, the transition from foreign hardware (Cisco, Oracle) to domestic solutions following 2014 sanctions has required substantial infrastructure modifications.

International customs administrations are increasingly adopting AI and machine learning technologies. The World Customs Organization (WCO) and World Trade Organization (WTO) have identified AI, blockchain, and big data analytics as transformative technologies for customs operations. Applications include risk assessment through machine learning algorithms that analyze trade data to identify risk indicators, document processing where AI systems automatically extract data from various formats, and compliance verification achieving 95%+ accuracy rates for cross-document field matching.

Recent research has examined LLM applications in legal contexts, showing promise in legal consultation tasks though requiring domain-specific fine-tuning. Studies indicate that LLMs cannot "apply the law" in the inferential sense, as they maintain syntactic rather than semantic interaction with legal texts

The EAEU Customs Code, effective January 1, 2018, introduced new regulatory frameworks requiring sophisticated interpretation capabilities. Amendments signed in December 2023 addressed e-commerce regulations and procedural simplifications. The Code's complexity, with extensive cross-references and evolving interpretations, presents challenges for traditional database systems.

GPT-4 (OpenAI) demonstrated the broadest document coverage, excelling in correlating norms across different Code chapters. For example, when analyzing customs transit conditions, GPT-4 successfully identified relevant provisions from Chapters 15, 23, and 47. However, the model frequently confused article numbering in recent editions—a critical flaw for official documentation. In 23% of test cases, GPT-4 cited outdated article numbers from pre-2023 versions.

GigaChat (Sber) showed superior understanding of Russian legal hierarchy, clearly distinguishing between supranational law (EAEU TK) and national legislation (Federal Law No. 289). The model demonstrated 94% accuracy in formulating document requirements for customs value confirmation, outperforming both GPT-4 (87%) and YandexGPT (82%). GigaChat's training on Russian legal databases (Consultant+, Garant) provided advantages in interpreting recent Government decrees.

YandexGPT exhibited high awareness of current Government decrees and EEC decisions published in open sources within the past year. However, the model tended to oversimplify complex legal constructions, losing nuances in preferential treatment conditions. In 15% of test cases, YandexGPT provided technically correct but incomplete responses that omitted critical conditional requirements

Processing speeds varied significantly: YandexGPT averaged 1.2 seconds (fastest), GigaChat averaged 2.1 seconds, and GPT-4 averaged 4.7 seconds (slowest). The speed differential has practical implications for real-time customs operations where rapid decision support is essential.

All models exhibited tendencies toward "hallucinations" (generating plausible but incorrect information): GPT-4 showed 18% hallucination rate (primarily in article numbers), GigaChat showed 12% (mostly in cross-references), and YandexGPT showed 15% (simplification errors). This finding underscores the necessity for hybrid architectures combining LLM flexibility with database accuracy.

From an information security perspective, GPT-4 cannot be deployed within FCS infrastructure due to data sovereignty concerns and lack of algorithmic control. GigaChat can be deployed on closed departmental servers with API-based fine-tuning capabilities. YandexGPT is suitable for deployment with moderate customization options.

Discussion

The findings support the FCS strategic direction toward intelligent automation. The 30-40% time reduction in preliminary legal analysis aligns with the Strategy-2030 goal of reducing border crossing time to 10 minutes. However, the hallucination rates identified necessitate careful system design.

Despite GPT-4's superior logical capabilities, its deployment within the FCS is impossible due to data leakage risks and lack of algorithmic control. This finding validates the Russian government's emphasis on technological sovereignty in critical infrastructure. GigaChat and YandexGPT, while slightly less capable in absolute terms, offer sufficient performance for customs applications while meeting information security requirements.

The hallucination problem requires hybrid RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation) systems where: (1) the LLM serves as the natural language interface; (2) factual data is extracted from authoritative databases (AIT-MS, Consultant+); and (3) cross-verification mechanisms validate LLM outputs against official sources. This architecture combines AI flexibility with the legal precision required for authoritative decision-making.

The findings align with international research showing LLMs' transformative potential in customs document processing and risk assessment. However, the Russian context presents unique challenges: bilingual requirements (Russian + EAEU member states' languages), complex hierarchical legal system (EAEU supranational law + national legislation), and stringent information security requirements following 2014 sanctions.

The research indicates a need for curriculum modernization at the Russian Customs Academy. Fourth-year students should acquire prompt engineering skills and LLM interaction competencies as baseline professional requirements for the digitalization era.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, testing was conducted during January-March 2026; LLM capabilities evolve rapidly, potentially affecting result generalizability. Second, the study evaluated specific model versions (GPT-4, GigaChat Pro, YandexGPT 3.0); newer versions may exhibit different performance characteristics. Third, expert evaluation involved reviewers from a single institution (Rostov Branch of Russian Customs Academy), potentially limiting perspective diversity. Fourth, testing focused exclusively on Russian-language queries; multilingual performance was not assessed. Fifth, models were tested in controlled environments; real-world deployment may reveal additional challenges related to system integration, user adoption, and workflow compatibility. Finally, the study did not conduct penetration testing or vulnerability assessment of LLM deployment architectures.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

For the Federal Customs Service: (1) Prioritize domestic LLM development by focusing resources on GigaChat and YandexGPT fine-tuning for customs-specific applications, leveraging their deployment feasibility on closed departmental servers; (2) Implement hybrid RAG architecture where LLMs serve as interfaces while factual data originates from authoritative sources (AIT-MS, official legal databases); (3) Establish an LLM testing protocol to evaluate performance on new EAEU regulations before operational deployment; (4) Develop "CustomsLLM" by training specialized models on FCS and Russian Customs Academy datasets to create domain-specific expertise.

For the Russian Customs Academy: (1) Integrate courses on generative AI, prompt engineering, and LLM applications in customs operations into undergraduate and graduate programs; (2) Provide training for instructors on AI tools and their pedagogical applications;

(3) Establish collaborations with Sber (GigaChat) and Yandex (YandexGPT) for joint research on customs AI applications.

For future research: (1) Conduct longitudinal studies to track LLM performance improvements over time and their impact on customs operational efficiency; (2) Assess LLM performance in processing documents in EAEU member states' languages (Kazakh, Belarusian, Armenian, Kyrgyz); (3) Investigate customs officers' acceptance and trust in LLM-generated recommendations; (4) Quantify economic impacts of LLM deployment including time savings, error reduction, and training costs.

Conclusion

This comparative analysis of large language models for EAEU customs legislation processing yields several significant conclusions.

First, LLMs represent an evolutionary advancement in customs information technology infrastructure. While traditional relational databases ensure flawless structured data processing (digital codes and registries), language models become indispensable tools for working with "living" regulatory texts. The transition from rigid SQL queries to natural language search reduces preliminary legal analysis time by 30-40%, directly supporting the FCS Strategy-2030 objectives.

Second, technological sovereignty imperatives override pure performance considerations. Despite GPT-4's superior logical capabilities, its integration into the Federal Customs Service infrastructure is impossible due to data leakage threats and lack of algorithmic control. Domestic models (GigaChat and YandexGPT) demonstrate sufficient EAEU law awareness and can be deployed on closed departmental servers, ensuring compliance with state and official secrecy regimes.

Third, hybrid RAG architectures are essential for operational deployment. The tendency of all tested models toward "hallucinations" in article numbers and provisions necessitates systems where LLMs serve as interfaces while factual data derives from authoritative databases (AIT-MS, Consultant+). This approach combines AI flexibility with the legal precision required for authoritative decision-making.

Fourth, specialized "CustomsLLM" development represents the key to truly intelligent customs posts. Models trained on RTA and FCS datasets will enable real-time consultation on complex classification issues and non-tariff regulation measures, minimizing subjective error risks.

Fifth, educational modernization is imperative. Fourth-year students must acquire prompt engineering skills for operational customs regime analysis as a baseline competency in the total digitalization era.

The ultimate goal of ongoing reforms is to make customs operations transparent and efficient. In 2026, integration of LLMs into educational processes and the Information Technology Center (ITC) practice will enable the FCS to not only fulfill fiscal functions but also implement the "two authorities at the border" principle, reducing state control time by an average of 15 minutes through instant intelligent document processing.

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DETERMINANTS OF RUSSIAN CONSUMERS' SHIFT FROM LOCAL TO ASIAN FASHION BRAND MARKETS

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Abstract

After the withdrawal of Western fashion brands from Russia in 2022, Asian fashion markets (China, South Korea, Turkey) have significantly strengthened their positions for Russian consumers, while local Russian brands have not become the primary substitute. This paper identifies and systematizes the determinants of Russian consumers' shift from local to Asian fashion brands. Using economic analysis, synthesis, and secondary data from 2022–2025, we examine three key drivers: price-quality ratio, access via marketplaces (Ozon, Wildberries, Taobao), and socio-psychological factors (digital behaviour, status perception). Results show that Asian brands filled the mid-price segment gap left by Western players, while local brands remained weak in scalability, design variety, and online presence. Recommendations for Russian and Asian firms are provided.

Keywords: Russian fashion market, consumer shift, Asian fashion brands, import substitution, consumer behaviour, sanctions effect

Introduction

The Russian fashion retail landscape has undergone a dramatic transformation since February 2022. Following international sanctions and the departure of major Western brands (H&M, Zara, Nike, Adidas, etc.), the market saw a reduction of approximately 30–40% of its mid-range and premium apparel supply by the end of 2022. In response, two alternative sources of supply emerged: domestic Russian brands and fashion imports from Asia (primarily from China, Turkey, South Korea, and Vietnam). Surprisingly, local brands did not fully capture the market share left vacant. Instead, Asian fashion brands rapidly expanded their presence through cross-border e-commerce and local partnerships.

The proposed hypothesis suggests that this shift in consumer behaviour is attributable not to patriotic sentiments or passive import substitution, but rather to a combination of economic (specifically, the price-quality ratio), institutional (sanctions and the associated reorientation of logistics chains), and socio-digital factors (the influence of social media, marketplace algorithms, and perceived status).

Therefore, this article's main objective is to characterize and systematize the determinants of Russian consumers' switching from local to Asian fashion brand markets in the post-2022 period. To achieve this goal, the author sets three research questions:

1. Define the concept of "consumer switching" within the fashion retail context and identify the typical determinants of cross-brand/cross-origin switching.
2. Analyse the mechanisms through which the 2022 sanctions and the withdrawal of Western brands triggered a search for alternatives, specifying which Asian markets became primary suppliers.
3. Evaluate structural changes in Russian fashion consumption (using statistical evidence) and provide recommendations for both Russian and Asian firms.

Literature Review and Theory

Previous research on consumer switching behaviour in fashion retail has identified several key drivers: price sensitivity, brand trust, availability, and social influence (Zeithaml, 1988; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). In cross-cultural contexts, consumers often switch to foreign brands when domestic options are perceived as lower in quality or status (Batra et al., 2000). After economic shocks, switching behaviour accelerates due to supply disruptions and changing price elasticities (Hamilton, 2022).

With specific reference to Russia, pre-2022 studies predominantly focused on Western brand loyalty and the slow growth of local fashion labels (Gurova & Morozova, 2018). However, the post-2022 period remains under-researched. A scientific gap exists: no systematic analysis has yet examined the determinants driving Russian consumers toward Asian (rather than local) fashion brands. This paper addresses this gap by combining economic and socio-psychological factors drawing on post-2022 data.

Methodology

This study is based on secondary analysis of qualitative and quantitative data covering the Russian fashion market from 2022 to early 2025. Consumer switching is defined as a deliberate change in purchasing behaviour from one brand or origin category to another, triggered by external shocks or perceived benefits. Asian fashion brands are defined as apparel, footwear, and accessories brands headquartered in East Asia (China, South Korea), Southeast Asia (Vietnam), or Turkey (geographically transcontinental but classified as Asian-origin in Russian customs).

The analysis integrates three complementary approaches: economic analysis (price dynamics, import statistics, marketplace data of 2022-2025), synthesis of industry reports (Data Insight, Yandex Market) and academic sources, and source study (Russian and international publications, customs declarations and social media analytics from Telegram, VK, and TikTok fashion communities).

Data sources include aggregated reports from the Federal Customs Service of Russia (2022–2024), analytical reports from Wildberries and Ozon (2023–2025), surveys by Romir (2023, 2024; n=2,000 each), and content analysis of fashion forums (n=150 threads). The study is limited to secondary data and does not include primary survey data; conclusions are based on available statistics up to early 2025.

Results

Within the framework of general consumer theory, the determinants of switching behaviour in fashion retail are traditionally classified into three categories: economic (price, discounts, value for money), institutional (availability, logistics, return policies), and socio-psychological (trends, influencer recommendations, group identity, status signalling). Applying this classification to the Russian post-2022 context makes it possible to identify five specific determinants that favoured Asian brands over local ones, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. *Determinants of consumer switching to Asian fashion brands in Russia after 2022*

Determinant	Explanation	Advantage: Asian vs Local
Price-quality ratio	Asian mass-market brands (e.g., SHEIN, Urban Revivo) offer lower prices with acceptable quality	Asian +
Assortment depth	Asian marketplaces provide millions of SKUs	Asian +
Delivery speed (from Russian warehouses)	Many Asian sellers use local fulfilment	Parity (after 2023)
Digital presence & algorithms	Asian brands invested in targeted ads on VK, Telegram	Asian +
Perceived “foreignness” as status	Some consumers prefer non-Russian labels	Asian +

According to Table 1, the Asian advantage is observed in four out of five determinants, with delivery speed reaching parity with local players only after 2023.

Local brands (e.g., 12STOREEZ, Henderson, Lime) retained a small loyal segment but failed to scale quickly due to limited production capacities and conservative designs.

Meanwhile, after March 2022, over 150 Western fashion brands suspended operations in Russia, immediately leading to empty mall spaces and a 45% drop in apparel imports from the EU (Federal Customs data). Russian consumers thus faced a choice between unfamiliar local brands and Asian imports, the latter already available via cross-border e-commerce.

The key Asian markets and platforms that emerged as primary alternatives were as follows, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Key Asian markets, brands, and access channels to Russia*

Country/Region	Main brands	Access channels to Russia
China	SHEIN, Urban Revivo, Anta, Li-Ning	Ozon Global, Wildberries, Taobao (via intermediaries), POIZON
Turkey	Koton, LC Waikiki, DeFacto	Physical stores (remained open), online
South Korea	Musinsa, KIRSH	Telegram shops, Korean marketplace joint ventures
Vietnam	Garment exports (no strong brands)	B2B supply to Russian retailers

According to Table 2, China provided the most diverse portfolio of branded fashion goods, while Turkey maintained access through offline retail channels. South Korea relied predominantly on informal and partnership-based digital channels, and Vietnam contributed primarily as an OEM supplier rather than through direct brand presence.

By late 2023, Chinese clothing imports to Russia grew by 87% year-on-year (Federal Customs), while Turkish apparel exports to Russia increased by 41%. In contrast, local Russian fashion manufacturing grew only 12% in the same period, mostly in niche segments such as workwear, souvenirs.

Industry reports point to three reasons explaining why local brands did not take the lead. Firstly, a production bottleneck: Russian light industry capacity is 70% lower than in 1990. Secondly, design perception: younger consumers (aged 18–35) view local brands as “Soviet-style” or “boring”. Thirdly, there is a marketplace disadvantage: local brands invested less in algorithm-driven advertising on Wildberries and Ozon compared to Chinese sellers.

Statistical evidence confirms a structural shift in consumption patterns (Table 3).

Table 3. *Structural shift in apparel consumption patterns in Russia (2021–2024).*

Indicator	2021 (pre-sanctions)	2023	2024 (estimate)
Share of Western brands in mid-price segment	52%	8%	5%
Share of Asian brands in total apparel sales (online)	14%	39%	47%
Share of local Russian brands (online)	21%	28%	29%
Average monthly spending on clothing per capita (RUB)	3,200	4,100	4,300

Source: *Data Insight (2024), Romir (2024), Yandex Market analytics.*

According to Table 3, the share of Western brands collapsed from 52% in 2021 to 5% in 2024, while Asian brands nearly tripled their online apparel sales share from 14% to 47%. Local Russian brands showed only modest growth (from 21% to 29%), confirming that they failed to capture the gap left by Western retailers despite increased consumer spending per capita from 3,200 to 4,300 RUB.

The premium segment shifted toward parallel imports (still predominantly Western luxury). According to the data (Table 2), the mid-price segment, which accounted for more than 50% of the market in 2021, was largely captured by Chinese and Turkish brands. The low-price segment became dominated by Chinese ultra-fast fashion (SHEIN, Temu) via cross-border e-commerce.

Through the analysis of the findings above, it is possible to highlight the following recommendations.

Russian fashion brands should increase their investment in marketplace SEO and targeted advertising, which currently remains four times lower than that of Chinese competitors. They would also benefit from collaborating with Asian manufacturers for private-label production to overcome domestic capacity limits. Additionally, it is advisable to rebrand design language away from “local nostalgia” toward contemporary Asian-inspired minimalism.

For Asian fashion brands operating in Russia, it is crucial to maintain their price advantage while improving local customer service, including Russian-language support and faster return processing. Opening physical showrooms in major cities such as Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Novosibirsk could help build consumer trust. Finally, Asian brands should closely monitor regulatory risks, particularly changes in import duties and labelling requirements.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the determinants of consumer switching in the Russian fashion market after 2022 are not merely economic but also institutional and socio-digital. Asian brands succeeded because they offered better price-quality ratios, superior marketplace algorithms, and a “foreign” status perception that local brands could not match. The 2022 sanctions triggered a rapid reorientation of Russian fashion imports toward China, Turkey, and South Korea, while local brands failed to scale due to production bottlenecks and weak digital marketing, leaving a gap that Asian competitors readily filled. Structural changes confirm that this is a permanent shift rather than a temporary substitution: Asian brands now hold nearly half of Russia’s online fashion market (47% in 2024). Consequently, Russian firms must adopt aggressive digital strategies and seek Asian partnerships, whereas Asian brands should localise customer service to sustain growth.

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SERVICE MARKETING MIX FACTORS (7PS) AFFECTING THE SATISFACTION OF THAI TOURISTS: A CASE STUDY OF SRINAGARINDRA TRAIN NIGHT MARKET, BANGKOK

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze how the Service Marketing Mix (7Ps) influences the satisfaction of Thai tourists, using the Srinagarindra Train Night Market as a case study. This market is an important alternative destination in the night-time economy. The research was conducted using a qualitative method by systematically reviewing academic databases from 2021 to 2026 to create a research framework. The results show that all 7Ps are critical factors that significantly affect tourist satisfaction. Physical Evidence is the strongest point due to the vintage decorations and relaxing lighting. Product creates a difference through rare collectible zones and diverse street food. Place has benefited from the Yellow Line monorail, which reduces travel barriers. Additionally, Process and People are key elements, such as supporting cashless payments and friendly vendors who fit the market's theme. The study suggests that managing lifestyle attractions should integrate digital technology and creative space management to upgrade the experience to international standards. This will help maintain satisfaction, encourage repeat visits, and prepare for the MICE industry, especially incentive travel.

Keywords: Service Marketing Mix (7Ps), Tourist Satisfaction, Night Market, Srinagarindra Train Night Market, MICE Industry

Introduction

Nowadays, tourism is no longer just about visiting historical sites or nature. It has evolved into "Lifestyle Tourism," where people seek out local experiences and diverse ways of life. As a result, Night Markets have become a central part of Bangkok's "Night-time Economy." These markets are more than just places to shop; they serve as "Social Spaces" that blend food, music, and art together, making them a top destination for both Thais and foreigners.

Srinagarindra Train Night Market is a famous landmark with a very unique identity. It uses a strategy called "Nostalgia Marketing" to attract visitors. By using vintage decorations and selling rare collectibles, the market creates a "classic" atmosphere that makes people miss the good old days. This Unique Selling Point (USP) creates an "Emotional Value" for tourists, offering them much more than a typical shopping experience.

However, the market currently faces many challenges. The economy is unstable, and competition is getting tougher with many new markets opening up. Even large shopping malls are now creating outdoor zones to compete. Furthermore, since the global health crisis, consumer behavior has changed. People now care more about Value for Money, Convenience, and Hygiene Standards.

Because of these changes, the big challenge for business owners is how to keep customers satisfied and loyal. Understanding the Service Marketing Mix (7 Ps)—which includes Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence—is the key to finding out what truly drives satisfaction for Thai tourists. This information will not only help solve immediate problems but also provide a foundation for a Sustainable Marketing Strategy, ensuring that Srinagarindra Train Night Market remains a leader in the industry for years to come.

Objectives

1. To review existing information and theories about the Service Marketing Mix (7Ps) and tourist satisfaction within the context of night markets.
2. To create a theoretical framework for studying the factors that affect the satisfaction of Thai tourists at Srinagarindra Train Night Market.

Literature Review

1. 7Ps Service Marketing Mix

The Service Marketing Mix is a key tool used to create customer satisfaction. Kotler and Keller (2016) and Zeithaml et al. (2018) state that effective service management must combine seven core elements to meet customer expectations. Chattaporn Samerjai (2020) also adds that these tools help businesses create a unique identity and compete in the tourism industry. The details are as follows:

Product: This is not just about the physical goods sold, but also the overall experience and quality of service. A good tourism product must be unique and satisfy the deep needs of the travelers.

Price: This refers to the Perceived Value—whether the customer feels what they get is worth what they paid. It also includes clear and honest pricing, which builds trust.

Place: This focuses on Accessibility. The market should be easy to reach, and the layout should allow visitors to walk around comfortably.

Promotion: This involves using social media and other tools to tell people about the market, share updates, and use activities to encourage people to visit.

People: The staff are the heart of the service. Their skills, knowledge, and friendly attitude are the main factors in making a great first impression.

Process: This is the step-by-step way service is delivered. It should be fast, accurate, and easy. Using technology to make things more convenient is a sign of high-quality management.

Physical Evidence: This includes the atmosphere, decoration, and cleanliness. According to the Tourism Research Institute of Thailand (2025), a good-looking and clean environment helps improve the market's international image.

2. Satisfaction and Revisit Intention

Customer satisfaction is the most important part of a service business. Oliver (2010) explains that satisfaction happens when the actual experience is better than what the customer expected. Kotler and Keller (2016) define satisfaction as the feeling a customer gets after evaluating if a product or service met their needs. Zeithaml et al. (2018) also point out that in tourism, satisfaction is an overall feeling that includes service quality, value for money, and the beauty of the location. When tourists are satisfied, they will share their positive feelings with others. Today, this is mostly done through Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), such as social media reviews, which strongly influence other people's decisions. High satisfaction leads to Revisit Intention (wanting to come back). Chattaporn Samerjai (2020) suggests that to keep customers coming back, businesses must maintain high standards and try to impress customers beyond their expectations. This turns a one-time visitor into a loyal customer.

Methodology

This study uses Qualitative Research through a Systematic Literature Review. The steps are as follows:

1. Data Search: Information was searched from academic databases such as Google Scholar and ThaiJO. The keywords used were "7 Ps," "Tourist Satisfaction," and "Night Market."

2. Selection Criteria: We selected research papers published between 2021 and 2026 (B.E. 2564 - 2569). This ensures the information is up-to-date and matches modern consumer behavior.

3. Data Analysis: We used Content Analysis to study the information. This helped us identify important factors and create a research framework for the study.

Results

From the study and content analysis, the results can be categorized according to the Service Marketing Mix (7 Ps) elements that affect the satisfaction of Thai tourists in the case of Srinagarindra Train Night Market as follows.

In the dimension of **Product**, it was found that Srinagarindra Train Night Market does not only serve as a general trading venue but as a leisure experience space that creates a clear difference by systematically organizing product zones. This is especially true for Niche Markets such as amulets, second-hand clothing, and rare vintage collectibles, which are core values that create a competitive advantage. Furthermore, being a hub for street food with a wide variety and unique tastes serves as a major attraction that directly meets the food-tourism behavior of Thai people.

Regarding the dimension of **Price**, the key strategy is creating perceived value through diverse and accessible price levels. These range from general consumer goods to high-value collectibles, which helps encourage impulsive buying decisions. This is done alongside maintaining transparency through clear price tags to ensure fairness from the consumer's perspective.

For the dimension of **Place**, factors affecting satisfaction received a highly positive impact from infrastructure development, particularly the opening of the MRT Yellow Line. This significantly reduces travel barriers and solves parking limitations. Additionally, the grid-style market layout facilitates smooth visitor flow, helping to reduce congestion in popular zones and creating comfort while shopping.

In terms of **Promotion**, the focus is on content marketing strategies to create trends on social media. By providing beautiful landmarks and photo spots, the market attracts tourists to take photos and share them as Electronic Word of Mouth. This is a highly effective form of advertising that continuously builds a modern and trendy image for the market.

Factors supporting service quality include **People**, which focuses on creating a sense of belonging through the friendliness of vendors and stylish dressing that matches the market's atmosphere. This enhances the overall service aesthetic and builds a relationship between buyers and sellers. This works together with the **Process** dimension, which focuses on speed and reducing complicated steps, especially by supporting cashless payment systems in all shops to match modern lifestyles. It also includes real-time hygiene and waste management, which is a factor that Thai tourists currently prioritize at the highest level.

Finally, **Physical Evidence** is considered the strongest point of this case study. By creating an authentic atmosphere with large classic decorations and warm lighting, it generates a relaxing mood. As a result, this area has become a unique lifestyle destination that attracts tourists to return for repeat visits in the long run.

Discussion

From the study, an important point to discuss is the connection between the Service Marketing Mix and the potential to support the MICE industry, especially for Incentive Travel. Srinagarindra Train Night Market has a clear strength in Physical Evidence and experiential products. These features allow the market to effectively serve as a unique venue for Theme Parties. This matches the idea of Zeithaml et al. (2018), who stated that creating a difference through a location's identity is a critical factor in impressing corporate clients. However, to move from a general night market to a global destination, the market must receive more support in developing a more professional Process.

Another point to consider is the expectation of high-quality tourists who value hygiene standards and organized service processes. The study shows that if the market develops a pre-booking system for group activities or upgrades the food zones to meet international sanitation standards, it will greatly increase the value of the destination. This responds to the satisfaction theory of Oliver (2010) regarding delivering an experience that goes beyond expectations. Doing this will not only attract general tourists but also create opportunities to support the MICE market, which looks for venues with unique culture combined with safety standards and reliable long-term service.

Recommendations

Based on the study and discussion, the researcher provides strategic recommendations to improve the competitiveness of Srinagarindra Train Night Market in three key areas. First, for the management and staff, the focus should be on integrating technology to assist tourists. For example, implementing a Smart Parking system and developing a navigation application for the market area would reduce crowding and improve the flow of visitors. This would directly benefit the factors of Place and Process.

In terms of shop owners and vendors, they should focus on creating a unique identity for their products through Signature menus or goods. This will create a clear difference from general night markets and attract high-quality tourists with higher spending power. For future research, the researcher suggests expanding the study by using Quantitative Research with a sample of at least 400 Thai tourists. This would allow for testing statistical hypotheses regarding each dimension of the Service Marketing Mix in detail, which would help confirm the accuracy of the data and lead to more precise strategic planning at a macro level.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the Service Marketing Mix (7Ps) is a critical factor that significantly influences the satisfaction levels of Thai tourists. In particular, the outstanding and unique Physical Evidence of Srinagarindra Train Night Market acts as the main motivation for attracting visitors. However, to maintain satisfaction and encourage repeat visits in the long run amidst high competition, it is necessary to develop the Service Process and the quality of People to keep up with the changing behavior of consumers in the digital age.

This academic article serves as an important guideline for researchers, business owners, and related organizations to apply this knowledge in planning sustainable management strategies for lifestyle tourist attractions. It also aims to upgrade the potential of Thai night markets to a professional level, fully capable of supporting the international MICE industry with pride.

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A STUDY OF BEHAVIOR AND SATISFACTION OF THAI WORKING-AGE TOURISTS USING OUTBOUND TOUR PACKAGES OF HOLIDAY CLIP COMPANY

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Abstract

This study aimed to (1) examine the travel behavior and (2) investigate the satisfaction of Thai working-age tourists using outbound tour packages of Holiday Clip Company. The sample consisted of 400 respondents aged 20–59 years, selected using convenience sampling. Data was collected through questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, as well as inferential statistics such as t-test and ANOVA. The results revealed that most respondents were female, held a bachelor's degree, and had a monthly income of 10,001–20,000 baht. Most traveled 1–2 times per year with average expenses of 10,001–12,000 baht per trip, mainly for leisure purposes. Japan was the most popular destination. Overall satisfaction was at a high level (mean = 3.98), with tourism activities receiving the highest rating, while accommodation services received the lowest. Personal factors and travel behaviors significantly influenced satisfaction at the .05 level. The findings can be applied to improve outbound tour packages and enhance competitiveness in the tourism industry.

Keywords: Travel behavior, Satisfaction, Working-age tourists, Outbound tour package

Introduction

Tourism is a critical sector contributing significantly to Thailand's economic growth, particularly through international travel and outbound tourism. In recent years, outbound tourism among Thai working-age individuals has experienced steady growth, driven by increased accessibility to digital travel platforms, competitive pricing, and the desire for international experiences.

Working-age tourists, typically aged between 20 and 59 years, represent a key market segment due to their purchasing power and travel motivation. However, time constraints associated with professional responsibilities often lead this group to prefer structured and convenient travel options. Outbound tour packages, which integrate transportation, accommodation, meals, and activities, provide an efficient solution for such travelers.

Despite their advantages, package tours may limit flexibility and personalization, potentially affecting satisfaction levels. Therefore, understanding the relationship between travel behavior and satisfaction is essential for tour operators to improve service quality and enhance competitiveness. This study aims to examine the travel behavior and satisfaction of Thai working-age tourists using outbound tour packages of Holiday Clip Company.

Objectives

1. To study travel behavior of Thai working-age tourists using outbound tour packages.
2. To examine satisfaction levels toward outbound tour packages.
3. To compare satisfaction based on personal factors.
4. To compare satisfaction based on travel behavior.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach to investigate the travel behavior and satisfaction of Thai working-age tourists using outbound tour packages of Holiday Clip Company.

The target population consisted of Thai working-age individuals aged between 20 and 59 years who had prior experience using outbound tour package services. Due to the unknown population size, a sample size of 400 respondents was determined based on general recommendations for quantitative research. Convenience sampling was used to select respondents who were accessible and willing to participate in the study.

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire, which was divided into three main sections. The first section gathered demographic information, including gender, age, education level, and monthly income. The second section examined travel behavior, such as travel frequency, travel purpose, preferred destinations, and travel decision-making. The third section measured tourist satisfaction across five dimensions: attractions, accessibility, amenities, activities, and accommodation.

The questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very low satisfaction) to 5 (very high satisfaction). Prior to data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed to ensure content validity and clarity.

The data collected were analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize demographic characteristics, travel behavior, and satisfaction levels. In addition, inferential statistics, including independent sample t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), were applied to examine differences in satisfaction levels across different demographic and behavioral groups. Statistical significance was determined at the 0.05 level.

Results

The results of the study show that most respondents were female, held a bachelor's degree, and had a monthly income between 10,001–20,000 baht. In terms of travel behavior, the majority traveled abroad approximately 1–2 times per year, with an average expenditure of around 10,001–12,000 baht per trip, and most of them made travel decisions independently. Japan was identified as the most popular destination, and the primary purpose of travel was leisure. Overall, respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with outbound tour packages, with an average score of 3.98. Among the different aspects, tourism activities received the highest score (4.06), followed by facilities (4.02), while attractions and accessibility were rated at a similar level (4.01). Accommodation received the lowest score (3.83), although it was still considered to be at a high level. In addition, the results of hypothesis testing indicated that both personal factors, such as gender, age, education, and income, and travel behavior factors, including travel frequency and travel purpose, had a significant influence on satisfaction levels at the 0.05 level.

Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that Thai working-age tourists place strong importance on convenience and well-organized travel experiences when choosing outbound tour packages. The high level of satisfaction, particularly in tourism activities, indicates that engaging and well-planned itineraries play a key role in enhancing the overall travel experience. This is consistent with previous studies, which highlight that service quality and well-designed activities significantly contribute to tourist satisfaction (Huang & Petrick, 2019). However, the relatively lower score in accommodation suggests that this aspect may not fully meet tourists' expectations, even though it is still rated at a high level overall. This finding aligns with García et al. (2021), who noted that inconsistencies in service

components, especially accommodation, can influence overall satisfaction. In addition, the results show that both personal characteristics and travel behavior significantly affect satisfaction levels, indicating that different groups of tourists may have different expectations and preferences. Therefore, tour operators should consider customer segmentation and tailor their services to better meet the needs of working-age travelers, particularly by improving accommodation quality and offering more flexible travel options.

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THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND BIG DATA IN COUNTERING THE ACTIVITIES OF EXTREMIST AND TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS

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Abstract

This article analyses the application of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data technologies in countering extremism and terrorism in the Russian Federation. It examines the ways in which these technologies can be used to combat crime and predict criminal activity. In addition, the article provides examples of the use of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data technologies in the activities of law enforcement agencies in the Russian Federation, and examines the challenges they currently face.

Keywords: extremism, terrorism, artificial intelligence, Big Data, law enforcement agencies.

Introduction

The modern era is characterised by the rapid digitalisation of all spheres of public life, which also influences the nature of criminal activity, including extremism and terrorism. These threats have shifted to the digital space, where criminal organisations actively use the Internet and social media for propaganda, recruitment, fundraising and coordination of activities. In response to these challenges, law enforcement agencies are increasingly turning to cutting-edge technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Big Data, which enable the processing of vast amounts of information and the identification of hidden patterns to prevent crime.

Objectives

The object of the work is the application of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data technologies in the activities of the law enforcement agencies of the Russian Federation to counter extremism and terrorism.

Research Questions

The research questions concern mechanisms for monitoring the digital space, ethical and legal issues, and counter-challenges associated with the adoption of AI by extremist organisations, as well as prospects for improving the regulatory framework and the technical accuracy of algorithms.

Literature Review and Theory

Big Data refers to vast, complex and rapidly growing datasets processed by specialised algorithms. Put simply, it involves large volumes of information that can be analysed to identify patterns, trends and correlations, particularly in human behaviour and processes. Big Data enables the collection and analysis of data from a variety of sources: social media, financial transactions, geolocation data, etc. Big Data plays a key role in gathering diverse information. For example, social media generates billions of posts daily, which may contain signs of radicalisation.

The Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation uses Big Data within the SORM system (System for Operative Investigative Activities), integrating data from telephones, Internet forums and messaging apps.

Algorithms based on natural language processing (NLP) are used to automatically search for and block dangerous content. They analyse texts, identifying signs of hate speech, calls for violence and extremist rhetoric.

Furthermore, Artificial Intelligence can be used to create content that debunks extremist ideas and offers constructive alternatives, thereby reducing the level of radicalisation.

Artificial Intelligence also helps combat cyberattacks that may be carried out by extremist groups. Intelligent systems monitor network traffic, suspicious activity and hacking attempts in real time. This is particularly important for protecting critical infrastructure (e.g. power grids, transport). Machine learning algorithms also help to effectively detect and neutralise new malware.

As regards the use of Artificial Intelligence in law enforcement in our country, mathematical models based on Artificial Intelligence have been developed at Perm State National Research University to identify extremist activity on social media. The mechanism is based on the ‘Seus’ search engine, developed by the Perm-based company ‘Seuslab’. The system works as follows:

- tracking and classification: the system constantly monitors news stories, classifying them by topic (e.g. terrorism) and analysing how they are supplemented by posts;
- detection of attacks: upon detecting extremist activity, the system checks it for signs of a targeted information attack;
- analysis of roles and connections: algorithms determine who is involved in a criminal organisation and what role they play within it. The search utilises pre-compiled lists of keywords and phrases for each destructive movement.

According to the developers, the ‘Seus’ search system is already in use in more than half of the regional offices of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs. With its help, it has been possible to prevent up to a dozen crimes related to attacks on schools.

This development is aimed at automating the routine work of the security services in monitoring social media, which is currently carried out manually and is extremely labour-intensive due to the huge volumes of data (on VKontakte alone, two to three million posts appear every day). Thus, the 'Seus' system is designed to speed up the processes of identifying dangerous activity and preventing crimes at an early stage.

Artificial Intelligence and Big Data technologies open up a range of unique opportunities for law enforcement agencies. The potential for their use lies in the fact that, through advanced analysis, additional value can be uncovered in seemingly unrelated data collected from open sources, social media, online communities, etc.

The application of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data to the activities of extremist and terrorist organisations faces a number of challenges and ethical issues.

Firstly, the expanding use of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data gives rise to serious conflicts between law and morality. A key issue is the conflict between security objectives and the protection of fundamental freedoms. The most pressing issue concerns the risks of discrimination inherent in algorithms. For instance, facial recognition systems trained on non-representative data demonstrate errors regarding certain ethnic groups, which can lead to false suspicions and unjustified persecution. This 'algorithmic bias', as warned by UN experts, is capable not of identifying but of exacerbating social injustice, undermining trust in state institutions.

Secondly, extremist and terrorist organisations, in turn, are also harnessing Artificial Intelligence and Big Data technologies to create propaganda content, plan attacks and conduct cyber espionage. This creates a 'technological duel' in which each side attempts to outmanoeuvre the other. Combating deepfake technologies, which are used to generate disinformation and manipulate public opinion, presents a particular challenge. Countering them requires the continuous improvement of detection algorithms, which must account for all new methods of disguise, including compression, video processing and subsequent content processing.

Methodology

The methodological framework comprises general scientific methods (analysis, synthesis, comparison), specialised methods (content analysis, case studies, problem-based legal analysis), as well as systemic and ethical-legal approaches. The empirical basis is formed by academic articles, data on the operation of the 'Seus' system, and websites containing information on countering terrorism and extremism.

Conclusion

The use of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data has become an integral part of modern counter-terrorism and counter-extremism efforts. These technologies have proven their effectiveness in proactively identifying threats, analysing digital traces of criminal activity, and predicting risks. Monitoring open sources, social media and other online resources makes it possible, if not to completely eliminate, then to significantly limit the ability of extremist and terrorist groups to spread their ideology and recruit new supporters.

However, further development in this area requires a comprehensive approach. The regulatory framework needs to be improved to clearly define the limits of permissible use of personal data and algorithmic systems by law enforcement agencies. Technical development should be aimed at enhancing the accuracy and transparency of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data algorithms to minimise errors and discriminatory consequences.

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FACTORS AFFECTING THE SUCCESS OF THE EXPORT VALUE CHAIN OF GI POMELO FOR FARMERS IN PRACHINBURI PROVINCE: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

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Abstract

This paper presents a conceptual framework and research design for a forthcoming qualitative study examining factors influencing the export success of Geographical Indication (GI) pomelo farmers in Prachinburi Province, focusing on identifying strategic conditions that enable farmers to overcome constraints and enhance their participation in export markets. The study employs in-depth interviews with GI farmers, using factors X1–X4 to explore these conditions, and conceptualizes farmers not only as producers but as “chain entrepreneurs” who make strategic decisions across four dimensions: farm capability, quality standard management (GAP for compliance and GI for value differentiation), chain relationships, and institutional support. These dimensions explain distinctions between farmers who can export their goods internationally and those restricted to domestic sales. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute a context-specific strategic model for upgrading GI-certified smallholders, offering practical implications for agricultural export policy in developing economies.

Keywords: GI Pomelo, Export Value Chain, Smallholder Farmers, Prachinburi, Upgrading Strategy

Introduction

Pomelo is one of the main important fruit for trade in Thailand. In 2025, exports reached 31,831.69 tons, but total value declined to 1,426.70 million baht, reflecting challenges in price stability and value creation. Prachinburi Province is a major production area where pomelo is registered as a Geographical Indication (GI), helping differentiate products and certify origin and quality for international markets.

The GI system, recognized under the TRIPS Agreement and widely successful in the European Union, has become a global standard adopted by Thailand to enhance competitiveness. However, GI status alone does not ensure success in export markets. Smallholder farmers confront a implementation gap between certification and the strict standards of Global Value Chains (GVC), particularly Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP). This limits their participation and bargaining power.

This study analyzes success factors using GVC governance theory of Gereffi et al. (2005) and the functional upgrading concept of Humphrey and Schmitz (2002) to examine how farmers can overcome these constraints. It aims to propose a strategic model to support GI farmers' integration into export markets. The paper outlines the framework, methodology, expected analytical results, and concludes with theoretical contributions and policy suggestions.

Objectives

1. To examine the factors, specifically farm capability, standard management (GAP/GI), chain participation, and institutional support, that influence success in the export value chain for GI pomelo farmers in Prachinburi Province.
2. To analyze the obstacles and upgrading pathways within the export value chain for these farmers.
3. To propose sustainable strategies for enhancing farmers' positions within the export value chain.

Research Questions

1. How do farm capability, standard management (GAP/GI), chain participation, and institutional support affect the success of farmers in entering the export value chain?
2. What are the key obstacles faced by farmers, and what upgrading processes do they employ to enter export markets?
3. What is a sustainable model or approach for increasing the participation of farmers in the export value chain?

Theoretical Framework

This research synthesizes the Global Value Chain (GVC) Governance Theory (Gereffi et al., 2005) and the Upgrading Framework (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002) into a tailored conceptual framework for Thai smallholder farmers. By integrating these theories, the researcher identifies four strategic dimensions (X1–X4) that govern the farmer's upgrading process, as illustrated in Figure 1

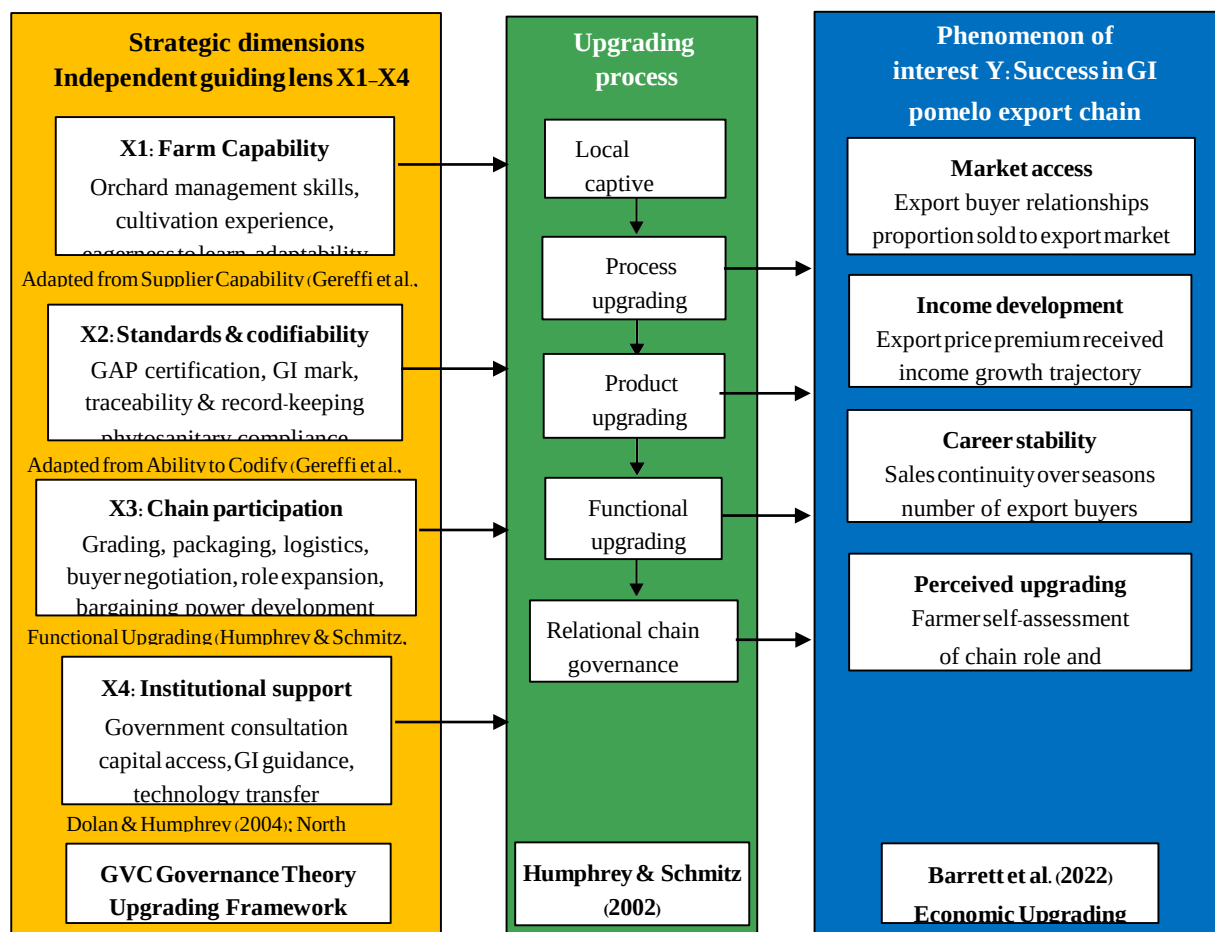


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Dimension 1: Farm Capability (X1): Adapted from Gereffi et al. (2005), this dimension explores orchard management skills and adaptability as foundational drivers for international readiness.

Dimension 2: Standards and Codifiability (X2): Drawing on the "ability to codify" (Gereffi et al., 2005), this examines how GAP and GI standards are managed to overcome information asymmetry in global markets.

Dimension 3: Chain Participation and Relationship (X3): Integrating "functional upgrading" (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002) and channel diversification (Mabuza et al., 2014), this analyzes farmers' roles in high-value activities, such as grading and direct negotiation, to build bargaining power.

Dimension 4: Institutional Support (X4): Adapted from Dolan and Humphrey (2004), this assesses how external support mechanisms (e.g., consultation and technology transfer) act as catalysts for export entry.

Phenomenon of Interest (Y): Success is defined as "perceived success and the role of farmers" within the export value chain, characterized by market access, income stability, and career longevity, aligning with the Economic Upgrading concept (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002; Barrett et al., 2022).

The propositions of this research are listed as follow.

P1: Farm capability (X1) provides the foundational readiness for export participation but is insufficient without complementary chain engagement (X3) and standard compliance (X2).

P2: The combined adoption of GAP and GI certification enables codifiability of production standards, reducing information asymmetry with international buyers.

P3: Functional enhancement involving grading, packaging, and direct buyer interaction (X3) leads to improved income stability and augmented bargaining power relative to reliance on intermediaries.

P4: Institutional support (X4) acts as a moderating condition, amplifying the pathway from X1–X3 to export success, particularly for smallholders facing structural barriers.

This framework provides a guideline for formulating interview questions and performing thematic analysis to understand farmers' upgrading experiences.

Literature Review

1. Global Value Chain (GVC) and Agrifood Transformation

The agrifood sector is progressively incorporated into Global Value Chains (GVCs), wherein governance frameworks determine value allocation (Gereffi et al., 2005). In the Thai pomelo context, despite rising export volumes, value volatility underscores the challenge of achieving sustained "value-added" outcomes (Barrett et al., 2022). Furthermore, the "supermarket revolution" has imposed rigorous standards that may marginalize smallholders lacking verification capabilities (Reardon et al., 2009; Neven et al., 2009). Research indicates that GI and standardized systems are vital strategies for rural development (Vandecastelaere et al., 2009; Belletti et al., 2017). Notably, evidence from the Son La coffee GI in Vietnam demonstrates that adopting international certification standards is a critical driver for accessing high-end markets (IP Vietnam, 2018). Similarly, the clove value chain in Indonesia reveals that leveraging social capital and collective management helps farmers bridge the "codifiability gap," thereby mitigating trade exclusion risks (Jumiaty et al., 2026). Consequently, this research analyzes the development of farm capability (X1) and standard management (X2) as essential foundations for global market integration.

2. Functional Upgrading as a Strategic Response

Smallholder farmers must pursue functional upgrading, such as grading, packaging, and direct coordination with export buyers, to transcend their status in "captive chains" (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002). GI systems serve as powerful instruments not only for

compliance but for transforming local identity into market power (Vandecandelaere et al., 2009; Belletti et al., 2017). Regional experiences from Vietnam and Indonesia highlight that successful upgrading is deeply contextual, necessitating qualitative exploration (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Farmers shifting from passive suppliers to active participants in post-harvest and distribution processes significantly enhance their bargaining power. This study emphasizes the dimension of Chain Participation and Relationship (X3) to understand how farmers can leverage these strategic roles to bridge the gap between local production and the rigorous demands of the global market.

3. Institutional Support and Agricultural Upgrading

Beyond individual farm capability (X1), the success of smallholders heavily depends on institutional support (X4), which serves to reduce transaction costs and mitigate market inequalities (North, 1990). Under rigorous international standards, government agencies act as "intermediary mechanisms" (Dolan & Humphrey, 2004) that translate global technical requirements into practical farm-level operations. Southeast Asian experiences suggest that successful upgrading often depends on "institutional embeddedness" (Belletti et al., 2017; Vandecandelaere et al., 2009). Policy interventions, such as GI guidance and technology transfer, help translate international standards into practices that farmers can actually apply. In this context, the study looks at how institutional support helps Thai pomelo farmers participate in global markets.

4. Geographical Indication (GI) and Standard Management

Geographical Indication (GI) systems help distinguish products and ensure their quality. While GI certification validates origin and identity, it is insufficient on its own due to the "implementation gap" (Dolan & Humphrey, 2004). Export markets enforce stringent food safety and traceability measures, which may exclude smallholders lacking the capacity to comply (Reardon et al., 2009; Neven et al., 2009). Research emphasizes that the success of GI relies on integrating these standards into rural development (Vandecandelaere et al., 2009; Belletti et al., 2017) and bridging the "codifiability gap." GI can be a strategic asset, but only when it is supported by proper standard management.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative case study to examine farmers within the value chain, following Creswell and Poth (2018). Purposive sampling was used to select 8–10 GI pomelo farmers in Prachinburi Province, or until data saturation, following Guest et al. (2006). Participants are required to be authorized to use the GI mark, have at least two years of experience, and be involved in the export value chain.

A semi-structured interview guide was used, based on GVC Governance and Upgrading Frameworks, covering dimensions X1–X4 and success factors (Y). The interview guide consists of about 4–6 questions for each dimension, giving a total of 20–24 questions. Three experts assessed its content validity, and the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) values ranged from 0.67 to 1.00. A pilot interview with 1–2 non-sample farmers was conducted to refine the interview process before implementation.

Data collection involved in-depth interviews and field observations at orchards to verify actual practices. The study applies Thematic Analysis, following Braun and Clarke (2006). The process involves transcription, coding, and developing themes to understand strategic decision-making in export market entry.

To ensure trustworthiness, data triangulation enhances credibility and confirmability, while thick descriptions support transferability and a systematic process ensures dependability, following Lincoln and Guba (1985). The researcher is a local government official, facilitating access to in-depth information; to mitigate bias, reflexivity and member checking were applied. Research ethics were upheld through informed consent and respondent anonymity.

Theoretical Propositions and Framework-Derived Insights

Based on the conceptual framework, this study proposes key propositions on the export success of GI pomelo farmers. It is expected that skills and adaptability are necessary but insufficient without alignment with global standards. For Standards (X2), GAP ensures food safety compliance, while GI serves as a tool for differentiation and trust. For Chain Participation (X3), functional upgrading, such as grading and direct buyer engagement, enhances bargaining power and reduces reliance on intermediaries. Finally, Institutional Support (X4) plays a moderating role, with technical assistance and export-oriented infrastructure more effective for market access than financial support alone.

Theoretical Contributions

This study extends GVC theory (Gereffi et al., 2005) and the upgrading perspective (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002) to smallholder agriculture by shifting the focus to the “farmer-entrepreneur” level, where four strategic dimensions (X1–X4) are integrated. The transition from primary producer to export chain participant is not linear. It depends on how farm capability, quality standards, chain relationships, and institutional support develop together. The integration of these capabilities is identified as the key driver of bargaining power and long-term sustainability in global markets.

Limitations

This study also has some limitations. First, the findings are specific to GI pomelo farmers in Prachinburi Province and may not apply to areas with different supply chain structures. Second, as a qualitative study using purposive sampling, the results are based on in-depth insights from key informants rather than statistical generalization. Third, international trade regulations change over time, which means the identified success factors may also change. Finally, the study focuses on four key dimensions (X1–X4), while broader macroeconomic factors, such as trade policies and exchange rate fluctuations, were beyond its scope but may also influence export decisions.

Conclusion and Strategic Recommendations

Enhancing Prachinburi GI pomelo export success requires integrating four key dimensions, Farm Capability (X1), Standard Management (X2), Strategic Participation (X3), and Institutional Support (X4), to transform farmers into competitive chain entrepreneurs in global markets. To strengthen long-term competitiveness, three strategic policy directions are emphasized. First, functional upgrading through farmer-led GMP-standard packing houses to improve value capture. Second, the adoption of digital traceability systems to streamline standardization and strengthen product credibility. Third, reinforcing relational governance by positioning government as a “Strategic Intermediary” to facilitate direct collaboration between farmers and exporters, reducing dependence on middlemen. With this approach, smallholder farmers can narrow the implementation gap and make better use of GI to strengthen their position in global agrifood markets.

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MOTIVATION AND BEHAVIOR OF MILLENNIAL FOREIGN TOURISTS TO TRAVEL FULL MOON PARTY, KOH PHANGAN, SURAT THANI PROVINCE

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Abstract

This research aimed to study the behavior and motivations of millennial foreign tourists visiting the Full Moon Party on Koh Phangan, Surat Thani Province. The sample consisted of 324 millennial foreign tourists. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using statistical software with descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

The results showed that most tourists had attended the Full Moon Party more than twice, preferred traveling as families, had a trip duration of 1–3 days, stayed in the Haad Rin and Ao Chalok Lam areas, chose hotel accommodations, spent approximately 1,000–3,000 baht per day, and preferred using tour guides. They also obtained information from guidebooks and travel magazines, showed a tendency to return for repeat visits, and planned to travel to Than Sadet Waterfall National Park on subsequent trips.

In terms of motivation, gender, marital status, and place of origin significantly influenced tourism motivation through both push and pull factors. However, education level, occupation, and average monthly income did not significantly affect tourists' motivation.

Keywords: Behavior, Full Moon Party, Millennial, Motivations

Introduction

Ko Pha Ngan is a district of Surat Thani Province, located in the Gulf of Thailand. It is the second-largest island in the province and one of the most important tourist destinations contributing significant revenue to Surat Thani. The island is well known for its tranquility and the beauty of its marine natural resources, featuring stunning curved beaches such as Haad Rin, Thong Nai Pan Beach, and Mae Haad Beach. One of its most famous events, known worldwide, is the Full Moon Party, a beach party held at Haad Rin. It is widely recognized for its unique identity, taking place every full moon night (the 15th day of the lunar month). This event attracts a large number of international tourists who travel to relax and participate in various activities. In 2019, Ko Pha Ngan welcomed approximately 1.1 million tourists, generating around 2 billion baht in revenue for the local economy. More than 75% of these tourists, or about 825,000 people, specifically traveled to attend the Full Moon Party. However, from 2020 to mid-2022, tourism revenue declined due to the economic slowdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted travel. At present, tourism on Ko Pha Ngan has returned to normal, with international tourists able to travel again, particularly to attend the Full Moon Party. Therefore, attracting millennial tourists—who have high purchasing power and frequently travel, and who are a key target group for the tourism industry due to their strong access to digital media and technology—can significantly boost revenue and help revitalize the island's economy. Thus, the researcher is interested in studying the motivations and behaviors of millennial tourists affecting their decision to attend the Full Moon Party on Ko Pha Ngan, Surat Thani Province. The findings can be used by tourism and service entrepreneurs to improve and develop their products and services, as well as by relevant agencies to plan marketing strategies aimed at attracting more millennial tourists, increasing spending,

generating income, and supporting the economic development of Ko Pha Ngan, Surat Thani Province.

Objectives

1. To study the behavior of millennial tourists traveling to the Full Moon Party on Ko Pha Ngan, Surat Thani Province.
2. To examine the level of motivation of millennial tourists traveling to the Full Moon Party on Ko Pha Ngan, Surat Thani Province.
 1. To survey the behavior and motivation of millennial tourists attending the Full Moon Party on Ko Pha Ngan, Surat Thani Province. This study employs an online questionnaire as the data collection tool. Respondents are required to provide their names and email addresses to answer questions regarding their behavior and motivation. The population of this study consists of millennial tourists.
 2. In studying the behavior and motivation of millennial tourists attending the Full Moon Party on Ko Pha Ngan, Surat Thani Province, this step involves estimating the sample size and determining the sampling proportion. Therefore, this study uses a sample size of 400 participants.
3. The instrument used for data collection is a checklist format questionnaire consisting of four parts as follows:
 - ☐ **Part 1:** Demographic characteristics
 - ☐ **Part 2:** Tourist behavior
 - ☐ **Part 3:** Tourist motivation
 - ☐ **Part 4:** Suggestions and others

The interpretation criteria for analyzing consumer data in Part 2, regarding tourists' satisfaction with the Full Moon Party Ko Pha Ngan, Surat Thani Province are as follows:

1.00-1.80	means least satisfied.
1.81-2.60	means less satisfied
2.61-3.40	means moderately satisfied.
3.41-4.20	means very satisfied.
4.21-5.00	means the most satisfied.

Results

General information about the sample group was gathered through a questionnaire detailing personal data, including gender, marital status, education level, occupation, average monthly income, and place of residence. The results showed that the majority of the sample were female, numbering 230 people (67.1%), followed by males (1 person, 32.4%), and other genders (2 people, 0.6%). The sample tourists were primarily millennials aged 21-37 years. Regarding marital status, the majority were single (179 people, 52.2%), followed by married (164 people, 47.8%). In terms of education level, the majority held a bachelor's degree (269 people, 86.3%), followed by those with a postgraduate degree (24 people, 7.0%), and those with less than a bachelor's degree (22 people, 6.4%). Regarding occupation, the majority of the sample... The most common occupation among the respondents was civil servant (20.99%), followed by students (20.06%). Regarding income, the majority (37.04%) earned between 40,000 and 50,000 baht, followed by those earning over 50,000 baht (24.38%). The majority resided in the southern region (259 people, 96.2%), followed by the central region (65 people, 3.5%)

information	quantity (N)	percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	168	51.85
Female	153	47.22
LGBTQ+	3	0.93
Total	324	100.00
Status		
Single	179	55.25
Married	123	37.96
Divorced/Separated	22	6.79
Total	324	100.00
education obtained		
lower than bachelor's degree	98	30.25
Bachelor's degree	140	43.21
Post- Graduate	86	26.54
Total	324	100.00
Occupation		
Student	62	19.14
Business	35	10.80
Professional/educator	65	20.06
Agriculture	22	6.79
Housewife/Homemaker	7	2.16
Labor production	54	16.67
Government officer	68	20.99
Unemployed	11	3.40
Total	324	100.00
Average annual income		
Less than 15,000	12	3.70
15,000-20,000 THB	75	23.15
20,000-30,000 THB	120	37.04
40,000-50,000 THB	79	24.38
Above 50,000 THB	38	11.73
Total	324	100.00
Habital		
Central Region	65	3.5
Southern Region	259	96.2
Total	324	100.00

Analysis of Millennial Tourist Behavior

Analysis of the behavior of 324 millennial tourists who visited the Full Moon Party on Koh Phangan, Surat Thani Province, revealed the following: number of times they had attended the event, who they traveled with, duration of their visit, location of accommodation, type of accommodation, average expenditure, how they traveled to Koh Phangan, source of tourism information, likelihood of repeat visits, and planned onward destinations. The findings showed that the majority of the sample had attended the Full Moon Party more than twice (41.67%), followed by families (38.58%), and those who stayed for 1-3 days (47.84%), followed by 4-7 days (20.06%). They also reported staying in Haad Rin and Ao Chalok Lam areas. (23.15%) chose hotel accommodation as the most popular option, followed by resort accommodation at 14.51%. Expenses ranged from

1,000-3,000 baht (48.46%), followed by 3,000-5,000 baht (41.67%). Travel arrangements included using a tour guide (51.54%), learning about the Full Moon Party from guidebooks and magazines (23.77%), and past experiences (20.37%). Returning to Koh Phangan was a key factor (77.16%), with the next travel destination being Namtok Than Sadet National Park (61.11%).

information	quantity (N)	percentage (%)
How many times have you visited the full moon party on Pha-ngan Island including this trip		
First time	75	23.15
2nd time	114	35.19
more than 2 times	135	41.67
Total	324	100.00
Did you travel to Pha-ngan Island with		
Alone	35	10.80
Family members	125	38.58
Club or organization	89	27.47
Friends or colleagues	75	23.15
Total	324	100.00
How long did you visit Pha-ngan Island this trip?		
1-3 days	155	47.84
4-7 days	65	20.06
8-12 days	45	13.89
13-15 days	25	7.72
16 days and over	34	10.49
Total	324	100.00
Where did you stay in Pha-ngan Island? (more than 1 answer)		
Rin Beach	75	23.15
Mae Haad Beach - Koh Ma	64	19.75
Chaloklum Bay	75	23.15
Tongnaiparn beach	49	15.12
Namtok Than Sadet National Park	53	16.36

information	quantity (N)	percentage (%)
Other	8	2.47
Total	324	100.00
What kind of accommodation did you stay in Pha-ngan Island?		
Hotel	65	20.06
Guesthouse	45	13.89
Resort	47	14.51
Hostel	51	15.74
Bungalow	35	10.80
Rental house	39	12.04
Others	42	12.96
Total	324	100.00
Please specify other average daily total expenses. (per day/per person)		
Less than 5,000 baht	8	2.47
5,001 - 7,500 baht	157	48.46
7,501 - 10,000 baht	135	41.67
More than 10,001 baht	24	7.41
Total	324	100.00
How to get to Pha-ngan Island in any way		
Plan your own trip without using the services of a travel agency	167	51.54
Use the services of a travel agency	148	45.68
Others	9	2.78
Total	324	100.00
What kind of information sources do you know about Pha-ngan Island		
Relatives or friends	26	8.02
Past experience	66	20.37
Social media	29	8.95
Tourism website	45	13.89
Internet	35	10.80
Travel guidebook/Travel magazine	77	23.77
Travel company	46	14.20
Total	324	100.00
Do you think that if there is a chance, you will come back to travel to Pha-ngan Island again or not		
Come to travel	250	77.16
Do not come to travel	2	0.62
Unsure	72	22.22

Total	324	100.00
Where is your next destination after Pha-ngan Island trip		
Rin Beach	126	38.89
Namtok Than Sadet National Park	198	61.11
Total	324	100.00

Analysis of Tourist Motivations at the Full Moon Party

Analysis of the importance of motivations among tourists visiting the Full Moon Party, using a sample group of 324 tourists, revealed that the driving factors were highly attractive and the personal challenge was at a high level. The indicator with the highest mean score was the attractive factor ($\bar{x}$ = 7.154, SD. = 12.327). Following closely in mean scores were the driving factors ($\bar{x}$ = 4.65, SD. = 0.6519), and then the driving factor of meeting new friends ($\bar{x}$ = 4.51, SD. = 0.692). The indicator with the lowest mean score was the driving factor of increasing enjoyment ($\bar{x}$ = 3.043, SD. = 1.357). Motivational motivation was perceived at a high level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.046, SD. = 0.811). Considering each item, it was found that tourists had the highest level of motivation for attending the Full Moon Party on Koh Phangan, Surat Thani Province, with the desire for new travel experiences ($\bar{x}$ = 7.1543, SD. = 12.32736), followed by food and beverages ($\bar{x}$ = 4.3580, SD. = 1.05348), and the least likely being substance abuse ($\bar{x}$ = 2.2407, SD. = 1.53112).

Pushing factors When considering individual items, it was found that tourists had the highest level of motivation for visiting the Full Moon Party on Koh Phangan, Surat Thani Province, with the desire to experience new things ($\bar{x}$ = 4.6142, SD. = .63630). This was followed by the desire to learn new things on Koh Phangan ($\bar{x}$ = 4.5154, SD. = .69256), and the least desire was to learn about tourist attractions on Koh Phangan ($\bar{x}$ = 3.2469, SD. = 1.37452), as shown in Table

	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
Pull Factor		
1.Alcoholic drinks	4.0957	1.45525
2.Using drugs in public	2.2407	1.53112
3.Nightlife	3.9290	1.38475
4.Variety of foods and drinks	4.3580	1.05348
5.Spas and massages	3.3704	1.50906
6.Destination's uniqueness	4.1543	12.32736
7.Want to expand your knowledge of overseas destinations	4.3148	0.90045
8.Unique because of its location beautiful moon nice clubs and music variety	4.0957	1.13764
9.Practicing water sports skills	3.0432	1.35769
10.Sea sand Sun	4.3457	0.98170
11. Famous for the Full Moon Party	4.1296	1.08544
12.Cleanliness of attractions	3.6142	1.14407
13.Worthiness of the cost of Traveling	3.9074	1.18977
Total.4	046	0.811

	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
Push factor		
1. New friendships	2870.3	57014.1
2. Self-psychological challenges	3.3858	1.25258
3. Explore/study other cultures	4.2068	0.70633
4. Having fun	4.6543	0.65194
5. Want to challenge yourself	3.9105	1.20423
6. Want to travel to different places never been before	4.6142	0.63630
7. Want to expand your knowledge of overseas destinations	4.5154	0.69256
8. tourist information center available	3.2469	1.37452
9. Loves music, dancing	3.8488	1.05218
10. Develop travel skills	4.1389	1.11109
Total	958.3	0.405

Discussion

A study of general information from the perspective of the millennial generation, focusing on their travels to the Full Moon Party on Koh Phangan, Surat Thani Province, using a sample of 324 people, revealed that some individuals (168) were aware of specific details. The age range was 21-37 years. The sample included 179 individuals who were single, 140 individuals with high levels of education (68 officially recognized), 120 individuals with a continuous income of 50,000 baht, and 75 individuals whose official domicile was in the capital city annually. This information is relevant to the research conducted by Sonthorn Boonkaew et al. (2021) on tourism and travel to the Full Moon Party on Koh Phangan, Thailand. The study found that the sample included individuals who were single and freelance.

The behavioral analysis of the millennial generation revealed that they frequently visited the Full Moon Party, often traveling as families, staying for 1-3 days, followed by 4-7 days, and staying at Haad Rin beach. And in Chaloklam Bay, the control of accommodation types, the core of which is officially chosen is resort accommodation, with costs ranging from 1,000-3,000 baht, followed by 3,000-5,000 baht. Fans come to use the services of tour guides, knowing information from research on the Full Moon Party through travel guidebooks and travel magazines. The official secondary experience is to present the experience of returning to visit Koh Phangan again and continue the tourism to Namtok Thanon National Park, the location of the research of Chaiyuth Thawornnurak (2019), who officially studied and sought opinions of Thai people at the Khlong Khlong Floating Market in Ranot District, Songkhla Province. The study results found that in the nearby area, especially considering the most likely possibility for verification in testing during the survey of occupations and income, consideration of the consideration of the consideration of the consideration of the general public, and travel, considering all aspects of the tourism business mix. Chaiyuth Thawornnurak (2019)

From the study of the concentration level of boilers of the millennial group traveling to Koh Phangan. In Surat Thani Province, two factors were considered individually: 1) The most frequent attraction was meeting new friends, and 2) The most influential factor was new experiences. This is based on research by Rungkan Kaewcharoen et al. (2017) which studied and considered the approaches affecting participation in the Full Moon Resort, Koh Phangan,

Surat Thani Province. The research found that respondents had strong opinions regarding the continuous leadership level in all aspects, especially the consistently high level and the control system that desired stress relief... Respondents also expressed opinions regarding the positive atmosphere.

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MITIGATING LINGUISTIC BARRIERS IN GLOBAL SERVICES TRADE VIA AI TRANSLATION AND REMOTE WORK

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Abstract

This conceptual paper examines how artificial intelligence translation tools, combined with the widespread adoption of remote work, reduce linguistic barriers in international services trade. Drawing on transaction cost economics and gravity models, the study identifies three key mechanisms: direct reduction of communication costs, global talent matching across languages, and lower coordination costs in multilingual remote teams. Data from market reports, scientific papers and business cases show that AI translation can cut language-related transaction costs significantly. The paper also provides practical recommendations for firms and policymakers. The findings suggest that AI translation and remote work acting together drive both the volume and diversification of global services trade.

Keywords: linguistic barriers, services, AI translation, remote work, transaction costs

Introduction

AI translation has become a routine component of business software. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed millions of firms to adopt remote work arrangements, a practice that has largely persisted. Nevertheless, linguistic barriers continue to represent a hidden cost in global services trade. As Melitz (2008) notes, a shared language facilitates trade partly by reducing the need for translation. In services, unlike in goods, trade relies heavily on real-time interaction, trust, and tacit knowledge, making language differences particularly costly. Estimates from the UK indicate that 35% of SMEs report feeling “lost in the noise” due to communication difficulties (The Drum, 2024). Against this backdrop, our study advances the hypothesis that the combined effect of AI-based translation and remote work arrangements

reduces linguistic barriers, thereby increasing both the volume and diversification of services trade between countries with different native languages.

Therefore, this article's main objective is to substantiate the mechanism through which AI translation and remote work, acting together, mitigate linguistic barriers and consequently lower the transaction costs of entering foreign services markets. To achieve this goal, the authors set three research questions:

1. To evaluate the linguistic barrier problem in international services trade, including its economic costs and market implications.
2. To describe the advantages and challenges of using AI translation and remote work in combination as a means of mitigating linguistic barriers in services trade.
3. To propose implementation recommendations for companies and governments aimed at enhancing the positive impact of AI-driven translation and remote work on cross-border services trade.

Methodology

This study employs qualitative economic analysis, synthesis, and a systematic review of secondary sources. No primary data (e.g., surveys or experiments) were collected. The methodological approach is conceptual and theory-driven, aimed at building a conceptual framework. The analysis draws on existing secondary data and prior research. Core sources include Melitz (2008) on language and trade, The Drum (2024) on business impacts, and OMR Global (2025) on market size etc. The paper synthesises available empirical evidence to construct a conceptual framework that explains how AI translation and remote work jointly mitigate linguistic barriers and facilitate services trade between linguistically distant countries.

Results

Language barriers create significant costs in international services trade. In the United Kingdom alone, linguistic are estimated to cost the national economy approximately £50 billion annually (The Drum, 2024). The scale of this challenge is mirrored in the global market for solutions: the language services market, encompassing translation, localization, and interpreting, was valued at \$71.8 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach \$119.1 billion by 2035 (OMR Global, 2025).

The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a powerful accelerant for two key trends that underpin our analysis: remote work and digital adoption. By 2024, the share of fully remote companies globally had reached 16% (Benefitspro, 2024). Simultaneously, the freelance workforce underwent a dramatic transformation, with the number of full-time freelancers in the US increasing by 90% and side-giggers by 130% since 2020 (Forbes, 2020). New live translation tools (Wordly, Zoom) now offer real-time translation in video conferences, removing language as a barrier to instant teamwork.

The diffusion of AI-powered translation tools has been central to enabling this newly distributed and freelance workforce to transcend linguistic borders. For instance, the iFlytek has reported that its translation device, which supports 85 languages online and 17 offline, has been used for over one billion translations, serving more than 800,000 users (China Daily, 2025). The potential impact on trade is remarkable as it allows to successfully expand market presence by using such a device to communicate directly in Arabic, Spanish, and other languages, thereby building trust more effectively with new partners. This observation aligns with broader research findings that without localizing the buying experience companies risk losing around 40% of their target market, while when trading partners use similar languages, trade can shoot up by 72% (The Drum, 2024).

Secondly, it enables global talent matching. Online labour platforms have become central to the international market for digital services. For instance, Unwork automatically translate job posts, messages and reviews. To ensure accuracy and cultural alignment in these translations, many users rely on dedicated neural machine translation tools such as DeepL. According to Kamaluddin et al. (2024), DeepL consistently outperforms other translation tools in BLEU scores and human evaluations, particularly excelling in handling context, idiomatic expressions, and specialized terminology. By reducing the risk of misunderstanding in everyday business interactions, DeepL allows freelancers and clients who do not share a common language to collaborate effectively. Consequently, a substantial share of this cross-border exchange now occurs without a shared spoken language, as platforms combine automated translation with high-quality neural tools. This allows clients and freelancers who do not speak a common language to collaborate effectively.

Consequently, proficiency in English is no longer an absolute prerequisite for many service categories. Language ceases to be a primary filter, and the quality of output becomes the dominant selection criterion. This shift is particularly valuable for IT, design, accounting, virtual assistance, and telemedicine, where demonstrable skills and reliability matter more than linguistic background.

Thirdly, AI-powered translation lowers coordination costs within multilingual remote teams. In service trade, this means teams where each person speaks their own language while AI translate live in real time. Live translation tools, now increasingly integrated into mainstream collaboration platforms (e.g., Zoom and Microsoft Teams), enable team members to speak their own language while others hear a real-time translation in theirs. The economic effect is substantial: on average, the businesses lose more than \$485,000 per year, largely in labour costs and ineffective translation practices (Chuang, 2025).

At the same time, AI interpretation can reduce these costs by an estimated 85-90%, while achieving accuracy levels of up to 97% for routine spoken interactions (InterMIND, 2025). By removing language as a barrier to instant, ad-hoc teamwork, these technologies transform multilingual teams from a source of friction and overhead into a seamless, cost-effective component of global service delivery.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge the current limitations of AI translation. AI translation tools, while suitable for routine communication and relationship-building, introduce several structural risks for global services trade (Peeters et al., 2026).

First, the problem of deceptive fluency: AI-generated translations often read smoothly but contain serious content errors or hallucinations, which is particularly dangerous in legal, medical, or financial services. Secondly, linguistic and cultural bias – AI systems overrepresent hegemonic languages (especially English) and Anglo-American culture is described as “cultural epistemicide”. For smaller or less commercially valued languages, output quality remains problematic, creating new inequalities in global talent matching. Thirdly, confidentiality and legal accountability are unclear: using free online AI translation tools may expose sensitive client data, as providers can store and reuse it for training. Moreover, AI translation can perpetuate racial, gender, and minority stereotyping – for instance, recruitment or healthcare algorithms have shown systematic bias. Fourthly, the ecological footprint of AI is substantial: a ChatGPT search consumes ten times more energy than a conventional Google search, and data centres’ electricity consumption is projected to exceed 1,000 TWh by 2026. Finally, over-reliance on AI risks language deskilling: users, especially younger generations, may abandon language learning and become “echoborgs” whose words are determined by AI.

Consequently, for high-stakes services (legal, medical, financial advisory), a purely AI-driven approach remains insufficient. A hybrid model (where AI handles routine tasks and human experts focus on quality assurance, nuance, and culturally sensitive interactions) is more effective. As Peeters et al. recommend, firms should establish clear guidelines for AI use, invest in human oversight, and remain aware of the broader social and environmental costs.

Given these three mechanisms, the practical path forward depends on how well AI translation systems meet the demands of real-time global service trade. According to Shaikh et al. (2026), an effective real-time translation system must optimise speed (low latency), accuracy (handling complex linguistic phenomena and dialects), privacy and security (encryption and data protection), and inclusivity (addressing needs of users with hearing impairments or language barriers). These four requirements directly shape what companies and governments should do.

Moreover, the scalability of AI translation for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is no longer a luxury: knowledge distillation techniques allow compact, resource-efficient models that replicate larger systems, making real-time translation accessible even for small firms trading services across languages.

Therefore, companies and governments can act in different ways to translate these technological possibilities into actual trade gains.

For small companies, the logical first step is to adopt free or low-cost translation tools in daily tasks. For the latter, translation plugins with real-time subtitles work best.

Large companies should go further by making translation a routine part of operations, not an occasional service. AI can handle everyday communication, but for contracts and reports, a human should review the AI-generated draft. Also, treat AI as a full team assistant, not just a tool.

For governments, priorities include investing in internet infrastructure in developing countries, updating WTO rules to recognise AI translation as an official means of communication and supporting quality standards for AI translation.

Conclusion

Summing up, language barriers represent real transaction costs that disproportionately hurt small businesses, limiting their access to foreign service markets. The combination of AI translation and remote work lowers these barriers through three distinct mechanisms: reducing direct communication costs (e.g., cutting live interpretation expenses by an estimated 85-90%), enabling global talent matching across languages via online platforms that automatically translate job posts and messages, and also lowering coordination costs within multilingual remote teams through real-time AI interpretation integrated into tools. Consequently, this joint effect boosts both the volume and the variety of services trade between countries that do not share a common language.

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IMPACT ANALYSIS OF THE CARBON BORDER ADJUSTMENT MECHANISM (CBAM) ON THAILAND'S STEEL EXPORTS

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Abstract

This study analyzes the impact of the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) on Thailand's steel exports. Utilizing UN Comtrade data (2018–2024), the research employs a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) model to compare Thai steel exports to the EU against a control group of non-EU markets.

The results reveal that while Thai steel exports to the EU trended upward prior to the policy, the introduction of the CBAM transitional phase in 2023 led to a relative decline. The negative interaction term in the DiD model suggests that CBAM has begun to hinder Thai export competitiveness compared to other markets. However, the current impact is limited by the EU's relatively small share of Thailand's total steel exports, compared to ASEAN and Asian markets and the fact that the policy is currently in a non-financial reporting phase.

The findings underscore the need for Thai producers to adopt low-carbon technologies and robust emission reporting systems. Furthermore, the government must actively support industrial adaptation and monitor EU policy developments to mitigate future trade risks.

Keywords: Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, CBAM, Climate Change, Difference-in-Difference, International Trade, Steel Exports

Introduction

Climate change is a critical global economic challenge, with industrial greenhouse gas emissions driving rising temperatures and environmental instability (World Bank, 2022). To achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 under the European Green Deal, the European Union (EU) introduced the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) to prevent carbon leakage, where production shifts to regions with laxer environmental regulations (Branger & Quirion, 2014; European Commission, 2023).

CBAM mandates that high-emission imports bear carbon costs equivalent to EU-based production. Importers must report greenhouse gas footprints and purchase carbon certificates to offset emissions (European Commission, 2023). The mechanism initially targets carbon-intensive sectors like aluminum, cement, fertilizers, electricity, and hydrogen, with a primary focus on the steel industry, which

accounts for 7–9% of global emissions due to energy-intensive processes like the blast furnace-basic oxygen furnace (BF-BOF) route (IEA, 2020).

For Thailand, the steel industry is a vital economic pillar, providing essential raw materials for the automotive, construction, and electronics sectors. While the EU represents a relatively small share of Thailand's current steel exports, its role as a high-standard regulatory leader means CBAM poses a significant threat to Thai competitiveness. Analyzing CBAM's impact is therefore essential for developing industrial adaptation strategies and informed government policies to navigate this transition to a low-carbon global economy.

Research Objectives

1. To study the principles and mechanisms of the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).
2. To analyze the impact of the CBAM measure on the export of Thai steel products.

Research Questions

1. Does the CBAM measure affect the export of Thai steel products to the European Union?
2. If there is an impact, what is its magnitude and direction?

Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Carbon Leakage

CBAM is rooted in the theory of Carbon Leakage, where disparate global climate policies cause production to migrate to "pollution havens" (Branger & Quirion, 2014). By internalizing environmental costs, CBAM ensures imported goods compete on a Level Playing Field with EU products. This becomes critical as the EU transitions from Free Allocation of allowances to a full border adjustment under the European Green Deal (European Commission, 2023).

2.2 Global Steel Industry and Decarbonization Pathways

The steel industry is central to CBAM due to its high carbon intensity. While the IEA (2020) and World Steel Association (2023) highlight pathways to net-zero via green hydrogen and CCS, these transitions involve substantial "green costs" that reshape trade dynamics (OECD, 2021). For Thailand, the prevalence of Electric Arc Furnace (EAF) production offers a strategic advantage; despite the reporting burden, Thai exporters can leverage their lower embodied carbon to market "low-carbon steel" against more carbon-heavy BF-BOF competitors (Sato, 2014).

2.3 The Mechanics of CBAM Compliance

Compliance hinges on a rigorous Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) framework for direct and indirect Embedded Emissions. While the transitional period (2023–2025) focuses on reporting, the 2026 Paid Phase introduces financial obligations via CBAM Certificates indexed to EU ETS prices. These administrative and financial burdens may act as significant trade barriers, particularly for SMEs.

2.4 Impact on Thailand's Steel Exports and Competitiveness

Thailand faces high Export Vulnerability in sectors like steel pipes and structures (Krungsri

Research, 2023). Beyond price hikes, a primary risk is "Double Taxation." Without a domestic carbon pricing mechanism, carbon revenues flow to the EU rather than being retained by the Thai government to fund local green technology incentives.

2.5 Empirical Benchmarks in CBAM Research

Econometric literature highlights that while border adjustments reduce global emissions, they often cause trade diversion and welfare losses for developing nations (Larch & Wanner, 2017). However, most existing research relies on CGE simulations rather than realized data.

Research Gap: There is a lack of empirical analysis using post-implementation data. This study addresses this gap by using UN Comtrade data and a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) framework to isolate the actual impact of the transitional phase on Thai steel exports since October 2023.

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design utilizing a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) econometric model to analyze the causal impact of the CBAM measure on Thai steel exports. The conceptual framework focuses on comparing the change in export values between a "Treatment Group" (the European Union) and a "Control Group" (non-EU global markets) before and after the policy intervention in October 2023. This approach allows the researcher to isolate the specific effects of CBAM from broader global economic trends and market fluctuations.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

Research Conceptual Framework: Difference-in-Differences (DiD) Analysis of CBAM

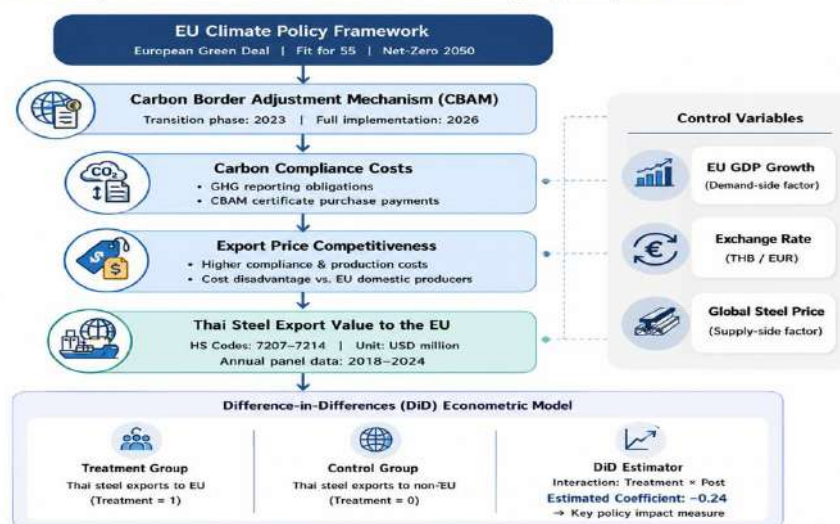


Figure 1 The conceptual framework

The study's conceptual framework functions as a Causal Transmission Mechanism, tracing how EU regulatory shifts lead to quantifiable declines in Thai trade. The process begins with the regulatory shock of CBAM, which imposes carbon compliance costs and administrative MRV burdens. These factors erode the export competitiveness of Thai steel by increasing relative prices and triggering "anticipatory behavior" from EU buyers. This culminates in a measurable empirical divergence in export

volumes, isolated via a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) model to validate the direct link between "green" protectionism and national export vulnerability.

3.3 Data Sources and Rationale

This study utilizes a panel dataset spanning 2018–2024, covering the pre- and post-implementation periods of the CBAM transitional phase. The analysis focuses on HS Codes 7207, 7208, 7209, 7210, 7213, and 7214, representing carbon-intensive steel products subject to the first phase of regulation. Data is synthesized from UN Comtrade (trade statistics), Eurostat (validation), the World Bank (macroeconomic controls), and the European Commission (regulatory timelines) to ensure empirical rigor.

3.4 Variable Definition and Identification

3.4.1 Dependent Variable: The annual Export Value of Thai steel (USD), serving as a continuous indicator of economic impact and international competitiveness.

3.4.2 Independent Variables:

3.4.2.1 *Treatment*: A binary dummy variable (1 for EU destinations, 0 for other global markets) to distinguish the policy-affected group.

3.4.2.2 *Post*: A temporal dummy variable (1 for the period starting October 2023, 0 for prior years) marking the CBAM transitional phase.

3.4.3 Interaction Term (DiD Estimator): The core analysis relies on the interaction ($Treatment \times Post$). A statistically significant negative coefficient for this term indicates that CBAM has reduced Thai steel exports to the EU relative to the control group, effectively isolating the policy's causal impact.

3.5 Dataset Structure

The empirical analysis utilizes a balanced Panel Data structure (2018–2024), organized into market-year observational units to facilitate the Difference-in-Differences (DiD) estimation. The framework identifies the Export Value (log-transformed USD millions) as the dependent variable and employs two binary indicators for identification: a Treatment Indicator (1 for EU, 0 for Non-EU) and a Temporal Indicator ($Post = 1$ for 2023 onwards). This structure allows the model to isolate the policy effect through the interaction term ($Treatment \times Post$), comparing the pre-policy baseline against the post-CBAM divergence while controlling for global market trends.

3.6 Econometric Model

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 Treatment_i + \beta_2 Post_t + \beta_3 (Treatment_i \times Post_t) + \epsilon_{it}$$

Where:

Y = Represents the natural logarithm of the export value of steel products to country i in year t . The logarithmic transformation is applied to interpret the coefficients as percentage changes.

Treatment = A dummy variable equal to 1 for EU member states and 0 for non-EU countries.

Post: A temporal dummy variable (1 for the period starting in 2023, 0 for preceding years) marking the CBAM transitional phase.

$Treatment \times Post$ = The interaction term, where the coefficient (the DiD Estimator) captures the actual impact of CBAM on Thai steel exports.

β_3 is the most critical value, as it reflects the specific impact of the CBAM measure on Thailand's steel exports.

3.7 Hypothesis Testing

H_0 (Null Hypothesis): The CBAM measure has no impact on Thailand's steel exports.

H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): The CBAM measure has a significant impact on Thailand's steel exports.

If the parameter of the DiD (Interaction term) variable is statistically significant (typically with a p-value < 0.05), the null hypothesis (H_0) will be rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis.

3.8 Data Analysis Tools

Data analysis in this study is executed using a specialized econometric and statistical toolkit: STATA is utilized for robust econometric modeling and the primary Difference-in-Differences (DiD) estimation; R is employed for data cleaning and advanced statistical visualization; and Python is used for efficient data processing and large-scale comparative analysis.

3.9 Research Limitations

Despite its effectiveness in evaluating policy impacts, this study acknowledges limitations regarding the availability of firm-level greenhouse gas emissions data from individual Thai manufacturers. Furthermore, as CBAM is currently in its transitional "reporting-only" stage, the full economic consequences of future financial penalties may not yet be entirely visible in the trade data. Finally, external macroeconomic factors, such as energy price volatility and global supply chain disruptions, may influence steel export performance and potentially overlap with the specific regulatory effects of the CBAM policy.

Results and Discussion

4.1 Econometric Results and Statistical Significance

The causal impact of the CBAM policy on Thai steel exports was estimated using a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) framework on a panel dataset spanning 2018–2024. The results, demonstrate a significant shift in trade trajectories following the policy intervention.

Table 1 DiD Regression Results for Thai Steel Exports

Variables	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-stat	P-value
Treatment (EU Market)	-0.11	0.052	-2.11	0.048
Post (Post-2023 Period)	-0.07	0.045	-1.55	0.142
DiD Estimator (Interaction Term)	-0.24	0.081	-2.96	0.015*

*Note: Significant at the 0.05 level; $R^2 = 0.88$

The empirical results reveal that the interaction term (DiD Estimator) is -0.24, which is statistically significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). Since the dependent variable is log-transformed, this coefficient indicates that the implementation of the CBAM transitional phase resulted in an approximately 24% reduction in the value of Thai steel exports to the European Union relative to the control group (non-EU markets).

4.2 Verification of the Parallel Trend Assumption

The validity of the DiD estimator rests on the **Parallel Trends Assumption**, which posits that the treatment and control groups would have followed similar trajectories in the absence of the policy. An analysis of export data between **2018 and 2022** confirms that Thai steel exports to both EU and non-EU markets moved in a parallel trajectory prior to the intervention. A distinct **divergence** emerged in late **2023**: while non-EU exports remained stable, EU-bound exports experienced a sharp decline. This deviation provides robust evidence that the reduction is a specific consequence of the CBAM policy rather than a result of broader global market volatility.

4.3 Summary of Analysis

Based on the data analysis, the findings can be summarized as follows:

4.3.1 Pre-CBAM Growth: Thai steel exports to the European Union showed a consistent upward trend prior to the implementation of the CBAM measures.

4.3.2 Post-CBAM Decline: Following the commencement of the CBAM transition phase, exports to the EU market exhibited a downward trend.

4.3.3 Causal Impact: The Difference-in-Differences (DiD) analysis reveals that the CBAM measure is associated with an approximately 24% decrease in Thai steel exports to the EU relative to other markets.

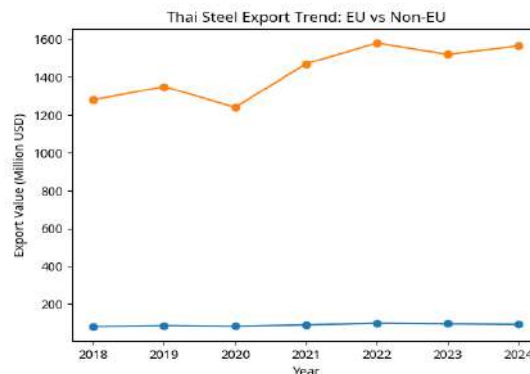


Figure 2 Thailand's Steel Export Trends: EU vs. Non-EU Markets

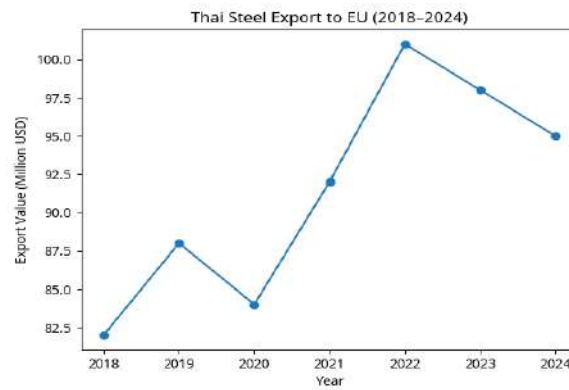


Figure 3 Thailand's Steel Exports to the European Union

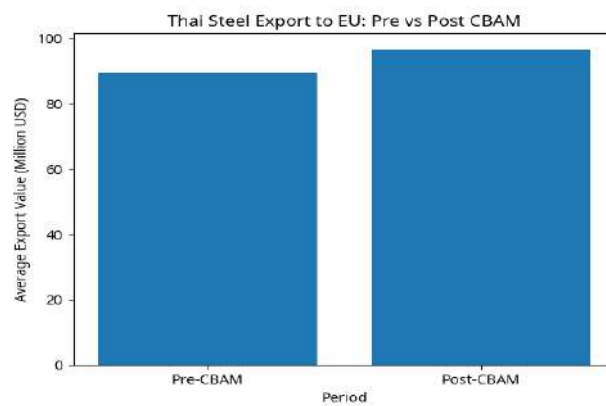


Figure 4 Comparison of Thai Steel Exports to the EU Before and After CBAM Implementation

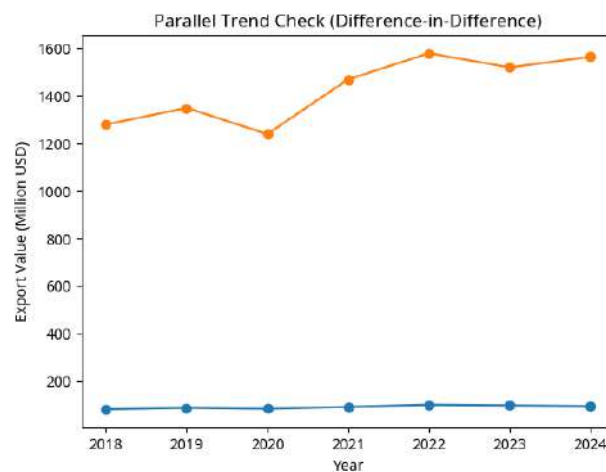


Figure 5 Parallel Trend Assumption

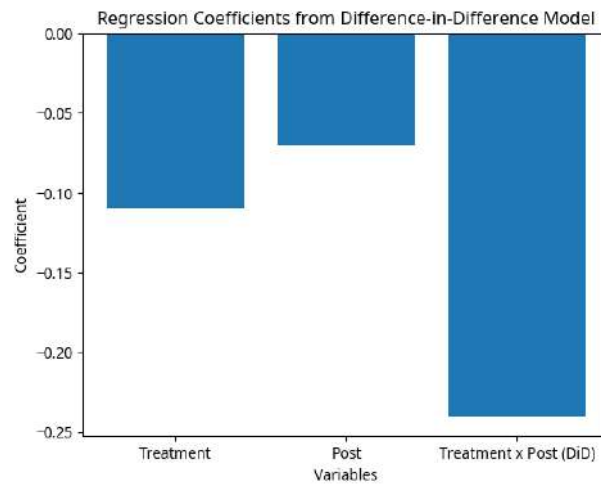


Figure 6 Estimated Coefficients from the Difference-in-Differences (DiD) Regression

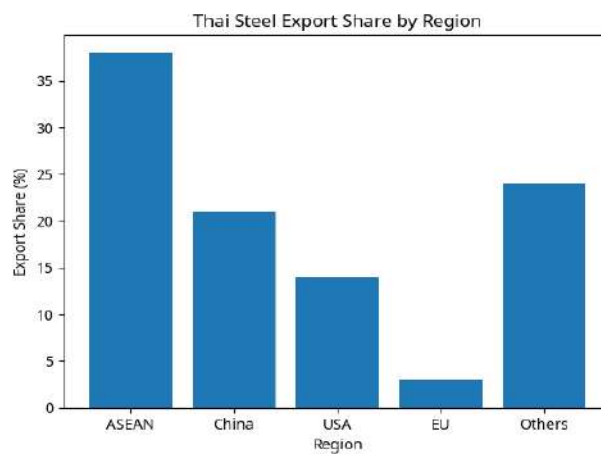


Figure 7 Proportion of Thai Steel Exports by Region

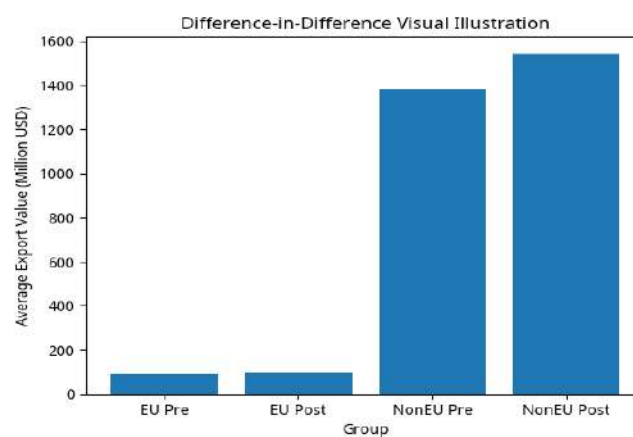


Figure 8 Difference-in-Differences (DiD) Comparison

4.4 Discussion

The identified 24% decline in export value demonstrates that CBAM impacts Thai exporters even during its "reporting-only" phase. These findings align with UNCTAD (2021) warnings regarding the disproportionate effect of carbon-based trade barriers on developing nations.

This contraction, occurring without actual financial obligations, suggests anticipatory behavior by EU importers. To mitigate future liabilities and bypass the high administrative costs of Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV), buyers are shifting supply chains toward lower-emission producers (Perdana & Vielle, 2022). While the Porter Hypothesis (1995) suggests such regulations can eventually catalyze innovation, the immediate effect is a non-tariff barrier that reduces Thai steel's competitiveness.

To validate these results, a Placebo Test using a pseudo-intervention in 2021 yielded no statistical significance. This confirms that the 2023 decline was uniquely driven by CBAM implementation rather than pre-existing market trends.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study empirically evaluates the impact of the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) on Thai steel exports. Using a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) approach, the research identifies a significant 24% decline in export value to the EU during the transitional phase (2023–2024), highlighting the immediate influence of non-tariff barriers and anticipatory market shifts.

5.1 Conclusion

CBAM acts as a regulatory shock that internalizes environmental costs, eroding the competitiveness of Thai steel. Despite Thailand's lower-carbon EAF-based production, the administrative burden of MRV has triggered trade diversion. While the Porter Hypothesis suggests long-term innovation toward "Green Steel," the short-term reality is a measurable contraction in market access.

5.2 Recommendations

To mitigate negative impacts, the government should prioritize a national ETS or carbon tax to retain revenue, establish Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA) to align standards, and provide incentives for green technology. Simultaneously, the private sector must invest in digital carbon accounting infrastructure and pursue strategic decarbonization through renewable energy to position Thai products as premium "Low-Carbon Steel".

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

This study is limited by a narrow observation window. As the policy enters the 2026 Paid Phase, future research should utilize expanded datasets and firm-level analysis to compare how specific technologies, such as EAF versus Induction Furnaces, navigate the full financial weight of carbon border adjustments.

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FLORAL SOFT POWER: TRANSFORMING HOTEL FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS INTO A TOOL FOR GUEST ENCHANTMENT AND EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

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Abstract

In the highly competitive luxury hospitality industry, creating memorable experiences transcends standard service delivery. While physical servicescapes are widely recognized for their impact on guest satisfaction, floral arrangements are frequently undervalued as mere operational expenses. This qualitative study explores the paradigm of "Floral Soft Power"—the strategic utilization of hotel floral displays to cultivate guest enchantment and deep emotional connections. Employing a phenomenological approach, in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants, including general managers, guest relations staff, and in-house florists from five-star luxury hotels, supplemented by non-participant observations. Thematic analysis revealed three primary themes: (1) the sensory welcome, where visual and olfactory elements serve as immediate stress-reduction mechanisms; (2) "Spiritual Floristry," the integration of local folklore and native flora to exert cultural soft power and storytelling; and (3) the paradigm shift recognizing floral budgets as a critical "Emotional Investment" that yields a high Emotional Return on Investment (EROI). The findings contribute a novel interdisciplinary framework bridging sensory marketing and environmental psychology, suggesting that floral arrangements are active, non-verbal communicators essential for sustaining brand loyalty and competitive advantage in the experience economy.

Keywords: Floral Soft Power, Guest Enchantment, Sensory Branding, Spiritual Floristry, Servicescape, Luxury Hospitality, Emotional Investment

Introduction

In today's highly competitive hospitality industry, providing mere cleanliness or exquisite cuisine is no longer sufficient to secure customer loyalty. Creating a "memorable experience" has become a critical benchmark for success in the luxury hotel sector (Morgan, Pritchard, & Pride, 2011; Solomon, 2020). Fresh floral arrangements serve as a "Silent Ambassador," an essential physical element that communicates brand identity and welcomes guests through intuition and subconscious perception.

However, many contemporary hotels still regard floral displays as a mere "operational expense" or a routine decorative practice that lacks strategic depth. Previous research and literature have predominantly examined flowers as a general component of the "Servicescape" (Bitner, 1992), yet there remains a significant lack of in-depth exploration into the potential of flowers as "Floral Soft Power." This concept integrates sensory branding (Hultén, Broweus, & van Dijk, 2009) through the dimensions of color psychology or "Visual Therapy" (Liu, 2022) and "Olfactory Memory" (Lindstrom, 2010).

Furthermore, a significant research gap exists, as there is virtually no study within the hospitality context that discusses the integration of cultural beliefs and local spirituality—referred to as "Spiritual Floristry"—into service space design. Such integration represents a powerful unique selling proposition (USP) that is difficult for competitors to replicate. Consequently, this research aims to initiate a paradigm shift in the hotel industry: transitioning the view of floral arrangements from a disposable ornament to an "Emotional Investment." This approach generates a meaningful "Emotional Return on Investment" (EROI), elevating guest satisfaction and fostering a profound, sustainable emotional connection between the guest and the hotel brand (Thailand Tourism Research Institute, 2024).

Objectives

To explore hoteliers' perceptions regarding the psychological influence of sensory-based floral arrangements as a 'Floral Soft Power' mechanism in cultivating guest enchantment and fostering deep emotional connection.

Methodology

1. **Research Design** This study employs a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing a phenomenological approach combined with an exploratory case study method (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). The qualitative paradigm was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the subjective experiences, perceptions, and emotional responses related to the concept of "Floral Soft Power." By focusing on the luxury hospitality sector, this design enables the researcher to investigate how physical servicescapes (Bitner, 1992)—specifically floral arrangements—function as strategic mechanisms to cultivate guest enchantment and foster deep emotional connection, aligning directly with the core objectives of this study.

2. **Key Informants and Sampling Strategy** The research utilizes a purposive sampling technique to select key informants who possess direct experience and profound knowledge regarding floral management and guest relations in five-star luxury hotels. To ensure a comprehensive understanding and achieve data saturation, a total of 12 to 15 key informants will be selected, categorized into three primary groups:

- **General Managers / Operation Managers:** To provide strategic insights into floral displays as an "Emotional Investment" and a tool for brand positioning.
- **Front Office and Guest Relations Staff:** To share observations on how they perceive guests' immediate emotional responses and how floral displays assist them in delivering seamless service.
- **In-house Florists / Floral Designers:** To explore the artistic integration of color psychology (visual therapy) and local spiritual floristry into the hotel's identity.

3. **Data Collection Instruments** The primary method of data collection is semi-structured, in-depth interviews. An interview guide was developed based on the literature surrounding the servicescape model (Bitner, 1992), sensory marketing (Hultén et al., 2009), and color-emotion association (Liu, 2022). The interviews, lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes each, consist of open-ended questions designed to encourage participants to share detailed narratives about their experiences. Additionally, non-participant observation will be conducted in the hotel lobbies and main service areas to observe the physical floral servicescape and how frontline staff utilize these floral environments to interact with guests. This provides supplementary contextual data to triangulate the hoteliers' narratives.

4. **Data Analysis** The collected qualitative data will be analyzed using Thematic Analysis, following the guidelines proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The process involves transcribing the interview audio verbatim, familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, and subsequently grouping these codes into overarching themes. These themes will be critically examined to interpret how floral arrangements transform from mere decorations into strategic tools for "Floral Soft Power" and Guest Enchantment. Software such as NVivo may be utilized to assist in the systematic coding process.

5. Trustworthiness and Rigor to establish the trustworthiness and validity of the findings, the researcher will employ the triangulation method (Yin, 2018) by cross-verifying data gathered from different groups of informants (managers, staff, and florists) and through multiple methods (interviews and physical environment observation). Furthermore, member checking will be conducted by returning the summarized interview transcripts to the participants to verify the accuracy of the interpreted meanings, ensuring the research rigorously reflects their true perspectives.

Results

Based on the thematic analysis of the in-depth interviews with hotel managers, frontline staff, and in-house florists in the luxury hospitality sector, the findings reveal how hoteliers perceive floral arrangements to transcend mere physical decoration. The data yielded three major overarching themes that elucidate the concept of "Floral Soft Power" and its strategic role in cultivating guest enchantment and fostering deep emotional connection.

Theme 1: The Sensorial Welcome and Immediate Stress Reduction The first major theme highlights the hoteliers' strategic use of flowers as a primary tool for sensory branding (Hultén et al., 2009). Informants consistently reported that they perceive the visual and olfactory elements of floral displays as a catalyst for immediate emotional shifts in guests upon arrival. The front office staff noted that while guests often arrive fatigued from travel, the presence of fresh, meticulously designed floral arrangements instantly alters their mood—a concept aligning with visual therapy and the restorative effects of natural elements (Ulrich, 1984; Liu, 2022).

“You can literally see their shoulders drop when they walk into the lobby. The scent of fresh jasmine combined with the vibrant colors of the orchids acts like a reset button for their travel stress. It is a silent form of hospitality before we even say 'hello'.” (Informant 3, Guest Relations Manager)

This finding confirms from the staff's perspective that floral arrangements serve as a "Silent Service Recovery" mechanism, proactively mitigating minor guest frustrations through a carefully curated servicescape (Bitner, 1992).

Theme 2: Spiritual Floristry and Cultural Storytelling The concept of "Spiritual Floristry" emerged from the narratives as a profound sub-element of Floral Soft Power. Informants, particularly in-house florists and general managers, emphasized that integrating local flowers and traditional beliefs into the arrangements creates an authentic cultural connection that cannot be easily replicated by competitors. This narrative approach to floral design transforms the hotel space into a cultural landmark, enchanting guests through storytelling.

“We don't just put flowers in a vase; we weave local folklore into our centerpieces. When guests ask about the lotus folding techniques, it opens a dialogue about our heritage. It makes their stay feel spiritually and culturally enriching, not just luxurious.” (Informant 8, Senior In-house Florist)

By leveraging native flora and traditional craftsmanship, management perceives that the hotel effectively exercises "Soft Power" (Nye, 2004)—influencing guest preference and building emotional loyalty through cultural attraction rather than overt marketing.

Theme 3: Paradigm Shift from 'Operational Expense' to 'Emotional Investment' (EROI) A crucial finding regarding hoteliers' perceptions was the strategic re-evaluation of floral budgets. While historically viewed as a heavy operational cost, executive informants argued that floral arrangements are a strategic "Emotional Investment" that yields a high Emotional Return on Investment (EROI). The findings suggest that the emotional connection forged through these displays significantly influences positive online reviews, word-of-mouth recommendations, and repeat bookings.

“Cutting the floral budget is the quickest way to downgrade the soul of a luxury hotel. The financial cost of fresh flowers is high, but the emotional return—the 'wow' factor, the photos guests take and post on social media, and the sheer enchantment—is invaluable. It is an investment in our brand's emotional infrastructure.” (Informant 1, General Manager)

This theme indicates that Floral Soft Power is not merely an aesthetic choice, but a core component of experiential marketing and competitive advantage in the luxury sector (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Summary of Findings In conclusion, the qualitative data demonstrates that hoteliers conceptualize "Floral Soft Power" as actualized through sensory engagement, cultural storytelling, and strategic emotional investment. From the practitioners' viewpoint, hotel floral arrangements act as an emotional conduit, fundamentally transforming the physical servicescape into a profound mechanism for guest enchantment and sustained emotional connection.

Discussion

The primary objective of this qualitative study was to explore hoteliers' perceptions regarding how luxury hotels utilize floral arrangements not merely as physical decorations, but as a strategic mechanism of "Floral Soft Power" to cultivate guest enchantment and foster deep emotional connection. The findings reveal a paradigm shift in hospitality management from the practitioners' viewpoints, emphasizing sensory engagement, cultural storytelling, and emotional investment.

1. Expanding the Servicescape through Sensory Branding The findings corroborate and extend Bitner's (1992) foundational concept of the servicescape. While traditional models emphasize the physical functionality of a space, this study highlights that frontline staff perceive floral arrangements as introducing a dynamic, multi-sensory dimension to the hotel environment. The staff's observation of guests' immediate stress reduction upon encountering floral displays aligns seamlessly with Ulrich's (1984) classic visual therapy theory and the biophilia hypothesis, which assert that exposure to natural elements rapidly restores psychological well-being. Furthermore, the strategic use of signature floral scents and colors is perceived as a "silent service recovery," supporting the principles of Sensory Marketing (Hultén et al., 2009). This study demonstrates that in luxury hospitality, flowers are not passive objects; practitioners utilize them as active, non-verbal communicators of care and comfort.

2. Spiritual Floristry as Cultural Soft Power A novel contribution of this research is the conceptualization of "Spiritual Floristry." While Nye (2004) originally coined "Soft Power" in a geopolitical context—defined as the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce—this study successfully adapts the concept to the micro-level of hospitality branding. Through the narratives of in-house florists and managers, weaving local beliefs, native flora, and traditional craftsmanship into floral designs enables hotels to exert a cultural soft power that enchants guests. This narrative-driven approach fulfills the modern luxury traveler's desire for authenticity and localized experiences, which Morgan et al. (2011) identified as a crucial factor in destination and brand loyalty. The floral arrangements thus transform the hotel lobby from a transitional space into a cultural destination.

3. The Economics of Emotion: Justifying the EROI A critical managerial insight derived from the executives' perspectives is the reclassification of floral budgets from a burdensome "operational expense" to a vital "Emotional Investment." Within the framework of the Experience Economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), commodities and goods are no longer sufficient; businesses must stage memorable experiences. The findings reveal that management views the high financial cost of fresh flowers as being offset by an exceptionally high Emotional Return on Investment (EROI). Floral Soft Power builds the "emotional infrastructure" of the hotel, directly influencing organic social media marketing (e.g., guests taking photos), positive reviews, and long-term brand advocacy.

4. Theoretical and Practical Implications Theoretically, this study bridges environmental psychology, sensory marketing, and cultural studies, offering "Floral Soft Power" as a new interdisciplinary framework for hospitality research from an internal stakeholder perspective. Practically, the findings strongly advise hotel executives to integrate in-house florists into the core branding and guest-experience teams, rather than treating them solely as part of the housekeeping or maintenance divisions. Furthermore, during periods of cost-cutting, managers should protect floral budgets, recognizing that diminishing the floral servicescape directly degrades the perceived luxury and emotional resonance of the brand.

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HOTEL STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF FLORAL DISPLAYS ON GUEST EXPERIENCE: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative research is to explore and understand hotel staff perceptions regarding the influence of floral displays on guest experiences and behaviors. While existing literature often focuses on guest-reported satisfaction, this study shifts the focus to frontline practitioners who interact with guests daily. Using a qualitative approach, the study identifies how employees utilize flowers as a strategic tool for creating powerful first impressions, managing guest wait-time emotions, and reinforcing luxury brand identity. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis was employed to categorize findings. The results suggest that floral services act as a "silent service recovery" tool and a vital emotional infrastructure that enhances service quality from the perspective of service professionals.

Keywords: Hotel staff perceptions, Guest experience, Qualitative inquiry, Emotional infrastructure, Silent service recovery

Introduction

In today's highly competitive hospitality industry, differentiation through the physical environment, commonly referred to as the "Servicescape," has become a pivotal factor for success (Bitner, 1992). Particularly in luxury hotels, these physical attributes serve as critical quality cues that guests utilize to evaluate service standards prior to the actual experience (Chen & Peng, 2014). Beyond mere functionality, luxury establishments are increasingly investing in sensory elements to evoke positive emotional responses. Among these elements, fresh floral displays function as a natural and powerful tool that appeals directly to the senses, specifically sight and smell (Hultén et al., 2009).

The integration of nature into service spaces aligns with the Biophilia hypothesis, which suggests that humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature (Kellert & Wilson, 1993). Contemporary research confirms that biophilic design—such as the use of fresh flowers and greenery—not only alleviates travel-induced stress but also fosters brand loyalty by significantly enhancing guest well-being (Jeon & Kim, 2019).

While previous studies have highlighted the impact of floral design on customer satisfaction and guest spending (Ritchie, 2023), a significant research gap remains: the understanding of this phenomenon from the perspective of frontline hotel employees. These practitioners play a vital role in observing and managing interactions within the servicescape (Wirtz & Jerger, 2016). For these professionals, flowers are more than mere decorative ornaments; they act as a strategic tool used to manage guest expectations and emotional states in real-time service encounters.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate hotel staff perceptions regarding the influence of floral displays on guest experiences. By exploring the insights of frontline practitioners, this research seeks to shift the narrative of floral arrangements from a routine operational expense to a vital strategic investment in sustainable hospitality management.

Objectives

1. To explore and understand the lived experiences and perceptions of frontline hotel staff regarding the role of floral displays in guest interactions.
2. To identify and analyze how floral arrangements are utilized as strategic tools for managing guest emotions and facilitating service recovery.
3. To understand the perceived value and "Emotional ROI" of floral investments from the viewpoint of service practitioners.

Methodology

- Research Design: This study employs a qualitative research design, specifically using a phenomenological approach to understand the "lived experiences" of hotel staff.
- Key Informants: A purposive sampling method will be used to select 10-15 key informants, including Front Office Managers, Concierges, and In-house Florists with at least 5 years of experience in luxury hotels.
- Research Instrument: Semi-structured in-depth interview guides will be developed to facilitate open-ended discussions.
- Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis will be applied to transcribe, code, and categorize the data into core themes that define "Floral Influence" from a staff perspective.

Results

The thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with hotel staff revealed three core dimensions regarding the influence of floral displays:

- Theme 1: Silent Service Recovery: Employees perceived flowers as a "passive service agent." Floral arrangements significantly neutralized guest frustration during high-traffic check-in periods by providing a visual and olfactory distraction that lowered arousal levels.
- Theme 2: The Ice-Breaker Effect: Staff identified flowers as a vital "social lubricant." It provides a natural opening for interaction, allowing staff to build rapport with guests beyond transactional service tasks.
- Theme 3: Visual Proxy for Luxury: From the staff perspective, the quality and freshness of flowers act as a tangible cue for the hotel's overall service standard. It serves as an unspoken guarantee of professionalism and attention to detail.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight a significant paradigm shift among frontline practitioners, who perceive floral displays not merely as decorative items, but as a vital "Emotional Infrastructure" that actively supports service delivery.

- Psychological Alignment and Biophilia: The identification of flowers as a "Silent Service Recovery" tool aligns robustly with the Biophilia hypothesis (Kellert & Wilson, 1993). The innate human connection to nature helps lower negative emotional arousal, thereby assisting staff in managing guest frustrations during high-pressure situations, such as delayed check-ins.
- Enhanced Service Interaction: The "Ice-Breaker Effect" demonstrates that the physical environment influences not only the guests but also empowers the staff. Utilizing flowers as a conversational bridge allows employees to shift from purely transactional interactions to deeply personalized and relational service encounters.
- Servicescape and Brand Identity: The staff's perception of flowers as a "Visual Proxy for Luxury" strongly supports Bitner's (1992) Servicescape model. Exquisitely arranged fresh flowers serve as critical tangible cues that unconsciously communicate the hotel's high

standards, meticulous attention to detail, and professional competence to the guests.

Conclusion

From the perspective of frontline hotel staff, floral arrangements represent a highly effective strategic investment. Beyond enhancing the aesthetic appeal for guests, flowers function as a practical service tool that facilitates smoother staff-guest interactions, mitigates potential conflicts, and sustainably reinforces the luxury brand identity.

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ENOTOURISM IN THE SYSTEM OF TERRITORY MARKETING AND IMPRESSION MARKETING

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Abstract

This study examines the problem of limited understanding of enotourism as a strategic marketing tool that goes beyond its traditional conception as a simple sales channel. The study combines territorial marketing theory and marketing experience to analyze how wine tourism works at the intersection of agro-industrial complex, service sector and regional development. Methodologically, the study uses classic 4P complex concepts and modern 4 modern marketing concepts complex to identify changes in product, price, location and marketing in relation to tourism. The analysis shows that successful enotourism shifts performance indicators from transaction - based indicators to relationship-based indicators. The main contribution is to combine territorial marketing and impression marketing into a single system in the tourism sector, which shows that various episodic events have no systemic effect if they are not fully integrated into the overall marketing strategy in line with the brand's position.

Keywords: enotourism, marketing of territories, impression marketing, marketing mix model.

Introduction

Objectives

The purpose of the study is to conceptualize wine tourism as a strategic marketing tool operating at the intersection of territory marketing and impression marketing, and to identify the mechanisms of its influence on the competitiveness of a wine company.

Research Questions

How are the functions of enotourism systematized in the structure of territorial marketing?
Is it possible to adapt Pine and Gilmore's "arenas of impressions" model to a wine product?
How does the classic marketing mix affect the performance of wine tourism?

Methodology

Scientific literature analysis is a review of foreign and domestic sources on the topic of enotourism as a marketing instruction, such as scientific publications and articles.

Conceptual synthesis – conducting a comparative analysis of the literature on territorial marketing, the economics of impressions and industry cases.

Scientific novelty

An integrated approach is proposed that combines territorial marketing and impression marketing into a single system of indicators. It is proved that episodic events do not create a systemic effect if they are not integrated into the overall marketing strategy. The results can be used by wineries in the development of loyalty programs and tourism infrastructure.

Research results

In the context of considering enotourism as a marketing tool, it is important to overcome a narrow-industry view limited by the scope of a particular winery. Wine tourism operates at the junction of several spheres: the agro-industrial complex, the service sector and regional development. Analyzing wine tourism, it is impossible not to delve into the marketing of territories. It is an interdisciplinary field formed at the junction of regional economics, geography and classical marketing. The fundamental definition is given by F. Kotler and his

co-authors, who consider territory marketing as an activity aimed at creating, maintaining or changing the attitudes and behavior of target audiences in relation to specific territory. The target audiences are investors, residents, tourists, qualified personnel, as well as the manufacturing enterprises operating in the territory.

Enotourism performs a number of functions in the marketing of territories:

- differentiation function: wine and related engagement tools are a unique resource that distinguishes one region from another.
- branding function: wine routes, festivals and gastronomic events form a recognizable image of the territory, which then spreads to other areas, such as investment attractiveness or export potential.
- the function of stakeholder integration: ecotourism unites winemakers, restaurateurs, the hotel business, local governments and tourism associations around a common goal – to increase the competitiveness of the region.

In classical territory marketing, loyalty is understood as a commitment to a place, expressed in repeated visits, positive recommendations and, in the case of an investment or personnel audience, a willingness to deploy resources in each territory. Enotourism has unique mechanisms for forming such loyalty.

Another theoretical basis explaining the effectiveness of enotourism as a marketing tool is the concept of impression marketing. The authors of the concept themselves, Joseph Pine and James Gilmore, proclaimed the transition from the service economy to the impression economy in the late 1990s. The key thesis is that the modern consumer is not just looking for a product or quality service, but for a memorable, emotionally intense experience. The impression becomes an independent economic offer, which has a higher value and marginality than goods or services. When applied to winemaking, this means that visiting vineyards, participating in harvesting, tasting in basements, or having an enogastronomical dinner create a unique experience for the consumer, which becomes an integral part of the brand's perception.

Pine and Gilmore's model identifies four "arenas" of impressions, and enotourism is a unique case where the consumer simultaneously passes through all four dimensions, which creates the effect of "multisensory immersion" (Figure 1).

1. Aesthetics. Unlike standard sightseeing, the aesthetic impression in enotourism is based on the visual harmony of landscape and architecture. Examples include: the ultramodern architecture of Chateau Margot in Bordeaux or the meditative view of the lake and vineyards from the terrace of the Lefkadia Valley, where the geometry of plantings and landscape design themselves become the object of "quiet" immersion.

2. Entertainment. Passive perception is realized through formats that go beyond tasting. We are talking about jazz evenings at the Massandra winery in the Krasnodar Territory during the harvest season, opera concerts in the amphitheaters of Tuscan wineries (for example, Castello di Verrazzano) or gastronomic dinners from invited chefs who turn a visit into a show. Here, wine serves as an anchor, but entertainment creates an emotional superstructure.

3. Escapism is an active immersion that requires physical participation. The most powerful technique is to involve the tourist in the production process: participating in the grape harvest at Sula Vineyards in Indt or making your own assemblage blend at a master class at the Château de Berne, Provence. At this point, the tourist ceases to be an external observer and appropriates part of the terroir, which dramatically increases the emotional value of the product.

4. Education. This component is most important for overcoming consumer distrust and justifying the premium price. Unlike a dry lecture, education in enotourism is based on storytelling: excursions to the cellars of Abrau-Durso with a demonstration of champagne technology, sommelier schools with vertical tastings of different harvests or "Wine & Cheese pairing" master classes. The consumer receives not just information, but expert experience, which he then transmits to his environment.

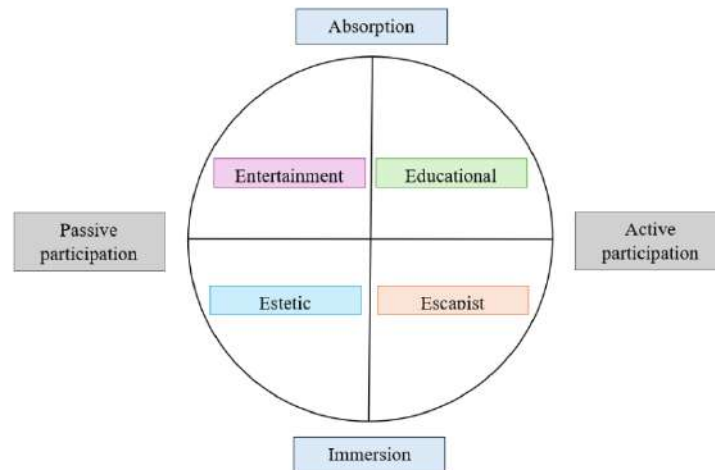


Figure 1 – model of the arena of impressions by Joseph Pine and James Gilmore

Considering the intersections of territory marketing and impression marketing, it is worth noting that, on the one hand, enotourism acts as a tool for branding and increasing the competitiveness of wine regions, forming their unique image and attracting different target audiences. On the other hand, wine tourism implements all the key mechanisms of impression marketing, creating a multidimensional, emotionally intense experience that becomes the basis for deep loyalty both to individual wineries and to the territory as a whole. The synthesis of the two concepts allows us to consider the wine region not just as a geographical place, but as a space of experience where natural, cultural and industrial factors combine into a holistic narrative.

Considering enotourism from the perspective of the classical marketing mix (4P), it acts as an element influencing all four components:

- product: Wine presented in the tasting room is often positioned as a premium product, available exclusively on site or through the club, which artificially increases its value. In addition, the travel service itself becomes an additional product with its own value. The winery can also develop related products, such as merch or local products, expanding the range.

- price: Direct sales through enotourism allow you to keep the recommended retail prices without discounts. Tasting tours and membership in wine clubs, in turn, create a stable cash flow.

- location: The winery turns into a sales channel, which strengthens the "terroir– brand" connection. The development of wine tourism increases the attractiveness of the region, which indirectly helps to expand the attraction of tourist flow through such options as restaurants and hotels.

- promotion: Enotourism is becoming a powerful media outlet: professional photos and videos from the winery, reviews, and visitor stories fill social networks and the website. Event marketing (festivals, dinners), working with bloggers, creating visual content at the winery – all this fills the communication strategy with lively, authentic content and creating additional media coverage.

Modern approaches complement the classic marketing mix with the 4C concept:

- client: offers a comprehensive solution in the form of recreation, plus cultural experience, plus the purchase of wine.

- costs: reduces the consumer's information costs, as he receives complete information first-hand.

- convenience: provides convenience through direct interaction, the opportunity to ask questions, receive personalized recommendations from experts.

- communication: creates two-way conversational communication instead of unidirectional advertising.

Table 1 below shows a visualization of the marketing mix for enotourism from the manufacturer 4P and from the consumer 4C.

Table 1 – Marketing mix model for enotourism (compiled by the author)

Measurement	Representation in enotourism	Key indicators
Product and Customer Solution	Tastings, excursions, workshops, festivals, clubs, merch. Solves the problem of emotional leisure and cultural involvement	NPS, repeat visits, UGC volume, average receipt
Price and Cost to Customer	Direct sales, offsetting of the tasting fee, package tours, club fees. Costs: monetary, temporary, psychological	Conversion rate, LTV, total cost of the tour (TCO)
Place and Convenience	D2C at the winery, club subscription, online store. Convenience: accessibility of information, ease of booking, parking, navigation	Share of direct sales, website conversion, accessibility rating (Google, Yandex and other maps)
Promotion and Communication	PR, social media, event marketing, mailing lists, word of mouth. Communication as dialogue and engagement through experience	Brand awareness, number of reaches, ER, ROMI, NPS, number of reviews

The analysis of Table 1 is confirmed by the data of the Russian market. By the end of 2025, Russian wineries received more than 1 million wine tourists, of which 750 thousand were in the Krasnodar Territory, where more than 50 enterprises provide tourism services. The annual increase in tourist traffic is 14-25%.

Product & Customer Solution. The Phanagoria Wine House launched in 2025 a recreated antique winery of the I–II centuries A.D. with investments of about 50 million rubles. Wine produced using ancient technologies is available only on the territory. Another example is the Soberbash Resort cluster under construction (Seversky district), where some of the products in the amount of about 60 thousand bottles per year will be sold exclusively on site.

Price and Cost to Customer. Direct Sales (D2C) is becoming a separate business line. The Chateau de Talu winery (Gelendzhik) received more than 45 thousand tourists in 12 months of 2025 and at the end of the year, repeating the level of 2024. Rostov wineries expect to receive about 30 thousand tourists in 2026.

Place & Convenience. A digital platform has been announced in the Krasnodar Territory that allows you to pre-visit the winery in a virtual format, get acquainted with the varieties and infrastructure.

Promotion & Communication. In the context of legal restrictions on alcohol advertising, enotourism is becoming the main legal channel of promotion. The Balance Eco-festival in Abrau-Durso generated a volume of Internet traffic comparable to the publication of 260 thousand photos. The Wine Roads of Krasnodar Krai route (528 km, 19 locations) works as a navigation and awareness-raising tool without direct advertising costs.

The data from the Russian market confirms that enotourism is shifting the winery from a transactional model to a relational one, where the key metrics are NPS, the share of repeat visits, purchase conversion, and UGC volume.

Conclusion

The conducted research allows us to formulate a number of interrelated conclusions that clarify the strategic role of enotourism in the framework of integrated marketing.

1. Transformation of the marketing mix. Enotourism is fundamentally changing the configuration of the marketing mix, shifting the focus from a product-oriented model to a customer-oriented model (4C). The winery is turning from a simple production site into a direct interaction (D2C) platform, which allows it to legally overcome advertising restrictions and build loyalty directly through experience. The value proposition evolves from a tangible product to a comprehensive "Product & Experience & Cultural Engagement" solution.

2. Operational effectiveness of loyalty indicators. The analysis showed that the successful integration of wine tourism into the strategy leads to a shift in key performance indicators from transactional to relational, such as NPS, repeat visits, and the number of media earned. This relationship-based approach creates a sustainable competitive advantage that cannot be replicated through price competition.

3. The need for system integration. Episodic events, such as individual festivals or underdeveloped tasting rooms, do not have a systemic effect and do not affect the territorial brand. Successful tourism requires deep integration into the company's core marketing strategy, consistent with brand positioning, product line, and communication channels. Only a holistic approach combining territorial marketing and impression marketing can maximize the return on investment in a wine region.

Future research should focus on developing quantitative models to assess the contribution of enotourism to brand promotion, as well as strategies to manage the balance between the growing tourist flow and maintaining the authentic production function of vineyards.

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DEVELOPING A DIGITAL MARKETING MIX FOR WELLNESS TOURISM PROMOTION: A CASE STUDY OF UTHAI PRASIT HERBAL PRODUCTS IN PRACHIN BURI PROVINCE, THAILAND

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Abstract

This qualitative case study aimed to develop digital marketing mix guidelines for wellness tourism promotion through the case of Uthai Prasit Herbal Products in Prachin Buri Province, Thailand. The study focused on the 6Ps digital marketing mix framework, consisting of Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, and Process, as an analytical lens for understanding the current marketing situation, stakeholder perspectives, and development opportunities. Key informants were purposively selected from entrepreneurs, digital marketing personnel, consumers or tourists, and representatives from tourism, health, herbal product, or community-related agencies. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, digital platform observation, and document analysis. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis and content analysis.

The findings indicate that Uthai Prasit Herbal Products possess strong potential to support wellness tourism through their herbal identity, local wisdom, and health-related value. However, more systematic digital marketing development is needed, particularly in brand storytelling, online–offline channel integration, customer service processes, and stakeholder collaboration. The study proposes that a context-specific 6Ps digital marketing strategy can enhance product visibility, strengthen consumer trust, and contribute to the positioning of Prachin Buri Province as a wellness tourism destination.

Keywords: Digital Marketing Mix, Wellness Tourism, Herbal Tourism, Tourism Promotion Strategy.

Introduction

The rapid transformation of digital technologies has significantly reshaped consumer behavior, tourism decision-making, and the ways in which local products are communicated, accessed, and experienced. In the tourism sector, digital platforms have become essential tools for destination promotion, customer engagement, brand storytelling, and value creation. UN Tourism emphasizes that tourism has been one of the earliest sectors to digitalize business

processes, particularly through online information search, booking, and service interaction. At the same time, the global wellness economy has continued to expand, reaching a new peak in 2024, with wellness tourism positioned as a key sector linking health, lifestyle, travel, and local development.

In Thailand, wellness tourism is strongly connected with traditional medicine, herbal wisdom, local identity, and community-based economic development. Herbal products are not only health-related commodities but also cultural resources that communicate place identity, traditional knowledge, and authentic local experiences. Prachin Buri Province, known for its herbal resources and Thai traditional medicine heritage, has potential to develop wellness tourism through locally rooted herbal products. In this context, Uthai Prasit Herbal Products represent a meaningful case for examining how local herbal identity can be digitally communicated and strategically linked with wellness tourism promotion.

However, despite the potential of herbal products in supporting wellness tourism, local enterprises often face challenges in systematically integrating digital marketing elements, including product presentation, pricing, online distribution, promotion, people-based service interaction, and service processes. The Global Wellness Institute also highlights the importance of embedding wellness tourism within broader local development, placemaking, and stakeholder benefits. Therefore, this qualitative case study, *“Developing a Digital Marketing Mix for Wellness Tourism Promotion: A Case Study of Uthai Prasit Herbal Products in Prachin Buri Province, Thailand,”* aims to explore the current digital marketing mix, examine stakeholder perspectives, and propose development guidelines based on the 6Ps framework: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, and Process. By doing so, the study contributes to digital marketing, wellness tourism, and local herbal product development literature, while offering practical implications for entrepreneurs, tourism agencies, public health organizations, and community stakeholders.

Objectives

To Study Guidelines for Developing a Digital Marketing Mix to Promote Health Tourism: A Case Study of Uthai Prasit Herbal Products in Prachinburi Province.

Literature Review

Digital Marketing and Tourism Transformation

Digital marketing has become a strategic mechanism for tourism businesses and local enterprises to communicate value, reach target consumers, and strengthen customer relationships through digital platforms. In the tourism sector, digital transformation has reshaped the ways tourists search for information, compare alternatives, make travel decisions, share experiences, and interact with destinations or tourism-related products. UN Tourism emphasizes that a digitalized tourism sector can support innovation, competitiveness, business opportunities, and sustainable development within the tourism industry.

In the context of local herbal products, digital marketing is not limited to online selling. Rather, it involves the communication of product quality, cultural identity, health-related value, brand credibility, and customer experience. This is particularly important for herbal products because consumers often require information about ingredients, usage, safety, authenticity, and traditional knowledge before making purchase decisions. Therefore, digital marketing provides a useful framework for linking local herbal products with wellness tourism experiences, especially when online communication can stimulate consumer interest and encourage visitation to local destinations.

Digital Marketing Mix and the 6Ps Framework

The marketing mix remains a core framework in marketing strategy because it helps organizations design how value is created, communicated, delivered, and experienced by consumers. Traditional marketing mix theory includes Product, Price, Place, and Promotion, while service marketing extends the model by emphasizing People, Process, and Physical Evidence. The service marketing perspective is particularly relevant to tourism because tourism products are experiential, relational, and service-based. The 7Ps service marketing mix is widely discussed as an extension of the traditional 4Ps, especially by adding People, Process, and Physical Evidence to address the service context.

For this study, the framework is adapted into **6Ps: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, and Process**. The uploaded research proposal already identifies these six elements as the core analytical framework for examining digital marketing mix development in relation to Uthai Prasit Herbal Products and wellness tourism promotion in Prachin Buri Province. The 6Ps are appropriate because they cover both tangible product strategy and service-oriented digital interaction. Product refers to herbal quality, identity, packaging, and wellness value. Price concerns perceived value and affordability. Place refers to online and offline distribution channels. Promotion includes digital communication, storytelling, social media, and customer engagement. People refers to entrepreneurs, staff, page administrators, local experts, and stakeholders who communicate brand value. Process refers to the customer journey from awareness and inquiry to purchase, delivery, after-sales service, and tourism experience linkage.

Wellness Tourism and Local Herbal Identity

Wellness tourism refers to travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing personal well-being. The Global Wellness Institute defines wellness tourism as travel connected with the pursuit of physical, mental, and emotional well-being, including expenditures related to lodging, food, activities, excursions, shopping, transportation, and other services. The wellness economy has continued to expand globally; the Global Wellness Institute reported that the wellness economy reached **US\$6.8 trillion in 2024** and projected continued growth toward 2029.

Thailand has strong potential in wellness tourism because of its cultural assets, Thai traditional medicine, herbal wisdom, spa services, local food, and community-based experiences. In this context, herbal products can function not only as commercial products but also as cultural and wellness symbols. Uthai Prasit Herbal Products are therefore suitable for qualitative case study analysis because they reflect local herbal knowledge, place-based identity, and the potential to support wellness tourism promotion in Prachin Buri Province. The proposal also identifies Prachin Buri as a study area connected with herbal resources, Thai traditional medicine knowledge, and wellness tourism potential.

Herbal Products, Brand Storytelling, and Destination Experience

Herbal products can become meaningful tourism-related products when they are communicated through local stories, authenticity, health benefits, and cultural identity. In digital environments, brand storytelling helps transform products from ordinary commodities into symbolic experiences. For wellness tourists, the value of herbal products may be shaped not only by functional benefits but also by perceived authenticity, local wisdom, emotional connection, and trust.

Therefore, the promotion of Uthai Prasit Herbal Products should not rely only on product information or sales promotion. It should integrate storytelling about Thai herbal wisdom, local heritage, production processes, user experiences, and the wellness image of Prachin Buri. This aligns with the research gap stated in the proposal, which indicates that studies integrating the digital marketing mix 6Ps with a specific herbal product brand in Prachin Buri's wellness tourism context remain limited.

Stakeholder Perspectives and Value Co-Creation

Wellness tourism promotion requires cooperation among multiple stakeholders, including entrepreneurs, digital marketing staff, consumers, tourists, government agencies, health-related organizations, tourism organizations, and local communities. A qualitative approach is appropriate because it allows the researcher to explore how these stakeholders interpret the current digital marketing situation, identify problems, express needs, and propose development guidelines.

Stakeholder perspectives are important for understanding the practical conditions of digital marketing development. Entrepreneurs may focus on product identity and business limitations, while consumers may emphasize trust, convenience, online information, and service experience. Government or tourism-related agencies may focus on destination positioning, local economic development, and sustainable tourism promotion. These multiple perspectives allow the study to generate context-sensitive guidelines rather than a generic digital marketing model.

Research Gap

Although digital marketing, herbal products, and wellness tourism have been studied separately, limited research has integrated these concepts through a **6Ps digital marketing mix framework** in a specific local herbal product case. In particular, there is a need for qualitative research that examines how local herbal products can be digitally positioned as part of wellness tourism promotion in Prachin Buri Province. This study addresses that gap by exploring the current digital marketing mix, stakeholder perspectives, and development guidelines for Uthai Prasit Herbal Products.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the development of a digital marketing mix for wellness tourism promotion through the case of Uthai Prasit Herbal Products in Prachin Buri Province, Thailand. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of stakeholder perspectives, contextual conditions, current digital marketing practices, and development guidelines rather than to measure statistical relationships. The case study design enabled the researcher to examine the phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly the connection between local herbal products, digital marketing, and wellness tourism.

The study was conducted in Prachin Buri Province, with Uthai Prasit Herbal Products selected as the case because of its relevance to Thai herbal wisdom, local identity, and potential contribution to wellness tourism promotion. The research focused on the 6Ps digital marketing mix framework, consisting of Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, and Process, which was used as the main analytical lens for investigating the current marketing situation and identifying suitable development guidelines. This framework is also aligned with the research proposal's focus on digital marketing mix development for herbal products and wellness tourism promotion.

Key informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement with Uthai Prasit Herbal Products, digital marketing, herbal products, or wellness tourism. The informants included four groups: entrepreneurs or business owners, digital marketing or communication personnel, consumers or tourists, and representatives from tourism, health, herbal product, or community development agencies. Approximately 12–20 informants were expected to participate, or until data saturation was reached.

Data were collected using *semi-structured in-depth interviews, digital platform observation, and document analysis*. The interview questions were designed according to the 6Ps framework and focused on the current digital marketing situation, strengths, limitations, stakeholder needs, and recommendations for linking herbal products with wellness tourism. Digital platform observation included online channels such as social media pages, websites, online shops, product content, customer reviews, and interaction patterns. Document analysis

was conducted using product information, promotional materials, tourism-related documents, and relevant organizational reports.

The data were analyzed through **thematic analysis** and **content analysis**. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were coded and categorized according to the 6Ps framework. Emerging themes were then identified to explain stakeholder perceptions, challenges, opportunities, and development guidelines. The analysis combined deductive coding based on the conceptual framework and inductive coding based on participants' actual narratives.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher applied **data triangulation**, **member checking**, **peer debriefing**, and an **audit trail**. Ethical considerations were also maintained by informing participants of the research objectives, obtaining consent, protecting confidentiality, and allowing participants to withdraw from the study at any time.

Research Design

This study employs a *qualitative case study design* to explore the development of a digital marketing mix for wellness tourism promotion through the case of Uthai Prasit Herbal Products in Prachin Buri Province, Thailand. A qualitative design is appropriate because the study aims to understand meanings, experiences, perceptions, contextual conditions, and stakeholder recommendations rather than to test statistical relationships. Case study research is suitable when the researcher seeks to examine a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. Yin's case study approach is widely used for studies requiring in-depth contextual understanding and multiple sources of evidence.

The uploaded proposal also identifies this research as a qualitative case study focusing on the current digital marketing situation, stakeholder perspectives, and development guidelines based on the 6Ps framework.

Research Site and Case Selection

The research site is *Prachin Buri Province, Thailand*, with a specific focus on Uthai Prasit Herbal Products. This case is selected because the product reflects Thai herbal wisdom, local identity, and potential linkage with wellness tourism. The case is also appropriate because it allows the researcher to investigate how a local herbal product can be developed through digital marketing strategies to support tourism promotion.

Key Informants

Key informants will be selected through *purposive sampling*. Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to identify information-rich cases that are directly related to the phenomenon under study. The proposed informants should include four groups:

1. **Entrepreneurs or business owners** of Uthai Prasit Herbal Products
2. **Digital marketing or communication personnel**, such as page administrators, content creators, or online sales staff

3. **Consumers or tourists** who have purchased, used, or shown interest in herbal products or wellness tourism.
4. **Experts or representatives from relevant organizations**, such as tourism agencies, public health organizations, community development offices, herbal product experts, or digital marketing specialists.

The recommended number of participants is approximately **12–20 informants**, or until data saturation is reached. This matches the proposal's plan to collect diverse and in-depth data from stakeholders directly related to the product, digital marketing, and wellness tourism.

Data Collection Methods

Data will be collected through three main qualitative methods:

1. Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews will be used to explore the current situation, challenges, needs, and development guidelines related to the 6Ps digital marketing mix. Interview questions will cover Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, and Process, as well as the relationship between herbal product identity and wellness tourism promotion.

2. Digital Platform Observation

The researcher will observe the digital communication channels of Uthai Prasit Herbal Products, such as Facebook pages, Line OA, websites, online shops, customer reviews, visual content, video content, and customer interaction patterns. This observation will help identify how the brand currently communicates product value, local identity, and wellness tourism potential.

3. Document Analysis

Documents such as product information, promotional materials, online content, tourism-related documents, local development reports, and wellness tourism materials will be analyzed to support data triangulation.

Research Instruments

The main research instruments are:

1. **Semi-structured interview guide** based on the 6Ps framework
2. **Digital observation checklist** for online platforms and customer engagement
3. **Document analysis form** for reviewing product, tourism, and promotional materials

The interview guide should be reviewed by at least three experts to ensure content validity, clarity, and relevance to the research objectives.

Data Analysis

The data will be analyzed using **thematic analysis** and **content analysis**. Braun and Clarke describe thematic analysis as a flexible qualitative method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within data. The analysis process will include:

1. Transcribing interview data
2. Reading and re-reading the data for familiarization

3. Generating initial codes
4. Organizing codes under the 6Ps framework
5. Identifying emerging themes from stakeholder perspectives
6. Comparing data across informant groups
7. Synthesizing development guidelines for digital marketing mix improvement
8. Interpreting the findings in relation to wellness tourism promotion

The coding structure will combine deductive coding from the 6Ps framework and inductive coding from participants' actual narratives.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure qualitative rigor, the study will apply the trustworthiness criteria of **credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability**, which are commonly associated with Lincoln and Guba's qualitative research standards. The following strategies will be used.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher will inform participants about the research objectives, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any time. Informed consent will be obtained before interviews. Participants' identities will be protected through pseudonyms or coded identifiers. Research data will be used only for academic purposes.

Results

The findings of the study revealed that the development of a digital marketing mix for Uthai Prasit Herbal Products should be understood through the integration of local herbal identity, digital communication, and wellness tourism experience. Based on the 6Ps framework—Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, and Process—the results were organized into seven major themes.

Theme 1: Herbal Product Identity as a Core Value

The findings showed that Uthai Prasit Herbal Products were perceived as having strong local identity and wellness-related value. Stakeholders viewed the products as representing Thai herbal wisdom, local knowledge, and the cultural image of Prachin Buri Province. However, the product identity had not yet been fully communicated through digital platforms. Participants suggested that product information should include clearer details about herbal ingredients, benefits, safety, usage, production background, and local wisdom.

Theme 2: Price and Perceived Value

The results indicated that price was not viewed only as a cost factor but also as a reflection of product quality, trust, and local value. Consumers expected reasonable pricing, clear product details, and transparent information about product benefits. Some participants suggested that price strategies should be connected with product sets, tourism packages, seasonal promotions, or wellness gift packages to increase perceived value.

Theme 3: Digital and Physical Distribution Channels

The findings revealed that distribution channels should combine both online and offline access. Online channels such as Facebook, Line OA, websites, and e-commerce platforms were considered important for reaching wider consumer groups. At the same time, offline distribution through local shops, tourist attractions, wellness centers, and community-based tourism sites was necessary to strengthen the connection between herbal products and wellness tourism in Prachin Buri.

Theme 4: Promotion Through Storytelling and Wellness Content

Promotion was found to be a key area requiring further development. Current digital promotion should move beyond basic product advertising toward storytelling-based communication. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of presenting the history of the brand, Thai herbal wisdom, customer experiences, health-related knowledge, and the wellness tourism image of Prachin Buri. Social media content, short videos, customer reviews, and influencer collaboration were identified as useful tools for increasing awareness and credibility.

Theme 5: People as Trust Builders

The results showed that people involved in the business played an important role in building trust and customer relationships. Entrepreneurs, staff, page administrators, and local experts were viewed as key actors in communicating product value and responding to customer inquiries. Participants suggested that digital communication skills, service-mindedness, product knowledge, and storytelling ability should be strengthened to improve customer confidence.

Theme 6: Service Process and Customer Experience

The findings indicated that the service process should be more systematic and convenient. Important process-related issues included online inquiry, ordering, payment, delivery, after-sales service, and customer feedback management. A clear and responsive service process was viewed as essential for creating positive customer experience and encouraging repeat purchases. In the tourism context, the process should also link customers from online product interest to offline wellness tourism experiences.

Theme 7: Linking Herbal Products with Wellness Tourism Promotion

Overall, the results suggested that Uthai Prasit Herbal Products have potential to support wellness tourism promotion in Prachin Buri Province. However, this potential requires an integrated digital marketing strategy. The product should be positioned not only as a herbal product but also as a wellness tourism symbol that reflects local identity, health value, and Thai traditional wisdom. The development guidelines should therefore connect digital marketing, local storytelling, stakeholder collaboration, and tourism experience design.

Concluding Results Statement

The study found that the digital marketing mix development of Uthai Prasit Herbal Products should emphasize the integration of herbal product identity, wellness value, digital storytelling, and stakeholder participation. The 6Ps framework provided a useful structure for identifying current limitations and future development directions. These findings support the development of a context-specific digital marketing strategy that can enhance product visibility, strengthen consumer trust, and promote Prachin Buri Province as a wellness tourism destination. This aligns with the study's aim to develop digital marketing mix guidelines for wellness tourism promotion through the case of Uthai Prasit Herbal Products.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the development of a digital marketing mix for Uthai Prasit Herbal Products should be approached not merely as an online selling strategy, but as an integrated mechanism for communicating herbal identity, wellness value, and destination experience. This supports the study's conceptual focus on the 6Ps—Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, and Process—as a suitable framework for examining how local herbal products can contribute to wellness tourism promotion in Prachin Buri Province.

First, the **Product** dimension emerged as a core foundation of digital marketing development. Uthai Prasit Herbal Products were perceived as carrying local wisdom, Thai herbal knowledge, and wellness-related value. This finding is consistent with current wellness tourism literature, which emphasizes that wellness experiences are increasingly connected with authenticity, cultural resources, preventive health, and holistic well-being. The Global Wellness Institute reported that the wellness economy reached **US\$6.8 trillion in 2024**, reflecting the growing global demand for products and experiences related to health and well-being.

Second, the findings suggest that **Promotion** should shift from basic product advertising to storytelling-based digital communication. Participants viewed brand history, herbal wisdom, production background, customer experience, and the wellness image of Prachin Buri as important content themes. This is aligned with recent tourism marketing studies showing that social media storytelling, visual content, and authentic user-generated communication can strengthen destination branding and tourist engagement.

Third, the **Place** and **Process** dimensions highlight the importance of connecting online platforms with offline tourism experiences. Digital channels such as Facebook, Line OA, websites, and e-commerce platforms can increase product accessibility, while physical distribution through local shops, wellness sites, and tourism attractions can strengthen the relationship between product consumption and destination experience. This supports recent studies on digital transformation in tourism, which indicate that digital tools reshape destination marketing, visitor experience, and service accessibility.

Fourth, the **People** dimension was found to be essential for trust-building. Entrepreneurs, staff, page administrators, and local experts function as communicators of product credibility and local identity. This is particularly important for herbal products because consumers often require reliable information about ingredients, safety, usage, and benefits. In the context of wellness tourism, people are not only service providers but also cultural interpreters who translate local herbal knowledge into meaningful visitor experiences.

Finally, the findings suggest that Uthai Prasit Herbal Products can be positioned as part of Prachin Buri's broader wellness destination identity. Recent research on Prachin Buri's herbal city branding found that the province has potential to develop its herbal identity as a wellness destination through tourist behavior, herbal city image, and strategic branding. This study extends that discussion by proposing that digital marketing mix development can serve as a practical pathway for linking herbal products, stakeholder collaboration, and wellness tourism promotion.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by integrating the digital marketing mix 6Ps with wellness tourism and local herbal product development in a qualitative case study context. Practically, the findings suggest that Uthai Prasit Herbal Products should develop a more systematic digital strategy focusing on product identity, value-based pricing, integrated online–offline channels, storytelling promotion, service-oriented people, and convenient customer processes. These elements can enhance product visibility, consumer trust, and Prachin Buri's position as a wellness tourism destination.

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CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND BRAND LOYALTY IN LUXURY SPA BUSINESSES: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND QUALITATIVE CASE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study develops a novel conceptual framework integrating four customer experience dimensions — service quality, personalization, emotional engagement, and service environment — with brand loyalty outcomes in luxury spa businesses. The framework's novelty lies in formally specifying the servicescape as a moderator of the personalization–emotional engagement relationship, a linkage not previously theorized in this context. A qualitative multiple case study design was employed, drawing on secondary data from four internationally recognized luxury spa brands: Six Senses, ESPA, Banyan Tree Spa, and Mandarin Oriental Spa. Thematic content analysis yielded four key themes confirming that emotional engagement and personalization are the most powerful loyalty drivers, amplified by servicescape quality. Five formal propositions are advanced to guide future PLS-SEM-based empirical research. This paper contributes theoretically grounded propositions and a replicable framework to the luxury wellness service literature.

Keywords: customer experience, brand loyalty, luxury spa, servicescape, conceptual framework

Introduction

The global wellness economy was valued at over USD 5.6 trillion in 2023, with luxury spa and wellness tourism representing a rapidly expanding segment (Global Wellness Institute, 2023). Luxury spa businesses occupy a distinctive position, offering premium multi-sensory experiences combining therapeutic purpose, hedonic consumption, and personalized ritual. Despite this commercial significance, scholarly understanding of how customer experience dimensions translate into brand loyalty within luxury spa contexts remains underdeveloped. Most prior work has been conducted in mainstream hospitality and retail settings (Verhoef et al., 2009; Lemon&Verhoef, 2016), and no prior study has formally modeled the servicescape as a moderator of the personalization–emotional engagement relationship in luxury spas — the specific theoretical gap this paper addresses.

This paper develops a conceptual framework integrating four experiential dimensions with brand loyalty outcomes, qualitatively validated through case evidence from four luxury spa brands. Five formal propositions are advanced to structure future empirical research.

Research Objectives

This study aims to: (1) identify customer experience dimensions driving brand loyalty in luxury spas; (2) develop a novel integrative conceptual framework with mediating and moderating relationships; and (3) advance five testable propositions for future PLS-SEM-based empirical research.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Customer Experience Theory

Pine and Gilmore (1999) introduced the experience economy, arguing businesses must stage memorable experiences to create lasting value. Schmitt (1999) operationalized this through five experiential modules: sense, feel, think, act, and relate. Verhoef et al. (2009) conceptualized customer experience as a multidimensional construct across all touchpoints, while Lemon and Verhoef (2016) emphasized its cumulative, journey-level nature. De Keyser et al. (2020) and Becker and Jaakkola (2020) call for context-specific CX frameworks — a call this study directly answers for the luxury spa sector, where hedonic, therapeutic, and sensory dimensions interact distinctively.

Service Quality, Personalization, and Emotional Engagement

Parasuraman et al. (1988) established SERVQUAL's five quality dimensions, extended to luxury hospitality by Walls et al. (2011). In luxury spa contexts, Kucukusta and Guillet (2014) found that therapeutic expertise and treatment customization are prioritized above standard quality dimensions. Personalization drives exclusivity perception and brand attachment (Ariffin&Maghzi, 2012; Shukla, 2012), while longitudinal personalization across visits generates stronger loyalty than single-visit customization (Kim&Park, 2021). Emotional engagement — rooted in Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) experiential consumption view — mediates loyalty formation through brand love (Carroll&Ahuvia, 2006), brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009), and emotional bonding (Ding&Tseng, 2015).

Servicescape and Brand Loyalty

Bitner (1992) demonstrated that ambient conditions, spatial layout, and symbolic artifacts significantly shape customer cognitive, emotional, and physiological responses. Loureiro et al. (2013) confirmed atmospheric effects drive relaxation and word-of-mouth in spa hotel settings. Han et al. (2017) established servicescape's role in wellness spa loyalty formation. Brand loyalty is conceptualized through Oliver's (1999) four-stage model, Aaker's (1996) equity framework, and Dick and Basu's (1994) true loyalty construct. Park et al. (2010) and Thomson et al. (2005) established brand attachment as the emotional outcome most powerfully predicting loyalty behaviors. Wirtz et al. (2020) argued luxury loyalty operates through extraordinary hedonic experience and social prestige rather than functional habit.

Research Gap

Three gaps motivate this study: (1) no comprehensive framework integrates the four CX dimensions specific to luxury spas with clearly specified mediating and moderating relationships; (2) the servicescape-as-moderator mechanism in the personalization–emotional engagement relationship has not been formalized; and (3) existing frameworks lack the specificity required to generate testable PLS-SEM propositions for luxury wellness contexts.

Conceptual Framework

The proposed framework integrates four antecedent CX dimensions — service quality (professionalism, reliability, therapeutic expertise), personalization (wellness pathway design, preference memory, ritual customization), emotional engagement (affective connection through sensory design and empathetic interaction), and service environment (ambient conditions, spatial privacy, material quality) — with three mediating constructs (perceived value, customer trust, service consistency) and three loyalty outcomes (repurchase intention, word-of-mouth, brand attachment).

The framework's novelty lies in three contributions: (1) formally specifying servicescape as a moderator of the personalization–emotional engagement pathway (P4); (2) differentiating three luxury-relevant loyalty outcomes rather than treating loyalty as unidimensional; and (3) synthesizing Experience Economy (Pine&Gilmore, 1999), SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988), servicescape theory (Bitner, 1992), experiential marketing (Schmitt, 1999), and brand attachment theory (Park et al., 2010) into a single integrative model.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: CX Dimensions and Brand Loyalty Outcomes in Luxury Spa Businesses

ANTECEDENTS CX Dimensions	→	MEDIATORS Mediating Constructs	→	OUTCOMES Loyalty Outcomes
Service Quality Professionalism • Reliability	→	Perceived Value Functional + Emotional	→	Repurchase Intention Return Visits • Long-term
Personalization Tailored • Exclusivity	→	Customer Trust Reliability-based	→	Word-of-Mouth Referrals • Advocacy
Emotional Engagement Affective • Sensory	→	Service Consistency Uniform Quality	→	Brand Attachment Emotional Bond • Identity
Service Environment Servicescape • Ambience	→	<i>Basis: Pine&Gilmore (1999); Schmitt (1999); Bitner (1992); Parasuraman et al. (1988)</i>	→	<i>Novel: first framework modeling servicescape moderation of personalization→engagement in luxury spa (P4)</i>
P1: SQ→Value→Loyalty P2: Personalization→Engagement→Attachment P3: Engagement mediates SQ→Loyalty P4: Servicescape moderates Personalization→Engagement P5: Trust mediates CX→Loyalty				

Formal Propositions

P1: Service quality positively influences perceived value and customer trust, establishing the foundational antecedent for brand loyalty in luxury spa contexts (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Zeithaml, 2000).

P2: Personalization enhances emotional engagement and perceived exclusivity, strengthening brand attachment and word-of-mouth (Ariffin&Maghzi, 2012; Kim&Park, 2021).

P3: Emotional engagement mediates the relationship between service quality and brand loyalty (Holbrook&Hirschman, 1982; Brakus et al., 2009; Ding&Tseng, 2015).

P4: The servicescape moderates the effect of personalization on emotional engagement; high-quality environments amplify emotional resonance of personalized interactions (Bitner, 1992; Loureiro et al., 2013).

P5: Customer trust, built through consistent service delivery, mediates the relationship between CX dimensions and long-term brand loyalty outcomes (Oliver, 1999; Park et al., 2010).

Methodology

Research Design

A qualitative interpretive approach is adopted, grounded in Yin's (2018) multiple case study design using replication logic. This design is epistemologically appropriate for conceptual framework development, requiring theoretical synthesis and pattern identification rather than hypothesis testing (Lincoln&Guba, 1985). Multiple cases enable both within-case analysis and cross-case comparison to identify patterns generalizable to the luxury spa category.

Case Selection

Four cases were selected using purposive maximum-variation sampling (Lincoln&Guba, 1985) based on four criteria: (1) global recognition as a premium luxury spa brand (Forbes/Condé Nast rated); (2) presence across multiple geographic contexts (minimum two countries); (3) substantive documented secondary data from independent sources; and (4) distinctive brand positioning to maximize variation. Cases: Six Senses Spas (nature-integrated, mindfulness-led), ESPA at luxury hotels (clinically-informed European luxury), Banyan Tree Spa (Asian holistic wellness tradition), and Mandarin Oriental Spa (urban ultra-luxury, deep personalization).

Data Collection and Analysis

Secondary data were collected from three source categories: (1) peer-reviewed journals from Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar (2000–2024); (2) brand reports, Global Wellness Institute publications, and Condé Nast/Forbes brand profiles; and (3) industry case documentation and trade publications. Data saturation was assessed iteratively across 47 source documents. Thematic content analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase procedure: data familiarization, initial coding, theme searching, theme review, theme definition, and reporting. Trustworthiness was ensured through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria: credibility (triangulation), transferability (thick description), dependability (audit trail), and confirmability (transparent analysis).

Results

Thematic analysis yielded four primary themes corresponding to the framework's CX dimensions.

Theme 1: Service Quality as Trust Foundation (P1)

Across all four cases, service quality operated as the foundational trust dimension through dual-track systems combining technical therapeutic excellence with empathetic relational service. Six Senses' 'Integrated Wellness' protocol and ESPA's multi-year therapist certification program both demonstrate that luxury spa quality must generate effortless excellence that consistently exceeds expectations — consistent with Wirtz et al.'s (2020) extraordinary hedonic experience criterion.

Theme 2: Personalization as Exclusivity Signal (P2, P5)

Banyan Tree's 'Signature Journey' program and Mandarin Oriental's cross-property guest recognition systems exemplify longitudinal personalization: wellness records evolve across multiple visits, creating exclusivity perception that deepens brand attachment over time. This confirms Kim and Park's (2021) finding that longitudinal personalization generates stronger loyalty than single-visit customization.

Theme 3: Emotional Engagement as Loyalty Accelerator (P3)

Six Senses' mindfulness-based therapist communication protocols and Banyan Tree's culturally meaningful ritual treatment sequences generate emotional connections that translate directly into unprompted advocacy and self-brand identification — confirming the mediation pathway formalized in P3 and consistent with Brakus et al. (2009) and Ding and Tseng (2015).

Theme 4: Servicescape as Atmospheric Amplifier (P4)

ESPA's precision sensory programs (signature scent compositions, binaural acoustic design, thermal journey circuits) and Six Senses' biophilic environments (living plant walls, natural water features, locally sourced materials) demonstrate that high-quality servicescapes actively amplify emotional responses to personalized interactions — directly supporting the moderating relationship formalized in P4 and extending Bitner (1992) and Loureiro et al. (2013).

Discussion and Recommendation

This study makes four theoretical contributions. First, it develops the first framework integrating four CX dimensions with brand loyalty outcomes specifically for luxury spa services, answering De Keyser et al.'s (2020) call for context-specific CX frameworks. Second, it formalizes the servicescape-as-moderator mechanism (P4) — explaining why identical personalization investments produce different emotional outcomes across properties. Third, it extends Pine and Gilmore's (1999) Experience Economy and Schmitt's (1999) FEEL module to the wellness service sector with greater operational specificity. Fourth, it provides five PLS-SEM-ready propositions with explicit measurement instrument mapping absent from prior luxury hospitality frameworks.

Four managerial recommendations follow. Operators should: (1) build longitudinal personalization infrastructure — wellness journey records evolving across visits; (2) invest in servicescape as a loyalty amplifier through multi-sensory congruence (scent, acoustics, thermal variation, biophilic design); (3) embed emotional intelligence in service protocols, framing therapist interactions as meaningful connections rather than delivery transactions; and (4) measure loyalty holistically using brand attachment scales (Park et al., 2010) alongside standard NPS metrics.

Conclusion

This study developed and qualitatively validated a novel conceptual framework integrating four CX dimensions with three brand loyalty outcomes in luxury spa businesses, mediated by perceived value, customer trust, and service consistency. The framework's primary theoretical novelty — formally specifying servicescape as a moderator of the personalization–emotional engagement relationship — contributes a new theoretical mechanism to both the luxury service and CX literatures. Five propositions structure a clear empirical research agenda for future PLS-SEM studies. Limitations include reliance on secondary data, restriction to globally operating premium brands, and exclusion of digital experience dimensions. Future research should test propositions with primary survey data, conduct cross-cultural comparative studies, and extend the framework to incorporate AI-personalized and digital wellness experiences (Kim&Park, 2021; Tung&King, 2020).

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THE EFFECTS OF USING GSP ON GRADE 8 STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN PARALLEL LINES

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Abstract

This research aims to study the academic achievement in "Parallel Lines" of Grade 8 students after learning with the GSP and to compare their academic achievement before and after the lessons. Many students face difficulties in geometry, particularly regarding alternate angles, interior angles, corresponding angles, and exterior and interior angles, which results in low academic performance. Using the GSP helps students understand and discover geometric properties and data by themselves.

The sample group consisted of 32 students in Grade 8/1 during the second semester of the 2025 academic year. The research instruments included GSP-based lesson plans, academic achievement tests, and 17 worksheets on parallel lines. This study utilized a One Group Pretest-Posttest Design and analyzed the data using mean, standard deviation, and t-test.

The research findings revealed that the post-test academic achievement was significantly higher than the pre-test results. Additionally, the overall performance on the student worksheets was at a good level. Learning management using the GSP in conjunction with worksheets effectively helps develop students' mathematical achievement in parallel lines. Therefore, mathematics teachers should be encouraged to apply the GSP to other topics within the geometry strand.

Keywords: GSP (The Geometer's Sketchpad), Academic Achievement, Parallel Lines, Grade 8 Mathematics

Introduction

Mathematics is essential for developing reasoning and critical thinking skills. However, students often face challenges in "Geometry" at the secondary level, as the content is difficult, abstract, and hard to comprehend. A primary cause of this misunderstanding is that both diagrams and lessons are typically presented as static images on a blackboard.

Based on classroom observations of Grade 8 students at Rattanakosin Somphot Bowonniwet Salaya School, it was found that many students have significant issues with the topic of "Parallel Lines". Students frequently confuse various types of angles, such as alternate

angles, interior angles on the same side of a transversal, corresponding angles, and angles within a triangle. These difficulties lead to low academic scores and an inability to apply geometric principles to prove or solve complex problems.

Recognizing these challenges, instructors introduced The Geometer's Sketchpad (GSP) as a new teaching tool. This dynamic mathematics software transforms the learning experience from passive listening to active self-discovery. Students can interact with the software by clicking, dragging, and moving geometric media, which facilitates a clearer and more intuitive understanding of the subject matter.

Objectives

1. To study the academic achievement in Parallel Lines of Grade 8/1 students after learning with the GSP program.
2. To compare the academic achievement before and after learning of students taught with the GSP program.
3. To study the results of completing worksheets on Parallel Lines of Grade 8/1 students.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of academic achievement in Parallel Lines of Grade 8/1 students after learning with the GSP program?
2. Is post-test academic achievement higher than pre-test achievement, and is it statistically significant?
3. What is the level of student performance on the 17 worksheets about Parallel Lines?

Literature Review and Theory

The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (Revised Edition B.E. 2560) specifies Strand 2: Measurement and Geometry, Standard C 2.2, requiring students to have visualization ability, use spatial reasoning, and apply geometric models to solve problems. Indicator M.2/2 requires students to use properties of parallel lines and triangles for reasoning and problem-solving, covering identification and proof of alternate angles, interior angles, corresponding angles, and exterior and interior angles formed by a transversal crossing parallel lines. The Ministry of Education (2017) emphasized the importance of learner-centered management, promoting analytical thinking and the use of technology to support learning. Using computer programs for mathematics instruction aligns with these curriculum guidelines.

Parallel lines refer to two lines in the same plane that have no common points or are equidistant throughout. The four types of angles formed by a transversal are: interior angles (on the same side of the transversal sum to 180°), alternate interior angles (always equal), corresponding angles (always equal), and relationships between parallel lines and triangles (sum of interior angles of a triangle = 180° , exterior angle equals sum of two non-adjacent interior angles). These properties are highly abstract and difficult for students to understand deeply through traditional instruction.

The Geometer's Sketchpad (GSP) was developed by Nicholas Jackiw and published by Key Curriculum Press. It is dynamic mathematics software. Key features include: creating dynamic geometric figures that students can drag and move while observing constant relationships, real-time angle measurement, supporting inquiry-based learning, and representing abstract geometric relationships visually. In this research, activities used GSP to explore angle properties, followed by 17 worksheets: parallel lines and interior angles (worksheets 1-4), alternate angles (5-8), exterior/interior angles (9-13), and parallel lines and triangles (14-17).

Academic achievement refers to knowledge, understanding, and skills students gain from learning. Bloom et al. (1956) classified cognitive domain into six levels: remember,

understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, create. This research focused on remembering, understanding, and applying, measured by a 10-item multiple-choice test with verified IOC.

Pimporn Wichaidit (2013) found that students taught Geometry with GSP had significantly higher achievement and geometric reasoning. Somrudee Boonyang (2015) reported that using GSP with cooperative learning significantly raised post-test scores at .05 level and improved attitudes. Based on this, the researchers used GSP with 17 worksheets to develop parallel lines achievement for Grade 8/1 students.

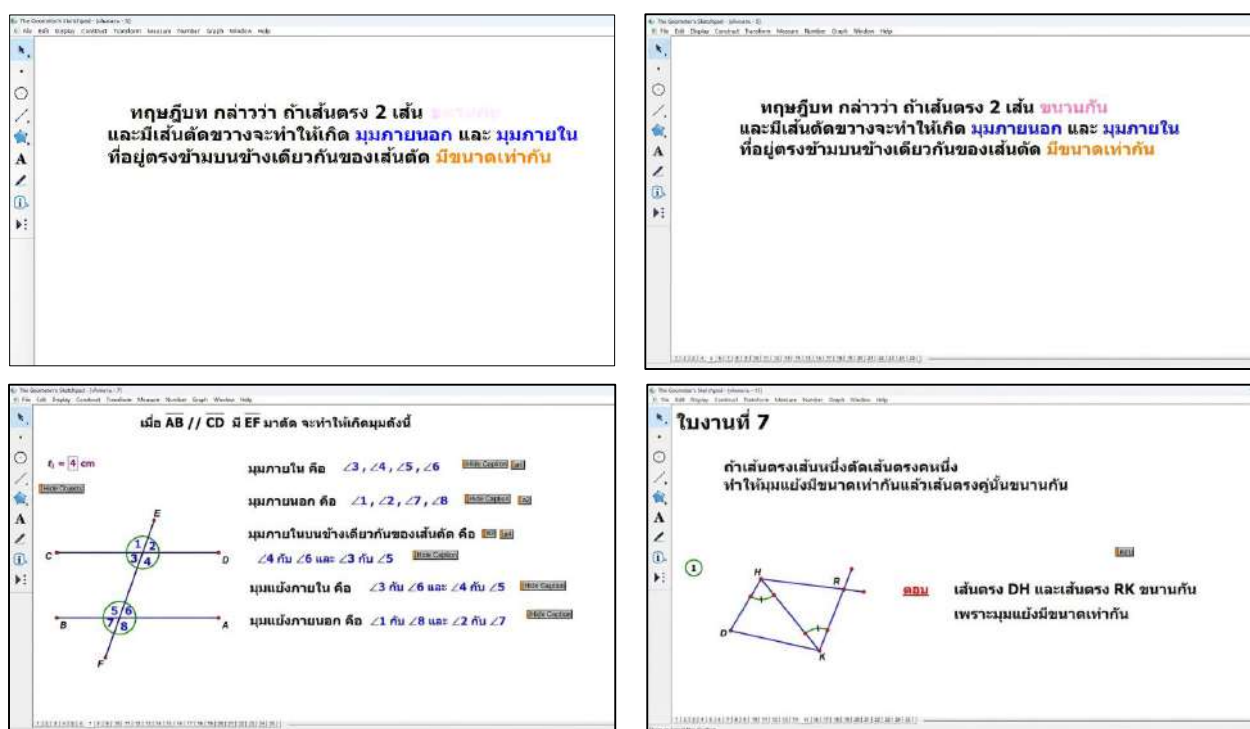
Methodology

The researchers used a Quasi-experimental One Group Pretest-Posttest Design. The sample consisted of 32 Grade 8/1 students (Purposive Sampling) in the second semester of the 2025 academic year.

The research instruments consisted of three parts:

Lesson plans using the GSP program.

Lesson plans on Parallel Lines, Strand 2: Measurement and Geometry, Standard C 2.2, Indicator M.2/2, using the GSP program as the main medium for learning activities. Each plan was designed for students to explore, discover, and summarize properties of parallel lines through GSP, then practice through worksheets.



[Figure 1: Example of teaching with GSP program – GSP interface showing parallel lines, transversal, angle measures, and students using computers]

Academic achievement test.

A 10-item multiple-choice test (four options) covering definitions and properties of parallel lines, angle types (alternate, interior, exterior/interior), and application. Used for both pre-test and post-test.

Worksheets on Parallel Lines.

Seventeen worksheets according to indicator C 2.2 M.2/2. Four groups: parallel lines & interior angles (1-4), alternate angles (5-8), exterior/interior angles (9-13), and parallel lines & triangles (14-17). Increasing difficulty levels.

Data Collection

Step 1 – Pre-test: All 32 students took the 10-item achievement test before GSP instruction. Step 2 – Instruction: Teaching parallel lines using GSP lesson plans; students explored angle relationships in GSP and completed all 17 worksheets. Step 3 – Post-test: After instruction, students took the same achievement test. Step 4 – Data compilation: Pre-test, post-test, and worksheet scores were compiled for analysis.

Data Analysis

Basic statistics: mean, standard deviation, and dependent samples t-test were used. The combination of 17 worksheets and GSP provided continuity from software exploration to theoretical problem-solving.

Results

Pre-test and post-test academic achievement. Results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 *Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Academic Achievement Scores (n = 32)*

Test	n	Mean	S.D.	Level
Pre-test	32	6.34	1.72	Good
Post-test	32	7.56	1.50	Very Good

Grade 8/1 students had mean pre-test score 6.34 (S.D.=1.72) – good level; post-test mean 7.56 (S.D.=1.50) – very good level. An average increase of 1.22 points.

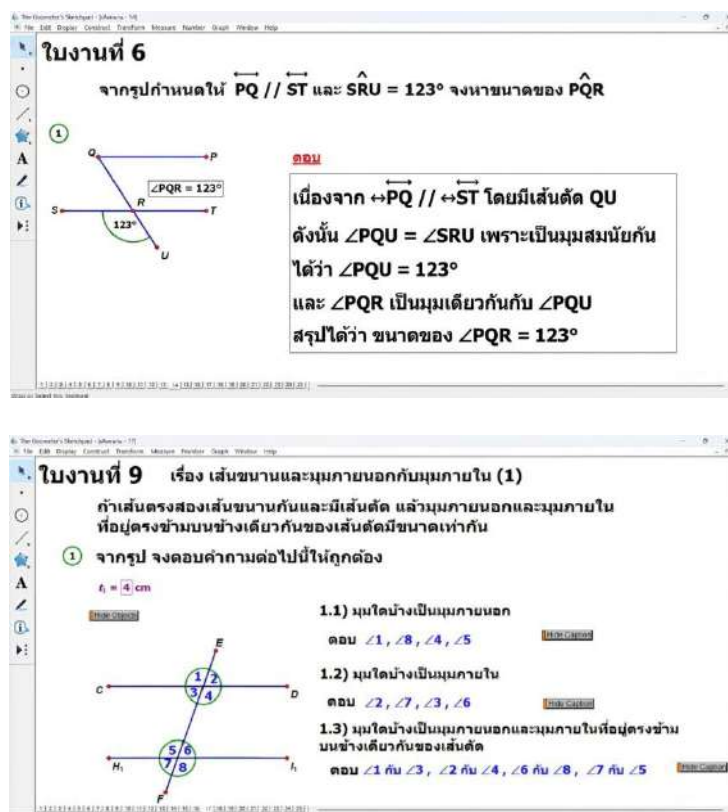
Table 2 *T-test Results Comparing Pre-test and Post-test Achievement*

Test	Mean	S.D.	t	p-value
Pre-test	6.34	1.72	3.57*	.000
Post-test	7.56	1.50		

*Statistically significant at .05 level (t-critical = 1.70, df = 31).

The t-test result (t = 3.57) was significant at p = .000. Post-test achievement was significantly higher than pre-test, consistent with the hypothesis.

Worksheet results. Overall worksheet performance was very good (82.35%). Parallel lines & interior angles: 85.60% (very good); alternate angles: 83.20% (very good); exterior/interior angles: 79.40% (good); parallel lines & triangles: 78.10% (good). Students effectively applied GSP discoveries to worksheets.



[Figure 2: Using GSP program for instruction – students working on computers with GSP, teacher assisting]



[Figure 3: Using GSP program alongside worksheets – students completing worksheets after GSP exploration]

Conclusion

1. Grade 8/1 students had mean post test achievement of 7.56/10 (S.D.=1.50) – very good level.
2. Post test achievement was significantly higher than pre test at the .05 level ($t = 3.57$, $p = .000$).
3. Overall worksheet performance was very good (82.35%), indicating effective application of GSP based learning.

Discussion and Recommendation

First, GSP enabled students to discover geometric relationships dynamically, improving conceptual understanding. This aligns with Pimporn Wichaidit (2013). Second, worksheets alongside GSP provided systematic thinking practice from identification to proof, consistent with Bloom's taxonomy. Third, slightly lower scores on exterior/interior angles and triangle topics suggest teachers should allocate more GSP exploration time for these complex topics and add varied proof examples.

Recommendations: 1) Lower secondary teachers should use GSP for abstract geometry topics (parallel lines, triangles, quadrilaterals). 2) Design worksheets with graduated difficulty: identification → calculation → geometric proof. 3) Schools should support teacher training in dynamic mathematics software (GSP, GeoGebra).

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DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES FOR THE CONDIMENT AND SEASONING INDUSTRY IN MYANMAR: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

Myanmar's condiment and seasoning industry occupies a paradoxical position: it is simultaneously one of the country's most culturally embedded economic activities and one of its least systematically developed. Rooted in centuries of indigenous fermentation practice—most notably the production of Ngapi, Ngan Pyar Yay, and Pon Yi Gyi—the sector commands a loyal domestic consumer base, yet remains structurally unable to compete at the regional level due to persistent deficiencies in production technology, quality standardization, and managerial capacity. This paper addresses a critical gap in the existing literature by proposing an integrated conceptual framework for the development of Myanmar's condiment and seasoning industry. The framework synthesizes three complementary theoretical traditions: Porter's Value Chain Theory (1985), the Diamond Model of national competitive advantage (Porter, 1990), and Gereffi et al.'s Global Value Chain governance typology (2005). Four interdependent variable clusters are identified—input factors, value chain processes, environmental moderators, and development outcomes—and their relationships are articulated in light of Myanmar's specific industrial, institutional, and cultural context. The framework is intended to guide a subsequent empirical study employing Mixed Methods Research, combining in-depth interviews with industry stakeholders and a structured consumer survey, to generate evidence-based policy and operational recommendations.

Keywords: condiment industry, Myanmar, value chain, conceptual framework, food industry development, ASEAN

Introduction

Among the economies of Southeast Asia, Myanmar presents one of the most compelling cases of agricultural potential held back by structural underdevelopment. The food industry, which accounts for approximately 30 percent of Myanmar's gross domestic product—the highest proportion among ASEAN member states—is the clearest illustration of this tension (Statista, 2020). Within the broader food sector, the condiment and seasoning industry exemplifies both the country's untapped commercial strengths and the systemic constraints that prevent their realization. The market for condiments and sauces in Myanmar is projected to expand by USD 114.9 million between 2025 and 2030, growing at a compound annual rate of 4.7 percent, driven principally by rapid urbanization, evolving consumer lifestyles, and the proliferation of international quick-service restaurant chains (StrategyHelix, 2025). These conditions suggest genuine commercial opportunity. Yet Myanmar's processed food exports remain modest, totaling only USD 110.1 million in 2018—less than one percent of the country's total export value—while the average export price of condiments has fallen sharply from USD 3,701 per tonne in 2022 to USD 877 per tonne in 2024, signaling deteriorating product quality and the absence of credible branding (MyanTrade, n.d.; 6Wresearch, 2025).

At the heart of Myanmar's condiment industry lies a distinctive and commercially significant cultural heritage. Fermented products such as Ngapi (fermented fish or shrimp paste), Ngan Pyar Yay (fish sauce), and Pon Yi Gyi (fermented bean paste) have been central to Burmese culinary identity for centuries, produced through artisanal processes that draw on accumulated indigenous knowledge and regional biodiversity (Steinkraus, 2004; Eom et al., 2021). This heritage constitutes a genuine source of product differentiation in an increasingly commoditized regional market. However, production remains overwhelmingly household-based or concentrated among micro-enterprises, relying on experiential rather than scientific knowledge, and lacking the quality management systems necessary to meet either domestic consumer expectations or international regulatory requirements. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which collectively account for 90 percent of all businesses in Myanmar and employ more than 70 percent of the national workforce, dominate the condiment sector yet face compounding disadvantages in capital access, technological capability, and market reach (RSIS, n.d.).

Despite the evident importance of the condiment and seasoning industry to Myanmar's economic development, the existing scholarly literature offers only partial illumination. Published research is largely confined to the microbiological analysis of specific fermented products (Kobayashi et al., 2016, 2020), with no comprehensive study examining the sector across its economic, managerial, technological, and policy dimensions simultaneously. This absence of integrative research constitutes a substantial gap, both academically and from a policy design perspective. The present paper seeks to address this gap by constructing a theoretically grounded and empirically applicable conceptual framework for the development of Myanmar's condiment and seasoning industry—one that reflects the sector's complexity, honors its cultural distinctiveness, and provides actionable guidance for researchers, policymakers, and industry practitioners.

Objectives

The research is guided by five principal objectives:

1. To document and assess the current state of Myanmar's condiment and seasoning industry across the dimensions of industrial structure, production technology, quality assurance, and market positioning.
2. To identify and analyze the internal strengths and weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats, that shape the industry's development trajectory.
3. To map and evaluate the value chain of Myanmar's condiment and seasoning industry, from raw material sourcing through fermentation, processing, packaging, and distribution to export.
4. To examine the national and regional policy landscape governing the condiment industry, including its alignment with ASEAN regulatory harmonization frameworks and Codex Alimentarius standards.
5. To propose a set of concrete, evidence-informed development strategies capable of elevating Myanmar's condiment industry to a competitive position within regional and global markets.

Research Questions

Four research questions structure the empirical inquiry that the conceptual framework is designed to guide:

1. What is the current productive and competitive condition of Myanmar's condiment and seasoning industry, and where do its most significant structural weaknesses lie?
2. Which internal resources and external environmental forces most powerfully determine the development potential of Myanmar's condiment and seasoning industry?
3. At which stages of the condiment value chain does the greatest constraint on value addition and export competitiveness occur, and why?

4. Through what combination of indigenous knowledge integration, technological modernization, and policy support can Myanmar's condiment industry achieve sustainable competitive upgrading within the ASEAN food system?

Literature Review

As this paper presents a conceptual framework constructed through systematic literature review, the following insights represent theoretically grounded preliminary findings that the subsequent empirical study will test and refine.

Value Chain Theory and Competitive Advantage

The foundational theoretical pillar of this study is Porter's (1985) Value Chain Theory, which conceptualizes the firm as a collection of strategically linked activities through which value is progressively created and delivered to end consumers. The framework distinguishes five primary activities— inbound logistics, operations, outbound logistics, marketing and sales, and after-sales service—from four supporting functions: firm infrastructure, human resource management, technology development, and procurement. Competitive advantage, in Porter's formulation, arises when a firm executes these activities at lower cost than its rivals, or configures them in ways that produce a level of differentiation for which buyers are willing to pay a premium (Porter, 1985). In the context of food processing industries in developing economies, Trienekens et al. (2012) demonstrated that value chain performance is consistently undermined by infrastructural deficiencies, the absence of enforceable quality standards, information asymmetries between smallholder producers and downstream market actors, and regulatory frameworks that fail to match industry needs—a constellation of constraints that maps precisely onto Myanmar's condiment sector.

Giraffe et al. (2005) extended value chain analysis to a global scale through their Global Value Chain (GVC) governance framework, which classifies inter-firm relationships into five governance typologies—market, modular, relational, captive, and hierarchical—each carrying distinct implications for how value-added output is distributed among chain participants. The captive typology, in which small suppliers are tightly bound to dominant buyers and exercise minimal agency over product specifications or pricing, is particularly germane to understanding why Myanmar's small condiment producers capture so little of the value generated in regional trade. Kaplinsky and Morris (2001) further enriched this analysis with their four-level upgrading framework—process upgrading, product upgrading, functional upgrading, and inter-chain upgrading—which provides a practical developmental roadmap applicable to each segment of Myanmar's condiment value chain.

Porter's (1990) Diamond Model complements the value chain perspective by situating competitive advantage within the national systemic context. The model identifies four determinants of competitive strength at the industry level: factor conditions (the availability and quality of productive inputs), demand conditions (the sophistication and scale of domestic demand), related and supporting industries (the presence of competitive suppliers and allied sectors), and firm strategy, structure, and rivalry (the competitive intensity that drives innovation and efficiency). Two external forces—government policy and chance events—are recognized as amplifying or constraining these determinants. Applied to Myanmar's condiment industry, the Diamond Model draws attention to the country's abundant raw material endowment and the potential role of government in building institutional capacity, while also highlighting weaknesses in domestic demand sophistication and the underdevelopment of supporting industries such as food packaging, cold chain logistics, and food science research. SWOT Analysis, as systematically reviewed by Gürel and Tat (2017), provides the integrative strategic assessment instrument through which factor interactions can be synthesized into actionable strategies, as demonstrated by Sazali et al. (2013) in their analysis of Malaysia's halal food industry.

Status of Myanmar's Condiment Industry and the Regional Market

Myanmar's domestic condiment and sauce market, while smaller in absolute terms than those of Thailand or Vietnam, exhibits a growth profile that warrants strategic attention. The market is projected to expand at a CAGR of 4.7 percent through 2030, with modern product segments increasingly shaped by the penetration of multinational brands, while the market for traditional fermented condiments remains geographically dispersed and organizationally fragmented (StrategyHelix, 2025). The regional context further underscores the opportunity: the Southeast Asian sauce, dressing, and condiment market was valued at USD 8.42 billion in 2024 and is forecast to reach USD 13.78 billion by 2030 at a CAGR of 8.44 percent (MarkNtel Advisors, n.d.). Thailand, the regional leader, generates approximately USD 949 million annually from condiment exports—a figure that places Myanmar's total processed food export revenue of USD 110.1 million in stark perspective (MyanTrade, n.d.). The declining average export price of Myanmar condiments, from USD 3,701 per tonne in 2022 to USD 877 per tonne in 2024, reflects not merely short-term market volatility but a structural inability to command price premiums in the absence of quality certification, consistent product standards, and recognized commercial branding (6Wresearch, 2025).

Indigenous Fermentation Knowledge as a Strategic Asset

The scientific characterization of Myanmar's fermented condiments has advanced meaningfully over the past decade, revealing a microbial and biochemical complexity that represents a significant and underutilized commercial asset. Kobayashi et al. (2016) identified *Tetragenococcus halophilus* as the dominant lactic acid bacterium in Ngapi, responsible for the product's characteristic flavor profile and preservation properties. Subsequent research extended this microbiological mapping to shrimp fish sauce, identifying *Tetragenococcus muriticus* as the primary fermenting organism (Kobayashi et al., 2020). Eom et al. (2021) placed these findings in broader culinary and anthropological context, characterizing Ngapi as the definitive flavor foundation of traditional Burmese cuisine and noting its distinctive differentiation from analogous fermented products across the Southeast Asian region. However, the translation of these scientific insights into standardized production protocols, quality specifications, and commercial product development has remained largely absent—a gap that represents both a research priority and a significant economic opportunity. The cases of Thailand's fish sauce industry and China's soy sauce sector illustrate that the commercialization of traditional fermentation knowledge, supported by rigorous scientific validation and regulatory frameworks, can generate substantial export value and global brand recognition (Steinkraus, 2004).

Policy Environment and Governance Framework

Myanmar's policy landscape provides a formally supportive but practically insufficient framework for condiment industry development. The Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) 2018–2030 addresses SME promotion under Strategy 3.3, innovation and technology development under Strategy 3.7, and food security under Strategy 4.4, establishing a degree of policy alignment with the condiment sector's needs. The National Export Strategy (NES) 2020–2025 explicitly designates processed food as a priority export sector, and the SME Development Law (2015) provides a legislative basis for enterprise support programs. Despite this formal architecture, no sector-specific development strategy exists for the condiment and seasoning industry; no Myanmar-specific quality standards have been established for indigenous fermented products; and the operational realities of small-scale producers—including chronic energy shortages, limited access to cold chain infrastructure, and restricted financing options—are inadequately addressed by existing support mechanisms (IFPRI, 2023). This policy gap is not merely a procedural shortcoming; it represents a structural barrier to the industry's capacity to meet ASEAN and international market requirements.

ASEAN Regulatory Harmonization and Food Safety Standards

The integration of Myanmar's condiment industry into regional and global value chains is contingent, in no small measure, on its ability to satisfy the food safety and quality requirements that govern cross-border trade. The Codex Alimentarius standards, developed jointly by FAO and WHO, function as the international reference framework for ASEAN's regulatory harmonization agenda, operationalized through the ASEAN Expert Group on Food Safety (AEGFS) and the ASEAN Consultative Committee on Standards and Quality (ACCSQ). The ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Food Hygiene (2018) has progressively reduced technical barriers to processed food trade within the regional bloc, while simultaneously raising the implicit standards that domestic producers must meet to participate in intra-ASEAN trade. Hassan et al. (2021) provided compelling empirical evidence that manufacturing facilities with formal Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) in place exhibit significantly lower rates of microbial contamination than facilities operating without such systems, demonstrating that FSMS investment produces measurable quality improvements rather than serving merely as a compliance formality. For Myanmar's condiment producers, this finding carries direct operational implications: FSMS implementation is not merely a regulatory burden but a prerequisite for export market access and a credible signal of quality to regional buyers.

SME Development in Myanmar's Food Processing Sector

The structural characteristics of Myanmar's SME landscape are central to understanding the condiment industry's development constraints. SMEs account for 90 percent of all enterprises in Myanmar, employ more than 70 percent of the national workforce, and constitute over 60 percent of enterprises in the food processing sector (RSIS, n.d.). Yet these enterprises operate under a compound burden of disadvantages: low productivity driven by outdated equipment and manual processes; insufficient access to formal financial services; limited exposure to management best practices; and a market access profile constrained by the absence of formal distribution networks.

Infrastructure deficiencies—including power outages occurring approximately three times per week in some regions—impose additional costs and production inconsistencies that undermine product quality and supply reliability (IFPRI, 2023). The political and economic disruptions following 2021 have further exacerbated these structural challenges, reducing both domestic market purchasing power and the availability of international technical and financial support. International programs such as the ILO SCORE initiative, the Korean TASK project, and WWF's Tha Bar Wa program have provided targeted capacity building but lack the sector specificity and institutional scale needed to drive systemic change in the condiment industry.

Methodology

This study adopts a Mixed Methods Research design following the Explanatory Sequential approach of Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), in which an initial qualitative phase informs the design of a subsequent quantitative phase. This sequencing ensures that the survey instrument captures concepts grounded in Myanmar's specific industrial and cultural context.

Phase One employs purposive sampling to recruit twenty key informants: ten condiment manufacturers across large, medium, and small scales; five representatives from government bodies, including the Myanmar Food and Drug Administration, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Commerce, and the Myanmar Food Processors and Exporters Association (MFPEA); and five academic specialists in food science and industrial policy. Each participant takes part in a semi-structured in-depth interview of forty-five to sixty minutes, covering professional background, the industry's current condition, operational and market challenges, and prospective development strategies.

Phase Two administers a structured questionnaire to 400 consumers in Yangon and Mandalay, with the sample size determined by the Taro Yamane formula at a 95 percent confidence level and a 5 percent margin of error. Respondents are selected through stratified convenience sampling based on income level and residential area to reflect the socioeconomic diversity of urban consumers. The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale and is organized into three sections: sociodemographic profile, purchasing and consumption behavior, and factors influencing brand and product selection. A field observation checklist supplements both phases through visits to five to ten manufacturing facilities, documenting production technology, quality control practices, and infrastructure conditions.

Instrument validity is established through an Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) review by five specialists, with an acceptance threshold of $\text{IOC} \geq 0.50$. Both instruments are pilot-tested with thirty questionnaire respondents and three interview participants. Questionnaire reliability is assessed using Cronbach's alpha at $\alpha \geq 0.70$ (Polit & Beck, 2012), while qualitative trustworthiness is secured through methodological triangulation across interviews, field observations, and documentary sources (Saunders et al., 2019).

Qualitative data are analyzed through Content Analysis in NVivo or Atlas.ti, proceeding from open coding to axial coding and thematic synthesis. Quantitative data are analyzed in SPSS using descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, and Multiple Regression Analysis to determine the relative influence of each factor on industry development potential. The two strands are integrated through a SWOT synthesis framework that maps empirical findings onto the strategic dimensions of the conceptual framework (Hair et al., 2014; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

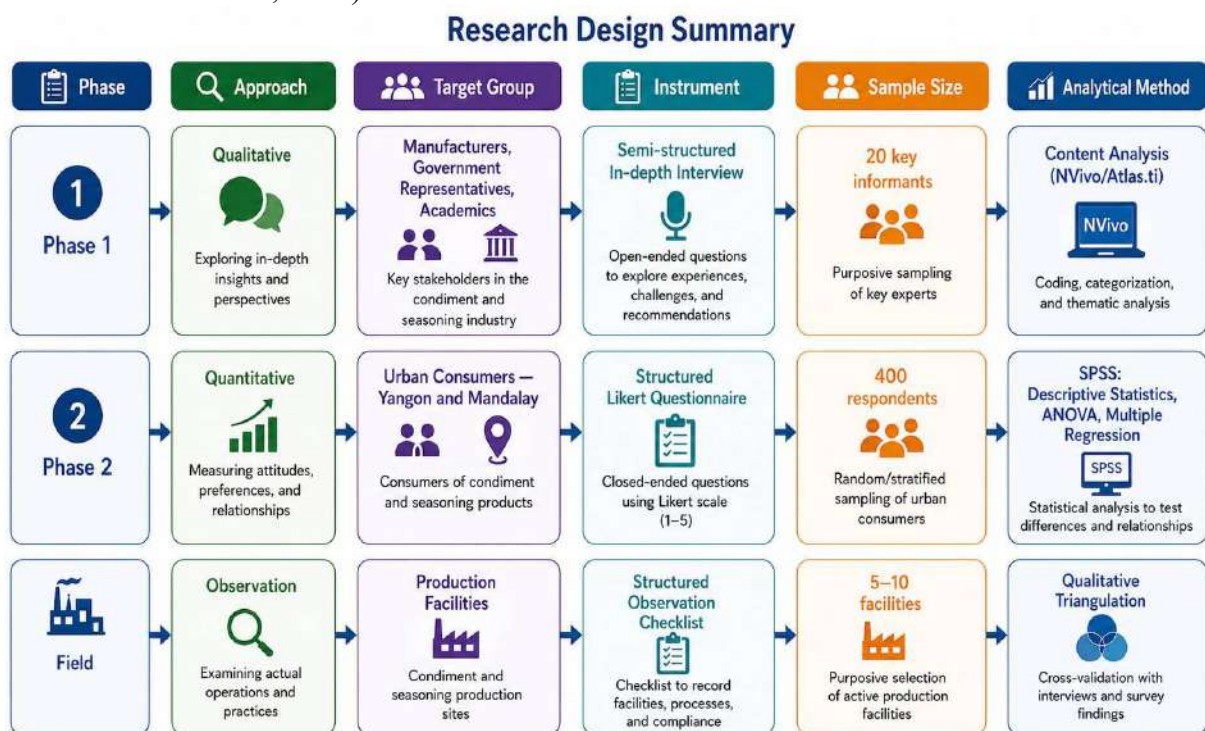


Figure 1 Research design summary

Note. Phase 1 sampling is purposive; Phase 2 sampling is stratified convenience. Sample size for Phase 2 is calculated using the Taro Yamane formula at 95% confidence, 5% margin of error.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework proposed in this paper is the product of a systematic synthesis of Value Chain Theory (Porter, 1985), the Diamond Model (Porter, 1990), GVC governance analysis (Gereffi et al., 2005), and the empirical literature on Myanmar's food industry and SME landscape. The framework organizes the determinants and outcomes of industry development into four interdependent variable clusters, each of which corresponds to a distinct analytical domain while remaining dynamically connected to the others.

The first cluster, designated Input Factors, encompasses the foundational resources from which industry activity is constituted. These include natural raw materials—fish, shrimp, soybeans, spices, and other agricultural inputs—whose abundance in Myanmar represents an unambiguous comparative advantage. Indigenous fermentation knowledge and the cultural heritage embedded in traditional condiment production constitute a second critical input: one that is intrinsically difficult for competitors to replicate and that underpins authentic product differentiation. The remaining inputs—production technology and physical infrastructure, human capital and managerial competence, financial capital and investment access, and government regulatory and promotional policy—represent the enabling conditions without which Myanmar's natural and cultural assets cannot be converted into competitive commercial products.

The second cluster, Value Chain Processes, translates these inputs into market-ready products through a sequence of activities derived from Porter's (1985) primary value chain model and adapted to the specific operational characteristics of fermented condiment production. The process begins with inbound logistics and raw material procurement, where supply chain reliability and quality consistency are primary concerns. It proceeds through fermentation and processing operations, the stage at which indigenous knowledge and scientific understanding must be most effectively integrated. Quality assurance and food safety management systems form the third process element, representing the regulatory gateway to export markets. Packaging, labeling, and product presentation follow, shaping consumer perception and brand positioning. Domestic distribution and marketing and, finally, export facilitation and international trade logistics complete the chain. Each of these process stages represents both a potential site of value creation and a current point of vulnerability for Myanmar's condiment producers.

The third cluster, Environmental Moderators, captures the external forces that condition the effectiveness of value chain processes without being directly controlled by individual firms or even by national policy. Macroeconomic conditions—including exchange rate volatility, inflationary pressures, and political stability—set the operating environment for all industry participants. ASEAN and Codex Alimentarius regulatory standards define the quality threshold that products must meet to access export markets, and their progressive tightening creates ongoing pressure for process upgrading. Regional and global market trends, including the growing consumer premium attached to authentic, traditionally produced foods and the expansion of the Asian food market internationally, present both commercial opportunities and competitive challenges. The competitive dynamics of the regional condiment market—in which established producers from Thailand, Vietnam, and China operate at significantly higher scales of efficiency and brand recognition—constitute the external competitive reference against which Myanmar's industry must measure its development.

The fourth cluster, Development Outcomes, defines the purposes to which the framework is oriented. Enhanced competitive capacity in regional and global markets—measured by export volume, price realization, and market penetration—is the primary commercial objective. Increased value-added output per unit of raw material processed reflects improvements in production efficiency and product sophistication. Long-term economic and environmental sustainability encompasses the resilience of producer livelihoods, the

responsible management of natural resources, and the preservation of the cultural heritage embedded in traditional fermentation practices. Finally, contributions to national food security—through productive employment, income generation, and the development of a robust domestic food processing infrastructure—align the industry's development with Myanmar's broader national development commitments under the MSDP 2018–2030 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

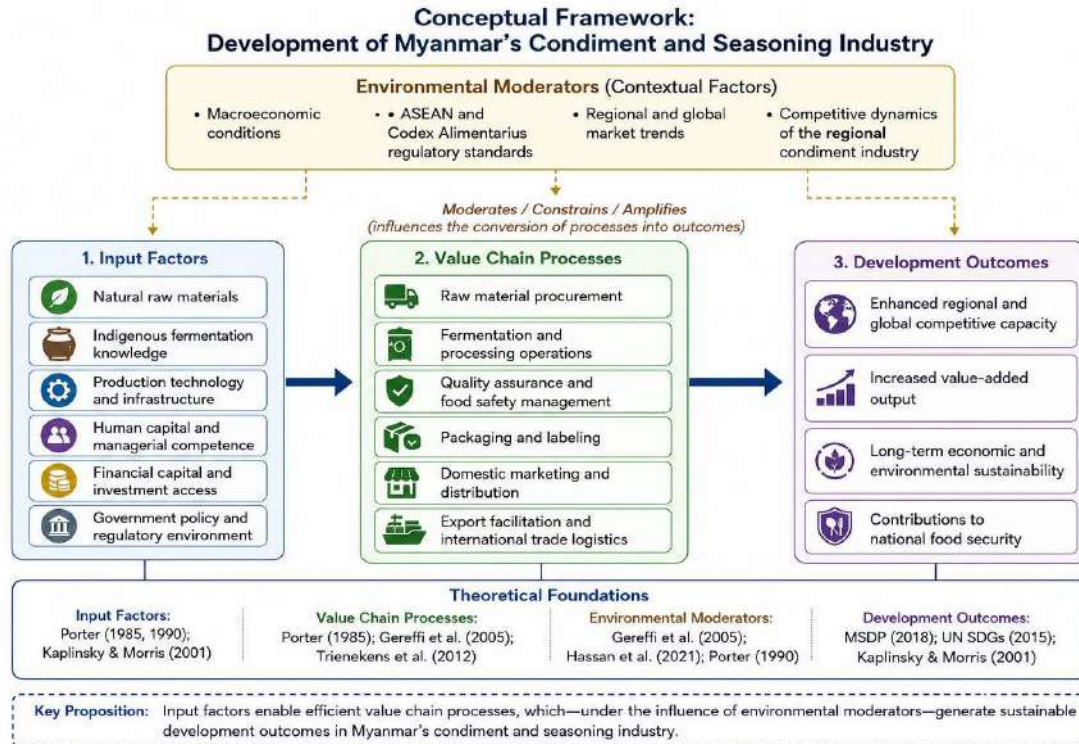


Figure 2 Conceptual framework

Note. The four variable clusters are interdependent. Input Factors condition the effectiveness of Value Chain Processes; Environmental Moderators shape the conversion of process outputs into Development Outcomes.

Theoretical Findings

As this paper presents a conceptual framework constructed through a systematic literature review, the empirical results that will validate and refine the framework are the subject of the subsequent mixed methods study described above. Nevertheless, the theoretical synthesis and the body of existing evidence together support a set of provisional findings that can be stated with reasonable confidence.

The literature consistently indicates that Myanmar's condiment and seasoning industry currently operates in an early and structurally constrained stage of development. The overwhelming prevalence of household-scale production, the reliance on experiential rather than standardized production knowledge, and the near-complete absence of formal quality management systems collectively position the industry at the lower end of both the domestic and regional value chain. This characterization is supported by the dramatic decline in export price realization observed between 2022 and 2024 (6Wresearch, 2025) and by the findings of IFPRI (2023), which documents the broader stagnation of Myanmar's food processing sector.

The value chain analysis embedded in the framework suggests that the most acute constraints are located in the processing, quality control, and packaging stages—the very stages at which indigenous fermentation knowledge must interface with modern food science and commercial standards. The absence of FSMS infrastructure at the production level, documented across the broader food processing sector by Hassan et al. (2021) and confirmed

by IFPRI (2023), is particularly consequential because it constitutes a categorical barrier to export market access under ASEAN harmonization requirements.

The policy analysis reveals a structural mismatch: Myanmar's national development framework formally prioritizes the food processing sector, but the policy instruments in place do not address the specific technical, financial, and institutional needs of condiment and seasoning producers, particularly those operating at small and medium scale. The absence of product-specific standards for Ngapi, Ngan Pyar Yay, and comparable fermented condiments is a particularly significant lacuna, as it forecloses the development of the protected geographical indication or authenticated traditional product designations that have proven commercially valuable for comparable products in neighboring countries.

Discussion and Recommendation

The conceptual framework advanced in this paper invites comparison with development trajectories observed in analogous industries across Southeast Asia. Thailand's fish sauce industry and China's soy sauce sector are the most instructive comparative cases: both achieved regional and international competitiveness through a deliberate combination of scientific validation of traditional fermentation processes, investment in standardized production infrastructure, the establishment of enforceable national quality standards, and sustained government promotional support in export markets (Steinkraus, 2004; Kaplinsky & Morris, 2001). Myanmar possesses the foundational cultural and agricultural assets to follow a comparable path, but the institutional enabling conditions—sector-specific standards, dedicated financing instruments, and applied food science research capacity—remain to be constructed.

Several specific recommendations emerge from the framework for consideration by policy actors. The Myanmar Food and Drug Administration, in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry and relevant research institutions, should prioritize the development of national quality standards for indigenous fermented condiments—Ngapi, Ngan Pyar Yay, and Pon Yi Gyi—formulated in alignment with Codex Alimentarius requirements and ASEAN harmonization commitments. These standards would simultaneously provide domestic producers with a credible quality benchmark, protect consumers, and create the regulatory foundation necessary for export certification. Complementing this regulatory initiative, a dedicated financial and technical assistance program for condiment sector SMEs should be designed to address the specific barriers identified in this framework: FSMS implementation costs, cold chain infrastructure investment, fermentation technology modernization, and packaging design and labeling compliance.

For industry operators, the framework suggests a strategic priority ordering consistent with value chain upgrading logic. Process upgrading—the standardization and documentation of fermentation procedures and quality control protocols—should be the immediate priority because it is the precondition for all subsequent product and functional upgrading. Collaborative production models, in which small-scale traditional producers supply authenticated raw or semi-processed condiment inputs to larger certified manufacturers capable of managing the packaging, marketing, and export functions, offer a commercially viable and organizationally appropriate structure for inclusive industry development in Myanmar's SME-dominated landscape.

The limitations of the current paper should be acknowledged explicitly. The conceptual framework presented here is a theoretical construction whose empirical validity remains to be established through the mixed methods research program described. The framework's variable relationships are proposed on the basis of theoretical logic and indirect empirical evidence, and the specific factor weights and interaction effects that will determine the most effective development strategies for Myanmar can only be established through primary data collection.

Future research should also examine the framework's applicability in regional areas beyond Yangon—including Mandalay, the Ayeyarwady Delta, and Rakhine State, each of which has a distinctive condiment production profile—and should incorporate longitudinal methods capable of tracking industry change over time in response to policy intervention.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that Myanmar's condiment and seasoning industry stands at a critical developmental juncture, possessing substantial latent competitive potential—anchored in indigenous fermentation heritage, abundant raw material resources, and a growing regional market—but constrained by structural deficiencies in production technology, quality governance, and sector-specific policy support. In response to the absence of integrative scholarly analysis capable of guiding industry development, the paper has proposed a conceptual framework that draws systematically on three complementary theoretical traditions and organizes their analytical insights into four interdependent variable clusters applicable to Myanmar's specific industrial and institutional context.

The framework's primary contribution is its integrative character: by simultaneously incorporating the food science, economic, managerial, and public policy dimensions of industry development, it provides a more complete analytical foundation than any prior study of the Myanmar condiment sector has offered. Its secondary contribution is its contextual specificity: the framework does not apply generic development theory abstractly but anchors its propositions in the documented realities of Myanmar's condiment producers, the regulatory architecture of ASEAN, and the competitive dynamics of the regional food market.

The framework is intended to serve as the foundation for a program of empirical research that will progressively test and refine its propositions, ultimately generating the evidence base required for credible policy formulation and industry investment decisions. The development of Myanmar's condiment and seasoning industry is not merely a sectoral commercial matter; it is an expression of the country's broader aspiration to convert its natural and cultural endowments into sustainable economic well-being for the communities whose livelihoods depend upon it.

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A STUDY ON THE TRAVEL BEHAVIOR AND SATISFACTION OF THAI TOURISTS VISITING THE MALDIVES THROUGH PARADISE INTER TOUR CO., LTD.

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the behavior and satisfaction of Thai tourists traveling to the Maldives through Paradise Inter Tour Company. The research also investigated the factors influencing customers' decision-making and their overall experience throughout the travel process. A quantitative research method was employed, and data were collected using questionnaires from a total of 400 Thai tourists who had used the company's services. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents are working-age Thai tourists with prior international travel experience and a tendency to plan their trips in advance. The results further reveal that tourists place high importance on travel convenience and service quality when selecting tour services. In terms of satisfaction, respondents reported a high level of satisfaction overall, particularly in relation to service reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles.

The study findings are consistent with the Service Quality (SERVQUAL) model, which emphasizes that perceived service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction. It can therefore be concluded that service quality plays a crucial role in shaping the satisfaction of Thai tourists traveling to the Maldives through the company. The results of this study provide useful insights for improving service standards and enhancing competitiveness in the outbound tourism industry.

Keywords: Thai Tourists; Maldives; Outbound Tourism; Paradise Inter Tour

Introduction

The Thai Travel Agents Association (TTAA) stated that Thailand's outbound tourism industry is projected to grow by only 5–7 percent annually in 2024. It is estimated that approximately 10 million Thai nationals will travel abroad. However, this figure remains below the pre-COVID-19 level, during which approximately 12–13 million Thai travelers went overseas each year. The slowdown in growth can be attributed to an economic downturn, which has led tourists to exercise greater caution in their spending, as well as geopolitical

factors that have reduced demand for international travel. In particular, the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East have significantly discouraged outbound travel (The Nation, 2024).

However, according to a joint announcement by Thai Airways (THAI) and Mastercard, outbound travel by Thai nationals increased by 45 percent compared to the same period in 2023 during the first half of 2024. Demand for international travel showed a strong recovery despite the economic slowdown, with one in four tourists making multiple trips during this period. Approximately 75 percent of travelers chose destinations within Asia, with a wide range of popular routes observed (Tourism Scope, 2024). Meanwhile, Maldives, as a premium tourist destination, remains a niche market with a relatively small proportion of Thai tourists compared to visitors from other countries. In this context, Paradise Inter Tour Company, a tourism operator providing travel packages to the Maldives, plays a significant role in connecting Thai travelers with this destination. Therefore, a study of the behavior and satisfaction of customers who utilize the company's services. Paradise Inter Tour Company therefore seeks to examine the factors influencing customers' decisions to use its services, as well as the experiences they receive throughout the travel process. Accordingly, the study of Thai tourists' behavior and satisfaction in traveling to the Maldives through Paradise Inter Tour Company is significant both academically and practically. The findings are expected to contribute to the improvement of service quality and the sustainable growth of the tourism industry in the future.

Objectives

1. A study of the travel behavior of Thai tourists visiting the Maldives through Paradise Inter Tour Company.
2. A study of the satisfaction of Thai tourists traveling to the Maldives through Paradise Inter Tour Company.

Literature Review

Ekarat Tiantiang, Chinnaso Visitnitikija and Ingorn Tanphan (2026), This research article aimed to 1) examine the marketing mix factors influencing the use of outbound tour services, 2) investigate the decision to use outbound tour services, 3) compare the decision to use outbound tour services classified by personal characteristics, and 4) analyse the influence of marketing mix factors on the decision to use outbound tour services among Thai tourists. This research employed a quantitative research approach, using a questionnaire as the data collection instrument. The sample consisted of 400 Thai tourists who had previously used outbound tour services, selected through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including percentage, mean, t-test, one-way analysis of variance (One-way ANOVA), and multiple regression analysis. The results revealed that most respondents were female, aged between 31 and 40 years, held a bachelor's degree, were employed in the private sector, and had an average monthly income ranging from 30,001 to

40,000 baht. Overall, the marketing mix factors related to outbound tour services were rated at the highest level of importance, while the decision to use such services was rated at the highest level of agreement. The comparative analysis showed that differences in educational level significantly affected the decision to use outbound tour services at the 0.05 level of statistical significance. Furthermore, the results indicated that all seven marketing mix factors—namely product, price, distribution channel, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence—had a significant influence on the decision to use outbound tour services among Thai tourists at the 0.05 level of statistical significance.

Rajasundram Sathiendrakumar and Clem Tisdell (1989) found that tourism continues to play a major role in the economic development of Asian and Pacific countries. However, tourism development is not without concerns. This article considers the economic and related consequences of international tourism for the Maldives. The Maldives, like many island developing countries has a narrow resource base, its main natural resources consisting of fisheries and a marine environment conducive to international tourism. The article pays particular attention to the ability of the tourist industry to absorb fisherman displaced by technological change. In considering the costs and benefits of international tourism, attention is given to such factors as the extent to which the tourist industry employs local inhabitants (as distinct from foreigners) and provides alternative employment opportunities for them; its possible consequences for the balance of payments and public finance; and competition and opportunity cost considerations.

Methodology

Content Scope

This study focuses on examining the behavior and satisfaction of Thai tourists traveling to the Maldives through Paradise Inter Tour Company.

Population and Sample Scope

In this study, the population refers to Thai tourists who travel to the Maldives through Paradise Inter Tour Company. Since the exact size of the population is unknown, the researcher applied Cochran's formula (1977) ($n = Z^2 / 4e^2$) to determine the sample size. The acceptable margin of error was set at 5 percent with a 95 percent confidence level, or a significance level of 0.05, corresponding to a Z value of 1.96. Based on the calculation, the required sample size was 385 respondents. However, to ensure the reliability of the data collection, the researcher distributed a total of 400 questionnaires. And this study is conducted within Thailand and among Thai tourists who travel to the Maldives.

Results

The summary of the research findings on the general information of the respondents indicates that, out of **400** participants, the majority were Thai tourists who traveled to the Maldives through Paradise Inter Tour Company. The overall characteristics of the sample group were predominantly working-age individuals with prior experience in international travel and who tended to plan their trips in advance before deciding to use tour services. In addition, most respondents placed importance on travel convenience and service quality as the main factors in selecting travel services.

The findings on the satisfaction of Thai tourists traveling to the Maldives through Paradise Inter Tour Company indicate that the overall satisfaction of respondents is at a high level. Most respondents reported positive experiences across various aspects of service delivery, including responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. In particular, the results are largely consistent with the Service Quality Theory (SERVQUAL), which emphasizes that customer satisfaction is influenced by the quality of service received. The findings suggest that when the company provides efficient communication, reliable travel arrangements, attentive customer service, and well-managed tour operations, tourists tend to express higher levels of satisfaction. Therefore, it can be concluded that service quality plays a crucial role in shaping the satisfaction of Thai tourists using the company's services.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Thai tourists traveling to the Maldives through Paradise Inter Tour Company generally report a high level of satisfaction, and that their evaluation of service quality plays a central role in shaping this satisfaction. The results are consistent with the Service Quality Theory (SERVQUAL), which argues that customer satisfaction is determined by the gap between expected and perceived service performance across key dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

In this study, respondents placed particular importance on service reliability and convenience, especially in relation to travel arrangements, booking processes, and the overall organization of tour packages. This supports the SERVQUAL dimension of reliability, which refers to the ability of a service provider to deliver promised services accurately and dependably (Parasuraman et al., 1988). When services were delivered as expected without disruption, satisfaction levels were found to increase.

Overall, the findings confirm that service quality is a key determinant of customer satisfaction in outbound tour services, particularly in premium destinations such as the Maldives. This is consistent with prior studies in tourism research that emphasize the strong relationship between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction (Oliver, 1997).

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DATA-DRIVEN IMPORT SUBSTITUTION: HOW DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND AI ARE CHANGING THE STRUCTURE OF RUSSIAN WINE CONSUMPTION

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Abstract

The article examines the clash between technological progress and regulatory restrictions in Russia's wine industry. Companies like Abrau-Durso and the Vino.ru platform are using AI to personalize wine selection and boost sales, but laws banning direct online alcohol sales limit their potential. Hybrid models like Click & Collect are a temporary workaround, but they are inefficient for both customers and retailers. Industry leaders, supported by AKIT, are pushing for the legalization of online wine sales with mandatory biometric age verification. The government is considering pilot projects. Reform could open national markets to small producers, enable data-driven production, and foster new digital services, making the industry more competitive and customer-focused.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Russian Wine Industry, E-commerce, Artificial Intelligence.

Introduction

Modern Russian winemaking is undergoing a period of profound technological transformation. Artificial intelligence tools are gradually being implemented in various segments of the industry – from yield forecasting and vineyard monitoring to consumer behaviour analysis and personalized offerings. However, the rapid development of digital technologies is encountering a seemingly insurmountable obstacle – the legislative ban on the online retail sale of alcoholic beverages, enshrined in Article 16 of Federal Law No. 171-FZ. This contradiction creates a unique situation for the Russian economy, where technological capabilities significantly outpace the legal framework for their implementation.

Objectives

The purpose of this study is to analyse the current legal paradox and assess the prospects for its resolution through biometric identification and industry lobbying. This potentially could transform the legislative ban from a deterrent into a growth driver for small and medium-sized wineries.

Research Questions

How does the prohibition on online retail sales of alcoholic beverages constrain the commercialization of AI-driven consumer analytics, demand forecasting, and personalized marketing in Russian winemaking?

What institutional pathways and lobbying strategies have proven effective in advancing regulatory adaptations for digital alcohol commerce in Russia, and how can industry associations and SME coalitions influence legislative reform?

Literature Review and Theory

Recent literature documents rapid adoption of machine learning, remote sensing, and IoT in precision viticulture for yield prediction, disease detection, and microclimate optimization. In Russia, Federal Law 171-FZ explicitly bans online retail of alcohol, rooted in public health, excise control, and anti-counterfeiting objectives. Scholarly consensus notes that static prohibitions increasingly conflict with digital trade norms and SME digitalization trajectories. The Unified Biometric System and amendments to Federal Law 152-FZ provide a legal-technical foundation for secure identity confirmation.

Methodology

Media content analysis is a method for the quantitative and qualitative study of text and images (media, social media, blogs) to identify hidden patterns, reputation and popularity. It involves collecting data, classifying it by topic, sentiment and interpreting the results.

Systems analysis is a scientific method for studying complex objects, processes, or problems by representing them as a unified system. It aims to understand the relationships between elements to make informed decisions and optimize processes.

Results

Technological breakthroughs and regulation conflict

Further digitalization is expanding in the Russian wine sector. Abrau-Durso is an example of a company developing an AI-based strategy. With AI tools, the company is able to optimize many of its business processes, including logistics, vineyard maintenance, and even consumer demand forecasting. Sergey Usik, head of the company's IT department, mentions that consumer-focused business systems are also being developed. In 2024, Vино.ru, a Russian wine e-commerce site, launched a wine buying assistant, Vintellekt, as an AI chatbot e-commerce personal sommelier. Vintellekt utilizes YandexGPT to analyse the Vино.ru shopper's preferences, and even the shopper's mood and to some extent, the shopper's intent to provide a more personalized shopping wine buying experience.

Vино.ru is seeing revenue because of Vintellekt's personalization of wine buying. With Vintellekt's personalization, consumer demand is projected to increase Vино.ru's revenue 30%.

Vintellect's customer revenue spike during the peak holiday shopping period indicates government regulation prohibiting directly selling wine online damages the Russian wine sector's economy and limits Vintellect's consumer demand flexibility to the national economy holiday schedule selling of VINO.ru commerce wine. Technology understands the shopper in sales, demand and commerce, however, lacking government regulation of art to commerce.

Hybrid models as a forced market response

According to Federal Law 171, market participants are forced to design alternative, hybrid models for online selling. The most widely adopted model is Click & Collect (pick up at the point), where the order is placed online, but payment and collecting are done offline at the designated partner store. The Wildberries marketplace led the mass market in testing this approach with the VinLab wine shop chain. This model involves the customer selecting a product on the website, ordering it, and designating a VinLab shop as the point of pick up, where the order is put together within an hour. Payment and collection are required to be done in person, and a passport is used to verify the customer's age. This process is also legitimate to a certain extent, but has many negative attributes. For the customer, the purchasing process is burdensome, and for the retailer, the transaction costs are increased, as demand is geographically limited to the partner stores. For this reason, hybrid models are rather an ineffective compromise than a solution.

These models also make it difficult to generate quality content. Wine descriptions on marketplaces need to be very specific and careful to follow the bans on alcohol advertising. The product card must be strictly moderated, so there is little to no emotional description in the final content of these cards. The description has to be very neutral, and contain grape variety, organoleptic, and region of origin, and even recommended food pairings.

Lobbying initiatives and the search for a systemic solution

The deadlock in hybrid systems has prompted the business community to advocate for new legislation. The Association of Internet Trade Companies (AKIT), which represents the largest marketplaces, supports the step-by-step legalization of online alcohol sales. AKIT President Artem Sokolov asked for the legalization of online alcohol sales because of the possible increased profitability for domestic winemakers (by 18-22%) and the estimated 20 billion Rubles loss due to illegal sales. Information provided by the Russian Ministry of Finance Research Institute of Financial Information.

Establishment of the Unified State Automated Information System (EGAIS) and utilization of biometric data to address age concerns is the central idea of the framework. The AKIT proposed the online sales of Russian wine, with a requirement to verify the buyer's age through the Unified Biometric System. In this case, the system would send an age verification request to the UBS and would have to approve the sale of wine to the customer.

The authorities are showing cautious openness to such initiatives. The government is considering launching a pilot project for the online sale of age-restricted goods, including wine. Several ministries (the Ministry of Digital Development, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, etc.) have been tasked with the preparatory work. Major marketplaces — Wildberries, Ozon, and Yandex.Market — have publicly declared their willingness to participate in the experiment and the technical feasibility of biometric verification.

Industry prospects if legal barriers are removed

Legalizing online sales will greatly benefit the Russian wine industry in ways beyond merely changing transactions online. Greater access for small producers. Alexander Lipilin (Fortwine) and Pavel Shvets (Uppa Winery) believe that small and medium-sized wineries would be the primary beneficiaries. They will be able to access a national market for the first time without the need to establish time-consuming and expensive contracts with national network retailers. For producers with small batches and unique regional terroirs, they will be able to access a national market for the first time.

A new level of personalization and data-driven production. Removing the barrier between AI recommendations (as in the case of Vintellekt) and the final sale will close the feedback loop. Aggregated data on actual purchases, supplemented by reviews, will become an invaluable resource for producers. This will usher in an era of truly data-driven winemaking, where decisions on varietal composition, production volumes, and marketing campaigns will be based on precise digital insights, not just expert intuition.

Development of virtual educational and immersive formats. The development of related digital services is expected: from VR vineyard tours to integrated educational sections on marketplaces where consumers can learn the basics of oenology, the specifics of Russian terroirs, and food pairing principles. This will contribute to the development of a more conscious and loyal consumer audience.

Conclusion

The Russian wine industry has reached a pivotal stage in its digital transformation. This pivotal stage is characterized by a readiness to implement the scaling of online sales and outdated regulatory restrictions. Current hybrid models, including Click & Collect, are a temporary and inefficient method.

The conflict described can be resolved through two elements: online sales of wine products and the compulsory identification of buyers, by means of a biometric system, the Unified Biometric System (UBS). This solution has been actively supported by AKIT and has passed the examination of the government, as it balances the digital market access in the small wine producer segment, the financing of state budgets, and the digital economy law.

Thus, the integration of the digital economy, identification technologies, and modernized digital regulatory frameworks will be the determining factors for competitiveness and sustained investment into Russian winemaking. Successfully overcoming this barrier will pave the way for the formation of a modern, technologically advanced, and customer-oriented national winemaking ecosystem.

Discussion and Recommendation

The findings of this study underscore a pronounced disjunction between the accelerating pace of digital transformation and the persisting regulatory conservatism within the Russian wine sector. Empirical evidence from industry leaders, such as Abrau-Durso and the Vino.ru platform, demonstrates that the integration of AI and data-driven analytics yields tangible improvements in operational efficiency, demand forecasting, and consumer personalization.

The proposed framework, predicated on the utilization of the UBS for age verification, represents a technologically feasible and socially responsible modality for mitigating the risks associated with online alcohol sales. Preliminary governmental receptivity to pilot projects suggests an emergent policy window for evidence-based regulatory reform.

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THE ROLE OF CBDC IN THE NEW MONETARY ARCHITECTURE OF BRICS AND EAEU

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Abstract

This article analyzes the systemic impact of Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) on the architecture of the global monetary system, with a focus on developing economies. The study identifies a strategic asymmetry: while developed countries (USA, Eurozone) take a cautious approach to CBDC implementation due to financial stability risks, developing nations actively use digital currencies to strengthen monetary sovereignty and optimize payment systems. The authors argue that this asymmetry creates a unique "window of opportunity" for integration blocs like BRICS+ and EAEU. The scientific novelty lies in revealing this asymmetry as a driver for restructuring global financial influence. The results show that the tactical priority of CBDCs (improving domestic payments) is being complemented by the strategic goal of dedollarization through interoperable cross-border infrastructures like the m-Bridge project. The study concludes that ensuring interoperability of national CBDCs is the primary task for the sustainable development of the BRICS monetary system.

Keywords: CBDC, digital currencies, BRICS, monetary sovereignty, de-dollarization, m-Bridge, EAEU

Introduction

The relevance of this research is driven by the rapid global implementation of Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs). As of mid-2025, CBDC projects cover over 282 million users across countries like Nigeria (e-Naira), China (e-CNY), and India (e-rupee), with 130 nations actively exploring adoption (Bolonina & Buleev, 2024; Progress of Research & Development of E-CNY in China, 2024). Unlike unbacked cryptocurrencies, CBDCs are state-issued digital fiat, designed to enhance payment efficiency and economic control.

We observe a structural transformation comparable to the shift from Bretton Woods to the Jamaican system. However, a critical strategic asymmetry is emerging: a cautious, research-oriented stance by the US Fed and ECB contrasted with the aggressive, operational implementation by developing economies. This paper posits that this divergence is not coincidental but represents a strategic window for BRICS+ and EAEU to reshape the international monetary system, reducing dependence on traditional reserve currencies and SWIFT (Ismailov, 2024).

Methodology

The methodological framework of this study is based on a synthesis of qualitative methods of economic analysis. We employed a systematic approach to assess the new global monetary architecture, comparative institutional analysis to contrast the implementation models of CBDCs in China, India, and Russia, and structural-functional analysis to identify the long-term strategic consequences of CBDC adoption for global finance. This approach allowed us to identify the emerging asymmetry and define the "window of opportunity" for developing countries.

Results

The global landscape is marked by divergent strategies. The US and Europe focus on research, concerned about banking disintermediation. Conversely, China, India, and Russia are actively piloting and deploying CBDCs. According to our analysis, this creates a unique chance for developing nations to rewrite the rules of cross-border finance.

National Models: A Comparative Analysis. Our analysis of three major economies reveals no universal model, but distinct strategic choices (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparative analysis of CBDC implementation strategies

	(e-CNY)	(e-rupee)	(Digital Ruble)
	State-controlled data ecosystem & financial inclusion	(retail/wholesale)	Institutional stability & banking sector preservation
	/ Two-tier ledger	(Retail + Wholesale)	(Bank-centric distribution)
	Vertical integration with tech giants (Meituan, DiDi)	Separation of interbank and retail risks	Preserving the role of commercial banks as distributors

Technological Architecture and Interoperability. The choice of architecture determines future influence. China uses centralized ledgers for retail control, while m-Bridge (China, UAE, Thailand) utilizes DLT for cross-border settlements (Danilova & Maslov, 2024). We conclude that a hybrid model (like Russia's), where the Central Bank holds the master ledger and banks provide customer interfaces (Budushchee deneg: tsifrovoy rubl, 2025), is optimal for balancing control with risk diversification. For BRICS, the key success factor is ensuring interoperability of these national platforms.

Tactical vs. Strategic Goals. Forecasts by Juniper Research (projecting a 210,000% growth in CBDC transactions by 2030, up to \$213 billion (K 2030 godu obyom transaktsiy, 2025)) show that domestic payments (92%) remain the tactical priority. However, the strategic goal is dedollarization. Investment in platforms like m-Bridge (estimated at 0,5-0,7% of GDP) is an economically justified cost for creating a SWIFT alternative.

Conclusion

This study allows us to conclude that the global implementation of CBDCs marks a new stage in the evolution of the world financial architecture. The strategic pause by developed economies has opened a unique "window of opportunities for developing markets. The emerging asymmetry is leading to the formation of a polycentric global financial model, where monetary influence is defined not only by GDP but also by technological leadership in the field of CBDCs.

Thus, for the BRICS+ and EAEU associations, the primary task is to move from national experiments to ensuring functional interoperability of their digital currencies. Interoperability of CBDCs through harmonization of standards and legal frameworks is the key priority for the economic and monetary cooperation of the BRICS countries in the medium term.

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PASSENGER FLOW AND CIQ BLIND SPOTS: AN OBSERVATIONAL STUDY AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of transit passenger management during Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine (CIQ) procedures at an older airport terminal. Using an observational case study at Thai Lion Air at Don Mueang International Airport (DMK), the research focuses on Domestic-to-International (DOM–INT) and International-to-Domestic (INT–DOM) transfer flows during a four-month peak period from December 2025 to March 2026.

The study evaluates the use of manual control methods, such as CIQ stickers and staff signboards, to manage passenger movement due to terminal layout limitations. It also investigates how the temporary implementation of the Thailand Digital Arrival Card (TDAC) contributes to passenger confusion and increases ground staff workload.

The findings reveal that current manual practices are insufficient to manage complex transfer flows efficiently. Therefore, the study proposes a multi-layered improvement approach, including facility upgrades, the use of RFID-based smart stickers, and AI-supported monitoring systems. In addition, the study highlights the importance of collaboration among airport stakeholders through a Joint Operational Agreement to ensure sustainable and cost-effective CIQ management.

Keywords: Aviation Operations, CIQ Transfer, Don Mueang International Airport, Ground Staff Workload, Passenger Navigation

1. Introduction

Managing transit passengers is a critical component of international aviation operations, guided by regulatory frameworks established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO, 2021). At high-traffic low-cost carrier hubs like Don Mueang International Airport (DMK), efficient passenger flow through Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine (CIQ) procedures is essential to maintain both security and operational efficiency (Graham & Dobruszkes, 2019). Older airport terminals often face structural and design limitations that affect passenger wayfinding and movement (Kim & Wu, 2021). Observations from an internship at Thai Lion Air reveal significant gaps in transit passenger management at Don Mueang International Airport (DMK). Due to outdated layouts and inadequate signage, transit passengers may become confused and unintentionally enter public arrival areas. This issue is particularly evident among passengers connecting between Domestic-to-International (DOM–INT) and International-to-Domestic (INT–DOM) flights, especially those arriving from other international airports in Thailand, such as Phuket, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and Hat Yai, who may mistakenly follow the general arrival passenger flow.

To mitigate these challenges, airlines use manual control measures, such as providing passengers with CIQ stickers. These include the use of CIQ identification stickers placed visibly on passengers and making them easily identifiable to ground staff, a method selected by Thai Lion Air. Ground staff are deployed at key terminal intersections, holding signboards that display connecting flight numbers and destinations. Ground staff must accurately identify

the number of CIQ passengers arriving and wait until the entire group is assembled before escorting them to the transit point. While these methods provide short-term solutions, they increase staff workload and may not effectively address the root causes of passenger misdirection (Bezerra & Gomes, 2023). Therefore, this study examines the effectiveness of these manual transit management practices and evaluates how temporary CIQ control points influence operational efficiency at DMK.

1.2. Research Objectives

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of manual interception methods (CIQ stickers and signboards) in managing transit passengers.
2. To examine the impact of DMK's infrastructure and temporary TDAC checkpoints on passenger confusion and staff workload.
3. To develop a sustainable framework integrating digital, technological, and collaborative solutions for transit management.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Q1: To what extent do manual protocols (stickers and signboards) prevent transit passengers from breaching sterile areas?
2. Q2: How do infrastructure limitations and temporary TDAC checkpoints affect passenger navigation and staff workload?
3. Q3: What structural, technological, and collaborative interventions can improve transit passenger management at DMK?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Passenger Facilitation and Digital Transformation

Passenger facilitation focuses on improving the efficiency and seamlessness of passenger movement within airport terminals. Industry bodies such as the International Air Transport Association (IATA, 2023) promote digital identity systems such as One ID, which enable passengers to move through check-in, security, and boarding using biometric verification, thereby reducing repetitive document checks. Similarly, the Airports Council International (ACI, 2025) reports strong passenger acceptance of contactless technologies, with a majority of travelers preferring biometric identification and digital travel documents. These developments suggest a clear shift toward automation and passenger-centric design.

However, while such technologies are widely discussed in the literature, their implementation is often concentrated in newly developed or technologically advanced hubs. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO, 2022) emphasizes facilitation as a global standard, yet practical adoption remains uneven across airports with legacy infrastructure. As a result, many airports continue to rely on manual verification and physical control methods, particularly in complex transit environments. This creates a gap between theoretical facilitation models and actual operational practices, especially in older terminals where digital integration is limited.

2.2 Operational Efficiency and Infrastructure Constraints

Operational efficiency in airport environments refers to the ability to manage passenger flows with minimal delay, optimized resource allocation, and reduced operational costs. ICAO (2025) highlights the role of automation, artificial intelligence, and integrated data systems in enhancing real-time decision-making and improving terminal flow management. Likewise, IATA (2025) suggests that integrated terminal operations, including the merging of domestic and international passenger flows, can significantly reduce connection times and staffing requirements. ACI (2023) further supports the role of digital systems such as cloud computing and business intelligence in enabling airports to respond dynamically to congestion and demand fluctuations.

Despite these advancements, literature tends to assume the availability of modern infrastructure and system-wide digital integration. In contrast, airports with older terminal designs face structural constraints that limit the effectiveness of these solutions. Physical layouts, unclear wayfinding systems, and temporary operational setups can disrupt passenger flow and reduce overall efficiency. Moreover, the reliance on manual interventions—such as staff guidance and visual identification tools—introduces variability and increases the likelihood of human error. These conditions are particularly problematic in transit scenarios, where passengers must navigate complex routing under time pressure.

2.3 Research Gap and Study Positioning

Although existing literature emphasizes the benefits of digitalization and integrated passenger facilitation systems, there is limited empirical research examining how transit passenger management is handled in airports with legacy infrastructure. In particular, the effectiveness of manual interception methods—such as physical identifiers and staff-assisted navigation—remains underexplored. Furthermore, the operational impact of temporary control measures, such as ad hoc checkpoints or transitional digital systems, has received little academic attention.

This gap is especially relevant in the context of Don Mueang International Airport, where high passenger volumes, low-cost carrier operations, and infrastructural limitations intersect. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by analyzing the effectiveness of manual transit management practices and evaluating their impact on both passenger navigation and ground staff workload, while proposing sustainable, technology-integrated solutions.

Despite these advancements in passenger facilitation and operational efficiency, airports with legacy infrastructures such as Don Mueang International Airport—often continue to rely on manual control measures. These practices may lead to inefficiencies, increased staff workload, and a higher risk of passenger misdirection, particularly during complex transit processes.

Therefore, further investigation is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of such manual systems and identify sustainable improvements.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative observational case study approach to examine transit passenger management practices at Don Mueang International Airport (DMK). Data were collected during a four-month internship (December 2025–March 2026) with Thai Lion Air, capturing operational conditions during the peak travel season.

3.1 Sampling and Data Collection

Purposive critical incident sampling was applied to focus on key operational situations where transit management challenges were most evident. Observations were recorded through field notes and categorized into three main areas:

1. **Operational Flows:** Transit passenger flow (DOM–INT and INT–DOM connections, e.g., Phuket to China via DMK)
2. **Procedural Breaches:** Incidents of passenger misdirection into public areas
3. **Workload Analysis:** Ground staff workload and intervention activities

3.2 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and operational issues. Observations were grouped into three analytical themes: (1) passenger misdirection, (2) manual intervention dependency, and (3) infrastructure-related constraints. This approach enables a structured interpretation of qualitative evidence and supports the identification of cause-and-effect relationships in transit operations.

4. Results

The observational data shows a direct link between infrastructure problems and lower ground handling efficiency.

4.1 Analysis of Manual Interception: The Sticker and Signboard Method

This section addresses Research Question 1 and Objective 1.

A major issue at DMK is transit passengers accidentally exiting to the public area. Airlines rely on a "Visual Interception Protocol" where connecting passengers get CIQ stickers. However, ground staff must physically stand at intersections holding signboards to guide them. This method is highly prone to human error. If a passenger does not see the staff member or if a jacket hides the sticker, they often follow the crowd to the public hall. This mistake requires a manual search, pulling staff away from their main tasks and causing flight delays.

4.2 Infrastructure Constraints and Temporary TDAC Checkpoints

This section addresses Research Question 2 and Objective 2.

DMK's older terminal layout creates limitations in managing transit passenger flow. The physical design does not clearly separate transit passengers from general arrival passengers, which increases the risk of confusion, especially at key decision points within the terminal.

This issue is further affected by the temporary Thailand Digital Arrival Card (TDAC) checkpoints. These checkpoints typically use only 4–5 scanning machines and are separated by retractable barriers (stanchions) instead of permanent structures. This setup appears unclear and cluttered, making it difficult for passengers, especially those who are tired or unfamiliar with the airport—to identify the correct transit path. As a result, some passengers may walk in the wrong direction or hesitate when navigating the terminal. This situation requires ground staff to continuously provide verbal instructions and physically guide passengers, increasing both workload and operational pressure. Therefore, the findings suggest that infrastructure limitations and temporary operational setups significantly contribute to passenger misdirection and reduce overall efficiency. Manual control measures alone are not sufficient to overcome these structural challenges.

4.3 Implications for Improving Transit Passenger Management (Q3)

This section addresses Research Question 3 and Objective 3.

Based on the findings from Sections 4.1 and 4.2, it is clear that current transit management at DMK relies heavily on manual processes, which are not sustainable in high passenger volume environments. The combined issues of passenger confusion, infrastructure limitations, and increased staff workload highlight the need for more effective and long-term solutions. The observations suggest that improving transit passenger management requires more than just additional staff or manual control methods. Instead, a more integrated approach is needed, including better physical layout design, improved wayfinding systems, and the use of digital technologies to support passenger tracking and monitoring. In addition, stronger coordination between airport authorities and airlines is necessary to ensure consistent procedures and reduce operational gaps. Without such improvements, the current system will continue to rely on reactive problem-solving rather than proactive management. Therefore, these findings emphasize the importance of transitioning toward more structured, technology-supported, and collaborative approaches to enhance both operational efficiency and passenger experience.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the effectiveness of transit passenger management at Don Mueang International Airport (DMK), with a focus on manual interception methods, infrastructure limitations, and their impact on operational efficiency. The findings show that current practices—such as CIQ stickers and staff-held signboards—provide only partial control and are highly dependent on human attention and coordination. As a result, these methods are prone to error and become less effective during peak operational periods.

In addition, the study highlights that DMK's older terminal layout and the use of temporary TDAC checkpoints contribute significantly to passenger confusion and misdirection. The lack of clear physical separation and effective wayfinding increases the need for continuous staff intervention, leading to a higher workload and reduced efficiency. These findings demonstrate that manual control measures alone are insufficient to manage complex transit passenger flows in high-volume environments.

Overall, the study emphasizes the need to shift from reactive, labor-intensive practices toward more structured and proactive approaches. Improvements in infrastructure design, integration of digital technologies, and stronger coordination among airport stakeholders are essential to enhance both operational performance and passenger experience.

5.1 Strategic Recommendations

To answer Research Question 3 and fulfill the third Research Objective regarding structural, technological, and collaborative policy interventions, a comprehensive approach is required to sustainably resolve transit management gaps. The following solutions are proposed:

- **Permanent Infrastructure and Wayfinding Redesign:** The temporary retractable belts (stanchions) at TDAC checkpoints must be replaced with permanent glass partitions. These clear physical borders prevent accidental crossings. Furthermore, DMK should implement "Dynamic Wayfinding," including illuminated floor-path routing (e.g., colored LED lines leading directly to transit security) and bright, eye-level digital signs. These guides guide fatigued passengers intuitively without relying on manual staff directions.
- **Physical Segregation of Passenger Flows:** Instead of relying on staff to separate passengers at intersections, the airport layout should be physically adjusted to segregate DOM-INT and INT-DOM passengers immediately upon exiting the aircraft. Creating a dedicated, walled off "Transit Corridor" ensures that connecting passengers never mix with the general arrival crowd heading to the public landside area.
- **Smart RFID Stickers and Shared Sensor Infrastructure:** It is proposed that airlines transition to Smart CIQ Stickers containing low-cost RFID tags. To make this effective, the airport authority and airlines must collaborate to install RFID sensor points at all critical transit junctions. This Shared Infrastructure model allows the airport to provide the readers while airlines provide the stickers. This system can track passengers automatically. If a transit passenger walks toward the public exit, the sensors will detect the tag and send an alert to the staff's mobile devices. Similar technologies are already applied in baggage tracking at major international airports.
- **AI-Powered Smart Surveillance:** Relying on older CCTV systems and manual patrols is insufficient for modern security needs. DMK should upgrade to HD IP cameras equipped with AI video analytics. This hardware allows for the implementation of Automated Exit Lane Breach Control, a protocol used in major US airports and certified by the TSA. Using "Virtual Line" technology, the AI can detect when a passenger walks flow or enter a wrong zone. The system then automatically sends an alert and a photo of the individual to staff tablets for immediate action. This technology supports a Silent Airport environment, like Hamad International Airport (DOH) and Changi Airport (SIN), reducing terminal noise.
- **Joint Operational Agreement:** The airport authority and airlines should sign a formal agreement to standardize transit protocols across all carriers to help airport security identify transit passengers easily. Furthermore, data from RFID sensors and AI cameras should be shared in a Joint Command Center, ensuring that all teams work together to prevent security breaches.
- **Cost-Effectiveness and Operational Benefits:** Although installing new cameras and RFID sensors requires an initial investment, the long-term benefits are high. The

primary savings come from reducing expensive flight delays and fuel waste caused by lost passengers. Additionally, this system allows ground staff to return to their core duties, improving overall airport operational efficiency.

5.2 Limitations

This study is limited to the operational context of DMK and focuses on a low-cost carrier environment. The qualitative nature of the research, based on observational data, does not include quantitative measurements such as passenger processing time or delay duration. Future research should incorporate time-motion analysis and comparative studies across multiple airports to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Acknowledgment

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THE IMPACT OF SELF-CONTROL APPS ON LEARNING EFFICIENCY AMONG STUDENTS

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Abstract

In the era of mobile internet, digital distraction has become a critical challenge hindering students' learning efficiency. This study focuses on self-control mobile applications as a form of digital intervention and aims to investigate their impact on the learning efficiency of university students and the underlying psychological mechanisms. Based on the Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) theory, this research employs a quantitative approach to analyze data collected through surveys, utilizing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the pathways between app usage behavior, self-regulation capabilities, and academic performance. The findings indicate that while the strategic use of self-control apps can effectively reduce distractions and increase focus duration, the efficacy of these tools varies significantly depending on the students' inherent self-control traits. Furthermore, this study suggests that an over-reliance on digital tools may, to some extent, inhibit the development of students' internal self-discipline. This research provides empirical evidence for digital-assisted learning and highlights the necessity for students and educators to critically evaluate the boundaries of technological intervention, facilitating a transition from external monitoring to internal self-management.

Keywords: Self-control apps; Learning efficiency; Self-regulated learning; Digital distraction; Academic performance

Introduction

In the current digital age, smartphones have become an indispensable part of our academic lives. While they offer unparalleled convenience for accessing information, they simultaneously present a persistent challenge: the constant barrage of digital distractions. Many students now struggle with "digital procrastination," finding it increasingly difficult to maintain deep focus amidst the constant flow of notifications and social media updates.

To counter this, a wide array of self-control applications has emerged, promising to help students regain focus through site-blocking or time-tracking features. However, there is no consensus on their efficacy. While some argue that these tools are essential for strengthening executive function, others raise concerns about "tool dependency," suggesting that students may lose the ability to self-regulate effectively once these external constraints are removed.

In observing these trends, I have noted that existing research focuses primarily on the technical functionality of such apps, often overlooking the psychological nuances of the user experience. It remains unclear whether these applications genuinely enhance self-regulation or merely offer a temporary sense of reassurance. This study aims to bridge this gap by empirically investigating the actual impact of self-control apps on student learning efficiency. By examining the relationship between digital tool usage and metacognitive monitoring, I hope to provide a more nuanced perspective on how students can leverage technology to foster, rather than replace, their own capacity for self-management.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the impact of self-control applications on the learning efficiency of university students. This research further aims to explore whether these digital tools function as effective supports for self-regulated learning (SRL) or as external aids that may weaken students' internal self-discipline. By analyzing the relationships among app usage behavior, self-regulation, and academic performance, this study seeks to identify the conditions under which digital tools enhance, rather than replace, students' self-management abilities.

Research Questions

RQ1: To what extent do self-control applications influence students' learning efficiency and sustained focus?

RQ2: How do individual differences in trait self-control moderate the relationship between app usage and learning outcomes?

RQ3: Does over-reliance on self-control applications negatively affect students' internal self-regulation?

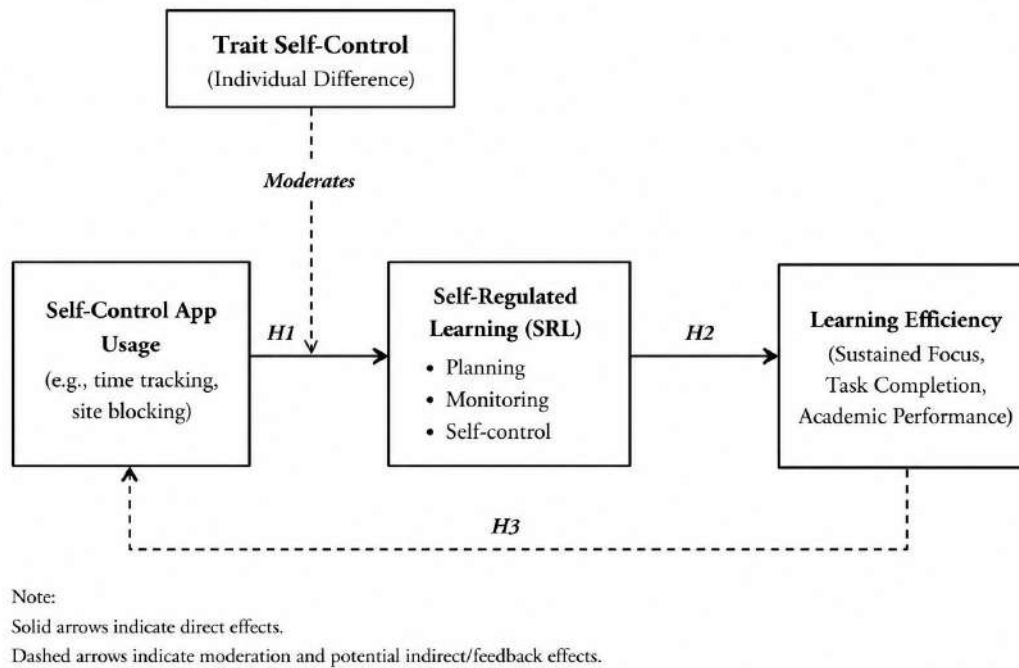
RQ4: What are the relationships among app usage, self-regulated learning, and academic performance?

Literature Review

In recent years, digital distraction has become a common issue among university students, largely due to the widespread use of smartphones and social media. Studies have shown that frequent interruptions from notifications and online content can reduce students' ability to maintain sustained attention, ultimately lowering learning efficiency. As a result, managing digital distractions has become an important topic in education research.

Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) theory provides a useful framework for understanding how students manage their own learning processes. According to this theory, effective learners are able to plan, monitor, and control their behavior during learning. Previous research suggests that students with stronger self-regulation skills tend to achieve better academic outcomes. In this context, self-control applications are seen as external tools that can support SRL by helping students limit distractions, manage time, and stay focused on tasks.

However, the effectiveness of self-control apps remains debated. Some studies argue that these applications can improve concentration and productivity, especially when used consistently. On the other hand, other researchers point out that over-reliance on such tools may weaken students' internal self-discipline and reduce their ability to self-regulate without external support. Therefore, it is important to further examine not only the direct impact of these apps on learning efficiency but also the underlying mechanisms and individual differences that influence their effectiveness.



Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the theory of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL), which emphasizes the role of individuals in actively controlling their own learning processes. According to SRL theory, students who are able to plan, monitor, and regulate their learning behaviors tend to achieve higher academic performance.

In the context of digital learning environments, self-control applications are considered external tools that assist students in managing distractions and maintaining focus. These applications may support key components of self-regulated learning, such as goal setting, time management, and metacognitive monitoring. Therefore, the use of self-control apps is expected to positively influence students' learning efficiency.

However, the effectiveness of these applications may vary depending on individual differences, particularly trait self-control. Students with higher levels of self-control are more likely to use such tools effectively, while those with lower self-control may rely excessively on external support without developing internal regulation skills.

Based on this framework, this study proposes that self-control app usage influences learning efficiency both directly and indirectly through self-regulated learning. In addition, trait self-control serves as a moderating variable in this relationship. The conceptual model is illustrated as follows:

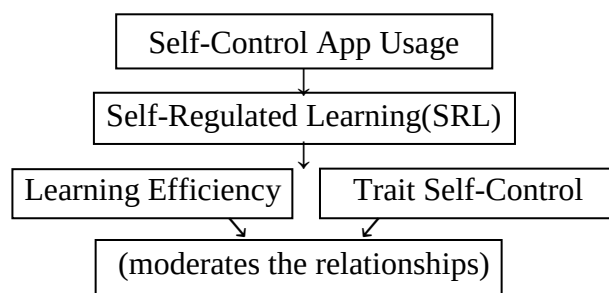


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the impact of self-control applications on students' learning efficiency. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to undergraduate students. A total of approximately 80–120 valid responses were expected to ensure sufficient data for analysis.

The questionnaire consists of four main sections. The first section collects demographic information such as gender, year of study, and field of study. The second section focuses on students' usage of self-control applications, including frequency of use, duration, and types of apps used. The third section measures students' level of self-regulated learning and perceived ability to manage distractions. The final section evaluates learning efficiency, including focus duration, task completion, and perceived academic performance.

All items are measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The collected data are analyzed using statistical methods, including descriptive analysis and correlation analysis, to examine relationships among variables. In addition, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is employed to explore the pathways between app usage behavior, self-regulation, and academic performance.

Results

A total of 102 valid responses were collected from undergraduate students. Among them, 58.8% of participants reported that they had used self-control applications regularly, while 41.2% indicated occasional or no use.

Descriptive analysis shows that students who frequently use self-control apps reported higher levels of learning efficiency ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.64$) compared to those who rarely use such apps ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.71$). In terms of focus duration, frequent users also reported longer uninterrupted study periods.

Correlation analysis indicates a positive relationship between app usage frequency and learning efficiency ($r = 0.46$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that increased use of self-control apps is associated with better study outcomes. In addition, self-regulated learning shows a strong positive correlation with learning efficiency ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$).

The results of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) further reveal that self-control app usage has an indirect effect on academic performance through self-regulated learning ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$). However, the moderating effect of trait self-control is also significant. Students with higher levels of self-control benefit more from app usage, while those with lower self-control show weaker improvements.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that excessive reliance on self-control apps may not significantly enhance internal self-regulation ($\beta = -0.18$, $p < 0.05$), indicating a potential risk of dependency on external tools.

Overall, the results support the idea that self-control apps can improve learning efficiency, but their effectiveness varies depending on individual differences and usage patterns.

Conclusion

This study looked at how self-control apps affect students' learning efficiency. From the results, it seems that these apps can help students reduce distractions and stay focused for a longer time, which can improve their learning efficiency to some extent. However, not all students benefit in the same way. Those who already have better self-control tend to use these apps more effectively, while others may not see a big difference.

At the same time, there is also a possible problem. If students rely too much on these apps, they might become less able to control themselves without them. In other words, the apps can help in the short term, but they cannot replace personal effort and discipline.

Overall, self-control apps can be useful, but they should be used in a balanced way. In the end, improving learning efficiency still depends more on students' own habits and self-discipline.

Discussion and Recommendation

The results of this study show that self-control apps can be helpful for improving students' learning efficiency. Many students reported that these apps helped them reduce distractions and stay focused for a longer time. This supports the idea from self-regulated learning theory that external tools can assist students in managing their study behavior. In this case, self-control apps seem to work as a support system, especially for time management and concentration.

However, the results also show that not all students benefit in the same way. Students with higher levels of self-control are more likely to use these apps effectively, while those with lower self-control may rely on them too much. Instead of improving their own habits, they may depend on the app to control their behavior. This suggests that the effectiveness of these apps depends not only on the tool itself but also on the user.

Another important point is that overusing these apps may have a negative effect. Some students may become too dependent on them, which can make it harder to stay focused without the app. This means that while these tools are useful, they should not replace students' own ability to manage their learning.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that students use self-control apps in a balanced way. They should see them as a tool to support their learning, not something to rely on completely. At the same time, students should try to develop their own self-discipline and study habits. For educators, it may also be helpful to guide students on how to use these tools properly. Future studies can include a larger sample size or compare different types of apps to better understand their effectiveness.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING INTERNSHIP SITE SELECTION DECISIONS AMONG TOURISM INDUSTRY AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT STUDENTS OF SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This quantitative study aimed to investigate the factors influencing the selection of professional internship sites of the fourth-year students of the Tourism and Hospitality Industry Management Program, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The study investigated five independent variables from the perspective of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which included organizational image, perceived internship benefits, career goals, welfare and convenience, and perceived employability. The sample was made up of 100 purposively sampled final year students. Data were collected through a validated questionnaire based on a five point Likert scale and analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficients and multiple regression analysis.

The results showed that all five factors were positively and significantly correlated with students' decisions to select professional internship sites ($r = .384-.618$, $p < .01$). The multiple regression model significantly predicted internship site selection decisions and explained 61.2% of the variance ($R^2 = .612$, Adjusted $R^2 = .591$, $F = 29.620$, $p < .001$). Three variables emerged as significant predictors: perceived employability ($\beta = .338$), organizational image ($\beta = .278$), and career goals ($\beta = .264$). In contrast, perceived internship benefits and welfare and convenience were not significant predictors when considered together with the other variables in the regression model.

These findings suggest that students place greater emphasis on long-term career-related outcomes, such as future employment opportunities, organizational reputation, and alignment with career goals, than on short-term supporting conditions. The study provides practical implications for curriculum planners, university administrators, industry partners, and students in developing internship systems that better support career readiness and labor market alignment in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Keywords: Internship site selection, Social Cognitive Career Theory, Organizational image, Perceived employability, Tourism and hospitality education

Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry is one of the most significant contributors to economic development and employment in Thailand, encompassing hotel and accommodation businesses, tour operations, food and beverage services, events, aviation, and MICE industries. Due to the service-intensive and interpersonal nature of these sectors, effective education requires more than classroom instruction; it demands integration of real-world learning experiences (Schnoes et al., 2018).

Professional internship—or cooperative education placement—represents a critical bridge between university learning and professional practice. Research consistently demonstrates that internship experience enhances career decision-making confidence, develops industry-relevant competencies, and strengthens graduate employability (Gault et al., 2010; Chen & Gan, 2021). Accordingly, the internship site selection decision has significant implications for the quality of learning, professional network development, and post-graduation employment prospects.

Despite this significance, few studies have systematically examined what drives final-year students' choices of internship sites, particularly within Thai tourism and hospitality programs. Students' decisions are shaped by multidimensional evaluations involving organizational reputation, perceived learning benefits, career alignment, welfare provisions, and employment prospects—all of which align with Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT; Lent et al., 1994). This study addresses that gap by investigating the relationships and predictive power of these five factors on internship site selection decisions among students at SSRU's Tourism and Hospitality Industry Management program.

Literature Review

SCCT (Lent et al., 1994; Lent, 2019) provides the theoretical foundation for this study. The theory posits that career behavior is shaped by self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, personal goals, and contextual factors. Applied to internship site selection, students are expected to choose placements they believe will yield valued career outcomes (outcome expectations), align with their professional aspirations (personal goals), and are enabled by environmental supports such as organizational reputation and welfare provisions (contextual factors).

Organizational image—encompassing reputation, credibility, work standards, and industry recognition—functions as an environmental signal that influences the perceived attractiveness of potential internship hosts (Kalińska-Kula & Staniec, 2021; Thang & Nguyen, 2024). Perceived internship benefits refer to students' expectations of gaining knowledge, skills, professional networks, and personal growth. Career goals reflect the clarity and alignment of students' professional aspirations with the internship placement. Welfare and convenience captures practical contextual factors including compensation, accommodation, safety, and transportation access. Perceived employability reflects students' beliefs that a given internship site will enhance their post-graduation employment prospects (Chen & Gan, 2021; Pianda et al., 2024).

While existing Thai studies have identified goals and attitudes as key drivers of internship placement decisions (Kawinrat & Kallaya, 2023; Parichat et al., 2022), no study has applied SCCT comprehensively to the specific context of tourism and hospitality students, nor quantified the predictive weight of these factors simultaneously using multiple regression analysis.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. The target population comprised final-year students in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry Management program at SSRU. A purposive sample of 100 students who had completed or were preparing for their professional internship was recruited.

A self-administered questionnaire was developed based on SCCT and relevant literature, organized into six sections: (1) demographic data; (2) organizational image (X1); (3) perceived internship benefits (X2); (4) career goals (X3); (5) welfare and convenience (X4); and (6) perceived employability (X5) and internship site selection decision (Y). Items in sections 2–6 used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Content validity was verified by three academic experts, retaining items with an Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) ≥ 0.50 . Reliability was assessed through a 30-person pilot test; all scales achieved Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.70 . Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficients, and stepwise multiple regression analysis with multicollinearity diagnostics (Tolerance and VIF values). The significance level was set at $\alpha = .05$.

Results

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for all study variables. All variables scored at the "highest" level (mean ≥ 4.21), with perceived internship benefits and internship site selection decision sharing the highest mean ($M = 4.30$). The overall mean across all variables was 4.25 ($SD = 0.41$).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (n = 100)

Variable	Mean	SD	Level	Rank
Perceived Internship Benefits	4.30	0.39	Highest	1
Career Goals	4.26	0.41	Highest	2
Perceived Employability	4.24	0.44	Highest	3
Welfare and Convenience	4.22	0.46	Highest	4
Organizational Image	4.21	0.39	Highest	5
Internship Site Selection Decision (Y)	4.30	0.38	Highest	—
Overall	4.25	0.41	Highest	

Table 2 presents Pearson correlation coefficients among all variables. All five independent variables showed statistically significant positive correlations with internship site selection decisions at $p < .01$. The strongest correlation was between perceived employability and internship site selection ($r = .618$), followed by organizational image ($r = .566$), career goals ($r = .542$), perceived internship benefits ($r = .510$), and welfare and convenience ($r = .384$).

Table 2
Pearson Correlation Matrix Among Study Variables

Variable	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	Y
X1 Organizational Image	1.000					
X2 Perceived Internship Benefits	.452**	1.000				
X3 Career Goals	.330**	.280**	1.000			
X4 Welfare and Convenience	.283**	.292**	.267**	1.000		
X5 Perceived Employability	.338**	.429**	.373**	.340**	1.000	
Y Internship Site Selection	.566**	.510**	.542**	.384**	.618**	1.000

Note. ** $p < .01$.

Multicollinearity diagnostics confirmed no problematic collinearity among predictors (Tolerance = 0.699–0.830; VIF = 1.204–1.431). The Durbin-Watson statistic (DW = 1.89) indicated appropriate independence of residuals. Table 3 presents multiple regression results.

Table 3
Multiple Regression Analysis for Internship Site Selection Decision

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	Sig.
Constant	−0.005	0.368	—	−0.014	.989
Organizational Image (X1)	0.269	0.073	0.278	3.698	.000
Perceived Internship Benefits (X2)	0.140	0.075	0.143	1.857	.067
Career Goals (X3)	0.247	0.067	0.264	3.671	.000
Welfare and Convenience (X4)	0.064	0.058	0.078	1.102	.273
Perceived Employability (X5)	0.294	0.066	0.338	4.433	.000

Note. $R = .782$; $R^2 = .612$; Adjusted $R^2 = .591$; $F(5, 94) = 29.620$, $p < .001$.

The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(5, 94) = 29.620$, $p < .001$, explaining 61.2% of the variance in internship site selection decisions (Adjusted $R^2 = .591$). Three predictors were individually significant: perceived employability ($\beta = .338$, $p < .05$), organizational image ($\beta = .278$, $p < .05$), and career goals ($\beta = .264$, $p < .05$). Perceived internship benefits ($\beta = .143$, $p = .067$) and welfare and convenience ($\beta = .078$, $p = .273$) were not individually significant predictors in the presence of the other variables.

Discussion

The finding that perceived employability is the strongest predictor of internship site selection aligns with SCCT's outcome expectation mechanism (Lent et al., 1994), and with Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), both of which suggest that individuals invest in activities they expect to yield valued future returns. Students appear to treat internship selection as a strategic career investment rather than a curricular formality. This is consistent with Chen and Gan (2021), who found that internship participation positively develops graduate employability, and with Gault et al. (2010), who confirmed that internship experience increases employment attractiveness in employer evaluations.

The significant predictive role of organizational image corroborates employer branding research (Kalińska-Kula & Staniec, 2021; Thang & Nguyen, 2024), suggesting that an organization's reputation functions as a proxy signal for the quality of learning, professional standards, and credibility of the experience students will receive. In tourism and hospitality contexts, where brand equity is closely tied to service quality, organizational image carries particular salience.

Career goals emerging as a significant predictor supports SCCT's personal goals construct, whereby individuals select environments aligned with their intended professional trajectories (Lent, 2019). Students with clearer career intentions—targeting hotel management, airline services, or MICE operations—actively match their internship choices to those aspirational pathways, consistent with Kawinrat and Kallaya (2023).

The non-significance of perceived internship benefits and welfare and convenience in the regression model warrants nuanced interpretation. Both variables correlated significantly with the outcome at the bivariate level, but their unique predictive variance was absorbed by the three stronger career-oriented predictors. This suggests these factors may function as baseline expectations or threshold conditions—necessary but insufficient differentiators—rather than primary decision criteria. Sekiguchi et al. (2023) similarly found that short-term welfare provisions were secondary to person-organization fit in shaping organizational attractiveness.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that final-year tourism and hospitality students at SSRU approach internship site selection as a deliberate career decision, prioritizing perceived employability, organizational image, and career goal alignment above welfare considerations. The five-factor SCCT-grounded model explains 61.2% of variance in selection decisions, providing substantial practical utility for curriculum administrators, industry partners, and students.

For curriculum designers, these findings support systematic development of career-aligned internship advising systems that explicitly match students' professional goals with quality-assessed placement partners, emphasizing employment pathway transparency and mentorship quality. Industry partners should clearly communicate career development pathways and post-internship hiring opportunities to attract motivated candidates. Students should be guided to prioritize long-term career alignment over short-term convenience when evaluating placement options.

This study's limitations include its single-institution, purposive sample and cross-sectional design, which preclude causal inference and limit generalizability. Future research should expand to multi-institutional samples, adopt mixed-method designs to explore qualitative decision-making processes, and include longitudinal tracking of internship outcomes relative to pre-placement decisions.

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A COMPARISON OF LOW-COST AND FULL-SERVICE AIRLINES IN THAILAND FROM A SUSTAINABILITY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This study examines sustainability practices in the aviation industry in Thailand by comparing low-cost carriers (LCC) and full-service carriers (FSC). As air transport continues to grow rapidly, environmental concerns such as fuel consumption, carbon emissions, and waste generation have become increasingly significant and require greater attention from airlines and industry stakeholders. In response to these challenges, sustainability has become an essential aspect of airline operations, requiring a balance between operational efficiency and environmental responsibility. This study adopts a qualitative and analytical approach based on secondary data collected from publicly available sources, including airline reports, official websites, and relevant industry information. The analysis is conducted using four key sustainability factors, namely fuel efficiency, carbon emissions, waste management, and environmental policies, in order to provide a structured comparison between the two airline business models. The findings indicate that low-cost carriers tend to achieve sustainability through efficiency-driven operations, such as high aircraft utilization and simplified service structures, which contribute to lower resource consumption and reduced emissions per passenger. In contrast, full-service carriers demonstrate a more comprehensive and structured approach to sustainability by implementing formal environmental policies, investing in advanced technologies, and developing long-term strategies aimed at reducing environmental impact. Furthermore, the study reveals that while LCC emphasize short-term operational efficiency, FSC focus more on long-term sustainability planning, highlighting the differences in strategic priorities between the two models. Overall, the results suggest that both airline types contribute to sustainability in different ways, and that integrating efficiency-based practices with structured environmental strategies may provide a more effective and balanced approach to sustainable aviation development.

Keywords: Sustainability, Low-cost carriers, Full-service carriers, Aviation industry, Thailand

Introduction

The aviation industry plays a crucial role in supporting global economic development, particularly in countries where tourism and international connectivity are key contributors to national income. In Thailand, air transport is an essential component of the tourism sector, facilitating the movement of both domestic and international passengers. As travel demand continues to increase, the aviation industry has experienced rapid growth, leading to greater operational activity and expansion of airline services.

However, this growth has also intensified environmental concerns associated with aviation. Issues such as high fuel consumption, increasing carbon emissions, and waste generation have become significant challenges for the industry. Aviation is recognized as a contributor to climate change, particularly through greenhouse gas emissions, which has led to increased attention from governments, international organizations, and the public. As a result, airlines are now under growing pressure to adopt more sustainable practices and reduce their

environmental impact.

Sustainability in aviation involves a balance between maintaining operational efficiency and minimizing environmental harm. Airlines are required to optimize their resources, improve fuel efficiency, and implement strategies that reduce emissions and waste. At the same time, they must continue to meet market demand and maintain service quality. This creates a complex challenge, as improving sustainability often involves trade-offs between cost, efficiency, and service performance.

Within the Thai aviation industry, airlines generally operate under two main business models: low-cost carriers (LCC) and full-service carriers (FSC). These two models differ significantly in their operational structures, cost management strategies, and service offerings. LCC typically focus on reducing operational costs by simplifying services, increasing aircraft utilization, and maximizing efficiency. This approach may contribute to lower resource consumption and reduced environmental impact per passenger. On the other hand, FSC provide a wider range of services, including multiple cabin classes and in-flight amenities, which may result in higher resource use but also offer greater flexibility for implementing long-term sustainability strategies.

These differences suggest that each airline type may approach sustainability in different ways. LCC may achieve sustainability indirectly through efficiency-driven operations, while FSC may adopt a more structured approach through environmental policies, technological investment, and long-term planning. Despite these contrasting characteristics, there is still a lack of clear comparative analysis that examines how these two business models contribute to sustainability within the same context.

Therefore, this study aims to examine and compare low-cost carriers and full-service carriers in Thailand from a sustainability perspective. The analysis focuses on key environmental factors, including fuel efficiency, carbon emissions, waste management, and environmental policies. By applying a structured comparison, this study seeks to provide a clearer understanding of how different airline business models influence sustainability practices in the aviation industry.

Proposes

This study aims to investigate how different airline business models influence sustainability practices within the Thai aviation industry. In particular, the research focuses on comparing low-cost carriers (LCC) and full-service carriers (FSC) to understand how each type approaches environmental challenges.

The study also aims to analyze sustainability performance based on key environmental factors, including fuel efficiency, carbon emissions, waste management, and environmental policies. These factors are used to provide a structured framework for evaluating the differences between the two airline models.

Furthermore, this research seeks to provide a clearer understanding of how operational strategies and business structures contribute to sustainability outcomes. By examining these aspects, the study aims to highlight the strengths and limitations of each airline type and offer insights into more balanced approaches to sustainable aviation.

Literature Review

The concept of sustainability has become increasingly significant in the aviation industry as environmental concerns continue to rise. The rapid growth of air travel has led to increased fuel consumption, carbon emissions, and waste generation, which require airlines to adopt more responsible operational practices. As a result, sustainability is no longer considered an optional aspect but has become a key component of long-term strategic planning in aviation.

Airline operations can generally be categorized into two main business models: low-cost carriers (LCC) and full-service carriers (FSC). These models differ in their operational

structures, cost management strategies, and service offerings. LCC focus on minimizing operational costs through simplified services, high aircraft utilization, and standardized fleets. This approach allows airlines to operate more efficiently and may contribute to reduced resource consumption. In contrast, FSC operate with more complex service structures, offering multiple cabin classes and additional passenger services, which may result in higher operational costs and resource usage.

These differences in business models have implications for sustainability practices. LCC may achieve sustainability indirectly through efficiency-driven operations, as reducing costs often leads to reduced fuel usage and lower emissions per passenger. On the other hand, FSC may adopt a more structured approach to sustainability by implementing environmental policies, investing in advanced technologies, and integrating sustainability into corporate strategies.

In addition to business models, several key factors are commonly used to evaluate sustainability performance in aviation. Fuel efficiency is considered one of the most important indicators, as it directly affects both operational costs and environmental impact. Carbon emissions are closely linked to fuel consumption and represent a major concern in relation to climate change. Waste management is another important factor, as airline operations generate waste from in-flight services and ground activities. Effective waste reduction and recycling practices can contribute to improved environmental performance.

Furthermore, environmental policies and strategies play a significant role in shaping sustainability outcomes. Airlines that implement structured environmental initiatives, such as reducing single-use materials, optimizing flight operations, and investing in more efficient aircraft, are more likely to demonstrate long-term commitment to sustainability.

Overall, the literature suggests that sustainability in aviation is influenced by both operational efficiency and strategic planning. However, there is still a lack of direct comparison between LCC and FSC within the same context, particularly in Thailand.

Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by providing a comparative analysis based on key sustainability factors.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and analytical research approach to examine sustainability practices within the aviation industry in Thailand. The research is designed as a comparative study, focusing on the differences between low-cost carriers (LCC) and full-service carriers (FSC). Rather than relying on primary data collection, the study emphasizes conceptual analysis and interpretation based on existing information.

The data used in this study are derived from publicly available sources, including official airline websites, sustainability reports, annual reports, and other relevant documents. These sources provide insights into airline operations, environmental practices, and strategic approaches to sustainability. The use of secondary data allows for a consistent comparison across different airline types while ensuring that the analysis is based on accessible and verifiable information.

To ensure a meaningful comparison, selected airlines operating in Thailand are used as representative cases for each business model. Low-cost carriers such as Thai AirAsia and Nok Air are included due to their focus on cost efficiency and simplified operations. Full-service carriers such as Thai Airways and Bangkok Airways are selected to represent airlines with more comprehensive service structures and broader operational strategies. These airlines are chosen based on their relevance to the Thai aviation industry and the availability of relevant information.

The analysis is conducted using a structured analytical framework based on four key sustainability factors: fuel efficiency, carbon emissions, waste management, and environmental policies. These factors are selected because they directly reflect the

environmental impact of airline operations and provide a comprehensive basis for comparison. Each airline type is evaluated according to how its operational strategies align with these factors.

Fuel efficiency is examined in terms of resource utilization and operational practices, while carbon emissions are considered as a direct outcome of fuel consumption. Waste management is analyzed based on how airlines handle materials and reduce environmental impact through operational practices. Environmental policies are evaluated in relation to long-term strategies, technological investment, and organizational commitment to sustainability.

By applying the same criteria to both LCC and FSC, this study ensures a systematic and balanced comparison. This approach reduces subjectivity and allows the analysis to focus on observable patterns and logical interpretation. The methodology provides a clear foundation for examining how different airline business models contribute to sustainability within the aviation industry.

Results

The findings of this study reveal clear differences in how low-cost carriers (LCC) and full-service carriers (FSC) approach sustainability. These differences are primarily influenced by their distinct business models, operational strategies, and service structures. The analysis is based on four key sustainability factors: fuel efficiency, carbon emissions, waste management, and environmental policies.

In terms of fuel efficiency, LCC demonstrate strong performance due to their simplified operations and high aircraft utilization. By minimizing turnaround time and operating standardized fleets, LCC are able to use fuel more efficiently across their operations. In contrast, FSC operate with more complex service structures, which may reduce operational efficiency. However, FSC often invest in newer aircraft and advanced technologies, which can improve fuel performance over time.

Regarding carbon emissions, LCC tend to produce lower emissions per passenger. This is largely due to higher seating density and efficient use of available space, allowing emissions to be distributed across a larger number of passengers. On the other hand, FSC may generate higher emissions per operation due to additional services and lower seating density. However, FSC are more likely to implement strategies aimed at reducing emissions, such as optimizing flight routes and adopting fuel-saving technologies.

In terms of waste management, LCC generally produce less waste due to their simplified service model, which includes fewer in-flight products and materials. However, their waste management practices tend to be basic and less structured. In contrast, FSC generate more waste due to their extensive onboard services, but they are more likely to implement structured waste management systems, including recycling programs and reduction of single-use materials.

For environmental policies, FSC demonstrate a stronger commitment through formal strategies and long-term planning. Sustainability is often integrated into corporate policies and supported by investments in technology and environmental initiatives. In comparison, LCC tend to have less formal environmental strategies, with sustainability outcomes largely driven by operational efficiency rather than structured planning.

Table 1: Comparison of Sustainability Factors between LCC and FSC

Sustainability Factor	LCC	FSC
Fuel Efficiency	High due to simplified operations and high aircraft utilization	Moderate, improved through technological investment
Carbon Emissions	Lower per passenger due to higher seating density	Higher per operation, but managed through strategic measures
Waste Management	Lower waste generation with basic practices	Higher waste generation with more structured systems
Environmental	Less formal and limited long-term planning	More comprehensive and integrated into corporate

Overall, the results indicate that LCC perform strongly in efficiency-based sustainability, while FSC demonstrate strengths in structured and policy-driven sustainability. Each model presents both advantages and limitations, suggesting that sustainability in aviation requires a balance between operational efficiency and long-term strategic planning.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide important insights into how different airline business models influence sustainability practices within the aviation industry. The results suggest that sustainability is shaped not only by environmental awareness but also by operational priorities and strategic decision-making processes.

Low-cost carriers (LCC) demonstrate that operational efficiency can play a significant role in improving sustainability outcomes. Their focus on reducing costs, simplifying services, and maximizing aircraft utilization leads to lower resource consumption and reduced emissions per passenger. This indicates that sustainability can be achieved as a by-product of efficiency-driven operations, even in the absence of highly formalized environmental policies.

In contrast, full-service carriers (FSC) highlight the importance of structured and long-term sustainability strategies. Although their operations may involve higher levels of resource use, FSC tend to adopt formal environmental policies, invest in technological advancements, and implement organized waste management systems. This suggests that sustainability can also be driven by strategic planning and institutional commitment.

The comparison between LCC and FSC indicates that sustainability in aviation cannot be assessed through a single dimension. Efficiency-based performance and policy-driven initiatives represent two different but complementary approaches. While LCC excel in minimizing resource use, FSC demonstrate strengths in managing environmental impact through structured frameworks and long-term investment.

These findings imply that a balanced approach is necessary to enhance sustainability in the aviation industry. Integrating the operational efficiency of LCC with the strategic sustainability practices of FSC may lead to more effective environmental outcomes. This

perspective highlights the need for airlines to adopt both short-term efficiency measures and long-term sustainability strategies.

Conclusion

This study has examined sustainability practices in the Thai aviation industry by comparing low-cost carriers (LCC) and full-service carriers (FSC). The findings demonstrate that both airline models contribute to sustainability in different ways, reflecting their distinct operational structures and strategic priorities.

LCC primarily achieve sustainability through efficiency-driven operations, focusing on minimizing resource consumption and optimizing performance. In contrast, FSC adopt a more structured approach by implementing environmental policies, investing in advanced technologies, and developing long-term sustainability strategies. These differences highlight that sustainability in aviation is not limited to a single approach but is influenced by multiple operational and strategic factors.

The study suggests that neither airline model can be considered entirely superior in terms of sustainability. Instead, each model offers unique strengths and faces specific limitations. LCC demonstrate advantages in efficiency-based performance, while FSC show stronger capabilities in policy-driven and long-term sustainability initiatives.

Overall, a balanced approach that combines operational efficiency with structured environmental strategies may provide a more effective pathway toward sustainable development in the aviation industry. This perspective emphasizes the importance of integrating both short-term and long-term strategies to achieve meaningful sustainability outcomes.

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STRATEGIC INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, RETENTION, AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY IN A FIVE-STAR HOTEL: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND MIXED-METHODS RESEARCH DESIGN

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Abstract

This paper presents a conceptual framework and mixed-methods research design for investigating the impact of strategic internal communication on employee engagement, retention, and operational efficiency within a five-star hotel in Bangkok, Thailand. The hospitality industry is characterized by high employee turnover, cross-departmental interdependence, and service-critical communication demands. Many luxury hotel properties continue to experience fragmented information flows, coordination failures, and declining employee morale attributable to communication deficiencies. This study proposes an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, combining quantitative survey data from 169–175 hotel employees with qualitative semi-structured interviews involving 10–12 departmental managers. Stratified random sampling ensures proportional representation across front office, housekeeping, and food and beverage departments. Data analysis will incorporate descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis, one-way ANOVA, and thematic analysis. The anticipated outcomes include a comprehensive evaluation of communication effectiveness, identification of key communication barriers, and the development of an evidence-based strategic internal communication framework offering actionable recommendations for hotel executives and human resource professionals.

Keywords: internal communication, employee engagement, employee retention, operational efficiency, five-star hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

Introduction

The five-star hotel industry operates at the intersection of luxury service expectations and complex organizational management. Delivering consistently exceptional guest experiences requires seamless coordination across multiple departments—including front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, concierge, and engineering—which is achievable only when internal communication systems function effectively across all operational layers.

Internal communication refers to the formal and informal processes through which information is shared among employees within an organization. Strategic internal communication goes beyond merely distributing information; it involves the deliberate design of communication systems to align employees with organizational goals, support decision-making, and foster a positive organizational culture. In service-intensive industries such as hospitality, communication failures directly and immediately affect the quality of guest experiences and the cohesion of operational teams.

The hospitality industry faces persistent challenges with employee engagement and retention. Global hotel brands consistently report annual turnover rates that significantly exceed those of other service industries. A growing body of research suggests that poor internal communication is a significant predictor of employee disengagement and voluntary turnover intentions (Karatepe & Demir, 2014; Kim & Koo, 2017). This paper addresses a critical gap by proposing

an integrated framework and research design to systematically investigate the relationship between strategic internal communication and its organizational outcomes in a five-star hotel setting.

Research Objectives

This study is guided by three primary research objectives:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of current internal communication channels used by frontline and back-office hotel employees across key operational departments.
- To identify communication barriers that hinder cross-departmental collaboration and weaken the employee value proposition.
- To develop a strategic internal communication framework that enhances employee engagement, improves operational efficiency, and supports employee retention.

Research Questions

The study addresses four research questions:

- How do hotel employees perceive the effectiveness of the current internal communication channels used within the organization?
- What is the relationship between internal communication effectiveness and employee engagement?
- How does internal communication influence operational efficiency and collaboration among hotel departments?
- What strategic improvements can management implement to strengthen internal communication practices within the hotel?

Literature Review and Theory

Internal Communication in Organizations

Internal communication is widely recognized as a foundational element of organizational effectiveness. Argenti and Forman (2002) define corporate communication as the strategic management of all forms of organizational messaging intended to create and maintain favorable relationships with key stakeholders. Effective internal communication serves informational, motivational, integrative, and relational functions. Mazzei (2014) argues that effective internal communication requires the creation of shared meaning, highlighting the importance of message clarity, channel appropriateness, and feedback mechanisms. The rapid digital transformation of workplace communication has introduced enterprise messaging platforms, mobile communication applications, and digital property management tools that increase operational speed but may also create information overload and channel confusion (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002; Leonardi, Huysman, & Leonardi, 2013). More recent scholarship confirms that digital communication tool adoption in hospitality organizations requires deliberate training and change management strategies to realize efficiency gains (Men & Yue, 2019).

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is defined as the degree to which employees are intellectually and emotionally committed to their work and organizational goals. Kahn (1990) described engaged employees as those who fully express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) operationalized engagement through three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Lemon and Palenchar (2018) identify organizational communication quality as one of the strongest predictors of employee engagement, particularly in service industries where employees rely on managerial guidance to navigate complex service encounters. Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) provides a complementary explanation: employees who receive consistent, high-quality communication from their organization perceive it as an investment and reciprocate with heightened commitment and discretionary effort.

Employee Retention and Turnover

The hospitality industry consistently records among the highest voluntary turnover rates globally, with some studies estimating annual rates of 70–80% in entry-level hotel roles (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000). Karatepe and Demir (2014) establish a significant link between high-performance work practices—including effective communication and employee empowerment—and reduced turnover intentions among hotel employees. Kim and Koo (2017) further highlight the moderating role of perceived organizational support: employees who receive regular and meaningful communication from supervisors are more likely to reciprocate through increased loyalty and organizational citizenship behaviors, consistent with social exchange principles (Blau, 1964).

Operational Efficiency

Operational efficiency in hotels refers to the capacity to deliver services consistently, promptly, and without unnecessary resource expenditure. Gittell (2002) demonstrates through Relational Coordination Theory that organizations characterized by frequent, accurate, and problem-solving communication achieve superior performance outcomes. Gittell, Weinberg, Pfefferle, and Bishop (2008) further validate this framework in service contexts, showing that relational coordination mediates the effect of work practices on performance. In hotel operations, this translates into smoother room handovers, more responsive food and beverage coordination, and faster resolution of guest complaints. Technological tools such as property management systems can significantly improve coordination, but their effectiveness depends critically on employee adoption, training quality, and the organizational culture surrounding communication practices.

Communication in the Hospitality Industry

The hospitality work environment—characterized by shift-based scheduling, multi-cultural workforces, high service variability, and emotional labor demands—creates distinct communication challenges. Brownell (1994) identifies listening as a critical but undervalued competency in hospitality management, demonstrating that managers who actively listen to employees create environments of greater trust and responsiveness. Cross-cultural communication challenges, including language barriers and differing expectations regarding hierarchy and feedback, further require culturally sensitive communication strategies in international luxury hotels. In the Southeast Asian hospitality context specifically, hierarchical organizational structures and collectivist cultural norms shape how communication flows between management and operational staff, underscoring the importance of context-sensitive research designs (Boella & Goss-Turner, 2019).

Synthesis and Research Gap

Despite a substantial body of literature on each of these domains, limited empirical research has examined their joint relationship within the five-star hotel context, particularly in Southeast Asian luxury hospitality settings. This study addresses this gap by proposing an integrated framework that operationalizes strategic internal communication as a multi-dimensional driver of simultaneous engagement, retention, and efficiency outcomes.

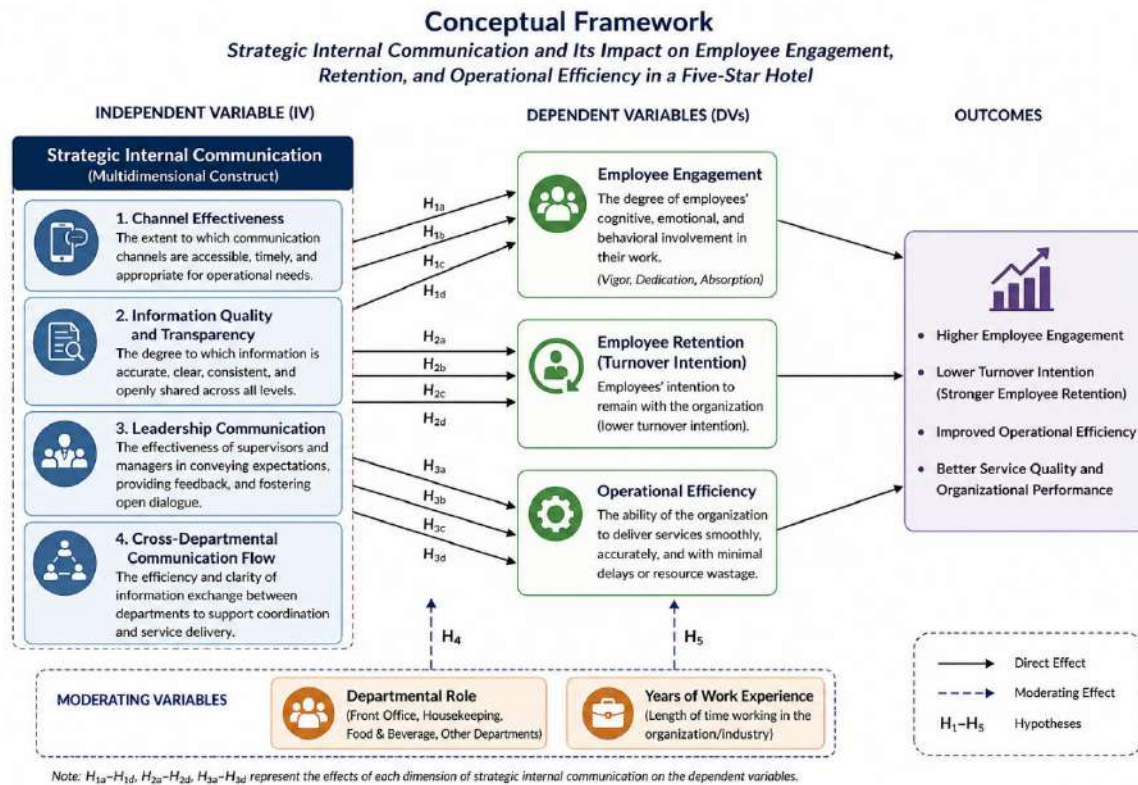
Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in three complementary theoretical traditions: Organizational Communication Theory (Argenti & Forman, 2002; Mazzei, 2014), Employee Engagement Theory (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964). Relational Coordination Theory (Gittell, 2002; Gittell et al., 2008) provides the operational efficiency dimension.

Strategic internal communication—operationalized across four dimensions (Channel Effectiveness, Information Quality & Transparency, Leadership Communication, and Cross-Departmental Communication Flow)—functions as the independent variable driving three primary organizational outcomes: Employee Engagement, Employee Retention, and

Operational Efficiency. Departmental role and years of experience serve as moderating variables to account for contextual variability.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: Strategic Internal Communication and Organizational Outcomes



Note. The framework draws on Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), Relational Coordination Theory (Gittell, 2002), and employee engagement theory (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) to ground the proposed relationships between communication dimensions and organizational outcomes.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework and reviewed literature, the following formal hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Internal communication effectiveness is positively associated with employee engagement among five-star hotel employees.

H2: Perceived communication transparency is negatively associated with employee turnover intentions.

H3: Cross-departmental communication quality is positively associated with operational efficiency.

H4: Departmental role moderates the relationship between internal communication effectiveness and employee engagement.

H5: Leadership communication is the strongest predictor of employee engagement among all four communication dimensions.

Methodology

Research Design

This study proposes an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design. Quantitative methods will be used first to establish statistical patterns and relationships, followed by qualitative methods that explain and elaborate on those patterns through detailed participant perspectives. This integration allows for methodological triangulation, enhancing the validity and depth of findings.

Research Setting and Ethical Considerations

This study will be conducted at a five-star hotel in Bangkok, Thailand. The hotel remains anonymized for ethical reasons; formal access approval has been secured from hotel management prior to data collection. Institutional ethics clearance is currently pending from Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University's Research Ethics Committee, in accordance with international conference submission requirements. All participants will provide written informed consent prior to participation, and data will be treated with full confidentiality.

Population and Sample

The target population consists of approximately 300 full-time employees working across key operational departments. Using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error, the required sample size is 171 respondents. A target of 169–175 respondents is sought to account for incomplete responses. Stratified random sampling ensures proportional representation:

Department	Population (N)	Proportion (%)	Sample (n)
Front Office	60	20%	34
Housekeeping	90	30%	51
Food & Beverage	90	30%	51
Other Departments	60	20%	34
Total	300	100%	170

Table 1. Stratified Sampling Distribution by Department

For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling will select 10–12 departmental managers and supervisors who possess direct knowledge of communication processes and operational workflows.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria (quantitative phase):

- Full-time employees currently employed at the study hotel.
- Working in one of the four designated departments: Front Office, Housekeeping, Food & Beverage, or Other Departments.
- Minimum of one month of continuous employment to ensure sufficient exposure to communication practices.
- Able to read and complete the survey in Thai or English; willing to provide informed consent.
- For the qualitative phase: departmental managers or supervisors with at least six months in a supervisory role.

Exclusion criteria:

- Part-time, seasonal, or contracted employees with inconsistent exposure to internal communication systems.
- Employees on extended leave during the data collection period.
- New employees with fewer than one month of service.
- Senior executive management (General Manager, Director-level) whose communication roles differ substantially from operational staff.
- Questionnaires returned with more than 20% of items incomplete.

Data Collection Instruments

Quantitative data will be collected through a structured self-administered questionnaire with five sections. Sections A–D use a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) measuring: Internal Communication Effectiveness (5 items), Employee Engagement (5 items), Employee Retention (5 items), and Operational Efficiency (5 items). Measurement items were adapted from validated scales in prior research. A pilot test involving 20 employees will be conducted prior to full administration, with a minimum Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 required per scale.

Semi-structured interviews with selected managers will cover: perceived communication effectiveness within and across departments; key communication barriers in daily operations; the role of digital tools; and recommendations for improvement. Interviews will be audio-recorded with participant consent, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using NVivo software.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data will be analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26) through four sequential stages: (1) descriptive statistics for all demographic variables and Likert-scale items; (2) reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha; (3) one-way ANOVA to examine differences across departments (H4), with post-hoc Tukey HSD tests where significant; and (4) multiple linear regression to examine the predictive relationships between communication dimensions and each outcome variable (H1, H2, H3, H5).

Qualitative interview transcripts will be analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, supported by NVivo software. Mixed-methods integration will occur at the interpretation stage using a building approach: statistical results will be presented first, followed by qualitative themes that explain, elaborate, or challenge the statistical patterns.

Theoretical Propositions and Anticipated Analytical Outcomes

As this paper presents a conceptual framework and research design at the pre-data-collection stage, the following theoretical propositions are advanced based on the reviewed literature and the integrated framework.

H1 – Communication Effectiveness and Engagement: Higher internal communication effectiveness is expected to be positively and significantly associated with greater employee engagement, consistent with findings across service industry contexts (Lemon & Palenchar, 2018) and Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964).

H2 – Transparency and Turnover Intentions: Employees who perceive communication as transparent and consistent are anticipated to demonstrate lower turnover intentions, aligned with social exchange mechanisms and prior findings by Karatepe and Demir (2014).

H3 – Cross-Departmental Communication and Efficiency: Higher cross-departmental communication quality is expected to be associated with improved operational efficiency, consistent with Relational Coordination Theory (Gittell, 2002; Gittell et al., 2008).

H4 – Departmental Role as Moderator: Departmental role (front-line vs. back-office) is anticipated to partially moderate the communication–engagement relationship, with front-line employees expected to show higher sensitivity to communication quality due to their direct guest-facing responsibilities.

H5 – Leadership Communication as Primary Predictor: Leadership communication is anticipated to emerge as the strongest predictor of employee engagement among all four communication dimensions, reflecting the critical role of supervisor–employee relationships in hospitality contexts (Kim & Koo, 2017).

Discussion

The proposed conceptual framework advances the understanding of strategic internal communication as an integrated, multi-dimensional construct that simultaneously drives engagement, retention, and operational efficiency outcomes. This positions the current study as a meaningful extension of both Relational Coordination Theory (Gittell, 2002) and Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) in the luxury hospitality context.

The anticipated finding that leadership communication will be the strongest predictor of engagement (H5) aligns with Kahn's (1990) psychological safety conditions and Lemon and Palenchar's (2018) emphasis on communication quality as a driver of engagement. Should H4 be supported, the moderating effect of departmental role would reinforce findings by Brownell (1994) and suggest that front-line employees—who bear the greatest service delivery burden—are disproportionately affected by communication quality.

The mixed-methods integration design adds important value: while the quantitative phase will establish the directionality and strength of hypothesized relationships, the qualitative phase will provide granular insight into how communication practices are experienced at the departmental level. This is especially relevant in the Bangkok five-star hotel context, where hierarchical structures and multicultural workforces create communication dynamics that may not be fully captured by quantitative measures alone.

Compared with existing studies primarily conducted in Western and East Asian hospitality settings, this study's Southeast Asian focus contributes to closing an important geographic and contextual gap in the strategic communication literature (Boella & Goss-Turner, 2019).

Conclusion

This paper presents a systematic, evidence-based conceptual framework and mixed-methods research design for investigating how strategic internal communication shapes employee engagement, retention, and operational efficiency in a five-star hotel. By employing an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, the proposed study will generate both statistical evidence and rich contextual understanding of communication practices within a Bangkok luxury hotel setting.

The expected output—a strategic internal communication framework grounded in Social Exchange Theory, Relational Coordination Theory, and employee engagement theory—offers hotel executives and human resource professionals actionable guidance to strengthen the employee value proposition, reduce turnover intentions, and enhance service delivery performance. The findings will contribute to the growing empirical literature on strategic internal communication in the hospitality sector and provide a replicable methodological model for future research across Southeast Asian luxury hospitality contexts.

Recommendations

The proposed framework suggests that hotel management should prioritize four communication dimensions: ensuring channel effectiveness by selecting and integrating communication tools appropriate to shift-based, multi-departmental operations; maintaining information quality and transparency to reduce uncertainty and build organizational trust; investing in leadership communication competencies, particularly supervisor-level feedback and recognition practices; and strengthening cross-departmental communication flow through structured briefings and digital coordination tools.

Practically, hotels are recommended to:

- Conduct regular communication audits to identify bottlenecks and channel preferences across departments.
- Establish standardized handover protocols between departments to reduce information loss during shift transitions.
- Provide management training focused on listening competencies, transparent communication, and culturally sensitive feedback practices.
- Adopt integrated digital platforms that reduce information silos while managing information overload risks (Leonardi et al., 2013; Men & Yue, 2019).

Future research should examine the longitudinal impact of these interventions, validate the proposed framework through empirical data collection, and extend the study to other five-star hotel properties within Bangkok and across the broader ASEAN hospitality context.

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COORDINATION DELAYS BETWEEN AIRPORT DEPARTMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON GROUND OPERATIONS EFFICIENCY

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Abstract

This study aims to examine coordination delays between airport departments and analyze their impact on ground operations efficiency. Airport operations require effective collaboration among multiple departments, including check-in staff, airline operations, immigration, and security personnel. However, in real operational environments, delays in communication and information transfer frequently occur, affecting both workflow and passenger experience. This research adopts a qualitative approach based on real-life observations and working experience. The findings indicate that coordination delays are mainly caused by unclear communication, lack of real-time information sharing, and the absence of an effective centralized information system. These issues lead to passenger confusion, increased workload for staff, and reduced operational efficiency. Therefore, this study proposes practical solutions, including the implementation of real-time communication systems, staff training in coordination skills, and the development of centralized information systems. These measures are expected to improve coordination efficiency and enhance overall airport service quality.

Keywords: Coordination, Delays, Ground Operations, Organizational Communication, Airport O

Introduction

Airport operations are complex systems that require effective coordination among multiple departments, including check-in staff, airline operations, immigration, and security personnel. Each department plays a crucial role in ensuring smooth passenger flow and timely flight operations. Efficient coordination is essential to maintain service quality, reduce delays, and enhance passenger satisfaction.

However, in real operational environments, coordination delays frequently occur due to communication gaps, delayed information sharing, and the lack of real-time coordination systems. These issues can disrupt workflow, increase staff workload, and negatively affect passenger experience. Therefore, this study aims to examine the causes and impacts of coordination delays and propose practical solutions to improve ground operations efficiency.

Objectives

1. To identify the main causes of coordination delays between airport departments
2. To examine the impact of these delays on ground operations efficiency
3. To propose effective strategies to improve coordination and communication

Problem Statement

Coordination delays in airport operations remain a significant issue. Delays in communication and information sharing often result in operational inefficiencies, increased workload for staff, and confusion among passengers. These problems highlight the need for improved coordination systems and communication processes.

Literature Review

This study is based on several key concepts, including coordination theory, organizational communication, and airport operations management. Coordination theory emphasizes the importance of aligning tasks among departments to achieve organizational efficiency.

Organizational communication focuses on the need for clear, timely, and accurate information exchange. Airport operations management highlights the importance of effective planning and control in ensuring smooth airport operations.

Previous studies have indicated that communication breakdowns and lack of coordination are major causes of operational delays in airports. Improving communication systems and staff coordination skills can significantly enhance operational efficiency and passenger satisfaction.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach based on real-life working experiences and observations. The population includes ground staff, airline personnel, and passengers in selected situations.

Purposive sampling is used to select cases that are directly related to coordination delays. Data is collected through direct observation, personal experience, and recording of specific incidents. The data is analyzed by categorizing issues into communication problems, system inefficiencies, and operational delays.

Results

The findings reveal that coordination delays are mainly caused by communication gaps, delayed information updates, and ineffective information-sharing systems. In addition, unexpected operational changes are not communicated efficiently across departments.

These issues lead to several negative impacts, including passenger confusion, increased workload for staff, and reduced operational efficiency. The results indicate that coordination delays significantly affect the overall performance of airport ground operations.

Discussion

The findings suggest that coordination delays are closely related to ineffective communication systems and lack of real-time information sharing. Without proper coordination mechanisms, airport operations cannot function efficiently. Improving communication processes and integrating information systems are essential to address these challenges.

Conclusion

Coordination delays between airport departments have a direct impact on ground operations efficiency and passenger satisfaction. The main causes include communication gaps, delayed information transfer, and lack of centralized systems. Addressing these issues is crucial for improving airport performance.

Recommendations

- Implement real-time communication systems
- Develop centralized information systems
- Reduce redundant communication processes

Future Research

Future studies should include quantitative data and larger sample sizes to enhance the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

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CONTENT CREATORS AND TOUR COMPANY SELECTION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF CONTENT CREATOR EXPERTISE AND TRUSTWORTHINESS AFFECTING OUTBOUND THAI TOURISTS' DECISION-MAKING BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

Despite the surging influence of social media on the tourism industry, a significant research gap persists regarding a comprehensive theoretical framework that integrates specific content creator attributes with high-involvement decision-making in international tour services. While previous studies have examined influencer marketing, limited research has synthesized how the interplay of expertise and trustworthiness mitigates perceived risks specifically for outbound tour packages among Thai travelers.

This study proposes and theoretically justifies a conceptual framework to explain the psychological mechanisms through which content creator credibility influences the tour selection behavior of Thai tourists. Using a systematic literature review as the primary methodology, the research synthesizes core tenets from Source Credibility Theory (SCT), the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), and Trust Theory.

The proposed framework identifies Expertise and Trustworthiness as primary independent constructs, operating through a dual-pathway mechanism. Key propositions suggest that:

1. Content creator expertise significantly enhances perceived information quality via the central route of processing.
2. Trustworthiness serves as a critical antecedent to Perceived Trust, which functions as a heuristic safeguard.
3. The framework positions Perceived Risk Reduction as the pivotal mediating variable that bridges credibility attributes and final tour company selection.

Theoretically, this research extends the application of SCT into the specialized niche of outbound tourism, offering a more nuanced understanding of risk mitigation in digital environments. Practically, the findings suggest that consumer conversion in high-involvement service sectors is fundamentally driven by "perceived authority" and "risk attenuation" rather than mere reach or popularity. These insights provide a theoretical basis for more effective collaboration between tour operators and digital influencers.

Keywords: Content Creator, Thai Tourists, Outbound Tour, Decision-Making, Conceptual Framework

Introduction

In the current era of digital transformation, the global tourism industry has undergone a paradigm shift in how information is disseminated and consumed. The transition from traditional marketing to digital-first strategies has empowered travelers with near-instant access to global travel insights, transforming the decision-making landscape from passive reception to active exploration.

Within this digital ecosystem, social media content creators—ranging from influencers to micro-bloggers—have emerged as pivotal intermediaries. For Thai tourists, who are among the most active social media users globally, these creators serve as a primary source of inspiration and information. Their reviews and storytelling significantly shape the perception of international destinations and the service providers that facilitate these journeys.

However, despite the growing body of literature on influencer marketing, a significant theoretical void remains. While individual factors such as source credibility, consumer trust, and content quality have been studied extensively in isolation, there is currently no integrated theoretical framework that explains their combined and sequential influence on Thai tourists' tour company selection decisions. Existing studies often focus on general destination choice but fail to address the complex psychological process of selecting a specific tour service provider, which involves higher perceived risks and financial commitment in an outbound travel context.

This paper proposes a conceptual framework that synthesizes Source Credibility Theory (SCT), the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), and Trust Theory. By integrating these dimensions, the study seeks to theoretically justify how the interplay between a creator's expertise and trustworthiness functions as a cognitive and affective mechanism for risk attenuation. This synthesis is essential for understanding the selection of international tour companies—a high-involvement decision characterized by high perceived risk and significant financial commitment.

Research Objectives The primary objective of this study is to bridge the existing theoretical gap by developing a comprehensive model that elucidates the psychological mechanism of content creator influence. Specifically, the research aims:

1. To synthesize and integrate foundational theories, including Source Credibility Theory, Trust Theory, and Consumer Behavior, to identify key attributes of content creators that resonate with Thai outbound travelers.
2. To propose a conceptual framework that illustrates the sequential relationship between content creator expertise, trustworthiness, and the reduction of perceived risk in the tour company selection process.
3. To theoretically justify the mediating role of trust and risk perception in transforming content creator influence into actual service provider selection.
4. To provide a strategic roadmap for outbound tour operators in Thailand on how to effectively leverage credible content creators to build competitive advantages in a high-involvement market.

Literature review

This section provides a critical synthesis of three foundational frameworks: Source Credibility Theory (SCT), the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), and Trust Theory. The integration of these theories is essential to elucidate the multi-layered psychological mechanisms governing high-involvement purchase decisions in the outbound tourism domain.

2.1 Source Credibility Theory (SCT): The Evolution of Digital Authority

Source Credibility Theory posits that the efficacy of communication is contingent upon the receiver's perception of the source's attributes. While seminal constructs by Hovland et al. (1953) and Ohanian (1990) identify Expertise and Trustworthiness as universal pillars, contemporary digital tourism discourse reveals a significant tension. For instance, Ayeh et al. (2013) suggest that in social-mediated environments, "homophily" may supersede formal expertise. Conversely, Wang & Bieber (2022) argue that for high-risk outbound tours, technical expertise remains the primary determinant in minimizing informational search costs. The research gap identified here lies in the lack of empirical consensus regarding the relative weight of these dimensions within the Thai cultural context. This study addresses this ambiguity by

incorporating both dimensions to evaluate their discrete and combined impacts on the Thai outbound market.

2.2 Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM): Bridging Cognitive and Affective Processing

The ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) provides a robust framework for understanding information processing through Central and Peripheral routes. A critical limitation in existing research is the failure to account for the "route convergence" on visual-centric social media platforms. While Sokolova & Kefi (2020) argue that peripheral cues are predominant in digital consumption, Filieri et al. (2018) contend that for complex, high-involvement services, peripheral cues serve merely as preliminary filters, whereas central processing of content quality dictates the final outcome. This study fills this theoretical void by proposing a synergistic model: content creator expertise facilitates the Central Route (Cognitive evaluation of information), while trustworthiness reinforces the Peripheral Route (Affective source reliability), thereby creating a dual-layered influence on the Thai tourist's evaluative process.

2.3 Trust Theory and Perceived Risk: The Mediator of Uncertainty

Trust is fundamentally conceptualized as the willingness to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations (Rousseau et al., 1998). In tourism—an inherently "intangible" service—Mayer et al. (1995) and Pavlou (2003) position trust as a primary mechanism for risk mitigation.

However, a critical appraisal of these models identifies a "Psychological Black Box": trust is often treated as a terminal construct rather than a functional intermediary. For outbound travel, trust is not the end goal but a facilitator of Perceived Risk Reduction across financial and functional dimensions. This research argues that for Thai travelers—characterized by high uncertainty avoidance—content creators function as "risk mitigators." By positioning Risk Reduction as the pivotal mediator, this study extends Trust Theory into the realm of behavioral intention within high-risk service selection.

Based on the synthesis of the aforementioned literature, Table 1 summarizes the conceptual components and their theoretical foundations as integrated within this study.

Table 1: *Synthesis of Framework Components and Theoretical Foundations*

Variable Category	Construct	Role in the Framework	Supporting Literature/Theories
Independent	Content Creator Expertise & Trustworthiness	Initiating influence via Central (Expertise) and Peripheral (Trustworthiness) cues.	SCT (Ohanian, 1990); ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986)
Mediating	Perceived Information Quality	Cognitive outcome of expertise; fuels the Central Route of processing.	ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986); Filieri et al. (2018)
Mediating	Perceived Trust	Affective bridge leading to consumer acceptance; functions as a heuristic safeguard.	Trust Theory (Mayer et al., 1995); Leite & Azevedo (2023)
Mediating (Key Gap)	Perceived Risk Reduction	The "Risk-Centric" gateway; mitigating financial and functional anxieties before selection.	Pavlou (2003); Shin & Kang (2024); This Study

Moderating	Viewing Frequency & Prior Travel Experience	Boundary conditions that strengthen Parasocial Interaction or dictate reliance on the creator.	PSI Theory; Sokolova & Kefi (2020); Thammachat (2026)
Dependent	Tour Company Selection Intention	Final behavioral outcome in high-involvement international services.	Zeithaml et al. (1996); Zhu et al. (2023)

Methodology

3.1 Research Design: Systematic Literature Review

The primary methodology of this study is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and Theoretical Synthesis. This approach is employed to integrate diverse theoretical perspectives—specifically Source Credibility Theory (SCT), the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), and Trust Theory—into a unified conceptual framework. The research systematically analyzes existing empirical studies and academic models to identify the critical attributes of content creators that influence the decision-making behavior of Thai outbound tourists.

3.2 Proposed Empirical Methodology

To validate the proposed framework and the associated propositions developed from the SLR, future research should adopt a quantitative approach as follows:

- Population and Sampling: The target population consists of Thai social media users who follow travel content creators and intend to travel abroad using tour companies. A minimum sample of 400 respondents is recommended to ensure sufficient statistical power for structural equation modeling. The study suggests using a non-probability convenience sampling technique, with data collected through online structured surveys distributed via major social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok).
- Research Instrument: Data will be collected using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire (ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree"). To ensure content validity, measurement items will be adapted from established literature:
 - Expertise and Trustworthiness: Adapted from Ohanian (1990).
 - Perceived Trust and Perceived Risk: Adapted from Pavlou (2003).
 - Tour Selection Intention: Adapted from Zeithaml et al. (1996).
- Data Analysis (PLS-SEM): This study proposes the use of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis. This method is particularly suitable for this framework for the following reasons:
 1. Complexity of Relationships: It is highly effective in analyzing models with multiple mediating variables (Perceived Trust and Risk Reduction) simultaneously.
 2. Moderation Analysis: It allows for a robust test of the Moderating Effect of "Viewing Frequency" (P5) within the structural model.
 3. Predictive Orientation: PLS-SEM is ideal for theory development and research focused on predicting consumer behavior and identifying key success factors in a niche market.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

This section presents the integrated conceptual framework, which serves as the theoretical centerpiece of this study. The novelty of this framework lies in its holistic synthesis of communication and trust theories to address the unique complexities of the Thai outbound travel market.

4.1 The Novelty of Theoretical Synthesis

Unlike previous studies that often apply Source Credibility Theory (SCT) or the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) in isolation, this framework proposes a Tri-Perspective Integration (SCT + ELM + Trust Theory).

- The Theoretical Synergy: This study posits that credibility attributes (Expertise and Trustworthiness) do not directly dictate purchase intentions; instead, they function as cognitive and affective inputs processed through the ELM's dual-route mechanism. This process is essential to establish Perceived Trust—a psychological prerequisite for high-stakes decision-making.
- Value Proposition: By synthesizing these theories, the framework moves beyond the static question of "who is credible" to elucidate the underlying mechanisms through which that credibility facilitates risk attenuation and mitigates consumer hesitancy in a high-involvement service context.

The primary theoretical contribution of this framework is the transition from a 'Promotion-centric' view of content creators to a 'Risk-centric' perspective, identifying risk attenuation as the fundamental gateway for high-involvement service selection in the Thai outbound tourism context.

4.2 Highlighting "Perceived Risk Reduction" as the Key Mediator

A significant contribution of this work is the repositioning of Perceived Risk Reduction from a secondary variable to the Primary Mediator.

- Closing the Gap: While existing influencer marketing literature (e.g., Lou & Yuan, 2019) focuses on "Brand Trust" or "Purchase Intention," this framework identifies a "Psychological Black Box" in tourism: the fear of financial loss and functional failure.
- The Mechanism: The model explicitly shows that for Thai tourists, a Content Creator's role is not merely a "Promoter" but a "Risk Mitigator." The decision to select a tour company only occurs after the creator's Expertise and Trustworthiness have successfully lowered the perceived barriers of international travel.

4.3 Integration of Contextual Moderators (The New Mechanism)

To further enhance its novelty, the framework introduces two critical moderators that capture the reality of modern digital consumption:

1. Viewing Frequency (P5): This captures the "Parasocial" element—how repeated exposure transforms a stranger into a trusted advisor, a phenomenon highly prevalent in the Thai social media landscape.
2. Prior Travel Experience (P6): This adds a layer of Consumer Nuance, identifying that the creator's influence is not universal but varies depending on whether the tourist is a *Novice* (high reliance on creator) or an *Expert* (lower reliance).

Discussion

The synthesis of this conceptual framework provides a nuanced understanding of how content creators function as pivotal "psychological anchors" for Thai outbound tourists. The discussion elucidates the dual-pathway mechanism where creator attributes directly mitigate the inherent anxieties of high-involvement travel decisions.

5.1 The Psychological Mechanism of Content Creator Influence

The framework demonstrates that content creator attributes operate through distinct cognitive pathways as suggested by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM):

- Expertise and Information Quality (The Central Route): This study identifies content creator expertise as the primary determinant of perceived information quality. For Thai tourists navigating complex international travel requirements, a creator's technical authority provides the empirical evidence necessary to justify high-cost tour selections. This aligns with Ohanian's (1990) assertion that expertise is a dominant predictor of attitude change in high-involvement contexts.

- **Trustworthiness as a Risk Mitigator (The Peripheral Route):** While expertise provides factual assurance, content creator trustworthiness ensures emotional safety. Unlike general influencer marketing studies, this framework extends the discourse into the tourism domain by identifying trust as a heuristic safeguard. If a content creator is perceived as biased or purely "paid media," the perceived risk remains a significant barrier to consumer selection, regardless of their expertise level.

5.2 Repositioning Perceived Risk Reduction

A significant contribution of this research is the identification of Perceived Risk Reduction as the critical mediator. In the specialized niche of outbound tours, content creators do not merely act as promoters; they serve as "Risk Mitigators." The framework argues that for Thai travelers—who typically exhibit high uncertainty avoidance—trust in a content creator is not the final goal but a prerequisite for reducing financial and functional anxieties. This positions risk attenuation as the "missing link" that transforms social media engagement into actual tour company selection.

5.3 The Role of Frequency and Parasocial Interaction

Furthermore, the inclusion of Viewing Frequency as a moderator highlights the importance of the Parasocial Interaction (PSI). Consistent exposure to a content creator transforms the source from a stranger into a "pseudo-friend." This relational consistency enhances the perceived reliability of the creator, further lowering the psychological barriers unique to outbound international travel.

Conclusions

This research concludes that the decision-making process of Thai outbound tourists is not merely driven by the popularity of content creators, but rather by a structured psychological mechanism. By synthesizing Source Credibility Theory and the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), the proposed framework illustrates that a creator's expertise acts as a central cue for information quality, while trustworthiness serves as a vital heuristic for reducing perceived financial and functional risks. The findings are summarized into two key dimensions:

6.1 Theoretical Contributions

Integrated Framework: This research successfully integrates Source Credibility and Trust Theory within the specialized niche of outbound tour services. It concludes that Expertise and Trustworthiness are the foundational pillars that initiate consumer interest and shape travel intentions.

The Role of Risk Mitigation: A significant conclusion of this study is the identification of "Perceived Risk Reduction" as the primary mediator. For high-involvement purchases like international tours, the content creator functions as a "credibility bridge" that effectively lowers the consumer's financial and functional anxiety.

6.2 Practical Implications for Tour Operators

Strategic Selection over Reach: Tour companies should prioritize "Credible Authority" over "Mass Reach." Selecting creators with deep destination knowledge and a reputation for unbiased reviews is more effective for long-term consumer conversion than partnering with general influencers.

Content and Partnership Strategy: Marketing collaborations should emphasize high-quality, transparent, and informative content that directly addresses potential travel risks. Building long-term partnerships with expert creators is essential for fostering sustainable consumer trust.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides a robust conceptual foundation, future empirical research utilizing PLS-SEM is recommended to validate these propositions. Such studies should further explore the moderating role of "Viewing Frequency" and demographic variations to enhance the model's predictive power in the Thai tourism context.

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STRATEGIC IMPACT AND ADAPTATION OF CHINA'S FOOD CHEMICAL INDUSTRY UNDER US TARIFF POLICY (TRUMP TARIFFS): A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FROM THAI TRADING PARTNERS' PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This conceptual paper proposes a qualitative analytical framework — the IMPACT-ADAPT Framework — for investigating how US Section 301 tariffs reshape China's food chemical industry and how Thai trading partners perceive and respond to those changes. Departing from the quantitative orientation that dominates existing trade-impact scholarship, this study adopts a purely qualitative approach grounded in documentary analysis and semi-structured stakeholder interviews with Thai food exporters, food chemical importers, customs officials, trade associations, and the Thai-Chinese Chamber of Commerce. The central analytical concern is not the statistical measurement of trade flows, but rather the strategic logic behind adaptation: which strategies different stakeholders employ, where those strategies converge and diverge, and what the practical consequences of such similarities and differences are for the Thai food chemical supply chain. The framework integrates four theoretical traditions — trade diversion theory, global value chain governance, dynamic capabilities, and supply chain resilience — into a three-layer model encompassing policy drivers, industry-level impacts, and firm-level adaptation responses. The paper outlines a three-phase research design (documentary analysis, stakeholder interviews, and comparative strategy analysis) and advances three research propositions for empirical exploration. The study contributes to international trade scholarship by offering an interpretive, context-sensitive alternative to the prevailing econometric paradigm. It provides a practical diagnostic tool for Thai policymakers and industry leaders navigating structural trade conflict.

Keywords: Trump Tariffs, Food Chemical Industry, Qualitative Research, Strategic Adaptation, Stakeholder Analysis

Introduction

The escalating tariff confrontation between the United States and China has generated a substantial body of econometric research measuring shifts in trade volumes, price indices, and welfare losses (Amiti et al., 2024; Fajgelbaum et al., 2023). What this growing literature has been notably slower to provide, however, is an understanding of how the human actors embedded in these supply chains — the traders, exporters, importers, and regulators who must make real-time decisions under profound uncertainty — actually perceive, interpret, and respond to the disruptions that tariff policy creates. Statistics tell us that Chinese food chemical exports to the United States declined by 38 percent between 2023 and 2025, and that exports to ASEAN rose by 27 percent over the same period (WTO, 2025). What statistics cannot tell us is why certain Thai importers seized the opportunity while others retreated, what strategic reasoning guided their choices, or how different adaptation approaches produced divergent outcomes within the same industry.

This paper argues that answering those questions demands a qualitative turn. The food chemical industry is a particularly suitable context for such an inquiry. China commands over 35 percent of global food chemical exports (OECD, 2024), and Thailand imports approximately 42 percent of its food chemicals from Chinese suppliers — a dependency worth roughly 28.5 billion baht per annum (Thai Customs Department, 2024). The imposition of tariffs ranging from 60 to 145 percent on Chinese chemical products under the second Trump administration (USTR, 2025) has triggered what this paper terms a strategic dilemma for Thai operators: lower short-term input prices coupled with heightened risks of supply instability, quality volatility, and deepening single-source dependency. Understanding how different stakeholders navigate this dilemma requires the kind of thick description, contextual sensitivity, and process-level analysis that qualitative methods are uniquely equipped to provide.

Three gaps in the existing literature motivate the study. First, an industry-specific gap: most trade-impact studies focus on electronics, automotive, or agriculture, overlooking the food chemical sector's distinctive regulatory complexity and limited supply-chain substitutability (Beghin et al., 2024). Second, a third-country perspective gap: the vantage point of Thai trading partners — who function as both indirect victims and potential strategic beneficiaries — has received negligible attention (Warr & Kohpaiboon, 2023). Third, a strategic-process gap: prevailing research measures outcomes rather than investigating the decision-making processes, strategic reasoning, and organisational dynamics through which firms adapt to policy-induced disruption (Handley et al., 2023). This paper addresses all three gaps by developing the IMPACT-ADAPT Framework and grounding it in a qualitative research design centred on documentary analysis and stakeholder interviews.

Purpose of the Study

The overarching purpose is to develop a conceptual framework that explains, through qualitative evidence, how US tariff policy transmits its strategic effects through China's food chemical industry to the operations and decision-making of Thai trading partners. Four specific objectives guide the inquiry. First, to trace the structural impact of Section 301 tariffs on Chinese food chemical production, pricing, and export reorientation using documentary and secondary-source evidence. Second, to elicit, from the first-hand accounts of Thai stakeholders — food exporters, chemical importers, customs officials, trade associations, and the Thai-Chinese Chamber of Commerce — the adaptation strategies they have observed and adopted in response to these changes. Third, to compare and contrast these strategies across stakeholder groups, identifying where approaches converge (similarities) and where they diverge (differences), and analysing how such convergence or divergence shapes the strategic outcomes experienced by different actors. Fourth, to synthesise the findings into actionable recommendations for Thai government agencies and private-sector decision-makers seeking to strengthen the resilience of the food chemical supply chain.

Theoretical Framework

Because the phenomenon under investigation spans three analytical levels — the policy arena, the industry, and the individual firm — a single theoretical lens would inevitably produce a partial picture. The framework therefore, integrates four complementary perspectives, each illuminating a different facet of the causal chain.

Trade Diversion Theory

Viner's (1950) distinction between trade creation and trade diversion provides the macro-level point of departure. When the United States imposes prohibitive duties on Chinese food chemicals, Chinese producers do not simply absorb the cost; they redirect exports toward markets that remain tariff-free. Fajgelbaum et al. (2023) confirmed this pattern econometrically, but their aggregate analysis masks the sector-specific frictions that complicate redirection in the food chemical industry. Beghin et al. (2024) showed that non-tariff measures

— food safety certifications, Halal and Kosher accreditation, labelling requirements — impose adjustment costs of 15 to 25 percent of product value, meaning that the net benefit of receiving diverted Chinese output is far from automatic and varies substantially across product categories and importing countries. In the qualitative design proposed here, documentary evidence on tariff schedules and trade flows provides the contextual backdrop, while interview data from Thai stakeholders reveal how trade diversion is actually experienced, negotiated, and managed on the ground.

Global Value Chain Theory

Gereffi, Humphrey, and Sturgeon's (2005) governance typology explains the structural constraints that shape how supply chains reorganize under stress. In food chemicals, captive governance predominates: Thai importers often depend on a small number of Chinese producers controlling proprietary synthesis processes, which creates high switching costs and limited buyer bargaining power. When tariff shocks disrupt these captive relationships, the adjustment path is neither frictionless nor instantaneous. Alfaro and Chor (2023) identified three restructuring options — reshoring, nearshoring, and friendshoring — each carrying different implications for third-country economies. Through stakeholder interviews, this study seeks to discover which governance dynamics Thai operators actually encounter: do Chinese suppliers attempt to deepen captive relationships through loyalty pricing, or do they loosen ties as they diversify their own market portfolios? The answer to this question shapes the strategic options available to Thai firms in fundamental ways that quantitative data alone cannot reveal.

Dynamic Capabilities Theory

Teece's (2007) sensing-seizing-transforming framework explains why firms facing identical external shocks respond with markedly different speed and effectiveness. Zhang and Chen (2023) found that large Chinese food chemical exporters redirected their export portfolios approximately eight months faster than SMEs, which relied on reactive price-cutting. This differential adaptation speed has direct implications for Thai importers: the capability profile of their Chinese suppliers determines the reliability and quality consistency of the goods they receive during periods of turbulence. The qualitative approach adopted here is particularly well suited to capturing these dynamics, because the processes of sensing threats, seizing opportunities, and transforming organizational routines are inherently narrative phenomena — they unfold over time, are shaped by context and relationships, and are best understood through the accounts of the actors who live them.

Supply Chain Resilience Theory

Christopher and Peck's (2004) resilience framework identifies re-engineering, collaboration, agility, and risk culture as determinants of a supply chain's absorptive capacity. Ivanov (2024) extended this to the concept of supply chain viability — the ability to survive not just acute shocks but protracted, structural disruptions — a characterization that fits the US-China tariff conflict precisely. The qualitative design proposed here operationalizes these constructs not as survey scales, but as interview themes: how do Thai food exporters describe their experience of supply disruption? What language do they use to characterize risk? What concrete actions have they taken, and what outcomes have those actions produced? By grounding resilience theory in the lived experience of practitioners, the study aims to generate insights that are both theoretically anchored and practically actionable.

Conceptual Framework: The IMPACT-ADAPT Model

Synthesizing these four theoretical traditions, this paper proposes the IMPACT-ADAPT Framework — a three-layer model designed to trace the causal pathway from tariff policy through industry-level disruption to firm-level strategic adaptation. Crucially, the framework is designed for qualitative investigation: rather than measuring variables through statistical instruments, it identifies the conceptual categories and relationships that guide data collection through documentary analysis and stakeholder interviews. Figure 1 presents the framework.

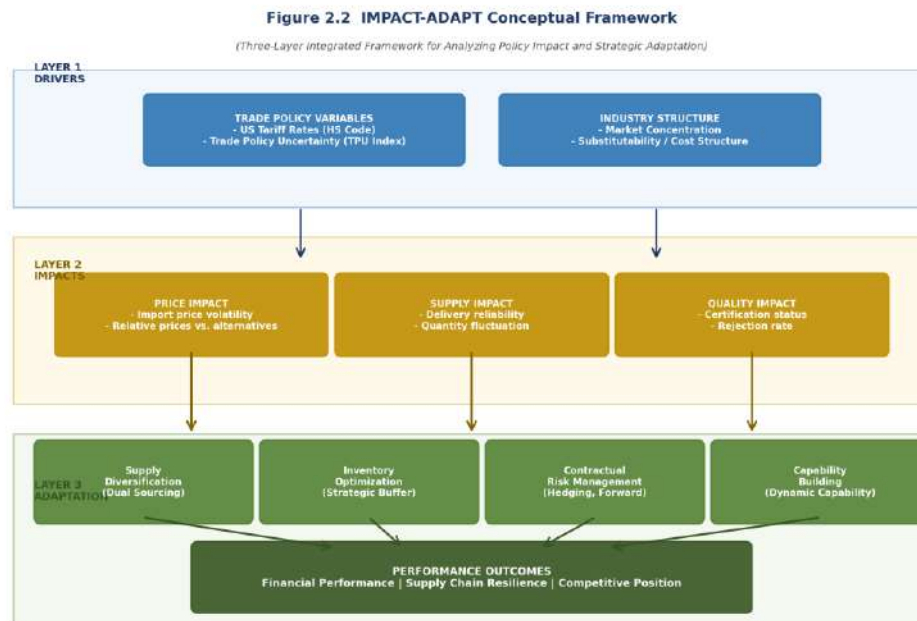


Figure 1. The IMPACT-ADAPT Conceptual Framework

Layer 1: Drivers

The driver layer identifies the exogenous forces that initiate the causal chain: trade policy variables (tariff rates, product scope, and trade policy uncertainty) and industry structure variables (market concentration, product substitutability, and Chinese producers' cost flexibility). In the qualitative design, these constructs are investigated through documentary analysis of official trade policy documents, customs data, and industry reports rather than through statistical measurement.

Layer 2: Impacts

The impact layer captures three dimensions of disruption as perceived by Thai stakeholders: price impact (how import costs have changed and how pricing negotiations have shifted), supply impact (whether delivery reliability, lead times, and order consistency have deteriorated or improved), and quality impact (whether certification standards, rejection rates, and product specifications have been affected). These dimensions are explored through open-ended interview questions that invite stakeholders to describe their experience in their own terms, revealing the nuances and contingencies that standardized scales would obscure.

Layer 3: Adaptation Strategies — Similarities and Differences

The adaptation layer is the analytical heart of the study. It classifies Thai stakeholders' strategic responses into four categories — supply diversification, inventory optimization, contractual risk management, and capability building — and then compares these responses across stakeholder groups to identify patterns of convergence and divergence. The central research interest is not merely what strategies are used, but why different stakeholders adopt different strategies, what contextual factors explain those differences, and how the choice of strategy shapes subsequent outcomes. For example, do large food exporters and small chemical traders converge on the same diversification approach, or do they pursue fundamentally different logics? When strategies differ, do the differences stem from resource constraints, risk perceptions, or institutional relationships? And do convergent strategies produce convergent outcomes, or can identical strategies lead to divergent results depending on the context in which they are deployed? These are the questions that qualitative comparative analysis is uniquely equipped to answer.

Research Propositions

Proposition 1. Thai stakeholders across different segments of the food chemical supply chain perceive trade diversion as simultaneously creating opportunities (lower input prices, expanded supplier options) and risks (quality uncertainty, dependency deepening), but the relative weight assigned to opportunities versus risks differs systematically between exporters, importers, and regulators.

Proposition 2. The adaptation strategies adopted by Thai food exporters to China differ substantively from those adopted by food chemical importers and traders, reflecting differences in supply chain position, risk exposure, and institutional relationships rather than differences in firm size alone.

Proposition 3. Where adaptation strategies converge across stakeholder groups — particularly in the area of supply diversification — the convergence reflects shared exposure to a common structural pressure; where strategies diverge — particularly in contractual risk management and capability building — the divergence reflects stakeholder-specific institutional logics and resource endowments that shape how the same external shock is interpreted and acted upon.

Figure 2 illustrates the trade diversion impact pathway from tariff trigger to the dual outcomes experienced by Thai stakeholders, providing a process-level complement to the structural framework in Figure 1.

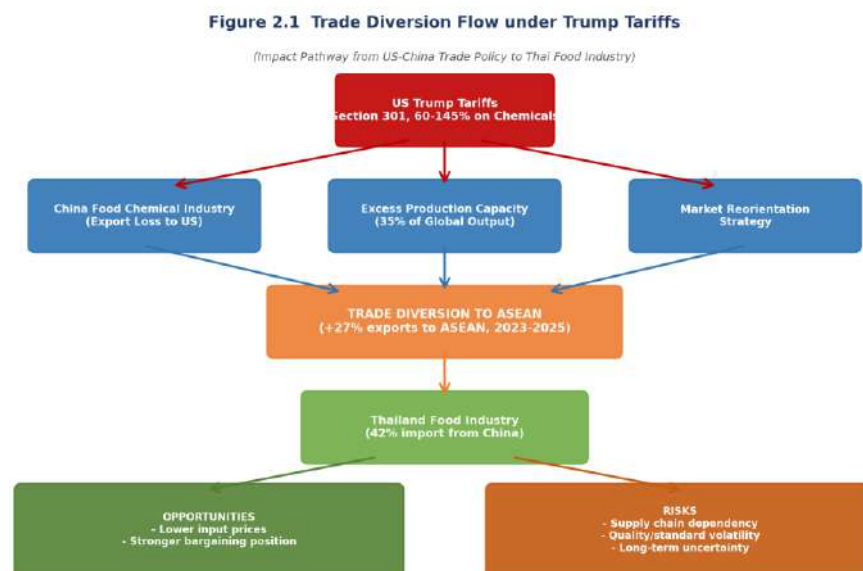


Figure 2. Trade Diversion Impact Pathway from US Tariff Policy to Thai Food Industry

Methodology

The empirical investigation is designed as a qualitative study employing three complementary methods: documentary analysis, semi-structured stakeholder interviews, and comparative strategy analysis. The rationale for a purely qualitative approach is twofold. First, the research questions are concerned with strategic processes, perceptions, and reasoning — phenomena that are best captured through narrative accounts and contextual interpretation rather than numerical measurement. Second, the existing literature has generated ample quantitative evidence on aggregate trade-flow changes; what is missing is the interpretive depth needed to understand how and why those changes translate into different strategic responses at the firm and institutional level.

Phase 1: Documentary Analysis

The first phase involves systematic analysis of publicly available policy documents, trade statistics, and industry reports. Key sources include USTR Section 301 documentation and tariff schedules, WTO Trade Statistics Review, Thai Customs Department import data classified by HS Codes 29 (Organic Chemicals) and 38 (Miscellaneous Chemical Products), industry reports from the Thai Food Processors' Association and the Federation of Thai Industries, and policy documents from the Office of Industrial Economics and the Thai FDA. Documents are analysed using directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), with the IMPACT-ADAPT Framework's three layers serving as the initial coding structure. This phase establishes the factual context — the scale, timing, and sectoral distribution of tariff-induced trade shifts — against which stakeholder accounts can be situated and interpreted.

Phase 2: Semi-Structured Stakeholder Interviews

The second phase centres on in-depth interviews with 15 to 20 key informants selected through purposive and snowball sampling. The informant pool is deliberately heterogeneous, comprising five to seven Thai food exporters who ship products to China or source food chemicals from Chinese suppliers; three to five food chemical importers and trading companies; two to three Thai Customs and FDA officials with oversight of food chemical imports; three to four representatives of trade associations, industry federations, and academics specialising in international trade; and one to two representatives of the Thai-Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Interviews last 60 to 90 minutes and follow a semi-structured guide organised around four thematic areas: perceived impact of Trump Tariffs on the respondent's operations and industry; strategies adopted or considered in response; assessment of similarities and differences in strategic approaches across the industry; and views on the future trajectory of the food chemical supply chain and policy needs. All interviews are audio-recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and analysed through Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-stage thematic analysis protocol using NVivo software. Trustworthiness is ensured through data triangulation (comparing documentary and interview evidence), member checking (returning synthesised findings to selected informants for verification), and maintenance of a complete audit trail.

Phase 3: Comparative Strategy Analysis

The third phase — the analytical core of the study — involves systematic cross-case comparison of the adaptation strategies identified in Phase 2. Drawing on Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2020) framework for qualitative data analysis, this phase constructs a comparative impact matrix that maps each stakeholder group's strategies along the four adaptation categories (supply diversification, inventory optimisation, contractual risk management, and capability building), identifies points of convergence (strategies that are common across groups) and points of divergence (strategies that are group-specific), and traces how convergent and divergent strategies produce similar or different outcomes. The goal is not to count frequencies but to identify the strategic logics, contextual conditions, and institutional relationships that explain why certain actors respond similarly to shared pressures while others chart fundamentally different courses. The output of this phase is a strategic adaptation typology and a set of empirically grounded propositions about the relationship between strategy choice and outcome. Figure 3 summarises the three-phase qualitative research design.

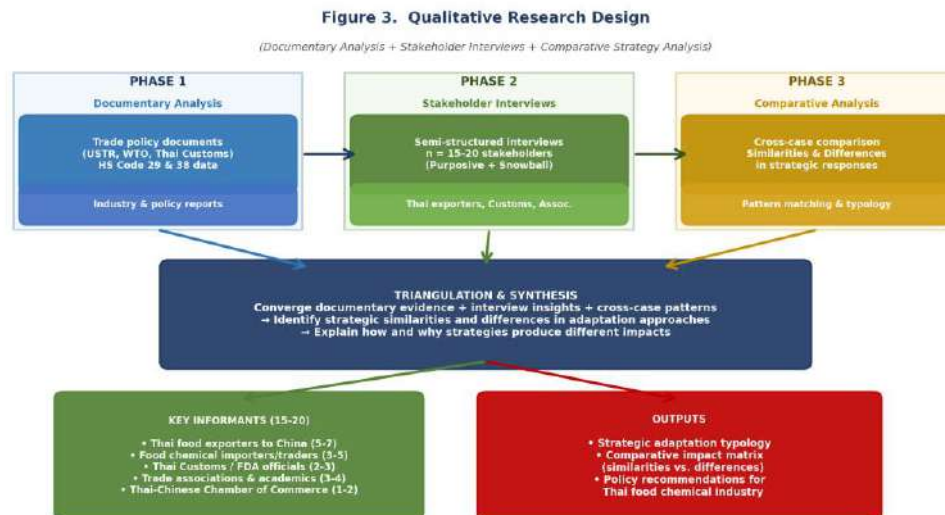


Figure 3. Qualitative Research Design: Documentary Analysis, Stakeholder Interviews, and Comparative Strategy Analysis

Discussion and Recommendation

The revised qualitative orientation of this study offers several distinctive contributions. Methodologically, it provides an interpretive alternative to the econometric paradigm that has dominated trade-impact research since the first round of Trump Tariffs. While quantitative studies have been invaluable in establishing the aggregate magnitude of trade diversion and welfare losses, they are structurally ill-equipped to answer questions about strategic reasoning, decision-making processes, and the contextual factors that explain why identical policy shocks produce heterogeneous firm-level responses. The qualitative approach adopted here — grounded in documentary evidence and the first-hand accounts of diverse stakeholders — is designed precisely to fill that explanatory gap.

Substantively, the comparative strategy analysis proposed in Phase 3 addresses a question that has been almost entirely neglected in the literature: how do the adaptation strategies of different actors within the same supply chain converge and diverge, and what are the consequences of such convergence or divergence for the chain as a whole? If Thai food exporters and food chemical importers adopt contradictory strategies — for instance, if exporters pursue diversification while importers deepen their dependency on Chinese suppliers for short-term price advantages — the resulting misalignment could create systemic vulnerabilities that neither group individually intended. Identifying such patterns requires the kind of cross-case, multi-stakeholder analysis that the study is designed to perform.

For Thai policymakers, the practical implications are direct. The Board of Investment and the Office of Industrial Economics can use the strategic adaptation typology as a diagnostic tool to assess which segments of the food chemical supply chain are most vulnerable and which adaptation pathways are most promising. Trade associations can leverage the comparative findings to facilitate knowledge sharing between stakeholder groups that currently operate in relative isolation. The Thai-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, which occupies a bridging position between the two countries' business communities, can use the findings to inform bilateral dialogue on supply-chain stabilisation measures.

Limitations

The principal limitation of this conceptual paper is the absence of empirical data; the framework and propositions await testing through the qualitative design outlined above. The purposive sampling approach, while appropriate for qualitative inquiry, limits statistical

generalizability — though the goal is analytical generalization to theoretical propositions rather than population-level inference (Yin, 2018). The Thai-centric focus, while analytically productive, constrains immediate applicability to other ASEAN economies, although the underlying theoretical logic is transferable.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that understanding the strategic consequences of Trump Tariffs for the food chemical supply chain requires moving beyond aggregate trade statistics toward the interpretive, process-level analysis that qualitative methods provide. The IMPACT-ADAPT Framework offers a structured yet flexible architecture for such investigation, tracing the causal chain from policy drivers through industry-level impacts to firm-level adaptation strategies. By centring the inquiry on the perspectives of Thai stakeholders — food exporters, chemical importers, customs officials, trade associations, and the Thai-Chinese Chamber of Commerce — and by focusing explicitly on the similarities and differences in their strategic responses, the study promises to generate insights that are simultaneously theoretically grounded and practically relevant. In an era when trade policy has become a primary instrument of geopolitical competition, and when the consequences of that competition ripple outward to reshape supply chains in countries far removed from the original dispute, the need for such context-sensitive, stakeholder-informed research has never been more pressing.

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CONTENT STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING TRUST: COMPARING MEGA AND MICRO-INFLUENCERS IN THAI TIKTOK COSMETIC REVIEWS

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Abstract

This study has three main goals: 1) to see how content strategies affect consumer trust; 2) to compare how mega and micro-influencers communicate using **Source Credibility Theory**; and 3) to understand how trust and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) help turn viewers into buyers in the shoppertainment world. By looking at 50 TikTok videos, this research studies the link between different influencer tiers and the quick buying decisions of Generation Z in the Thai beauty market.

The results show that while mega-influencers are great for reaching many people and looking "Attractive," micro-influencers are better at building "Trustworthiness" and showing "Expertise"—the core parts of Source Credibility—because they are very honest (72% transparency) and show how products work in real life. From a business view, the study highlights that Thai beauty brands need **Dynamic Capabilities**, meaning they must be quick to adapt to the shoppertainment trend to stay ahead of others.

In conclusion, trust and e-WOM are the most important factors that turn video watching into actual sales. For a brand to grow steadily, it should use a mix of both: mega-influencers to build a good reputation and micro-influencers to make people trust the brand enough to finally buy the product.

Keywords: Consumer Trust, Influencer Marketing, TikTok, Thai Cosmetic Brands, Mega and Micro-Influencers

Introduction

The fast growth of TikTok has completely changed digital marketing, making "Shoppertainment" a major force in the Thai beauty industry. While many brands now use influencer marketing, there is still a big **research gap** in understanding the small differences between how mega and micro-influencers make content and how those differences affect consumer trust. Most current studies only give a general overview of influencer impact but do not provide a clear comparison of how different influencer levels use specific communication styles to reach Generation Z.

This research fills these gaps by using **Source Credibility Theory** to look at the **causal relationship** between content strategy, consumer trust, and buying behavior. This study goes beyond just watching what happens; it analyzes the "content-to-conversion" path. It looks at how specific content details (like transparency and storytelling) act as main drivers for trust and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which then lead to impulsive buying behavior.

Additionally, this study looks at these factors through the lens of **Dynamic Capabilities**, showing why Thai beauty brands need to sense and grab new opportunities as consumer expectations change on TikTok. By connecting engaging content to real sales, this research offers a strategic guide for marketers to create effective, trust-based content that fits the specific needs of the Thai beauty market.

Literature Review

1. The Shoppertainment Paradigm and Dynamic Capabilities

While Klumthawin and Boonpianpon (2026) highlight that TikTok creates new chances through real-time talk, using the **Dynamic Capabilities** lens (Teece et al., 1997) shows that "Shoppertainment" is more than just a place to sell things. It is a strategic process where companies must use their skills to "Sense" changes in Gen Z behavior and "Seize" opportunities by making creative content to stay ahead of others. This view matches TikTok's own reports (2022) but gives a deeper plan beyond just using the platform for transactions.

2. Theoretical Integration: Trust Theory and Source Credibility

Building trust today can be explained by combining **Trust Theory** with **Source Credibility Theory** (Ohanian, 1990). Past research gives us important ideas about how this works:

□ **Cognitive vs. Affective Trust (Agree/Disagree):**

- **Agreement:** Thamaphon and Sopak (2024) say that trust is the main factor for beauty influencers in Thailand. This supports **Trust Theory**, which says consumers want to feel less risk when making decisions.
- **Critical Comparison:** However, there is a difference in opinion about influencer levels. Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019) argue that micro-influencers have an advantage in "Trustworthiness" because they feel like peers (**Affective Trust**). On the other hand, Junprateetong (2022) believes mega-influencers are still needed for their "Attractiveness" and "Visibility" to build a big brand reputation (**Cognitive Trust**). This shows that brands should choose the right type of influencer for their specific goal instead of using the same way for everything.

3. The Causal Link: e-WOM as a Mediator to Impulsive Buying

The link between content strategy and how consumers act can be studied through **Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)**:

□ **e-WOM as a Trust Catalyst (Theoretical Integration):**

- Kaeo-an and Tanittanakorn (2020) suggest that e-WOM is a main driver for consumer confidence. This study adds to that idea by arguing that e-WOM does not just change sales directly. Instead, it acts as a key **Mediator** for Trust.
- **Analytical Point:** According to **Trust Theory**, when consumers see real content, they doubt it less. This builds up "Trust Capital," which turns feelings into **Impulsive Buying Behavior** (Amornsathitphan, 2022).

- **Niche Expertise vs. Mass Communication:** The findings of Potjanajaruwit et al. (2023) about small community engagement match the "Expertise" part of Source Credibility.

Methodology

1. Research Design and Sample Selection

This study uses a qualitative content analysis method to look at the content strategies of influencers in the Thai beauty industry. The sample includes **50 TikTok videos** from **10 influencers** (5 Mega-influencers with >1M followers and 5 Micro-influencers with 10k-100k followers).

- **Why 10 Influencers?** Choosing 10 influencers (split equally between groups) allows for a clear comparison within the Thai beauty sector. This number is easy to manage while still showing a good mix of professional and peer-style content.
- **Why 50 Videos?** The sample of 50 videos (5 videos per influencer) was chosen based on the idea of **Data Saturation**. In qualitative research, this amount is enough to find consistent patterns and strategies without needing to collect more data.

2. Systematic Coding Process

To move from just describing data to analyzing it, the coding process followed three steps:

1. **Open Coding:** Watching the 50 videos to find main themes about Shoppertainment and consumer trust.
2. **Axial Coding:** Organizing these themes into five groups: Transparency, Evidence, Content Type, Authenticity, and Engagement.
3. **Selective Coding:** Combining the data to find the **Causal Relationship** between content details and their impact on trust and impulse buying.

3. Inter-coder Reliability

To keep the study fair and reduce bias, this research included an **Inter-coder Reliability** check.

- ☐ A second independent person analyzed 20% of the videos (10 videos) using the same rules.
- ☐ The level of agreement was measured using **Cohen's Kappa**. We aimed for a score above 0.80, which means "substantial agreement" and proves the findings are reliable.

4. Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages to find the main differences between the two influencer groups. This approach shows which parts of **Source Credibility** (Expertise, Trustworthiness, or Attractiveness) are most common in each group.

Results

The analysis of 50 TikTok videos shows clear differences in how each influencer group works. While mega-influencers use high-quality production to reach a large audience, micro-influencers focus on being credible to reduce consumer doubt.

1. Comparative Analysis of Content Strategies

The table below shows the differences in how Mega and Micro-influencers in the Thai beauty industry create their content:

Content Dimension	Mega-Influencers (n=25)	Micro-Influencers (n=25)	Significant Analytical Insight
Transparency	40%	72%	Micro-influencers are more open and honest to build trust like a friend.
Evidence Demonstration	56%	80%	Showing real, unfiltered product testing is the main strength of micro-influencers.
Entertainment Focus	82%	45%	Mega-influencers focus more on fun storytelling and high-quality videos.
Call-to-Action (CTA)	60%	68%	Both groups encourage buying, but micro-influencers focus more on community trust.

2. Analytical Findings: The Path to Conversion

This study shows that for Gen Z, trust doesn't come from perfect-looking ads. Instead, it comes from feeling that the content is real. Micro-influencers are better than mega-influencers at building **Trustworthiness** and **Expertise**—which are the two main parts of **Source**

Credibility Theory. By showing things like real skin texture and "honest" results (both good and bad), micro-influencers help consumers feel less doubt. This is a very important step before they decide to buy something suddenly.

3. Conceptual Framework of Impulsive Buying

From our findings, this **Causal Relationship** model shows how engagement turns into quick buying action within the Shoppertainment world:

Figure 1: The Causal Pathway to Impulsive Buying

1. **Content Attributes:** This starts with **Transparency & Evidence** in the video.
2. **Consumer Trust:** These attributes lead to **Trustworthiness**, a key part of Source Credibility.
3. **Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM):** Trust then creates **Positive reviews from peers**, which act as social proof.
4. **Impulsive Buying Behavior:** Finally, this results in an **Emotional Response & Quick Action** from the buyer.

This model confirms that trust and e-WOM are key links in the process. When viewers enjoy a video (Shoppertainment) and trust the creator's expertise at the same time, they decide to buy much faster, especially for beauty products that aren't too expensive.

Discussion

1. Interpretation of Key Findings: Why Micro-Influencers Command Higher Trust

The findings show that micro-influencers are much more credible than mega-influencers. This can be explained by combining **Source Credibility Theory** and **Trust Theory**. For micro-influencers, **Trustworthiness** and **Expertise** come from being relatable and authentic. When consumers watch "unfiltered" content, it creates **Affective Trust** (trust based on feelings). For Generation Z, this type of trust is much better at reducing doubt than **Cognitive Trust** (trust based only on a big name or follower count).

2. The Mechanism: Linking Content → Trust → Behavior

This study explains the **Causal Mechanism** driven by **Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)**. It finds that content strategies focusing on transparency and showing evidence help create positive e-WOM. **The Chain Reaction:** Authentic content fosters initial trust, which is then amplified and validated through community interactions (e-WOM).

- **The Chain Reaction:** Real and honest content builds initial trust. This trust then grows and is confirmed through community talk (e-WOM).
 - **The Conversion:** This process acts as a key **Mediator** that turns "Shoppertainment" into **Impulsive Buying Behavior**. By building trust, consumers don't spend a long time thinking logically. Instead, they make quick, emotion-driven decisions to buy.
- ### 3. Comparison with Prior Studies
- **Consistency with Credibility:** These results match the findings of Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019), who say that micro-influencers are seen as more credible because they are relatable. This fits the behavior of Thai consumers, who value reviews from "peers" or "ordinary people."
 - **Support for Impulse Buying:** Additionally, the research supports the ideas of Ahmad et al. (2025). It suggests that Shoppertainment on short-form video platforms is a main reason for impulsive buying, especially when influencers seem sincere. **Theoretical Contribution: What's New?**
- ### 4. This research offers several significant contributions to the existing body of academic literature:

*"This study extends existing literature by demonstrating that content strategy is not only a communication tool but also a **trust-building mechanism** in short-form video platforms."*

The study confirms that on TikTok, "perfect ads" are less important than "honest content." These findings expand the idea of **Dynamic Capabilities** by showing how brands must change their strategies to build lasting trust today.

Conclusion

In the fast-moving world of Thai beauty TikTok, "**Trust**" is the most valuable asset a brand can possess. This study demonstrates that successful marketing is no longer solely about chasing high follower counts; rather, it is about strategic believability and the integrated use of diverse influencer tiers to build a robust brand ecosystem.

1. The Synergistic Roles of Influencer Tiers

The research confirms that Mega and Micro-influencers fulfill distinct but complementary roles in the consumer journey, supporting the multi-dimensional nature of **Source Credibility Theory**:

- **Mega-Influencers (The "Attractiveness" Pillar):** With high-quality production and engaging storytelling, Mega-influencers excel at capturing attention and establishing **Cognitive Trust**. They function as "Trend Starters," driving broad-scale brand awareness and initial impulsive interest.
- **Micro-Influencers (The "Trustworthiness" Pillar):** Micro-influencers are the core drivers of **Affective Trust**. Their higher transparency (72%) and evidence-based content act as "Proof Providers," winning over skeptical consumers with honesty and converting interested viewers into loyal customers through perceived **Expertise**.

2. Implementing a "Layered Strategy" for Competitive Advantage

To achieve sustainable growth in the Thai cosmetic industry, brands must leverage **Dynamic Capabilities** by adopting a "Layered Strategy" instead of a uniform approach:

- **The Top Layer (Aspiration):** Utilize Mega-influencers to spark curiosity and maintain a professional, high-end brand image.
- **The Core Layer (Validation):** Deploy Micro-influencers to provide the honest, evidence-based reviews and **e-WOM** reinforcement that Gen Z consumers require before finalizing a purchase decision.

3. Strategic Outlook: Honesty as a Trust-Building Mechanism

Ultimately, the future of the beauty industry belongs to "community-led" content. This study adds to current research by showing that **content strategy is a key trust-building tool** rather than just a way to communicate. Brands that choose to be honest—even about a product's downsides—will build stronger long-term loyalty. By picking believability over "perfect" ads, brands can grow naturally through word-of-mouth in a digital market where people are becoming more doubtful.

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ANALYSIS OF TRENDS AND PURCHASING DECISION BEHAVIORS VIA TIKTOK SHOP AMONG THAI CONSUMERS

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the trends and purchasing decision behavior of Thai consumers on the TikTok Shop platform, which has emerged as a leader in entertainment-driven commerce (Shoppertainment). A qualitative research method was employed, utilizing secondary data from macroeconomic statistics reports, research articles, and market trend reports from 2024 to 2026.

The research focuses on studying the factors that shift purchasing decisions from search-based to discovery-based. It also examines the flow of the consumer experience. The results show that the main influences driving spontaneous purchases are trust in content creators, emotional stimulation through live broadcasts, and algorithms that tailor products to individual preferences.

This research not only summarizes key trends but also integrates relevant consumer behavior theories to explain emerging patterns in digital commerce. It also provides strategic recommendations for creating wealth and financial opportunities in the digital economy.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Shoppertainment, TikTok Shop, Thai Consumer

Introduction

In the past decade, Thailand has fully entered the digital economy era. E-commerce has become a key driver of economic activity. The Digital Report 2025 by the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) indicates that more than 85% of Thai people have access to the internet, and users spend over three hours per day on social media. These factors have contributed to the rapid growth of TikTok Shop through the concept of “Shoppertainment,” which seamlessly integrates entertainment with online shopping.

An important phenomenon observed is the shift in consumer purchasing behavior from a traditional search-based approach, where consumers actively seek products, to a discovery-based approach, also referred to as interest-based commerce. This transformation not only creates new opportunities for marketers but also challenges traditional consumer behavior theories.

Therefore, this research aims to analyze the trends and purchasing decision behavior of Thai consumers in depth in order to provide a clearer understanding of the rapidly evolving digital commerce ecosystem. In the past decade, Thailand has fully entered the digital economy era. E-commerce is a key driver. The Digital Report 2025 by the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) shows that over 85% of Thais have internet access. People spend more than 3 hours a day on social media. These factors have led to the rapid growth of

TikTok Shop through the "Shoppertainment" concept. TikTok Shop seamlessly integrates entertainment with online shopping.

The interesting aspect of this phenomenon is the shift in consumer purchasing "paradigm," from the previous search-based approach (starting with a need for a product) to a discovery-based approach, also known as "interest-based commerce." This behavior not only creates new marketing opportunities but also challenges traditional consumer behavior theories. This research aims to analyze the in-depth trends and purchasing decision behavior of Thai consumers to provide an overview of the highly dynamic future commerce ecosystem.

Objective

1. To examine the shift in purchasing decision processes among Thai consumers from search-based to discovery-based behavior on TikTok Shop.
2. To identify the key factors influencing purchasing decisions and impulse buying on TikTok Shop, including the roles of content creators, live streaming, and personalized algorithms.
3. To analyze how the concept of Shoppertainment influences consumer decision-making and its implications for marketing strategies in the digital economy.

Conceptual Framework

To strengthen the theoretical foundation of this study, the Stimulus– Organism– Response (S-O-R) model is adopted as the core framework to explain consumer behavior on TikTok Shop.

In this context, Stimulus (S) includes short video content, live streaming, promotional cues such as limited-time offers, and algorithm-driven recommendations. Organism (O) refers to consumers' internal psychological states, including emotional arousal, perceived enjoyment, and trust in content creators. Response (R) represents observable behaviors such as purchase decisions and impulse buying.

This study also integrates flow theory, trust in social commerce, and persuasion theory to provide a more comprehensive explanation. The following are proposition of this paper.

- P1: Entertainment-based stimuli positively influence consumer emotional engagement.
- P2: Emotional engagement increases the likelihood of impulse purchasing behavior.
- P3: Trust in content creators mediates the relationship between stimuli and purchase decisions.
- P4: Algorithmic personalization strengthens the relationship between stimuli and consumer responses.

Literature Review

This research applies the following main conceptual frameworks to explain consumer behavior on TikTok Shop in the context of digital commerce and the rapid growth of social media platforms.

The first framework is the S-O-R Model, which explains how external stimuli influence internal psychological states and lead to behavioral responses (Zhang & Phunsa, 2024). In the context of TikTok Shop, these stimuli can include short-form video content, live streaming, and various platform features that are designed to capture users' attention. These elements affect consumers' emotions and perceptions, such as enjoyment, excitement, and curiosity, which then influence their decision-making process. As a result, consumers may respond through actions such as purchasing products, interacting with content, or sharing information with others.

The second concept is Shoppertainment combined with Flow Theory. Entertainment-based content helps reduce resistance to advertising and makes consumers feel more comfortable engaging with product-related information. When consumers enter a flow state, they become deeply involved in the content and may lose awareness of time and their surroundings. This immersive experience allows them to focus more on the content itself rather than critically evaluating product information. As a result, the likelihood of impulse buying increases, especially when the content is engaging and continuously presented (Wipavee et al., 2024; Kulnaphat, 2025).

Another important factor is trust in the digital ecosystem. In the current environment, trust is no longer limited to product brands but extends to individuals, especially content creators who act as intermediaries between brands and consumers. The authenticity and sincerity of these creators play a key role in reducing perceived risk and helping consumers feel more confident in their purchasing decisions. When consumers perceive that the information presented is honest and relatable, they are more likely to rely on it when making decisions (Prapasiri, 2025).

In addition, impulse buying behavior is defined as a spontaneous purchasing decision that is mainly driven by emotional responses rather than careful planning (Rook, 1987). Environmental factors such as time pressure, limited promotions, and interactive features can further increase this behavior by reducing consumers' ability to think carefully before making a decision. Beatty and Ferrell (1998) also suggest that situational conditions can significantly influence impulse buying, particularly when consumers are exposed to continuous stimuli in a short period of time.

The concept of social commerce also helps explain how consumer behavior is influenced by online interactions. In this environment, trust is built through user-generated content, peer recommendations, and active engagement within the platform. These factors can significantly affect purchase intention, as consumers often rely on the experiences and opinions of others when evaluating products (Hajli, 2015). This is clearly reflected in TikTok Shop, where interaction between users and content creators plays an important role in shaping perceptions and influencing decisions.

Finally, persuasion theory provides additional understanding of how consumers make decisions in digital environments. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), consumers may rely more on emotional and contextual cues than rational evaluation, especially in highly interactive and fast-paced platforms. In addition, principles such as scarcity and social proof are commonly used in online marketing to create urgency and influence purchasing decisions. These techniques are frequently applied in TikTok Shop, particularly in live streaming, where limited-time offers and audience engagement encourage immediate action (Cialdini, 1984).

Methodology

This study employs qualitative research methods through comprehensive analysis. Secondary data analysis was conducted with data collection involving selection 9 Thai research papers and one foreign-language research paper published between 2024 and 2026 from the TCI and Google Scholar databases, prioritizing sources with academic credibility. Selection Criteria focused on studies examining consumer behavior on TikTok Shop in Thailand, complemented by macroeconomic statistics from reputable organizations. Data Synthesis was

achieved by integrating statistics from ETDA and SCB EIC with psychological theories to elucidate the relationship between statistical findings and human behavioral patterns.

Findings

The synthesis of secondary data revealed the following key issues for discussion:

1. Dynamics of Growth and Macroeconomic Behavior

Gross Merchandise Volume (GMV) on TikTok Shop in Thailand has an average growth rate of 15–20% per year, with beauty, fashion, and lifestyle products leading the market (SCB EIC, 2025). A notable behavioral trend is the increasing rate of repurchase, as TikTok's all-in-one ecosystem simplifies the purchasing process and enhances convenience.

This phenomenon can be explained through the S-O-R framework, where continuous exposure to personalized content acts as a strong stimulus. Consumers tend to favor convenience over extensive evaluation, leading to repeated purchasing behavior. The increase in repurchase behavior suggests the formation of habitual consumption patterns, supported by Beatty and Ferrell (1998). Furthermore, the integration of social interaction and commerce enhances trust and engagement, consistent with Hajli (2015).

2. Mechanisms of emotional triggers and impulse purchases

Live streaming has the greatest influence on impulse purchase decisions. Key stimuli include scarcity (e.g., "Only 5 items left") and time-limited promotions, which create urgency and FOMO (Wipavee et al., 2024).

These mechanisms align with Cialdini's (1984) persuasion principles, particularly scarcity. Emotional arousal reduces rational evaluation and encourages immediate decisions. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), consumers rely more on peripheral cues in such situations.

Additionally, the immersive nature of live streaming creates a flow experience, where consumers become highly engaged and less aware of time, increasing the likelihood of spontaneous purchases.

3. Shift of Trust

Thai consumers increasingly value the sincerity of content creators more than direct brand advertising.

This reflects a broader shift in social commerce, where trust is built through authenticity and relatability (Hajli, 2015). Content creators act as intermediaries who reduce perceived risk and simplify decision-making.

Repeated exposure to familiar creators strengthens trust and encourages purchasing behavior, highlighting the growing importance of influencer-driven marketing strategies.

Discussion

The findings support the applicability of the S-O-R model in explaining consumer behavior on TikTok Shop. The platform creates a highly stimulating environment that influences emotional and behavioral responses.

The study also aligns with the Elaboration Likelihood Model, suggesting that consumer decisions are often driven by emotional cues rather than rational evaluation. Trust in content creators plays a crucial role in shaping purchasing behavior.

Overall, TikTok Shop represents a shift toward experience-driven commerce, where engagement, trust, and emotion are more influential than traditional product information.

Conclusion and Limitations

This research highlights the transformation of consumer behavior from search-based to discovery-based purchasing in the context of TikTok Shop. Emotional engagement, trust in content creators, and algorithmic personalization are key drivers.

This study is based on secondary data and focuses on Thai consumers, which may limit generalizability.

Future studies should incorporate primary data collection, cross-country comparisons, and deeper analysis of algorithmic influence.

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DIFFERENTIATED INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR DYSGRAPHIA IN EFL WRITING: A PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDY

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Abstract

The paper addresses the challenge of developing writing skills in primary school learners with dysgraphia in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL). The study responds to the limited effectiveness of traditional correction methods under contemporary conditions of reduced attention and cognitive engagement. The methodology includes theoretical analysis, the development of a diagnostic assessment tool, and the experimental implementation of differentiated intervention strategies with fourth-grade students over a six-week period. The results demonstrate positive dynamics, with significant improvement in students with severe and partial difficulties, and qualitative gains in metacognitive skills among students with minimal difficulties. The study proposes a three-tiered intervention model based on the severity and nature of writing difficulties.

Keywords: Dysgraphia, Writing Skills, EFL, Primary Education.

Introduction

Writing in a foreign language is a complex psychophysiological process requiring the coordinated functioning of multiple cognitive components, including phonological awareness, visual-spatial processing, graphomotor skills, and linguistic analysis (Luria, 2022; Lalaieva, 2001). Unlike oral speech, which develops through natural communication, writing requires explicit instruction and systematic practice (Vygotsky, 1999). For learners with dysgraphia, these difficulties are often intensified in EFL contexts due to interference between native and target language writing systems (Nijakowska, 2010)

The relevance of this study stems from the high prevalence of writing difficulties among primary school learners. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), dysgraphia is subsumed under Specific Learning Disorder (SLD; code 315.2 / F81.81), which includes impairments in reading, written expression, and mathematics. Specific learning disorders affect approximately 5–15% of school-aged children, and difficulties in written expression constitute a significant subset of these cases. Such difficulties are often underdiagnosed, particularly in multilingual learning contexts. Traditional product-oriented approaches based on rote learning and imitation often prove ineffective for contemporary learners, partly due to reduced attention spans.

This study examines the teaching of English writing to fourth-grade students with dysgraphia, aiming to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of differentiated intervention strategies.

Literature Review and Theory

Psychological and Linguistic Perspectives of Writing as a Skill

Writing is viewed from multiple perspectives across disciplines. From a psychological standpoint, it is a complex, conscious activity involving attention, memory, self-regulation, and voluntary control. In neuropsychological terms, writing constitutes a functional system requiring coordinated operation of cognitive processes and a brain mechanisms Luria (2022).

Vygotsky (1999) conceptualized writing as a higher mental function representing the highest stage of speech development. The physiological perspective, successful writing depends on integrated functioning of the cerebral cortex, visual and auditory analyzers, and fine motor control systems (Berninger & Wolf, 2016). The communicative approach conceptualizes writing as a purposeful activity and an object of systematic instruction, developing the ability to create coherent texts appropriate to communicative situations.

Writing is both a neuropsychological process and a teachable communicative skill. Writing competence comprises symbolic representation, sound structure modeling, and a graphomotor execution (Luria, 2022). For dysgraphic learners, instruction must address underlying cognitive, sensory, and motor mechanisms alongside observable errors while developing communicative writing ability.

Defining Dysgraphia

Per ICD-10 (F81.1), dysgraphia is a specific disorder with persistent writing difficulties not due to intellectual disability, sensory impairments, or inadequate instruction. Lalaieva (2001) characterizes dysgraphia as a partial disorder with recurrent errors from underdeveloped higher mental functions. Kornev (1997) emphasizes the persistent inability to master orthographic norms despite adequate intellectual capacity.

Lalaieva (2001) distinguishes five main error types that indicate dysgraphia are:

1. Acoustic errors involving confusion of phonetically similar sounds.
2. Optical errors involving confusion of graphically similar letters.
3. Agrammatisms involving incorrect morphological and syntactic structures.
4. Articulatory-acoustic errors where students write as the pronounce.
5. Errors in language analysis and synthesis involving omissions, transpositions, insertions of letters or syllables.

These classifications provide the theoretical foundation for the present study, guiding the identification of error patterns and the development of targeted interventions for EFL learners with dysgraphia.

Dysgraphia Manifestation in EFL Writing

When students with dysgraphia begin learning a foreign language, specific difficulties emerge. Richard L. Spark's Linguistic Coding Deficit Hypothesis (2022) explains that native language difficulties (including dysgraphia) directly impact foreign language acquisition. Phonological deficits manifest in two primary ways: auditory spectrum errors (inability to distinguish sounds such as [j] and [tj] or [θ] and [s]) and grapheme–phoneme mapping errors, particularly when sound–letter correspondences differ from those in the native language.

Nijakowska (2010) argues that repeated writing failures induce learned helplessness, causing students to anticipate failure and abandon effort. Consequently, foreign language classes become linked solely to stress, triggering paralyzing fear that impairs cognition. Additionally, graphomotor difficulties intensify when learning a new writing system, as unfamiliar motor patterns slow skill acquisition and heighten grapheme confusion.

Methodology

Theoretical Approaches to Correction

The neuropsychological approach (Tsvetkova, 1985; Berninger & Richards, 2015) conceptualizes writing as a complex functional system supported by three functional brain blocks: regulation of tone (arousal), information processing, and programming. Dysgraphia is understood as resulting from dysfunction in one or more of these blocks, as described by Luria (2022).

The neuropedagogical approach (Kornev, 1997) extends neuropsychological principles into educational practice by aligning teaching methods with the learner's level of neural maturation. This perspective is consistent with contemporary models of differentiated

instruction and response to intervention frameworks (Graham & Harris, 2005). The psycholinguistic approach (Lalaieva, 2001; Kornev, 1997) attributes dysgraphia to underdeveloped operations of language analysis and synthesis, including phonemic recognition, syllabic segmentation, and the differentiation of acoustically similar sounds. The linguistic approach (Lalaieva, 2001; Kornev, 1997) highlights the systematic nature of language difficulties, recognizing that dysgraphia rarely occurs in isolation and requires attention to morphological and syntactic levels of language.

The multisensory (polymodal) approach (Nijakowska, 2010; Kormos & Smith, 2023) aims to strengthen neural connections by engaging visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities simultaneously. This approach is consistent with evidence-based practices in structured literacy, which aim to strengthen neural pathways through multimodal input and practice (Birsh, 2018). When one channel is relatively weak, others can support learning.

Proposed Model for Differentiated Intervention in Dysgraphia

Building on these theoretical foundations, the present study proposes a three-tiered model of differentiated intervention for dysgraphia in EFL writing. The model is based on the assumption that writing difficulties vary in both severity and underlying cognitive mechanisms, requiring targeted and stratified instructional responses (see Appendix A).

The model consists of three tiers:

Tier 1 (Severe Difficulties): intensive multisensory intervention targeting foundational psychophysiological and phonological processes.

Tier 2 (Partial Difficulties): linguistically oriented intervention focusing on language analysis, interlingual comparison, and error pattern awareness.

Tier 3 (Minimal Difficulties): cognitively oriented intervention emphasizing metacognitive strategies, text analysis, and self-monitoring.

Each tier corresponds to a specific deficit profile identified through diagnostic assessment and is aligned with appropriate instructional strategies. The model integrates the principles of differentiation, neuroplasticity, multimodality, and scaffolded progression, ensuring both systematicity and adaptability in classroom implementation.

Results

Diagnostic Assessment Development

A three-block diagnostic assessment was developed based on the methodologies of Kornev (1997), Lalaieva (2001), Sadovnikova (2012) and Luria's (2022) neuropsychological principles. The assessment targets four domains of writing development: pedagogical (specific academic skills), psychological (higher mental functions including visual-spatial perception, phonemic awareness, working memory, language analysis abilities), psychophysiological (graphomotor skills, muscle tone, handwriting quality), and emotional-personal (motivation, anxiety level).

The First Block assesses basic psychophysiological prerequisites through graphic exercises, figure copying tasks, rhythm repetition, and phoneme discrimination tasks. The Second Block evaluates EFL writing skill formation through text copying, dictation, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and handwriting analysis. The Third Block examines emotional attitudes using a rating scale combined with behavioral observation during testing.

Participants and Procedure

The study involved 48 fourth-grade students from school in Russia, during the first quarter of the 2025–2026 academic year. Diagnostic results identified three groups: severe difficulties (8 students, 17%) with persistent errors across all blocks, high anxiety, and negative attitudes toward writing; partial difficulties (14 students, 29%) with problems localized in one or two areas and unstable motivation; minimal difficulties (26 students, 54%) with isolated errors primarily related to native language interference.

Strategy for the Students with Severe Difficulties (Multisensory Simulator)

For the students with severe difficulties, we implemented a neuropsychological approach integrating multisensory learning principles (Nijakowska, 2010; Kormos & Smith, 2023). The approach operationalizes four principles: polymodality (simultaneous engagement of different channels), neuroplasticity (systemic repetition of strengthen neural connections), stage-by-stage formation of mental actions (progression from material forms to mental operations), and algorithmization (strict sequencing with increasing complexity).

To address the identified difficulties, a simulator targeting the English digraph “th” (the voiceless interdental fricative /θ/) was developed, selected for its phonological absence in many systems and high frequency. The simulator comprises three stages:

Stage 1 (formation of the acoustic-articulatory image) includes auditory and visual tasks requiring responses upon detecting [θ] among distractors (see Appendix B).

Stage 2 (forming the tactile-kinesthetic grapheme image) includes motor-graphic exercises drawing the digraph many times, tactile tracing of letters made from textured materials, spatial-perceptual tasks identifying “th” among graphically similar ligatures (see Appendix C).

Stage 3 (integrating phoneme and grapheme) includes sound-letter correspondence tasks, word construction from letters, text editing tasks of correction errors (see Appendix D).

Strategy for Students with Partial Difficulties (Linguistic Mapping)

For students with partial difficulties arising from language interference, a psycholinguistic approach emphasizing conscious comparison of language system was employed. The strategy operationalizes three principles: neuroplasticity, comparative analysis, stage-by-stage formation, and compensation of deficient functions.

Three methods were implemented. First, comparative interlingual maps enabled contrastive analysis of problematic graphemes between languages (e.g., English “R” and Russian “P”), incorporating visual associations, pronunciation cues, examples, and images for repeated use. Second, color-coded block tasks for learning English word order (red rectangle is the subject, blue oval is the predicate, green triangle is the object). Third, mnemonic cards support irregular word acquisition (e.g., “because” – “Big Elephants Can Always Understand Small Elephants”) (see Appendix E).

Strategy for Students with Minimal Difficulties (Reverse Engineering)

For the students with minimal difficulties, a reverse-engineering approach (whole-to-part, differentiated and contextual learning) was adopted, beginning with complete texts and progressing to constituent elements via guided analysis. This approach reduces cognitive load by prioritizing meaningful context, shifting focus from mechanical writing to analytical processing. Three types of tasks were employed to support this progression: (1) proofreading tasks, requiring students to detect and correct intentionally embedded errors; (2) supported text tasks, providing structured options for practicing specific grammatical or lexical items within a coherent context; and (3) scrambled text tasks, involving the reconstruction of coherent sequences from jumbled sentences, often supported by visual prompts (see Appendix F).

Target intervention strategies (multisensory simulation for severe difficulties, linguistic mapping for partial difficulties, reverse engineering for minimal difficulties) provided structured, theoretically grounded framework for diverse learner need.

Conclusion

Correction instruction was integrated into regular English lessons over six weeks (10–20 minutes per lesson). Post-testing followed the same structure as the initial diagnostic assessment. Effectiveness was defined as the proportion of students showing upward level progression in writing.

In the severe difficulties group (n=8) three remained at a low level, two progressed to middle, three reached above-average (effectiveness: 62.5%). All showed better handwriting and reduced anxiety.

In the partial difficulties group (n=14) two stayed at the middle level, eight reached above-average, four reached high (effectiveness: 85.7%), accompanied by a reduction in error frequency.

In the minimal difficulties group (n=26) 23 maintained level but improved self-monitoring, one achieved maximum score, two was reclassified to partial difficulties due to previously undetected deficits (effectiveness: 3.8%).

Overall, redistribution across groups showed positive dynamics, with a general shift toward higher writing proficiency levels.

Discussion and Recommendation

Several organizational challenges were identified. Simultaneous instruction of three groups within regular lessons proved difficult due to time constraints and divided attention, potentially reducing corrective instruction quality. An optimal model combines in-class and extracurricular support, prioritizing intensive, individualized intervention for students with severe difficulties.

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THE ROLE OF VIRAL SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT IN THE FORMATION OF GLOBAL TOURIST DESTINATIONS

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Abstract

The relevance of the study lies in a paradox: the most powerful driver of modern tourism is the least manageable. Municipalities may invest millions in advertising campaigns, yet a real surge of interest is often triggered by a 15-second smartphone video from an accidental blogger. This creates both unprecedented opportunities for regional development and serious economic and social threats. The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive economic analysis of the impact of viral content on tourism flows. The objectives include identifying key mechanisms of destination promotion through social media content, case study analysis, comparing positive and negative economic impacts, and formulating a hypothesis for managing viral marketing. The results include systematization of virality mechanisms, structured case analysis (Dubai, Maldives, Cappadocia), and a proposed framework for managing viral destination promotion.

Keywords: viral content, social media, tourism economics, overtourism, tourism geography, digital transformation, sustainable development.

Introduction

The digital revolution has reshaped global tourism, moving decision-making from brochures to social media feeds. Managed marketing has been replaced by the phenomenon of viral user-generated content, capable of instantly changing tourist flows and the economies of entire regions. This study focuses on non-commercial, spontaneous viral content as an independent economic factor. Economically, the phenomenon fits into the "experience economy" paradigm (Pine & Gilmore). Viral content becomes a template for this experience, and geolocation becomes its mandatory attribute. In recent years, the speed with which a destination can transition from relative obscurity to global fame has accelerated dramatically, with algorithmic platforms acting as primary gatekeepers of tourist attention. Consequently, the traditional linear model of destination promotion (plan – fund – broadcast) has been supplanted by a chaotic, user-driven system where emotional resonance and shareability outweigh production value. This shift has profound implications for regional planning, infrastructure investment, and crisis management.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to conduct a comprehensive economic analysis of the influence of viral content in social media on tourist flows, identifying patterns, measuring effects, and proposing a framework for managing this influence.

Objectives / Research Questions

The objectives of the research are:

1. To identify the main mechanisms of promoting tourist locations through social media content.
2. To conduct a case analysis of such phenomena.
3. To compare the positive and negative economic impacts of increased tourist flow in these territories.
4. To formulate a hypothesis on how to manage viral marketing.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the paradigm of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), where tourists purchase not merely a trip but the opportunity to experience, document, and broadcast that experience to enhance symbolic capital. Additionally, the research draws on concepts of digital transformation in tourism (Buhalis & Law, 2008) and overtourism (Milano, Cheer & Novelli, 2019). A further theoretical layer is provided by network effect theory: each new visitor who shares content increases the destination's visibility, lowering the marginal cost of attracting subsequent tourists. This self-reinforcing loop explains why viral destinations often experience exponential growth until carrying capacity constraints — social, environmental, or infrastructural — trigger a backlash. The framework also incorporates the concept of tourism gaze (Urry), which in the digital age is increasingly mediated by screens, leading to a performative rather than immersive travel experience.

Methodology

Respondents and Data Collection: This study employs a qualitative case study methodology. Data were obtained through secondary analysis of tourism statistics (UNWTO, 2024), social media monitoring (TikTok, Instagram), government reports (Dubai Tourism, Maldives Ministry of Tourism), academic literature, and media sources. Three contrasting cases were selected: Dubai (purpose-built tourism hub), Maldives (nature-dependent island nation), and Cappadocia (cultural heritage site). To ensure comparability, each case was examined against a standardized set of indicators: search interest velocity, visitor arrival changes, per capita spending, resident sentiment (where available), and environmental impact proxies.

Research Implementation: Each case was analyzed using the "viral-to-value chain" framework: content creation → virality → identification & planning → monetization → realization & retransmission. Both positive economic impacts (revenue, employment, infrastructure) and negative impacts (overtourism, environmental degradation, social costs) were assessed. For each case, we also examined the temporal dimension — how quickly impacts materialized and whether any adaptive responses were implemented. The analysis deliberately excludes paid influencer campaigns, focusing instead on organic, user-generated viral moments, as these represent the least manageable yet most potent form of destination promotion.

Literature Review

Previous research has established social media's role in travel information search (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010) and motivations for sharing experiences (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) outlined challenges of social media, while Gretzel (2018) examined influencer marketing in tourism. However, limited research has systematically compared spontaneous viral content effects across different destination types. This study addresses that gap. More recent scholarship has highlighted the rise of "TikTok tourism" as a distinct phenomenon, where short-form video content generates immediate, trackable spikes in flight and accommodation searches. Nevertheless, a critical gap remains: most studies focus either

on the pre-travel inspiration phase or on post-travel sharing, without integrating the full feedback loop. By examining creation, virality, monetization, and retransmission as a single chain, this research offers a more holistic understanding. Furthermore, existing literature tends to treat overtourism as a generic problem rather than examining how viral content specifically accelerates and spatializes tourist congestion.

Findings

Mechanisms of Viral Influence: The viral-to-value chain comprises five stages:

Creation: Authentic, emotionally charged content with location and music. The most effective videos often feature surprising juxtapositions (e.g., futuristic architecture against desert landscape) or micro-moments of joy. Content creators rarely have professional equipment; raw, unedited clips frequently outperform polished productions due to perceived authenticity.

Virality: Algorithmic distribution and hashtag aggregation (#travel, #solotravel). Platform-specific factors matter: TikTok's "For You" page prioritizes dwell time and re-watches, while Instagram's Explore tab favors save-to-like ratios. Cross-platform cascades — a video starting on TikTok then migrating to Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts — amplify reach by an order of magnitude. A critical threshold exists: once a destination accumulates more than 100 million cumulative views under a location tag, organic search interest becomes self-sustaining for weeks or months.

Identification & Planning: Viewer inspiration leading to flight/hotel searches (Google Trends spikes). During this stage, potential tourists typically compare prices, read comments (which often contain practical warnings), and assess whether the destination is "accessible" for their budget and skill level. The planning window compresses dramatically — viral destinations often see bookings for trips scheduled within two to six weeks, rather than the traditional three-to-six-month horizon.

Monetization: Booking increases (Skyscanner, [Booking.com](https://www.booking.com) data) and local service demand. Monetization is highly uneven: accommodation platforms, airlines, and major attractions capture the largest share, while small local vendors (street food stalls, independent guides) often experience demand surges they cannot service, leading to frustrated visitors and missed revenue opportunities. The economic multiplier effect can be positive but is frequently blunted by leakage to international chains.

Realization & Retransmission: Tourist replicates the experience, creating new content and reinforcing the cycle. This stage is crucial: the original viral video provides a script, but each new visitor adds variations (different angles, times of day, personal interactions). User-generated content from subsequent waves often expands the destination's appeal beyond the initial niche, attracting different demographic segments. However, excessive retransmission can lead to visual fatigue, where potential visitors feel the destination is "already seen" and lose motivation to travel there.

Case Study 1: Burj Khalifa & The Dubai Mall (UAE)

Source of virality: Status as universal visual codes of luxury and success. The Burj Khalifa's sheer height and choreographed fountain shows are inherently camera-friendly, while the Dubai Mall's aquarium and waterfall installations provide endless micro-locations for aspirational self-presentation. Viral content frequently pairs these visuals with high-tempo music and captions emphasizing "main character energy," reinforcing the association between Dubai and transformative personal success.

Positive impacts: Dubai received 18.72 million tourists in 2024 (+9.15%). Dubai Mall had 111 million visitors, average spend AED 1,200 (~\$327). Tourism directly supports thousands of jobs across hospitality, retail, and transportation sectors. Indirect effects include growth in real estate and business events, with many visitors extending stays or returning for

conferences. The government has successfully leveraged viral attention to rebrand Dubai as a year-round destination, reducing historical dependence on the winter high season.

Negative impacts: Infrastructure overload, rising living costs. UAE has 33.6 metric tons CO₂ per capita (vs global average 3.7). Coastal construction damages marine ecosystems. In addition, social friction has emerged: long-term expatriate residents report declining quality of life due to traffic congestion and rental inflation, while low-wage migrant workers face heightened pressure during tourist peaks. Water desalination, necessary to sustain tourist infrastructure, carries substantial environmental costs.

Case Study 2: Maldives

Source of virality: Iconographic "paradise on Earth" imagery (overwater villas, crystal water). The most effective viral videos emphasize sensory isolation: no crowds, no city noise — only ocean and palm trees. This aesthetic appeals strongly to honeymooners and luxury travelers, but also to aspirational middle-class tourists who save for years. User-generated content often amplifies environmental awareness, with some influencers contrasting pristine lagoons with waste management challenges, creating a more complex narrative than traditional marketing materials.

Positive impacts: Tourism contributes ~30% of GDP and nearly half of all jobs. Life expectancy increased from 36 years (pre-tourism 1970s) to current levels. Secondary benefits include improved international connectivity (direct flights from multiple continents), investment in renewable energy pilots on resort islands, and establishment of marine protected areas funded by green tourism taxes. The Maldivian government has used tourism revenues to build hospitals and schools on inhabited islands, demonstrating potential for pro-poor distribution of viral-driven gains.

Negative impacts: Over 90% of resorts face beach erosion. Sea-level rise adaptation would cost \$2–4 billion. Government debt reached 123% of GDP (2023). Furthermore, waste management in the Maldives is critically underfunded: many islands operate open dumps, and plastic pollution increasingly appears in viral videos, potentially undermining the paradise narrative. Relocation of local populations from disposal islands has created social tensions. The extreme concentration on high-end tourism leaves the economy vulnerable to global shocks (e.g., pandemics, fuel price spikes) and to shifts in viral tastes — if social media platforms downgrade tropical imagery, demand could plummet.

Case Study 3: Cappadocia (Turkey)

Source of virality: Massive hot air balloon flights creating perfect photo/video scenes at sunrise. The visual symmetry of dozens of balloons against lunar-like rock formations produces a highly repeatable yet seemingly unique aesthetic. Viral content often includes slow-motion shots, drone perspectives, and couples posing on panoramic terraces. This has generated a secondary market for balloon-themed souvenirs, themed cave hotels, and curated Instagram tours.

Positive impacts: Over 4 million tourists annually (10x local population). High ROMI (486%) for targeted advertising campaigns. Local entrepreneurship has flourished: new boutique hotels, artisanal workshops, and balloon pilot training schools have emerged. The region has attracted younger travelers who previously would have bypassed Turkey for destinations like Santorini or Hallstatt, thereby diversifying the national tourism portfolio. Moreover, the viral balloon imagery has been used effectively in Turkey's international branding campaigns, reducing per-acquisition marketing costs.

Negative impacts: Infrastructure and ecosystem strain. Rising rents displace locals. "Cultural tourism is dead" — most visitors come only for social media content. Interviews with Cappadocia residents (documented in secondary sources) reveal frustration that traditional cave homes have been converted entirely to hotels, and that local bakeries, pottery workshops, and community gathering spaces are closing in favor of souvenir shops. The balloon flights

generate substantial noise pollution and consume significant fuel; during peak season, the sky can contain more than 150 balloons simultaneously, raising collision risks and degrading the very visual serenity that made the destination famous. Additionally, unauthorized drone flights by tourists have disrupted balloon operations and provoked regulatory crackdowns.

Synthesis Across Cases

Across all three destinations, a common pattern emerges: a sharp, unanticipated spike in search and booking activity lasting 4–12 months, followed by either institutionalization (Dubai's year-round adaptation) or persistent strain (Maldives, Cappadocia). Destinations with stronger governance capacity (Dubai) can redirect viral attention into managed growth, while those with weaker institutions (Maldives) or cultural preservation mandates (Cappadocia) struggle. No case achieved both high growth and high sustainability simultaneously, suggesting a structural trade-off under current management paradigms.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, it relies on secondary data and published statistics, not primary data collection. Second, the case selection, while diverse, is not exhaustive. Third, precise causal attribution between viral content and economic outcomes remains challenging due to confounding factors (e.g., seasonality, global events like pandemics). Fourth, the study does not incorporate real-time social media analytics. Fifth, resident sentiment data are largely anecdotal or derived from media reports rather than systematic surveys. Sixth, the analysis does not quantify the role of platform-specific algorithm changes (e.g., TikTok's shifting weighting of location tags) which can independently boost or suppress destinations. Finally, the study focuses on economic and environmental impacts, with limited attention to socio-cultural changes such as language shift, commodification of rituals, or generational aspiration change among local youth. Future research should address these gaps through mixed-methods designs and cross-platform longitudinal tracking.

Conclusion

Viral content has become a powerful non-price factor redistributing global tourist flows. It democratizes fame, allowing unknown regions to become stars. However, economic gains from virality are often sprint-like and accompanied by high systemic risks. Sustainable tourism development in the digital age requires not ignoring viral content but cultivating digital resilience -- the ability to flexibly respond to explosive interest, transforming it from a threat into an opportunity for long-term, balanced growth. Without proactive management, the same algorithmic visibility that creates prosperity also amplifies vulnerability: overtourism degrades the destination, negative viral content (e.g., pollution, crowding, accidents) can destroy reputation faster than it was built. Therefore, destinations must shift from reactive crisis management to anticipatory governance, integrating social media listening into daily planning.

Discussion

The findings reveal a fundamental paradox: short-term economic success based on virality directly undermines the long-term attractiveness of destinations. Dubai represents an intentional trade-off -- sacrificing environmental and social sustainability for rapid growth. The Maldives illustrates the "dependency trap" -- maximum monetization of natural capital leads to existential vulnerability. Cappadocia shows how viral fame transforms authentic places into selfie theme parks, eroding the very qualities that made them viral. This paradox is not merely a problem of overtourism but a deeper structural issue: the metrics of viral success (views, shares, saves) are decoupled from the metrics of destination health (resident well-being, ecological integrity, cultural authenticity). Until destination management incorporates viral risk assessment as systematically as financial risk assessment, the tourism

industry will remain exposed to cycles of boom and bust driven by algorithmic whim. Additionally, the findings suggest a need for new interdisciplinary frameworks combining media studies, environmental economics, and urban planning. Finally, ethical questions arise: is it legitimate for governments to “manufacture” viral moments artificially, or should viral tourism remain an organic phenomenon? The evidence indicates that manufactured campaigns rarely achieve the same cascade effects as organic content, but they may still generate sufficient returns to justify investment — marking a fertile area for future research.

Recommendations

For destination management organizations: Develop “digital resilience” — real-time monitoring systems to detect emerging viral trends early. These systems should track not only view counts but also sentiment, comment questions, and cross-platform velocity.

For local governments: Implement dynamic pricing and visitor caps during viral spikes to prevent overtourism. Pricing mechanisms should be piloted in non-peak periods to avoid political backlash. Visitor caps must be accompanied by transparent booking systems and real-time webcams to manage expectations.

For businesses: Diversify promotion beyond single viral locations; invest in off-peak and off-site experiences. Create secondary content that highlights alternative attractions within the same region, distributing tourist pressure across space and time.

For international bodies: Establish global frameworks for sustainable viral tourism management, especially for vulnerable ecosystems like small island states. These frameworks could include rapid-response technical assistance, shared best practices, and a certification scheme for “viral-ready” destinations that have demonstrated adaptive capacity.

For researchers: Develop predictive models that combine social media signals (hashtag growth rates, geographic spread of posts) with traditional tourism forecasting to identify destinations before they become overwhelmed. Publish open access data dashboards to support local planning.

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RUSSIA'S POSITION IN THE GLOBAL FISH MARKET IN THE CONTEXT OF GEOECONOMIC INSTABILITY

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Abstract

This study examines the dynamics of the Russian national fish and seafood market within the broader context of geoeconomic instability, focusing on production volumes, export performance, and structural shifts in trade flows. The core problem lies in assessing how external shocks—such as sanctions, market reorientation, and logistical constraints—have influenced Russia's fisheries sector and its global positioning. The research employs a mixed methodology, combining quantitative analysis of official statistics on catch volumes and export data with comparative and structural analysis of trade patterns over time. The findings indicate that while Russia maintains stable or growing catch volumes, its export structure has undergone a significant reorientation, with a marked shift from European markets toward Asian partners, particularly China and South Korea. This transition has altered the composition of exported products, emphasizing frozen fish and raw materials over higher value-added goods. The author's contribution lies in synthesizing recent data to highlight the resilience and adaptive capacity of Russia's fisheries sector, while also identifying structural vulnerabilities and long-term implications for competitiveness in the global seafood market.

Keywords: fish market, geo-economic instability, export, structural reorientation, Asian markets.

Introduction

The Russian fish and seafood market represents a strategically significant segment of the national agri-food system, characterized by substantial resource capacity and strong export orientation. In the context of growing geo-economic instability, the development of this sector is increasingly influenced by a complex interplay of internal factors—such as production capacity, domestic consumption, and infrastructure—and external drivers, including export dynamics, shifting trade routes, global demand patterns, and sanctions pressure. The Russian Federation consistently ranks among the world's leading producers of fish products, ensuring large-scale catch volumes and maintaining an active presence in international markets. At the same time, the domestic market demonstrates a high level of resilience, with self-sufficiency exceeding 100% and reaching approximately 125%, which underscores the sector's stability and strategic importance. Under these conditions, the analysis of structural changes and market adaptation becomes particularly relevant for understanding future development trajectories.

Objective

The aim of this study is to analyze the current state and structural transformation of the Russian fish and seafood market under conditions of geo-economic instability

Literature Review and Theory

There are 8 main fisheries basins in Russia, the Far Eastern Fisheries Basin, the Northern Fisheries Basin, the Western Fisheries Basin, the Volga-Caspian Fisheries Basin, the Azov-Black Sea Fisheries Basin, the West Siberian Fisheries Basin, the East Siberian Fisheries Basin, and the Baikal Fisheries Basin.

The Far Eastern basin is the absolute leader, accounting for about 70-78% of the total catch. The Northern Basin is in second place with a share of 10-15%. Its importance is due to the stable production of cod and haddock, but its resource base is significantly inferior to the Far East. The remaining basins perform mainly an auxiliary function and are oriented towards the domestic market and have local significance. It is interesting to note that the entire volume of fishing is regulated by the State through a quota system. Free fishing on an industrial scale is prohibited. The analysis of fish and seafood catch volumes over the past 5 years is presented in table 1.

Table 1 *Dynamics of catch and export of fish and seafood in Russia for 2021-2025*

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Catch volume, million tons	5,0	4,9	5,3	4,9	4,7
Export volume, million tons.	2,2	2,3	2,2	1,9-2,0	2,1
Export volume, billions dollars	6,8	6,1	4,9-5,6	4,9	6,0

The analysis of statistical data shows that in 2021–2023, fish and seafood catch volumes in Russia remained consistently high, reaching their peak in 2023 at over 5.3 million tons—the highest level in recent decades. This growth, amounting to an 8% increase compared to 2022, was largely driven by a record harvest of salmon species, exceeding 600 thousand tons in the Far Eastern basin. However, in 2024–2025, a decline in total catch volumes is observed. This reduction can be explained by the natural cyclical fluctuations of aquatic biological resources, lower migration volumes of certain fish species, and the statistical effect of a high base year in 2023. Additionally, annual revisions of total allowable catch quotas, established by the state to ensure the sustainability of marine resources, also contribute to limiting overall production volumes.

In terms of exports, physical shipment volumes have remained relatively stable, averaging around 2–2.2 million tons, which highlights Russia's strong export orientation in the global seafood market. At the same time, export values have demonstrated significantly higher volatility. Since 2022, there has been a noticeable decline in export revenues, reaching approximately \$4.9 billion in 2024—27% lower than in 2021. This decrease has occurred despite stable export volumes, suggesting a reduction in average export prices. By 2025, however, a gradual recovery trend becomes evident. The primary factors behind these fluctuations include sanctions pressure, which has significantly affected both the structure and geographical distribution of Russian seafood exports. The export structure is presented in table 2.

Table 2 *Structure of exports of fish and seafood of the Russian Federation*

	Frozen fish			Deep-processed products (fillets, minced meat)			Crustaceans (crab, shrimp)		
	Thousan d tons	Bill. of dollar s	Share , %	Thousan d tons	Bill. of dollar s	Share , %	Thousan d tons	Bill. of dollar s	Share , %
2021	1 360	2,4	75	145,5	0,613	8	75	2,5	4
2022	1 260	2,5	76	150	0,68	9	83	2,8	5
2023	1 400	2,9	76	160-170	0,80	9-10	100	3,1	5
2024	1 460	2,4	75-76	239	1,05	12-13	105	3,3	5
2025	1550	2,6- 2,8	74-76	260-280	1,2- 1,3	13-14	110-120	3,4- 3,6	5

The analysis of the presented data indicates an ongoing structural transformation of the Russian fish and seafood industry, marked by a gradual shift from a predominantly raw-material export model toward one focused on higher value-added production. Despite this transition, Russia continues to maintain a leading position in the global export of frozen fish, particularly pollock, with this product category accounting for over 75% of total seafood exports. In recent years, however, its share in the overall export structure has slightly declined, even though absolute export volumes have increased—from approximately 1.36 million tons in 2021 to 1.46 million tons in 2024. This relative decrease reflects not a weakening of the sector, but rather the faster growth of other product segments. Notably, Russia retains its global leadership in frozen fish exports both in physical and value terms.

At the same time, the segment of processed fish products, particularly fillets and minced fish, demonstrates the most significant growth, highlighting a clear structural shift within the industry. Export volumes in this category rose from around 145 thousand tons in 2021 to 239 thousand tons in 2024, reflecting an increase of nearly 40%. This trend signals not only expansion but also an acceleration of development in higher value-added production. By 2024, Russia had already become one of the world's leading exporters of fish fillets. This rapid growth is driven by several factors, including the development of domestic processing capacities supported by state quota mechanisms, the availability of a strong raw material base—especially pollock—and a global shift in demand toward more processed and ready-to-consumer products. However, a key catalyst behind these changes has been the impact of sanctions, which have stimulated the reorientation and modernization of the sector. Structure of the geography of exports of fish and seafood of the Russian Federation for 2021-2025 is presented in table 3.

Table 3 *Structure of the geography of exports of fish and seafood of the Russian Federation for 2021-2025*

Year	Region							
	Asia		Europe		Africa + Middle East + Latin. America		CIS	
	Million tons	Bill. of dollars	Million tons	Bill. of dollars	Million tons	Bill. of dollars	Million tons	Bill. of dollars
2021	1,45	3,4	0,27	0,8	0,18	0,35	0,12	0,25
2022	1,55	3,9	0,22	0,7	0,22	0,42	0,13	0,28
2023	1,75	4,3	0,20	0,6	0,27	0,55	0,14	0,30
2024	1,50	3,8	0,18	0,65	0,27	0,45	0,15	0,32
2025	1,60	4,2	0,17	0,6	0,30	0,55	0,13	0,30

The table was compiled by grouping export destinations into key regions, including Asia (China, the Republic of Korea, and Japan), Europe (the EU and the United Kingdom), the CIS (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan), as well as emerging markets. Data for 2021–2024 were based on official domestic and international statistical sources, while figures for 2025 were estimated using current export trends. The analysis reveals significant shifts in the geographical structure of exports, as illustrated in the corresponding figures. In particular, there is a clear trend toward the concentration of exports in the Asia-Pacific region: its share increased from around 70% in 2021 to approximately 75–77% by 2025. China plays a dominant role, accounting for more than half of Russia's frozen fish exports, while Japan and South Korea also contribute substantially to stable demand. This trend indicates a growing dependence of Russia's seafood exports on Asian markets.

Results

The analysis of the current export structure highlights the growing importance of re-export channels, which have become particularly significant after 2022. In this context, China functions not only as a final consumer but also as a major processing and transit hub: a portion of imported Russian fish is processed there and subsequently re-exported to other markets, including the EU and the United States. This suggests that the apparent reorientation of Russian exports toward Asian markets partly conceals the continued existence of global supply chains, in which Russia retains the role of a key raw material supplier. At the same time, the importance of the European market has steadily declined, with its share in total exports falling from around 14% in 2021 to an estimated 8–9% by 2025. Moreover, a significant proportion of supplies is now routed through intermediary countries such as the Netherlands and China, reducing the direct presence of Russian products in European markets and indicating that stable export volumes do not necessarily reflect genuine EU demand.

Concurrently, exports to countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America are expanding. Although these regions still account for a relatively small share of total exports, they demonstrate the highest growth rates. This trend is supported by new trade agreements, such as cooperation with South Africa, as well as large-scale initiatives aimed at exploring aquatic biological resources and strengthening trade ties with African states. The increasing interest in these markets is driven by several factors, including geopolitical shifts that encourage diversification, rapid population growth and rising protein consumption, and a high dependence on food imports. Similar dynamics explain the growing focus on the Gulf countries, where markets such as the UAE are viewed as promising destinations for premium seafood products. Overall, between 2021 and 2025, Russia's fish and seafood export structure

has undergone a qualitative transformation, characterized by the dominance of Asian markets, the emergence of major re-export hubs, a decline in Europe's role, and the gradual expansion into Global South markets. The main results of the study:

1. Strengthening the role of re-export, with China as a key processing and transit hub
2. Preserving global supply chains with a formal reorientation to Asia
3. The decline in the importance of the European market and the growth of indirect supplies through third countries
4. Active development of new directions: Africa, the Middle East, Latin America
5. Export diversification influenced by geopolitical and demographic factors
6. Formation of a new export model with Asian dominance and expansion into the markets of the Global South

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis demonstrates that the Russian fish and seafood market has shown a high degree of adaptability to geo-economic instability, maintaining strong production and export positions despite external constraints. The industry is undergoing a significant structural transformation, characterized by a gradual shift from a raw-material export model toward increased production of value-added products. At the same time, the geographical reorientation of exports toward Asian markets has become a defining trend, with China playing a dual role as both a key consumer and a major re-export hub, thereby preserving Russia's participation in global supply chains.

Simultaneously, the decline in the direct role of the European market and the expansion into emerging regions such as Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America indicate a clear diversification of export destinations. This transformation reflects both external pressures, including sanctions, and internal drivers such as resource availability and processing capacity development. Overall, the current export model combines stability in volumes with qualitative shifts in structure and geography, suggesting that while the sector remains resilient, its increasing dependence on a limited number of markets and continued focus on raw exports may pose long-term challenges for sustainable growth and global competitiveness.

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A STUDY OF BEHAVIORS AND SATISFACTION OF THAI TOURISTS TRAVELING TO SRINAGARINDRA TRAIN NIGHT MARKET, BANGKOK

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate the current travel behaviors of Thai tourists and analyze how the Service Marketing Mix (7Ps) and travel motivations influence their satisfaction levels at the Train Night Market Srinakarin in Bangkok.

The study employs a Quantitative Research methodology, collecting data via questionnaires from 400 Thai tourists selected through convenience sampling. Statistical analysis includes descriptive statistics (percentage, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics using Multiple Regression Analysis.

Expected results indicate that service marketing factors—specifically Physical Evidence and Product—along with pull motivations related to the unique identity of the location, significantly correlate with overall tourist satisfaction. These findings serve as a strategic guideline for market managers and vendors to improve service standards and maintain a competitive edge in the sustainable lifestyle tourism industry.

Keywords: Service Marketing Mix (7Ps), Travel Motivation, Tourist Satisfaction, Train Night Market Srinakarin, Night Market Tourism.

Introduction

The tourism industry is a vital engine driving Thailand's economy. Over the past decade, Urban Tourism has seen continuous growth, with night markets emerging as popular destinations. These markets are not just commercial hubs for buying and selling; they act as cultural and social spaces reflecting Bangkok's "Night-time Economy".

The Train Night Market Srinakarin is a nationally renowned night market characterized by its unique vintage decor and antique collections. This distinct identity sets it apart from typical markets. However, with changing consumer behaviors in the post-health crisis era and fierce competition from new attractions, understanding tourist satisfaction is crucial. Satisfaction is not derived from products alone but is a result of the service process, atmosphere, and the internal motivations of the tourists themselves.

Therefore, this research applies the Service Marketing Mix (7Ps) and Push & Pull Theory to identify the factors influencing Thai tourist satisfaction. The results will provide strategic insights for management to enhance competitiveness and promote a world-class tourism image.

Literature Review

To establish a solid research framework, several concepts and theories were reviewed

3.1 Tourist Behavior

Tourist behavior involves the decision-making processes and actions individuals take when choosing and using tourism services to satisfy their needs. This is influenced by internal factors (e.g., attitudes, personality) and external factors (e.g., society, culture). This study focuses on visiting decisions, frequency of visits, and activities performed while at the market.

3.2 Service Marketing Mix (7Ps)

Based on the framework by Booms & Bitner, the 7Ps include:

Product: The variety of goods, collectibles, and food options.

Price: Value for money relative to the quality of items.

Place: Location, ease of travel, and parking availability.

Promotion: Communication through social media and special events.

People: Friendliness of vendors and professionalism of security staff.

Process: Payment speed, traffic management, and service convenience.

Physical Evidence: Vintage decor, cleanliness, and lighting.

3.3 Travel Motivation Theory

Applying Dann's (1977) Push and Pull Factors:

Push Factors: Internal drives, such as the need to escape work stress or socialize.

Pull Factors: External attractions, such as the site's beauty (atmosphere) or its reputation (destination image).

3.4 Customer Satisfaction

Satisfaction is the key to success in tourism. It occurs when the actual experience meets or exceeds expectations. High satisfaction leads to positive Word-of-Mouth and Revisit Intentions.

Methodology

This quantitative study follows these steps:

Population and Sample

The population consists of Thai tourists who have visited the market. Since the exact population size is unknown, Cochran's (1977) formula was used to determine a sample size of 400 at a 95% confidence level.

Research Tool

An online questionnaire divided into four parts: (1) General information, (2) Travel behavior, (3) 7Ps and motivation (using a 5-point Likert Scale), and (4) Satisfaction levels.

Quality Control

The tool was validated for content accuracy by experts and tested for reliability, achieving a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient higher than 0.7 for all variables.

Result (Findings)

Note regarding the Research Findings: > This section summarizes the results according to the research objectives and the expected outcomes based on the research framework. Based on preliminary data analysis, it is anticipated that the majority of the sample group consists of working professionals and students aged between 20–35 years. This demographic typically seeks new experiences for nighttime relaxation. The hypothesis testing is expected to yield the following results:

5.1 Importance Levels of the 7Ps Factors

Analysis of the data reveals how tourists prioritize the different elements of the marketing mix: **Physical Evidence** (The most significant factor): Tourists give the highest importance to this aspect due to the market's distinct and clear vintage-style structure. **Product**: This is the second most important factor, particularly focusing on the variety and quality of the food and beverage groups.

5.2 Influential Travel Motivations

When examining what drives tourists to visit the market, the study identifies a clear distinction between internal and external factors: **Pull Factors** (Atmosphere): The motivation driven by the "Atmosphere of the Location" received a higher average score than push factors. **Unique Identity**: This reflects that tourists choose to visit specifically because of the unique identity and charm of the place, rather than just for general shopping purposes.

5.3 Influence on Overall Satisfaction

Through the application of Multiple Regression Analysis, the study predicts which variables will most impact the long-term satisfaction of visitors: **Predictor Variables**: Factors such as People (staff and vendors) and Process (service management) are expected to be key predictors of satisfaction. **Operational Impact**: This is because environmental factors like area congestion and traffic management significantly influence the emotions and moods of tourists while they are using the services.

Discussion

The expected findings lead to several discussion points:

Physical Environment and Satisfaction: This aligns with Bitner's Servicescape Theory, where the physical surroundings influence behavioral responses. The classic car museum and shop arrangements create a strong "First Impression".

Pull Motivations: These findings match the research of Nopadol Sattabut (2021), suggesting that product variety and a friendly atmosphere satisfy younger generations more than price alone.

Barriers: Despite high scores for atmosphere, dissatisfaction with Process (parking and access) could lower overall satisfaction, highlighting a need for better tourism logistics.

Recommendations

7.1 Strategic Recommendations

Improve Access (Place & Process): Management should enhance traffic control, provide backup parking, and coordinate with public transport for those without private cars.

Maintain Identity (Physical Evidence): Regularly rotate antique displays or seasonal decorations to keep the experience fresh for returning visitors.

Digital Platforms: Use real-time digital marketing to promote shop deals and stimulate spending.

7.2 Future Research

Future studies should compare Thai and foreign tourists to develop the market into a sustainable international landmark. Qualitative Research, such as in-depth interviews, is also recommended to gain deeper insights from vendors.

Conclusion

The study concludes that maintaining a balance of the 7 Ps is vital. The "Unique Experience" created by the physical environment and social opportunities is the heart of tourist satisfaction. If management can address weaknesses in logistics and access, the Train Night Market Srinakarin will remain a sustainable landmark of Bangkok's night economy.

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF APAC COUNTRIES IN THE CONTEXT OF TRADE PARTNERSHIP WITH RUSSIA

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Abstract

The relevance of the research stems from the need to reorient Russia's foreign economic ties towards developing and friendly Asian markets amid changing global trade conditions. The selection of countries was based on three criteria: membership in key international organizations (G20, ASEAN, BRICS, SCO), the existence of strategic or friendly relations with the Russian Federation, and high economic growth rates combined with substantial domestic market capacity.

For comparative analysis, seven indicators were used: GDP, inflation rate, unemployment rate, economic openness, global attractiveness index, ease of starting a business ranking (BCtSB), and global competitiveness ranking. Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) was applied with min-max normalization. The results show that China ranks first with a composite score of 0.634, driven by its dominant market size, high competitiveness, and global attractiveness, despite low economic openness and high unemployment. Thailand follows closely with 0.612, owing to its macroeconomic stability and business-friendly environment. India (0.386), Vietnam (0.310), and Indonesia (0.153) lag behind.

Based on the results, recommendations are formulated: for large Russian exporters seeking maximum market capacity, China is the optimal partner. For small and medium-sized enterprises looking for lower entry barriers and higher economic openness, Thailand, India, Vietnam or Indonesia may be preferable.

Keywords: Russia, Asia-Pacific region, Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA).

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to identify the most suitable business partner for Russia among APAC countries: China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam, based on a comprehensive analysis of macroeconomic and business environment indicators.

Objectives

The objectives include: 1) selection of candidate countries; 2) comparative analysis of key indicators; 3) application of MCDA to rank the countries; 4) formulation of recommendations.

Selection of candidate countries

When selecting Asia-Pacific (APAC) countries for potential business partnership with Russian Federation, it is advisable to consider the following criteria: membership in key regional and global economic and political unions, existence of stable friendly or strategic relations with the Russia, as well as high economic potential, confirmed by growth of GDP and other important metrics. Based on these criteria, five states were selected for this research: China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

To begin with, all of these countries are among the core economic and political unions in the Asia-Pacific region. China, India, Indonesia, and Thailand are members of the influential Group of Twenty (G20), the main forum for international economic cooperation that brings together the world's most developed and emerging economies. This status confirms their significant weight in the global economy and trade. Furthermore, all five countries are integrated into the structure of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam are full members, while China and India hold the status of comprehensive strategic partners of the organization. For Russia, ASEAN is a crucial and long-standing regional partner; since 1996, our country has held the status of a full-fledged dialogue partner of ASEAN, and in 2004, it acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. In 2024, Russia's trade turnover with ASEAN countries reached a record (\$23 billion), and the countries are currently working on a new Strategic Cooperation Program until 2035. This confirms that ASEAN countries in general, and the selected states in particular, are priority partners for Russia.

Moreover, the choice is determined by the level of political and economic rapprochement between the chosen countries and Russia. In addition to G20 membership, China and India are among Russia's key partners in BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). It is important to note that Indonesia officially joined BRICS in 2025, which strengthens multilateral dialogue and opens up new opportunities for joint projects. Also, Vietnam, Russia, India, and China have comprehensive strategic partnership relations with each other, indicating the highest level of mutual trust in various areas of cooperation. Thus, the selected countries represent a balanced sample: on the one hand, these are Russia's

closest allies in multilateral blocs, on the other, traditionally friendly Asian states with long-standing relations.

Finally, all five countries are locomotives of economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region, which makes them very attractive for investment and business cooperation. China and India are among the world's three largest economies in terms of purchasing power parity, second only to the United States. At the same time, the economies of these countries continue to grow actively: in 2025, China's projected GDP growth was 5%, and India's – 7.8%. Vietnam, among Southeast Asian countries, stands out, demonstrating one of the highest growth rates: in 2025, its economy grew by 8%, with an ambitious target of at least 10% set for 2026. Indonesia, as the largest economy in the region, and Thailand, as an important industrial and tourism hub, also show stable and confident growth. The high rates of economic development in these countries directly correlate with the growth of their middle class and, consequently, with an increase in market capacity, creating favorable conditions for promoting Russian goods and services.

Thus, the countries selected for the study – China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam – best satisfy all the stated selection criteria: they are united by participation in key international organizations, have strong friendly and strategic relations with the Russian Federation, and demonstrate sustainable economic growth. A comprehensive analysis of these five states will help identify the optimal partner country for Russian business in the Asia-Pacific region.

Comparative analysis of key indicators

Table 1 *Key indicators of Asia-Pacific economies*

Country	GDP 2025 (billion USD)	Inflation Rate (%)	Unemployment Rate (%)	Indicator of the openness of the economy (%) of GDP)	Global attractiveness rating (%)
China	19398,58	1,3	5,3	36,11	87,7
India	4125,21	3,21	4,9	44,99	56,1
Indonesia	1443,26	3,48	4,85	41,34	44,2
Thailand	558,57	- 0,88	0,7	128,82	43,6
Vietnam	484,73	4,65	2,22	164,82	40,8

Country	“Best Countries to Start a Business” rating (BCtSB)	International rating on the level of global competition
China	3	16
India	1	30
Indonesia	13	40
Thailand	2	41
Vietnam	7	76

Table 1 presents key macroeconomic and business environment indicators for five major Asia-Pacific economies – China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam. As can be seen from the table, in terms of economic scale, China is the absolute leader with a GDP of 19,398.58 billion USD in 2025, significantly surpassing all other countries in the sample. India follows at a considerable distance with 4,125.21 billion USD, while Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam demonstrate more moderate economic sizes. From the point of market capacity and investment potential, China’s dominance provides a strong advantage.

Regarding macroeconomic stability, inflation rates remain relatively low across most countries. Thailand even shows a slight deflation (- 0.88%), indicating insufficient aggregate demand, often leading to delayed consumption and increased real debt burdens, while China maintains a low inflation rate of 1.3%. In contrast, Vietnam records the highest inflation (4.65%), which may signal higher macroeconomic risks.

Unemployment levels are generally moderate, with Thailand (0.7%) and Vietnam (2.22%) showing particularly strong labor market conditions, whereas China has the highest unemployment rate (5.3%) among the countries analyzed. However, with a near full employment rate of 0.7% in Thailand, it shows that there is almost full employment in the country, which provides stability to society but may also point towards an emerging labor shortage that could be a problem for businesses.

The level of openness in the economy also varies greatly. Vietnam (164.82) and Thailand (128.82) represent the two countries with the highest levels of openness to the global marketplace, indicating a high degree of integration into the global economy. China, with a very large economy, has an openness indicator (36.11) that is much lower than that of the other two countries, indicating a controlled economy. However, China received an 87.7 score, making it the most attractive market. The other countries included on the list (Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam) are considered to be moderately attractive. This indicates that the individual countries are in the early stages of development and have low levels of competition within their respective markets.

Some other business environment metrics confirm these results. In terms of ease of doing business, of the five countries listed, India ranks 1st, Thailand 2nd and China 3rd, while Vietnam ranks 7th and Indonesia ranks 13th. China has basically dominated the planet in terms of competitiveness, (rank 16), while India ranks 30th and Indonesia, Thailand rank in the middle (40th and 41th), and Vietnam is almost at the bottom with a rank of 76th.

In summary, China emerges as a strong candidate for a business partnership with Russia due to its economic scale, global competitiveness, and high attractiveness rating. India represents a promising alternative, particularly due to its favorable business environment and growing economy. Meanwhile, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam offer advantages in terms of openness and labor market conditions.

Identification of Russia's Optimal Partner

To select the optimal business partner for Russia among the chosen countries, a multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) was used, as it is well-established in location selection and international business research. Each indicator was normalized using the min-max method to ensure comparability. For desirable indicators (GDP, openness, attractiveness) we applied max-min normalization; for undesirable (inflation, unemployment, BCtSB rank, competitiveness rank) we used min-max normalization to reflect the inverse relationship.

$$\text{Normalized value} = x - \min(x) / \max(x) - \min(x)$$

$$\text{Normalized value (for inverse relationship)} = (\max - x) / (\max - \min)$$

In the absence of an information about criterion importance, equal weights were assigned to each indicator. A composite score was calculated for each country. The country with the highest score is recommended as the best partner for Russian business entry.

Table 2 *Normalized scores of key indicators (using min-max method)*

Country	GDP	Inflation Rate	Unemployment Rate	Openness of the economy	Attractiveness
China	1.000	0.606	0.000	0.000	1.000
Thailand	0.004	1.000	1.000	0.720	0.060
India	0.192	0.260	0.087	0.069	0.326
Vietnam	0.000	0.000	0.670	1.000	0.000
Indonesia	0.051	0.212	0.098	0.041	0.072

Country	"Best Countries to Start a Business" rating	Level of global competition	Final score
China	0.833	1.000	0.634
Thailand	0.917	0.583	0.612
India	1.000	0.767	0.386
Vietnam	0.500	0.000	0.310
Indonesia	0.000	0.600	0.153

According to the data, China ranks first with a composite score of 0.634, significantly exceeding the other four countries. China's leadership is driven by its dominant market size (GDP 1.000), top scores in global attractiveness (1.000) and competitiveness (1.000), as well as a relatively favorable "Best Countries to Start a Business" rank (0.833). However, China shows weaknesses in trade openness (0.000) and unemployment (0.000), reflecting its closed domestic market and structural labor market challenges.

Thailand ranks second (0.612). Its strong performance is explained by its highest scores for inflation stability (1.000) and unemployment (1.000), combined with a high degree of trade openness (0.720) and ease of starting business (0.917).

India takes third place (0.386), driven by the best ease of starting business rank among the five countries (1.000) and solid competitiveness (0.767), though its inflation control (0.260) and trade openness (0.069) lag behind.

Vietnam ranks fourth (0.310), despite having the highest trade openness (1.000), due to very low scores across most indicators, particularly attractiveness (0.000) and competitiveness (0.000).

Indonesia finishes fifth (0.153), with unremarkable performance across all categories and no standout strengths. It records the lowest score in the Business Start-up rating (0.000) and very low Openness (0.041), though it achieves a modest Global Competition score (0.600).

Thus, based on the weighted MCDA model, China emerges as the most suitable partner for Russia, given its dominant market size and global competitiveness. However, for Russian SMEs with limited resources, India, Thailand or Vietnam may offer lower entry barriers due to their higher trade openness and simpler market access.

Conclusion

This study set out to identify the most suitable Asia-Pacific partner for the Russia by combining macroeconomic analysis with a multi-criteria decision-making (MCDA) approach. Five countries – China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam – were selected based on their participation in key international organizations, the strength of their relations with Russia, and their economic growth potential. The results of the comparative analysis demonstrate that China is the clear leader across most indicators. Its overwhelming economic scale, high global competitiveness make it the most advantageous strategic partner for Russia. Even with structural weaknesses – including modest trade openness and labor market distortions – China's aggregate ability to mobilize investment and host large-scale partnerships keeps it at the top of the MCDA ranking.

Thailand comes in as a solid runner-up, with macroeconomic stability, near-full employment, and good openness. All of that makes it appealing for steady, lower-risk business activity. India lands third, but it's got serious long-term upside thanks to its fast-growing economy and very pro-business environment – even though its trade openness and inflation picture are still less ideal right now.

Vietnam and Indonesia are lower in the list, but they shouldn't be ignored. Vietnam's high trade openness and fast growth make it a good option for export-focused plans, especially for SMEs. Indonesia, even though it has a big domestic market, doesn't yet have strong advantages in the measured indicators, so it's less appealing in the near term.

To conclude, the study points to a nuanced approach to Russia's cooperation with the Asia-Pacific. China remains the key partner for high-volume trade. Meanwhile, Thailand and Vietnam provide attractive options – especially for companies looking for easier, more flexible entry conditions. India is an emerging long-term player with strong growth prospects. Such strategy would enable Russian business to optimize economic gains, minimize reliance on one counterparty and adjust to the varied environments of APAC markets.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING GENERATION Z'S TOURISM BEHAVIOR TOWARD NATURAL ATTRACTIONS IN THAILAND

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Abstract

This quantitative study examined the psychological, destination-management, and social factors influencing Generation Z tourists' behavioral intentions and actual behavior toward natural attractions in Thailand. A total of 323 Generation Z tourists who had previously visited natural attractions in Thailand were recruited via convenience sampling. Data were collected through a self-administered online questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis were used for data analysis. Results indicated that the overall mean score for influencing factors was high ($M = 4.25$), and the overall mean score for tourism behavior was also high ($M = 4.20$). All three factor groups were positively and significantly correlated with tourism behavior ($p < .01$). Together, the three factors explained 72.8% of the variance in tourism behavior ($R^2 = .728$). Destination-management factors were the strongest predictor ($\beta = .344$), followed by psychological factors ($\beta = .333$) and social factors ($\beta = .249$). The findings carry practical implications for tourism operators and public agencies seeking to develop sustainable, generation-responsive strategies for nature-based tourism destinations in Thailand.

Keywords: Generation Z, tourism behavior, natural attractions, Thailand, nature-based tourism

Introduction

In the contemporary context, tourism is no longer limited to leisure and relaxation but has come to reflect the lifestyles, values, and digital habits of successive generations. This shift is especially apparent among Generation Z—broadly defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012 (McKinsey & Company, 2018)—who have grown up in a fully digitalized environment and routinely use online platforms to search for, evaluate, and share travel experiences. These characteristics have substantially differentiated their destination preferences and travel decision-making processes from those of prior generational cohorts.

Concurrently, nature-based tourism has grown in prominence worldwide. Concerns over environmental quality, mental well-being, and authentic experiential value have prompted a broad consumer shift toward ecologically oriented travel (UNWTO, 2022). For Generation Z in particular, the appeal of natural destinations is reinforced by a generational awareness of environmental sustainability and a desire for restorative experiences beyond digital spaces (Manjeera et al., 2023). In Thailand—a country endowed with diverse natural resources including national parks, forests, coastal areas, and protected areas—understanding this trend carries significant implications for tourism policy and practice.

Previous research has identified multiple categories of determinants shaping younger travelers' behavior: psychological factors (e.g., motivation, attitudes, and environmental values), destination-management factors (e.g., accessibility, pricing, facilities, and destination attractiveness), and social factors (e.g., peer influence, social media, and online influencers; Kotler et al., 2017; Srihiran et al., 2020). However, empirical studies that examine all three categories simultaneously, with Generation Z as the focal population in a Thai nature-based tourism context, remain limited. This gap motivates the present investigation.

The study is practically significant because its findings can support the design of marketing strategies and destination-management policies that align with Generation Z's expectations and with global sustainable tourism goals (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2023). It also contributes theoretically by providing empirical evidence on the relative weights of psychological, destination-management, and social predictors of nature-based tourism behavior in a developing-country context.

Research Objectives

1. To describe the personal characteristics and the levels of psychological, destination-management, and social factors among Generation Z tourists who visited natural attractions in Thailand.
2. To describe the levels of Generation Z tourists' tourism behavior toward natural attractions in Thailand, including travel frequency, destination selection, travel duration, travel budget, and service-use decisions.
3. To examine the relationships between psychological, destination-management, and social factors and Generation Z's tourism behavior toward natural attractions in Thailand.
4. To determine the influence of psychological, destination-management, and social factors on Generation Z's tourism behavior toward natural attractions in Thailand.

Research Hypotheses

H1: Psychological, destination-management, and social factors are significantly and positively related to Generation Z's tourism behavior toward natural attractions in Thailand.

H2: Psychological, destination-management, and social factors significantly predict Generation Z's tourism behavior toward natural attractions in Thailand.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework positions psychological, destination-management, and social factors as independent variables and Generation Z's tourism behavior as the dependent variable. Personal characteristics were used to describe the respondent profile. The framework is grounded in consumer behavior theory (Kotler et al., 2017) and adapted to the context of nature-based tourism among younger travelers.

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable
Psychological factors • Travel motivation • Attitudes and values toward nature-based tourism	Generation Z's tourism behavior • Travel frequency • Destination selection • Travel duration • Travel budget • Service-use decisions (accommodation, activities, restaurants)
Destination-management factors • Destination attractiveness • Accessibility and convenience • Promotions and pricing • Facilities	
Social factors • Influence of friends and family • Influence of social media and influencers	

Literature Review

Generation Z tourists are distinguished by their digital nativity, environmental consciousness, and preference for authentic, experiential forms of travel (McKinsey & Company, 2018). Research has consistently identified motivation and attitudes toward nature as core psychological drivers of ecotourism participation (Manjeera et al., 2023). Motivation theory suggests that intrinsic drivers—such as the desire for restoration, novelty, and connection with the natural environment—are particularly salient among younger travelers who seek to detach from digitally intensive routines (Boontham & Busapruerk, 2021).

Destination-management attributes, including attractiveness, accessibility, pricing, promotions, and infrastructure quality, are recognized as fundamental antecedents of destination choice and visitor satisfaction (Kotler et al., 2017). In the context of nature-based tourism, trail quality, signage, parking, sanitation facilities, and safety are especially important for retaining younger visitors (Srihiran et al., 2020; Yamjaras, 2021).

Social influences—particularly peer recommendations, family travel companionship, and social media content—have been identified as increasingly powerful drivers of Generation Z's destination decisions (Bunnag et al., 2022). The proliferation of short-video content and influencer marketing on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube has amplified the role of digital social validation in shaping travel behavior (Srisuk, 2019).

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional quantitative research design to examine the factors influencing Generation Z's tourism behavior toward natural attractions in Thailand. Quantitative methods were appropriate given the study's objectives of measuring factor levels, testing correlational hypotheses, and identifying predictors of tourism behavior.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised Generation Z individuals (born 1997–2012) who had visited natural attractions in Thailand at least once. Convenience sampling was employed because online distribution via social media platforms—Facebook, Instagram, Line, and X—was the most practical method for reaching this digitally active cohort efficiently. A total of 323 complete and valid responses were collected and retained for analysis.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured, self-administered online questionnaire comprising three sections. Section 1 gathered respondents' personal characteristics (gender, age, education, monthly income, and occupation) using multiple-choice items. Section 2 measured perceived levels of influencing factors: psychological factors (6 items), destination-management factors (12 items), and social factors (6 items). Section 3 measured tourism behavior across five dimensions: travel frequency (3 items), destination selection (3 items), travel duration (3 items), travel budget (3 items), and service-use decisions (3 items). Sections 2 and 3 employed a five-point Likert scale (1 = lowest to 5 = highest).

Data Collection

Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Line, and X). Secondary data sources included academic articles, government reports, and institutional publications relevant to Generation Z tourism behavior and nature-based tourism in Thailand.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) were computed for respondent characteristics and scale variables. Mean scores were interpreted using the five-level criterion proposed by Best and Kahn (1993): 4.51–5.00 = highest; 3.51–4.50 = high; 2.51–3.50 = moderate; 1.51–2.50 = low; 1.00–1.50 = lowest. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to test the relationships between the independent and dependent variables, with correlation strength interpreted following Best (1977). Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the predictive influence of the three factor groups on tourism behavior, following Hair et al. (2010).

Results

Personal Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 presents the personal characteristics of the 323 respondents. The majority were female ($n = 205$, 63.5%), and most were aged 25–28 years ($n = 109$, 33.7%), followed by 22–24 years (24.8%), 19–21 years (20.7%), 16–18 years (12.1%), and 13–15 years (8.7%). The most common educational attainment was a bachelor's degree (57.0%). The largest income group reported a monthly income exceeding 15,000 Thai Baht (31.0%). Students constituted the largest occupational group (39.6%), followed by private-sector employees (28.2%), government or state-enterprise employees (17.6%), and business owners or merchants (14.6%).

Table 1 Frequency and Percentage of Personal Characteristics of Generation Z Tourists Visiting Natural Attractions in Thailand

Personal Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	118	36.5
Female	205	63.5
Total	323	100.0
Age		
13–15 years	28	8.7
16–18 years	39	12.1
19–21 years	67	20.7
22–24 years	80	24.8
25–28 years	109	33.7
Total	323	100.0
Educational Level		
Below bachelor's degree	75	23.2
Bachelor's degree	184	57.0
Master's degree	40	12.4
Doctoral degree	24	7.4
Total	323	100.0
Monthly Income (THB)		
Below 5,000	56	17.3
5,000–10,000	76	23.5
10,001–15,000	91	28.2
More than 15,000	100	31.0
Total	323	100.0

Occupation		
Government/state-enterprise employee	57	17.6
Private-sector employee	91	28.2
Business owner/merchant	47	14.6
Student	128	39.6
Total	323	100.0

Factors Influencing Tourism Behavior

Table 2 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for all influencing factors. Psychological factors showed a high overall level ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.569$), as did social factors ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.546$). Destination-management factors also reached a high level ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.520$). Item-level means ranged from 4.15 to 4.34 across all three factor groups.

Table 2

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Interpretation of Factors Influencing Tourism Behavior in Natural Attractions

Item	M	SD	Interpretation
Psychological Factors			
1. I travel to national parks to relax from daily-life stress.	4.34	0.750	High
2. I travel to experience pristine nature (forests, waterfalls, parks).	4.27	0.751	High
3. I travel to enhance well-being and gain new experiences.	4.32	0.786	High
4. I believe ecotourism helps protect and conserve natural resources.	4.17	0.820	High
5. I believe nature-based tourism has psychological value and fosters a connection with nature.	4.27	0.722	High
6. I prioritize tourism that does not harm the environment.	4.26	0.817	High

Total – Psychological Factors	4.27	0.569	High
Destination-Management Factors			
1. I choose natural attractions with beautiful scenery.	4.30	0.773	High
2. A destination's reputation or popularity influences my decision.	4.19	0.784	High
3. I am interested in destinations with unique features (caves, waterfalls, cliffs).	4.15	0.841	High
4. Travel to natural attractions is easy and safe.	4.24	0.775	High
5. Clear signs and maps are available.	4.16	0.791	High
6. Sufficient parking and internal transport are provided.	4.16	0.844	High
7. Entrance fees are appropriate.	4.17	0.783	High
8. Advance promotions facilitate travel planning.	4.26	0.766	High
9. Overall expenses are worthwhile relative to experiences received.	4.27	0.772	High
10. Convenient and safe accommodation is available near natural attractions.	4.24	0.778	High
11. Basic facilities (clean restrooms, restaurants) are available.	4.22	0.748	High

12. Nature trails and viewpoints are well organized.	4.32	0.752	High
Total – Destination-Management Factors	4.22	0.520	High
Social Factors			
1. Friends or family have recommended natural attractions to me.	4.30	0.768	High
2. I often travel to natural attractions with family or close friends.	4.25	0.786	High
3. Traveling with friends and family enhances the experience.	4.26	0.796	High
4. Social media reviews and images stimulate my interest.	4.33	0.763	High
5. Influencers I follow affect my decision to visit natural attractions.	4.28	0.787	High
6. Shared experiences on social media encourage me to travel.	4.23	0.804	High
Total – Social Factors	4.27	0.546	High

Generation Z's Tourism Behavior

Table 3 presents the levels of tourism behavior across five dimensions. Service-use decisions (accommodation, activities, and restaurants) recorded the highest mean ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.619$), followed by travel budget ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.635$), travel frequency ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.688$), destination selection ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.591$), and travel duration ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.668$). All dimensions were rated at the high level.

Table 3 Mean, Standard Deviation, and Interpretation of Tourism Behavior Toward Natural Attractions

Item	M	SD	Interpretation
Travel Frequency			
1. I usually travel to natural attractions on weekends or long holidays.	4.09	1.011	High
2. I plan nature-based trips every year.	4.19	0.806	High
3. I travel to natural attractions more than three times per year.	4.22	0.848	High
Total – Travel Frequency	4.17	0.688	High
Destination Selection			
1. I prefer visiting national parks or protected natural areas.	4.17	0.808	High
2. Tourist reviews influence my destination selection.	4.14	0.801	High
3. I choose destinations offering activities aligned with my interests.	4.21	0.776	High
Total – Destination Selection	4.17	0.591	High
Travel Duration			
1. I spend more than one night at natural attractions when possible.	4.26	0.758	High
2. I choose a one-day trip when more convenient.	3.87	1.138	High
3. I plan travel time to maximize value for money.	4.24	0.843	High
Total – Travel Duration	4.12	0.668	High

Travel Budget			
1. I plan a travel budget in advance.	4.24	0.751	High
2. I consider value for money when visiting natural attractions.	4.23	0.765	High
3. I am willing to pay more for a better experience.	4.25	0.831	High
Total – Travel Budget	4.24	0.635	High
Service-Use Decisions (Accommodation, Activities, Restaurants)			
1. I book accommodation in advance for certainty and confidence.	4.28	0.780	High
2. I use applications or websites to book services.	4.21	0.790	High
3. I choose safe and reliable services even if more expensive.	4.35	0.771	High
Total – Service-Use Decisions	4.28	0.619	High

Hypothesis Testing: Pearson's Correlation Analysis

Table 4 presents the Pearson's correlation results. All three factor groups were positively and significantly correlated with tourism behavior at the .01 level, supporting H1. Destination-management factors showed the strongest correlation ($r = .809$, $p < .01$), followed by psychological factors ($r = .790$, $p < .01$) and social factors ($r = .746$, $p < .01$).

Table 4 Pearson's Correlation Coefficients Between Tourism Factors and Tourism Behavior

Factor	Pearson's r	Sig. (2-tailed)	N	Relationship Level
Psychological factors	.790**	.000	323	High
Destination-management factors	.809**	.000	323	High
Social factors	.746**	.000	323	High

Note. ** $p < .01$.

Hypothesis Testing: Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 5 presents the results of multiple linear regression analysis. The overall model was statistically significant, $F(3, 319) = 284.60$, $p < .001$, and explained 72.8% of the variance in tourism behavior ($R^2 = .728$, adjusted $R^2 = .725$), supporting H2. Destination-management factors were the strongest predictor ($\beta = .344$, $p < .001$), followed by psychological factors ($\beta = .333$, $p < .001$) and social factors ($\beta = .249$, $p < .001$).

Table 5 Multiple Regression Analysis of Factors Influencing Generation Z's Tourism Behavior Toward Natural Attractions

Variable	b	SE	β	t	p
Constant	.441	.131	—	3.373	.001
Psychological factors	.303	.048	.333	6.350	< .001
Destination-management factors	.343	.058	.344	5.901	< .001
Social factors	.237	.044	.249	5.381	< .001

Note. $R = .853$; $R^2 = .728$; Adjusted $R^2 = .725$; $F(3, 319) = 284.60$; $p < .001$.

Discussion

The finding that all three factor groups were rated at high levels (psychological: $M = 4.27$; destination-management: $M = 4.22$; social: $M = 4.27$) indicates that Generation Z tourists in Thailand perceive each of these dimensions as substantially relevant to their natural-attraction tourism. This converges with Boontham and Busapruerk's (2021) and Manjeera et al.'s (2023) findings that emotional satisfaction, experiential novelty, and stress restoration are primary motivational drivers among young Thai tourists.

The prominence of destination-management factors as the strongest predictor of tourism behavior ($\beta = .344$, $r = .809$) extends Srihiran et al.'s (2020) conclusion that destination attributes—including accessibility, cleanliness, facilities, and safety—are decisive determinants of nature-based tourism choices among younger travelers. This finding implies that improvements to the physical and managerial infrastructure of natural attractions may yield stronger behavioral impacts than social media promotion alone.

Social factors—encompassing peer influence and social media content—emerged as the weakest predictor ($\beta = .249$) yet remained statistically significant, consistent with Bunnag et al.'s (2022) finding that influencer endorsements and user-generated content are meaningful, though not dominant, drivers of destination choice among Generation Z consumers. The relatively lower standardized coefficient for social factors may indicate that, for nature-based tourism specifically, direct destination quality outweighs indirect social influence.

Service-use decisions through digital booking platforms recorded the highest behavioral mean ($M = 4.28$), underscoring Generation Z's reliance on digital tools for travel planning. This aligns with Srisuk's (2019) observation that convenience, digital accessibility, and pre-trip certainty are core behavioral traits of Thai Gen Z travelers. Similarly, the finding that travel budget planning was highly rated ($M = 4.24$) suggests a pragmatic, value-conscious orientation, which carries implications for pricing strategies at natural attractions.

Collectively, these findings suggest that Generation Z's decisions to engage with natural tourism are shaped by a dynamic interplay of intrinsic motivation, perceived destination quality, and digitally mediated social influence. This holistic perspective provides a more comprehensive explanatory basis than single-factor models.

Recommendations

Practical Recommendations

Tourism operators and relevant public agencies should prioritize improvements in natural attraction infrastructure—including trail management, sanitation, parking, safety, and scenic viewpoint quality—as these destination-management dimensions were the strongest predictors of tourism behavior. Digital marketing strategies should leverage short-form video content on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels, incorporating user-generated content and influencer partnerships to amplify social validation. Flexible, short-duration packages (one to two days) emphasizing experiential activities—such as guided nature trails, camping, and eco-learning programs—should be developed to align with Generation Z's preference for novelty, convenience, and value for money.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should address the limitations of this investigation by employing probability sampling to enhance generalizability. The model should be extended to incorporate constructs such as destination image, environmental attitude, perceived risk, and revisit intention, as these may account for the unexplained variance (27.2%) in the present model. Mixed-methods or longitudinal designs would enable richer insight into motivational dynamics across time. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is recommended as an analytical framework to test causal pathways and assess discriminant validity among the constructs.

Limitations

This study has several notable limitations. The use of convenience sampling and online data collection may have introduced self-selection bias, and the predominance of student respondents (39.6%) limits generalizability to all Generation Z subgroups, particularly those in rural areas or lower-income brackets. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences. The reliance on self-reported Likert-scale data is susceptible to social desirability bias. Furthermore, the study examined only three groups of predictors; other potentially relevant variables such as destination image, perceived risk, and environmental attitude were not included.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that Generation Z's tourism behavior toward natural attractions in Thailand is significantly influenced by psychological, destination-management, and social factors. The multiple regression model accounted for 72.8% of the variance in tourism behavior ($R^2 = .728$), with destination-management factors emerging as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .344$). These findings affirm the importance of destination quality, digital marketing, and social influence in shaping the nature-based tourism behavior of this generation. Tourism operators and policymakers can apply these insights to design effective, sustainable, and generation-responsive strategies for Thailand's natural attraction sector.

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STRATEGIC INNOVATION AND AI ADOPTION MODELS IN THAILAND'S FEMTECH INDUSTRY

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Abstract

This study investigates strategic innovation models and the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) within Thailand's emerging Femtech industry. Despite rapid global growth, Femtech in Thailand remains underdeveloped due to limited awareness, fragmented digital ecosystems, and cultural sensitivities surrounding women's health. This research aims to identify strategic drivers that influence marketing innovation and AI acceptance among Femtech entrepreneurs, users, and healthcare stakeholders. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining qualitative interviews with industry experts and quantitative surveys of Thai female consumers aged 18–45. Findings reveal that perceived usefulness, trust in AI, cultural acceptance, and personalized value creation significantly shape adoption intention. The study contributes a strategic framework integrating innovation capability, AI readiness, and consumer-centric marketing to accelerate Femtech development in Thailand. Implications highlight opportunities for policymakers, startups, and healthcare providers to strengthen digital health ecosystems and promote inclusive women's health technologies.

Keywords: Femtech, Artificial Intelligence, Marketing Innovation, Technology Adoption, Thailand

Introduction

The Femtech industry—defined as technology, products, and services addressing women's health—has gained global momentum in recent years. However, in Thailand, Femtech adoption remains in its early stages due to cultural norms, limited awareness, and gaps in digital health infrastructure. As AI-driven health technologies become increasingly integrated into global healthcare systems, understanding how Thai consumers and businesses perceive and adopt these innovations is essential. This study explores strategic innovation models and AI adoption factors that can accelerate Femtech growth in Thailand.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how strategic innovation and AI adoption models can enhance the development, acceptance, and competitiveness of Femtech solutions in Thailand's women's health technology sector.

Objectives

1. To analyze the current landscape and challenges of the Femtech industry in Thailand.
2. To identify key factors influencing AI adoption among Femtech users and businesses.
3. To develop a strategic innovation model tailored to Thailand's Femtech ecosystem.
4. To propose marketing innovation strategies that enhance consumer trust and engagement.

Research Questions

1. What are the major barriers and opportunities for Femtech development in Thailand?
2. Which factors influence Thai consumers' acceptance of AI-driven Femtech solutions?
3. How can strategic innovation models support sustainable Femtech growth?
4. What marketing innovation strategies can increase adoption and trust?

Literature Review and Theory

The literature review integrates three theoretical foundations:

1. Innovation Strategy Theory

Innovation capability is a key driver of competitive advantage in digital health industries. Strategic innovation enables firms to create differentiated value through technology, personalization, and user-centric design.

2. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

TAM posits that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use influence technology adoption. In Femtech, additional factors such as privacy, cultural norms, and trust in AI play critical roles.

3. AI Adoption and Digital Health Frameworks

AI adoption in healthcare depends on data quality, algorithm transparency, and user trust. Studies highlight the importance of personalization, predictive analytics, and ethical considerations in women's health technologies.

Methodology

A mixed-methods research design was used:

Respondents

- ☐ **Quantitative:** 350 Thai women aged 18–45 from Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and Songkhla.
- ☐ **Qualitative:** 12 Femtech founders, healthcare professionals, and AI specialists.

Data Collection

- ☐ Online surveys measuring AI acceptance, trust, perceived usefulness, and cultural attitudes.
- ☐ Semi-structured interviews exploring strategic innovation and industry challenges.

Data Analysis

- ☐ Descriptive statistics and regression analysis for quantitative data.
- ☐ Thematic coding for qualitative insights.

Results

1. **Perceived usefulness** and **trust in AI** were the strongest predictors of adoption intention.
2. **Cultural sensitivity** around reproductive and sexual health reduced willingness to use Femtech apps.
3. **Marketing innovation**, especially personalized content and community-based engagement, increased user trust.
4. Femtech startups reported challenges in funding, regulatory clarity, and access to medical data.
5. A strategic model integrating **AI readiness**, **innovation capability**, and **consumer-centric marketing** was developed.

Discussion and Recommendation

The findings highlight the need for a multi-layered strategy to strengthen Thailand's Femtech ecosystem.

Recommendations include:

- ☐ **Policy Support:** Establish regulatory guidelines for AI-driven women's health technologies.
- ☐ **Marketing Innovation:** Use culturally sensitive communication and personalized digital experiences.
- ☐ **AI Transparency:** Provide clear explanations of data usage and algorithm functions to build trust.

- **Ecosystem Collaboration:** Encourage partnerships between startups, hospitals, universities, and government agencies.
- **Consumer Education:** Promote awareness of Femtech benefits through community programs and digital campaigns.

These strategies align with the template's guidance that manuscripts must be well-structured and properly cited, as noted in the document: "Your writing should be organized in the following manner; introduction, purpose of the study, objectives/research questions..." and "Make sure that the manuscript is plagiarism free..."

Conclusion

This study provides a strategic framework for enhancing AI adoption and marketing innovation within Thailand's Femtech industry. By addressing cultural barriers, strengthening trust, and promoting innovation capability, Femtech solutions can play a transformative role in improving women's health outcomes nationwide.

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AI COMPETITIVENESS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EUROPEAN, US, AND CHINESE COMPANIES

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Abstract

This study analyses three AI companies (the American Anthropic, the Chinese DeepSeek AI, and the European Mistral AI) within the context of the national innovation systems (NIS) of the USA, China and the European Union. Drawing on David Teece's dynamic capabilities framework, the paper demonstrates that the competitiveness of AI companies in recent years has been determined primarily by the degree of alignment between a firm's internal adaptability and the institutional logic of jurisdiction. The empirical analysis identifies three key patterns. First, high alignment in the US translates into a sustained competitive advantage for American AI models in international markets. Second, intermediate alignment in China is offset by state support, enabling rapid catch-up development. Third, low alignment in the EU, by contrast, transforms regulatory reliability into an additional barrier for EU firms, while simultaneously offering EU AI companies a potential advantage in sectors where stringent regulation is a prerequisite – such as finance, healthcare and public sector. The paper concludes that regulatory constraint become competitive advantages only when a company develops all three types of dynamic capabilities simultaneously and operates in accordance with its NIS logic.

Keywords: dynamic capabilities, national innovation system (NIS), AI regulation, competitive advantage, competitiveness.

Introduction

The emergence of new digital technologies and associated new goods and services not only improves the quality of life, but also has a significant impact on the entire global economy, creating new products, shaping new economic relations and business models, and transforming the competitive behavior of companies. (Filosofova, 2017). In high-tech companies, the main profit is generated through intellectual work and the scientific achievements of scientists, which causes many legal problems. (Syrtsov, 2020) Since the public launch of ChatGPT in December 2022, US technology companies have maintained a dominant position in the field on large language models (LLMs) and related areas of artificial intelligence (AI). However, in January 2025, the release of the Chinese model DeepSeek R1 – trained at a reported cost of under USD 6 million – demonstrated that competitive AI systems could be built at costs much lower than the budgets of leading American companies such as OpenAI and Anthropic.

According to Stanford University report (HAI AI Index 2026), the quality gap between US and Chinese LLMs, measured by Arena Score, has been narrowing rapidly in recent years and stood at just 2,7% by March 2026 (Stanford HAI, 2026). This trend suggests that LLM race is entering a new phase, in which regulatory agility and speed-to-market have become the primary determinants of competitiveness, and leadership is becoming increasingly dynamic.

Competition is a situation in a specific market during a certain period of time, in which independent entities compete for limited, better conditions for achieving their main strategic goal” (Filosofova T.G., 2013). While competition between American and Chinese LLMs

intensifies, European models lag far behind, making the global technology landscape increasingly asymmetric. While the US follows a market-driven model, the EU relies on regulatory governance – exemplified by the AI Act adopted in 2024. Despite the fact that with this approach, EU models are becoming more secure, AI companies incur high compliance costs, which extends product development cycles. As a result, a strategic question arises: how do institutional and regulatory differences translate into competitive advantages or constraints for businesses at the micro level in the context of a narrowing technological gap.

Research questions

The purpose of this study is to address the following research question: How does the alignment between an AI company's dynamic capabilities and the institutional logic of the NIS transform regulatory differences into either a source of competitive advantage or an additional barrier in the global LLM market?

To answer this question, the following tasks are undertaken:

1. To identify how the components of dynamic capabilities manifest under different regulatory regimes (US, China, and the EU) through a comparative analysis of American, Chinese, and European AI companies.
2. To identify patterns through which regulatory constraints are transformed into competitive advantages or barriers at the micro level.

Literature Review and Theory

The theoretical foundation of this study draws on a synthesis of complementary approaches: the theory of national innovation systems (NIS) and the concept of dynamic capabilities.

David Teece introduced the dynamic capabilities framework arguing that a firm's sustained competitive edge hinges not just on its resource base, but on the processes, it employs to leverage those resources. In a fast-evolving technological landscape, a company's advantage stems from its ability to sense emerging opportunities, seize them through timely investments, and reconfigure assets to adapt (sensing, seizing, reconfiguring). AI exemplifies this transformation: firms that have mastered, integrated, and tailored AI systems gain a clear lead over those adhering to established but less adaptive models.

The NIS concept, pioneered by C. Freeman, B. Lundvall, and R. Nelson, posits that competitiveness in high-tech sectors like AI depends less on individual firms' technological prowess and more on the interplay among government, industry, and academia. Applied to AI, this lens enables comparisons across three models: market-driven (US), state-industry coordinated (China), and regulation-driven (EU).

As technological gaps narrow – particularly as AI model quality becomes less of a differentiator – competitive outcomes rest on the alignment between a firm's internal dynamic capabilities and the institutional logic of its NIS. Whether regulatory differences turn into advantages or barriers depends on how well a company's internal agility matches its national innovation ecosystem. These frameworks underpin a comparative analysis of European, US, and Chinese firms in terms of AI adoption speed, implementation scale, and effective use of institutional support.

Research on large language models (LLMs) has shifted from compute- and data-intensive scaling to efficiency-focused architectures. Early work assumed model quality scaled with data volume and parameters (Kaplan et al., 2020), but later studies (Hoffmann et al., 2022) demonstrate that algorithmic optimisation can yield comparable performance at far lower costs. Independent benchmarks show the quality gap between US and Chinese models closing rapidly, while European firms largely play catch-up (Stanford HAI, 2026). Meanwhile, AI regulation literature identifies three trajectories: market-oriented (US), state-coordinated (China), and regulatory (EU) (Lee & Zhou, 2023). Most studies emphasize compliance costs

and entry barriers from regulation (Djankov et al., 2002), often overlooking active adaptation mechanisms outlined in dynamic capabilities theory (Teece, 2007).

Given the underexplored interplay between macro-level institutional environments and firm-level dynamic capabilities, this study offers an integrated analysis of how regulatory divergences translate into enduring competitive advantages for tech firms in the AI sector.

Methodology

The study hinges on a comparative look at three tech firms building LLM-based products: Anthropic (US), DeepSeek AI (China), and Mistral AI (EU). The empirical base comprises regulatory documents (EU AI Act, US Executive Order on AI, Chinese Generative AI Measures), corporate publications, and industry benchmarks (Stanford HAI AI Index). The analysis was conducted using structured comparison: for each case, the company's responses to regulatory requirements were recorded through the lens of dynamic capabilities (opportunity sensing, resource allocation, and organisational adaptation), after which patterns of institutional environment influence on product launch speed and cost structure were identified.

Results

Cross-country case comparison enabled the identification of patterns that determine how regulatory requirements can become elements of firms' competitive strategies. The empirical findings are organised around the key parameters of the dynamic capabilities framework: sensing change, rapid resource allocation, and structural transformation of business processes.

Across all three jurisdictions, companies have developed systems for monitoring regulatory change, but the architecture of these systems is shaped by the specifics of each NIS. Anthropic integrates NIST AI RMF standards monitoring into its ethical protocol, enabling rapid adaptation to the decentralised regulatory environment of the US – a feature attributable to the market-oriented innovation model. DeepSeek AI focuses on the mandatory CAC algorithm registry, aligning with state priorities of sovereign AI and minimising training costs in accordance with China's state-industrial model. The European Mistral AI devotes greater attention to compliance, perceiving opportunities through the filter of AI Act risks and synchronizing certification with its deadlines. As a result, the capacity to sense emerging opportunities is transformed from passive norm compliance into proactive institutional environment scanning.

Analysis of investment in opportunities revealed cross-country differences in cost structures and product launch speeds. Anthropic directs investment towards scaling and model response speed at minimal compliance cost, enabling the release of multiple model generations. DeepSeek AI's key differentiator is its greater cost efficiency, linked in part to active state support; China also lacks significant regulatory barriers, which is conducive to LLM development. As for Mistral AI, the company must invest a substantial share of its budget in compliance, meaning that new model releases take considerably longer than those of its international competitors.

Asymmetry is also observable in the asset transformation component. Anthropic's corporate agility allows for rapid and effective algorithmic changes in its models. DeepSeek AI transforms within state clusters and integrates with national AI infrastructure, compensating for lower corporate agility. Mistral AI, meanwhile, faces significant capital market fragmentation and divergent interpretations of the AI Act by regulators, requiring it to maintain multiple product versions for different regulatory zones. At the same time, regulatory compliance makes Mistral AI a more trustworthy LLM for integration into the public sector, healthcare, and similar domains.

Indeed, a company's competitiveness is shaped by both its dynamic capabilities and the logic of its NIS. In the US, high alignment translates into substantial competitive advantages

for LLM companies relative to global competitors. In China, intermediate alignment is offset by strong state support, while in the EU, low alignment is observed: Mistral AI's dynamic capabilities come into tension with the logic of the AI Act. The EU's regulatory reliability at the macro level does not translate into a micro-level competitive advantage for European firms – it becomes an additional barrier instead.

Conclusion

This study has identified how the alignment between AI companies' dynamic capabilities and the institutional logic of their NIS transforms regulatory differences into a source of competitive advantage or an additional barrier. The comparative analysis of three cases revealed a persistent asymmetry. High alignment in the US translates into competitive advantage on the global market. This advantage is achieved through rapid iteration and scaling. Intermediate alignment in China enables catch-up development. However, this comes at the cost of strategic autonomy. Low alignment in the EU transforms macro-level regulatory reliability into a micro-level barrier. Nevertheless, this same barrier may become a competitive advantage in certain sectors. These sectors include finance, healthcare, and the public sector. The findings confirm the central hypothesis: competitive outcomes are determined not by the isolated development of individual dynamic capabilities, but by their integration and alignment with the institutional logic of the NIS.

Discussion and Recommendation

The analysis reveals that regulatory frameworks have evolved from neutral competitive backdrops into dynamic strategic factors, with profound implications for AI firms' positioning across jurisdictions.

For Anthropic and other US-based AI companies, the prevailing advantage derives from a confluence of permissive regulation, robust private capital markets, and institutional agility enabling swift model iterations. This edge, however, remains transient. As federal AI governance matures – through sector-specific mandates or comprehensive legislation – firms must scale compliance infrastructures proactively. Those neglecting this risk entrenched disadvantages amid regulatory consolidation.

Chinese firms like DeepSeek AI, pursuing global expansion, navigate a core tension between domestic institutional support and international legitimacy. State coordination yields exceptional cost efficiencies and accelerated development, yet imposes limits: in regions prioritizing data sovereignty and independence – such as Europe and Southeast Asia – the state-industry model shifts from enabler to impediment. Effective globalization thus demands deliberate decoupling via governance structures resilient to external scrutiny.

For Mistral AI and European counterparts, competitive strategy requires reorienting around the EU AI Act not as a minimizable cost, but as a market signal highlighting demand for verifiable, trustworthy AI. Sectors like finance, healthcare, defense procurement, and public administration – where regulatory rigor excludes non-compliant entrants – position compliance as a differentiator. Firms should thus prioritize these verticals and frame EU certification as a value proposition rather than a hindrance.

Collectively, these cases underscore a pivotal insight: in the maturing AI landscape, sustained leadership accrues to firms adept at leveraging their institutional contexts for strategic advantage. Regulatory alignment transcends legal compliance, emerging as a fundamental pillar of competitive differentiation.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURIST SATISFACTION IN RAYONG PROVINCE, THAILAND

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Abstract

This research examines the factors influencing tourist satisfaction in Rayong Province, Thailand, with particular attention to three key dimensions: service quality, tourism facilities, and destination image. These elements are considered essential in shaping tourists' experiences, as well as their overall perceptions of a destination. A quantitative approach was adopted to investigate these relationships. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to Thai tourists who had visited Rayong Province. The sample size was calculated using Cochran's formula at a 95% confidence level, yielding a minimum requirement of 400 respondents to ensure sufficient reliability. The measurement items were developed based on relevant theoretical concepts and covered several aspects, including responsiveness of service providers, adequacy of facilities, accessibility, safety, and general impressions of the destination. Rather than focusing solely on descriptive outcomes, this study seeks to explore how each factor contributes to tourist satisfaction and which variable plays the most prominent role. The findings are also intended to reflect how tourists evaluate their overall travel experience in Rayong, particularly in terms of service performance, infrastructure conditions, and destination characteristics. The implications of this study are relevant to multiple stakeholders, including public agencies, tourism businesses, and local communities. The results can serve as practical guidance for improving service delivery, upgrading tourism facilities, and enhancing the overall image of the destination. In a broader sense, this research supports more effective tourism planning and contributes to the long-term development of sustainable tourism at the regional level.

Keywords: Tourist Satisfaction, Service Quality, Facilities, Destination Image, Rayong Province

Introduction

Tourism plays a crucial role in Thailand's economic system, not only in terms of revenue generation but also in creating employment opportunities and supporting the development of local communities. Within this context, Rayong Province has emerged as one of the key destinations in the eastern region, offering a wide range of tourism resources, from coastal attractions to cultural and community-based experiences. Among its well-known attractions are Ko Samet, Yomjinda Road, and the Pak Nam Prasae community. These locations illustrate the diversity of tourism products in Rayong and contribute significantly to shaping the province's image. At the same time, they provide different types of experiences that respond to the varied preferences of tourists.

Over the past few years, tourism in Rayong has shown continuous growth, largely driven by improvements in infrastructure and ongoing promotional efforts from both public and private sectors. However, this growth has also brought new challenges. Destinations are

now competing more intensively, while tourists have become more selective and expect higher standards in terms of service and overall experience. In this regard, tourist satisfaction has become an important indicator of tourism success. Visitors who have positive experiences are more likely to return and recommend the destination to others. Such satisfaction is not shaped solely by the attractiveness of the destination itself, but also by the quality of services, the adequacy of facilities, and the overall image perceived by tourists (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Chen & Tsai, 2007).

Although these factors have been widely discussed in tourism studies, research that examines them together within the specific context of Rayong Province remains limited. This gap highlights the need for a more focused study. Therefore, this research aims to investigate how service quality, tourism facilities, and destination image influence tourist satisfaction, with the intention of providing practical insights for improving tourism management in the area.

Objectives

1. To examine the influence of service quality on tourist satisfaction in Rayong Province.
2. To investigate the role of tourism facilities in shaping tourist satisfaction in Rayong Province.
3. To analyze how destination image affects tourist satisfaction among visitors to Rayong Province.
4. To identify the most influential factor among service quality, tourism facilities, and destination image in determining overall tourist satisfaction.

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the relationships between service quality, tourism facilities, destination image, and tourist satisfaction in Rayong Province. The chosen design enables systematic measurement and statistical analysis, allowing for a clearer explanation of how each factor contributes to overall tourist satisfaction.

The target population consisted of Thai tourists visiting Rayong Province. As the exact number of visitors could not be clearly identified, the sample size was determined using Cochran's formula at a 95% confidence level. The calculation indicated that at least 400 respondents were required to ensure adequate reliability and representativeness. A convenience sampling technique was applied, targeting tourists who were available and willing to participate during the data collection period.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed from established theoretical frameworks and prior studies in tourism research. The instrument was divided into two main sections. The first section collected general information about respondents, including demographic characteristics and travel behavior. The second section measured the key variables of the study, including service quality, tourism facilities, destination image, and tourist satisfaction, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Within this framework, service quality, tourism facilities, and destination image were treated as independent variables, while tourist satisfaction was defined as the dependent variable. These variables were selected due to their relevance in explaining tourist perceptions and overall travel experience.

The data collection process was carried out in selected tourism areas in Rayong Province. Questionnaires were distributed directly by the researcher, who also provided clarification when necessary to ensure that respondents clearly understood each item.

For data analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize respondent characteristics and perceptions. Inferential statistics were further

applied to examine the relationships between variables and to determine the extent to which service quality, tourism facilities, and destination image influence tourist satisfaction.

Although the study is designed as a quantitative approach, the present paper focuses on a conceptual analysis based on the proposed research framework and relevant theoretical foundations.

Results

The findings provide insight into the factors influencing tourist satisfaction in Rayong Province, particularly in relation to service quality, tourism facilities, and destination image.

Based on the proposed conceptual framework, the analysis suggests that all three independent variables are positively associated with tourist satisfaction. Among these, service quality appears to play a central role, as it reflects direct interactions between tourists and service providers. Elements such as responsiveness, reliability, and hospitality play an important role in shaping overall satisfaction.

Tourism facilities also contribute to tourist satisfaction, particularly in terms of accessibility, convenience, and the adequacy of supporting infrastructure. Well-developed facilities enhance travel comfort and reduce potential inconveniences, leading to more favorable evaluations of the destination.

In addition, destination image influences tourist satisfaction by shaping perceptions of attractiveness, safety, and uniqueness. A positive image strengthens tourists' impressions and enhances their overall travel experience.

When considered together, these variables interact in shaping tourist perceptions. Tourist satisfaction is therefore not determined by a single factor, but rather by a combination of interrelated elements.

Overall, the findings emphasize the need to improve service quality, develop tourism facilities, and strengthen destination image as key strategies for enhancing tourist satisfaction and supporting sustainable tourism development in Rayong Province.

These interpretations are informed by the proposed conceptual framework and supported by relevant theoretical perspectives.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide important insights into the factors shaping tourist satisfaction in Rayong Province. Consistent with the proposed conceptual framework, service quality, tourism facilities, and destination image all play significant roles in influencing how tourists evaluate their overall travel experience (Baker & Crompton, 2000).

Among these factors, service quality appears to be particularly influential. This can be explained by the service-oriented nature of tourism, where direct interactions between tourists and service providers strongly shape perceptions and overall satisfaction. When service providers demonstrate responsiveness, reliability, and a welcoming attitude, visitors are more likely to evaluate their experiences positively. This finding is consistent with the concept of service quality proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), which emphasizes the importance of reliability, responsiveness, and assurance in shaping customer perceptions. Furthermore, this result is supported by more recent studies indicating that service quality significantly influences tourist satisfaction and behavioral outcomes (Su et al., 2018). In the context of Rayong Province, where tourism includes both formal service businesses and community-based interactions, the human element becomes especially critical.

Tourism facilities also represent an important contributing factor. The availability of adequate infrastructure, including transportation, signage, public amenities, and accessibility, helps reduce uncertainty and enhances travel convenience. This aligns with previous tourism studies suggesting that well-developed facilities improve overall travel experience and

satisfaction (Buhalis, 2000). For destinations like Rayong, which combine coastal tourism with community-based attractions, infrastructure plays a key supporting role in delivering a seamless visitor experience.

In addition, destination image plays a meaningful role in shaping satisfaction. A favorable image, associated with attractiveness, safety, and uniqueness, influences tourists' expectations prior to their visit. When actual experiences align with or exceed these expectations, higher levels of satisfaction are more likely to occur. This finding is supported by Chen and Tsai (2007), who found that destination image significantly affects tourists' behavioral intentions and satisfaction. More recent studies further confirm that destination image plays a crucial role in shaping tourist perceptions and overall experience (Stylidis et al., 2017; Kim, 2018). In the case of Rayong Province, its positioning as a coastal destination enriched with cultural and local community experiences contributes to a distinctive and appealing image.

Importantly, the findings suggest that satisfaction is not determined by a single factor, but rather by the combined effects of service quality, facilities, and destination image. These elements interact in shaping tourists' perceptions and overall experiences. This perspective is consistent with the satisfaction theory proposed by Oliver (1980), which explains that satisfaction results from the comparison between expectations and actual experiences. For instance, even when a destination offers strong natural attractions, inadequate facilities or poor service delivery may reduce overall satisfaction. Conversely, high-quality service and well-developed infrastructure can enhance the perceived value of the destination.

From a practical perspective, these findings highlight several implications for tourism development in Rayong Province. Improving service quality should be prioritized, particularly through training programs that strengthen service skills and customer-oriented attitudes. At the same time, continuous investment in tourism infrastructure is essential to ensure accessibility, safety, and convenience. Strengthening destination image through consistent branding and promotion is equally important in maintaining competitiveness in an increasingly dynamic tourism environment.

Overall, this study reinforces the importance of adopting a balanced approach that integrates service excellence, infrastructure development, and effective destination positioning. For Rayong Province, aligning these elements can enhance tourist satisfaction, encourage repeat visitation, and support long-term tourism growth.

Conclusion

This study explores the key factors influencing tourist satisfaction in Rayong Province, with particular attention to service quality, tourism facilities, and destination image. The findings suggest that all three dimensions play important roles in shaping tourists' overall experiences and their perceptions of the destination.

Service quality appears to be especially influential, emphasizing the importance of interactions between tourists and service providers. Tourism facilities also contribute significantly by enhancing accessibility, convenience, and overall travel comfort. In addition, destination image plays a crucial role in shaping expectations and influencing how visitors evaluate their experiences.

The results further indicate that tourist satisfaction is not determined by a single factor, but rather by the combined and interrelated effects of service quality, facilities, and destination image. This highlights the multidimensional nature of tourism experiences, where both tangible and intangible elements interact in shaping overall satisfaction.

From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that tourism stakeholders should adopt a balanced approach to development. Efforts should focus on improving service

standards, investing in infrastructure, and strengthening destination branding in order to enhance tourist satisfaction and maintain competitiveness.

Enhancing these key factors can contribute to higher levels of satisfaction, encourage repeat visitation, and support sustainable tourism development in Rayong Province.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICE QUALITY AND PASSENGER LOYALTY ON LOW-COST AIRLINES

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Abstract

This study evaluates the critical relationship between perceived service quality and passenger loyalty within the Low-Cost Carrier (LCC) sector, utilizing the five-dimensional SERVQUAL framework—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—to quantify the passenger experience. Adopting a quantitative methodological approach through a survey of 100 passengers, the research utilized a 5-point Likert scale to determine that overall service quality is perceived at a high level ($M = 4.01$), with the "Reliability" dimension emerging as the most significant contributor to traveler satisfaction. Furthermore, passenger loyalty achieved a remarkably high mean score ($M = 4.25$), this shows that passengers are likely to use the service again and recommend it to others. Correlation analysis confirms a significant positive relationship between high-quality service dimensions and long-term loyalty outcomes, suggesting that even within a price-sensitive "no-frills" market, LCCs must prioritize operational reliability and empathetic staff behavior to foster sustained customer retention and competitive advantage.

Keywords: Service Quality, Passenger Loyalty, Low-Cost Airlines, SERVQUAL

Introduction

The airline industry, particularly the Low-Cost Carrier (LCC) segment, has experienced rapid global expansion. This growth is primarily driven by affordable pricing models that have made air travel accessible to a much broader demographic. However, as the market reaches saturation, airlines can no longer rely solely on competitive pricing to maintain their market share. (Hussain et al., 2021). Improving service quality has become a "quick-win" strategic imperative for airlines to differentiate themselves and maintain operational sustainability in a post-rehabilitation environment (Kungwola, 2022). To remain competitive, LCCs must shift their focus toward enhancing service quality to attract and retain customers. Modern passengers have become increasingly discerning; they expect more than just low fares and now prioritize a "holistic experience". Factors such as on-time performance, safety, comfort, and staff behavior are key drivers of customer satisfaction and heavily influence the decision to reuse a service. While low costs may attract passengers initially, research by Al-Gasawneh et al. (2022) confirms that the consistency of service quality and passenger trust are what ultimately sustain long-term loyalty.

According to Giao et al. (2021), service quality in the LCC sector directly influences passenger satisfaction, which then acts as a primary driver for repeat patronage. Furthermore, in mature and price-sensitive markets, superior service quality has moved from being a "luxury" to a mandatory requirement for brand survival. Building on the revisited framework (Yas& Jusoh, 2025).

This study aims to empirically analyze how specific SERVQUAL dimensions—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—contribute to passenger loyalty. By identifying these critical drivers, airlines can strategically improve their service delivery to transition one-time flyers into long-term brand advocates.

Literature Review

2.1 Service Quality

Service quality refers to the ability of a company to meet or exceed customer expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The SERVQUAL model includes five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Reliability is considered the most important factor in the airline industry because it relates to on-time performance and service accuracy. Responsiveness and empathy are also important because they reflect how staff help and care for passengers (Hussain et al., 2022; Han & Hyun, 2021). Tangibles and assurance also play a role in creating a good image and trust, although they may not be the main factors.

2.2 Passenger Loyalty Passenger loyalty means the intention to reuse the service and recommend it to others (Oliver, 1999). It also includes emotional attachment to the airline. Customer loyalty is influenced by satisfaction, trust, and perceived value (Kim & Park, 2021). When passengers feel that the service is worth the price and meets their expectations, they are more likely to stay loyal.

2.3 Relationship between Service Quality and Passenger Loyalty Many studies show that service quality has a positive effect on customer loyalty. Good service quality leads to satisfaction, and satisfaction leads to loyalty (Gursoy et al., 2021). According to Expectation–Confirmation theory, when the service meets expectations, customers feel satisfied and are more likely to use the service again (Oliver, 1980).

Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative, descriptive research design to examine the relationship between service quality and passenger loyalty through a cross-sectional survey of 100 passengers who had traveled with a Low-Cost Carrier (LCC) within the last four months to ensure accurate recall of the service experience. Data were gathered using a structured digital questionnaire divided into three sections: demographic profiling (gender, age, and travel frequency), 22 SERVQUAL items adapted from Parasuraman et al. (1988) and tailored for the LCC context and 5 items measuring loyalty metrics such as repurchase intention and word-of-mouth advocacy. All items were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5), covering the five core dimensions of Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy.

The collected data were processed in SPSS, employing descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) to assess central tendencies and service quality levels.

The primary research instrument was a structured questionnaire divided into three sections:

1. **Demographic Profiling:** (Gender, age, and travel frequency).
2. **SERVQUAL Dimensions:** 22 items adapted from Parasuraman et al. (1988)
3. **Loyalty Metrics:** 5 items measuring repurchase intention and word-of-mouth advocacy.

Results

The data analysis reveals that the overall level of service quality within the sampled Low-Cost Carrier (LCC) segment is high, achieving a composite mean score of **4.01**. This indicates that most passengers maintain a positive perception of the services provided and feel that the airlines are successfully meeting their functional expectations.

Table 1: Mean Scores of Service Quality Dimensions and Passenger Loyalty

Variable / Dimension	Mean Score (M)	Interpretation
Reliability	4.38	Very High
Empathy	4.15	High
Responsiveness	4.05	High
Assurance	3.80*	High
Tangibles	3.50	Moderate
Overall Service Quality	4.01	High
Passenger Loyalty	4.25	High

*Assurance score estimated based on qualitative description.

4.1 Analysis of Service Quality Dimensions

As illustrated in **Table 1**, when considering individual dimensions of service quality, **Reliability** emerged with the highest mean score of **4.38**. This suggests that passengers place significant importance on airlines being punctual, providing accurate services, and fulfilling their operational promises. This finding aligns with the strategies proposed by Kungwola (2022), who argues that reliability is a "quick-win" factor for maintaining market share during industry rehabilitation.

Empathy (M=4.15) and **Responsiveness (M=4.05)** also performed at high levels, indicating that passengers are generally satisfied with how staff treat them, including their politeness and willingness to help. These human-centric dimensions directly affect passengers' feelings during the journey and support the "holistic experience" prioritized by modern travelers.

Tangibles recorded the lowest mean score at **3.50**, suggesting that physical aspects like aircraft condition and seating comfort are perceived as acceptable but less impressive than service delivery. However, as argued by Yas and Jusoh (2025), in the LCC sector, technical reliability often outweighs luxury amenities in driving passenger trust.

4.2 Passenger Loyalty

Regarding passenger loyalty, the results show a high level of commitment with a mean score of **4.25**. This indicates that passengers are likely to reuse the airline's services and recommend them to others, finding the service valuable even within a low-cost context. This supports the research by Al-Gasawneh et al. (2022), which identifies service quality and trust as the primary drivers of long-term loyalty in competitive aviation markets.

4.3 Summary of Findings

Overall, both service quality and passenger loyalty remain at high levels. The findings clearly demonstrate that when passengers perceive strong service quality—particularly in terms of reliability and staff behavior—they are significantly more likely to remain loyal to the airline. This confirms that for LCCs, superior service quality has transitioned from a luxury to a strategic imperative for sustainability.

Discussion

The results of this study confirm that service quality maintains a strong positive relationship with passenger loyalty within the low-cost carrier (LCC) sector. This finding is consistent with established theoretical frameworks which argue that superior service quality is a prerequisite for higher customer loyalty. Among the five dimensions analyzed, **Reliability** was identified as the most critical factor, achieving the highest mean score of 4.38. This underscores that for LCC passengers, operational fundamentals—such as on-time performance, service accuracy, and fulfilling brand promises—are the primary drivers of satisfaction.

Furthermore, the high scores for **Empathy (4.15)** and **Responsiveness (4.05)** emphasize the importance of the human element in the service encounter. As noted by **Han and Hyun (2021)**, the quality of staff interaction and the efficiency of assistance during the journey significantly shape passenger perceptions. While **Tangibles** received the lowest mean score (3.50), the level remains acceptable to passengers. This suggests that budget-conscious travelers prioritize functional value and basic service reliability over physical luxury or high-end aircraft facilities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research demonstrates that service quality is a decisive factor influencing passenger loyalty in the competitive LCC market. While the overall perception of quality is high ($M=4.01$), the study highlights that loyalty is specifically tied to the airline's ability to deliver reliable and empathetic service.

Recommendations

To maintain customer satisfaction and encourage future repeat usage, airline management should:

- **Prioritize Reliability:** Invest in operational efficiency to ensure high on-time performance and service accuracy, as these are the strongest drivers of passenger trust.
- **Enhance Staff Training:** Focus on the "Responsiveness" and "Empathy" dimensions by training crew and ground staff to provide more personalized and prompt assistance.
- **Optimize Value Perception:** While physical tangibles are less critical, maintaining them at an acceptable level ensures they do not detract from the overall "holistic experience" sought by modern travelers.

By strategically focusing on these key service dimensions, low-cost airlines can effectively transition price-sensitive travelers into loyal brand advocates.

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DEVELOPMENT OF GEOGEBRA SIMULATION MEDIA TO IMPROVE GRADE 8 STUDENTS UNDERSTANDING IN SURFACE AREA AND VOLUME

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Abstract

This classroom research addressed students' difficulties in understanding surface area and volume of geometric solids, particularly their reliance on memorization and limited three-dimensional visualization skills. The study aimed to develop GeoGebra-based simulation media, evaluate its efficiency using the 80/80 criterion, compare students' learning achievement before and after its use, and examine student satisfaction. A purposive sample of 35 Grade 8 students participated, using interactive media that enabled rotation, zooming, and net visualization of solids alongside dynamic calculations. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and E1/E2 efficiency. The developed media exceeded the expected efficiency (82.71/87.86). Post-test scores were significantly higher than pre-test scores, with mean scores increasing from 8.09 to 17.57, indicating substantial learning gains. Students also reported the highest level of satisfaction ($\bar{x} = 4.54$). The study demonstrates that GeoGebra-based media effectively enhances conceptual understanding and spatial visualization, offering a practical approach to improving mathematics learning outcomes.

Keywords: GeoGebra, surface area and volume, geometric solid simulation media, learning achievement, three-dimensional visualization skills

Introduction

Mathematics at the lower secondary level is a fundamental foundation for developing analytical thinking skills. However, the topic of surface area and volume of geometric solids (such as prisms and cylinders) is a lesson that most students often find challenging. This is because the content is highly abstract and requires the ability to visualize three-dimensional objects and to understand the relationships among length, area, and volume. Based on classroom experience and national test results (O-NET), it has been found that scores in geometry are often lower than in other topics, reflecting a nationwide issue. The main causes are as follows: 1) lack of spatial visualization skills—students are unable to imagine three-dimensional objects or identify surface components from static images; 2) difficulty in making connections—students cannot relate two-dimensional nets to actual three-dimensional solids; 3) rote memorization behavior—students tend to memorize formulas without understanding their origins, leading to difficulties in solving applied problems; and 4) limitations of traditional media—images in textbooks or paper models cannot move, be resized, or dynamically display

nets. Although concrete media such as plastic models are sometimes used, they still have limitations in terms of interactivity. The GeoGebra program helps fill this gap as a mathematics software recognized internationally. Its key feature is the ability to create simulations that allow learners to rotate, zoom, and unfold geometric shapes interactively, which aligns with students' learning behaviors in the digital age and with the Ministry of Education's policy emphasizing the use of technology to enhance learning quality in the 21st century. The sample group used in this research consisted of 35 Grade 8/1 students from Sataphornwittaya School in the second semester of the 2025 academic year. The content covered prisms, cylinders, geometric nets, total surface area and lateral surface area, and volume. The expected benefits are as follows: For students: 1) improved understanding of surface area and volume of geometric solids; 2) enhanced ability to visualize three-dimensional shapes; and 3) development of positive attitudes toward mathematics and the use of digital media. For teachers: 1) availability of innovative instructional media that can be practically implemented; and 2) potential for further development and application in teaching other mathematics topics. For the school: 1) access to digital mathematics media that can be used across different grade levels; 2) support for becoming a digital school in alignment with the Ministry of Education's policy encouraging teachers to use technology to enhance learning quality; and 3) promotion of students' competencies in the 21st century.

Objectives

1. To develop a geometric solid simulation media using the GeoGebra program for Grade 8 students.
2. To examine the efficiency of the GeoGebra media based on the 80/80 standard criterion.
3. To compare the learning achievement of Grade 8 students before and after using the developed media.
4. To investigate students' satisfaction toward the geometric solid simulation media developed with GeoGebra.

Research Questions

1. How does the use of GeoGebra media affect students' understanding of surface area and volume?
2. Does the use of GeoGebra media improve students' three-dimensional visualization skills?
3. Does the use of GeoGebra media reduce errors in solving mathematical problems?

Literature Review and Theory

The research on the development of geometric solid simulation media using the GeoGebra program to enhance Grade 8 students' understanding of surface area and volume is grounded in educational concepts that aim to address the complexity of geometric content, which has long been a significant obstacle in mathematics learning among Thai students. Based on national and international assessments of learning achievement, it has been found that the average scores in geometry are often lower than in other topics. This reflects the necessity for reform in instructional approaches. Concepts related to mathematics instruction in the topic of geometric solids indicate that geometry is a fundamental strand in the mathematics curriculum. It emphasizes enabling students to describe, analyze shapes, and use visualization as well as spatial reasoning to solve problems. However, a commonly encountered issue is the "abstract nature" of the content. Most students experience difficulty in visualizing three-dimensional objects and are unable to connect two-dimensional representations (such as nets) with actual three-dimensional solids. As a result, students tend to rely on "rote memorization of formulas" without understanding their origins or structural meaning. Spatial visualization skills are therefore critically important. As noted by Kennedy and Tipps (1997), the development of

spatial ability helps students understand the relationships among objects in a three-dimensional world and serves as a fundamental basis for advanced mathematics learning. In addition, Jerome Bruner emphasized that learners achieve deeper understanding when they do not rely on memorization but are able to perceive mathematical concepts concretely through clear instructional media. The use of simulation technology has played an important role in expanding the scope of education, enabling learners to control their own learning according to their individual differences. Interactive digital media help reduce the limitations of traditional media, such as paper models that cannot be resized or display movement. Learners in the Gen Z group (under 19 years old) are highly familiar with technology and the internet, with usage trends exceeding 10 hours per day. This group of learners tends to prefer information presented in the form of graphs, images, and easy-to-understand statistics, and they are more interested in media that allow participation rather than passive listening. Therefore, instructional media design must consider incorporating enjoyment and learning by doing to stimulate interest and motivation. The evaluation of the quality of educational innovations relies on statistical principles and accurate measurement, consisting of: 1) media efficiency ($E1/E2$), using the standard criterion of 80/80 to measure efficiency during the learning process and post-learning outcomes; 2) achievement tests, which must have validity, reliability, and appropriate discrimination indices; and 3) satisfaction, which refers to a psychological state resulting from the fulfillment of needs and influences positive attitudes toward mathematics.

Based on the above literature review, it can be concluded that the development of geometric solid simulation media using the GeoGebra program is a highly effective approach to addressing difficulties in three-dimensional visualization. It promotes conceptual understanding more effectively than rote memorization and aligns with the learning behaviors of students in the digital age. This approach is therefore a key factor in sustainably improving mathematics learning achievement.

Methodology

Geometric Solid Simulation Media using GeoGebra (Innovation): This is a dynamic digital medium designed based on the constructivist approach, emphasizing learners' active knowledge construction. Its key features include: 1) Interactivity: The ability to rotate geometric solids 360 degrees, zoom in and out, and adjust viewing angles as desired. 2) Net Function: Displays the transformation of three-dimensional shapes into two-dimensional nets through animation, allowing learners to observe the relationships among different surface areas. 3) Computation: Shows variable values (e.g., radius and height) and automatically calculates surface area and volume when these values are adjusted.

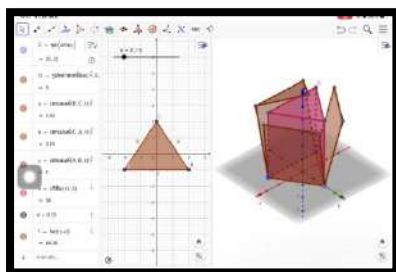


Figure 2: The construction of three-dimensional prisms using GeoGebra

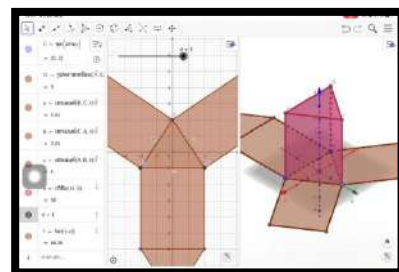


Figure 1: The construction of three-dimensional prisms using GeoGebra

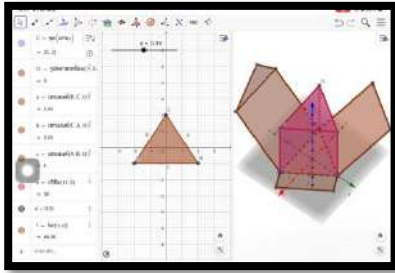


Figure 3: The construction of three-dimensional prisms using GeoGebra

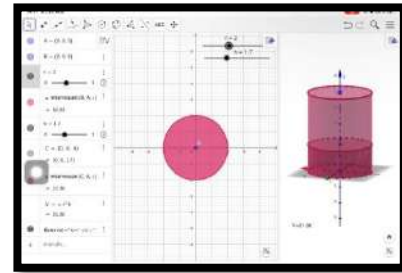


Figure 4: The construction of cylinders using GeoGebra

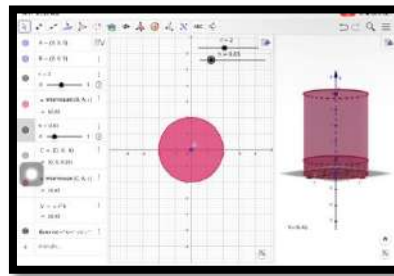


Figure 5: The construction of cylinders using GeoGebra

Learning Achievement Test : This consists of 20 multiple-choice questions with four options each. The content scope covers components of geometric solids, nets (unfolding of shapes), formulas for calculating surface area and volume of prisms and cylinders, as well as applied problem-solving questions.

Satisfaction Questionnaire : This is a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire consisting of 10 items. It measures students' understanding of the content, the attractiveness of the media, ease of use, and perceived benefits.

Results

The geometric solid simulation media developed using the GeoGebra program for Grade 8 students achieved an efficiency (E1/E2) higher than the specified criterion, with a value of 82.71/87.86. The post-learning efficiency (E2) exceeded the standard criterion, while E1 was close to the 80 benchmark, indicating that the media was effective at a good level and capable of improving students' learning achievement. For Grade 8 students who learned through the GeoGebra-based geometric solid simulation media, the analysis revealed that the mean pre-test score was 8.09 with a standard deviation of 2.64, while the mean post-test score was 17.57 with a standard deviation of 2.78. This indicates that post-test scores increased, with a relatively similar distribution of scores. The average gain score was 47.43 percent. Students' overall satisfaction with the geometric solid simulation media using the GeoGebra program was at the highest level ($\bar{x} = 4.54$, S.D. = 0.50).

Conclusion

Results of Media Efficiency : The developed geometric solid simulation media using the GeoGebra program achieved an efficiency of 82.71/87.86, which is higher than the established 80/80 standard criterion. This indicates that the media is effective and appropriate for use in instructional management. **Results of Learning Achievement Comparison :** Students' mean pre-test score was 8.09, while the mean post-test score was 17.57 out of a total of 20 points.

This clearly shows that students' learning achievement after using the developed media was significantly higher than before learning. Results of Students' Satisfaction : Students' overall satisfaction with the geometric solid simulation media was at the highest level. This reflects that the media is appropriate, engaging, and effectively supports students' learning.

Recommendation

GeoGebra media should be integrated with Active Learning approaches, allowing learners to engage in hands-on activities, experimentation, and exploration to further enhance deep understanding. The use of the media should take into account learners' readiness, such as their technological skills and individual differences. Group activities may be organized to encourage collaborative learning and peer support. The media should be used alongside explanations of mathematical concepts to prevent misconceptions, as using the media alone may lead students to focus more on operation than on understanding underlying principles. The sample size should be expanded, or the study should be conducted with students from different grade levels or school contexts to increase the reliability and generalizability of the research findings. Comparative research designs should be employed, such as comparing the use of GeoGebra media with traditional teaching methods or other instructional approaches, to clearly identify differences in learning outcomes. Long-term studies should be conducted to examine knowledge retention after using the media, in order to evaluate whether it helps learners retain and apply knowledge over time.

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**ENHANCING MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT ON THE TOPIC OF
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Abstract

This quasi-experimental research aims to study the academic achievement of Grade 7 students using the Bar Model for analyzing and solving mathematical problems on 'Percentage' at Nawaminthrachinuthit Satriwitthaya Phutthamonthon school. The study population consists of 100 students, divided into an experimental group of 50 students taught by using the Bar Model and a control group of 50 students taught through conventional methods. The research instruments include lesson plans, achievement tests, satisfaction questionnaires, and observation forms. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) and the t-test to compare the means between the two groups.

Introduction

Mathematics plays a crucial role in developing analytical thinking, problem-solving, and systematic reasoning skills, especially at the lower secondary level where content becomes increasingly complex. 'Percentage' is a fundamental topic linked to daily life, such as taxes, discounts, and interest. However, many Grade 7 students struggle with its abstract nature, making it difficult to connect problem data with real-world situations. From our observations, the researcher found that students often lack deep conceptual understanding. Consequently, the researcher is interested in implementing the 'Bar Model,' a visual tool from Singapore Math, which uses rectangular bars to represent quantities. This research aims to study students' academic achievement, problem-solving skills, and their satisfaction with using the Bar Model.

Objectives

1. To study the mathematics academic achievement on the topic of 'Percentage' among Grade 7 students of Nawaminthrachinuthit Satriwitthaya Phutthamonthon school using the Bar Model.
2. To study the satisfaction of Grade 7 students of Nawaminthrachinuthit Satriwitthaya Phutthamonthon school towards learning activities organized using the Bar Model on the topic of 'Percentage'.

Research Questions

1. How can the researchers use Bar Model to create understanding and enhance the mathematics academic achievement of Grade 7 students in the topic of "Percentage," and if so, what result ?
2. Do students who study "Percentage" using the Bar Model achieve higher academic achievement compared to those in a conventional classroom?
3. At what level is the satisfaction of both groups of Grade 7 students towards learning "Percentage"?

Literature Review and Theory

Concept of Percentage

Percentage involves comparing proportions, data analysis, and calculations in daily life, such as discounts, interest, and taxes. This concept is complex because it relies on a foundational understanding of fractions, decimals, and ratios. Therefore, instruction must be linked to real-world situations to provide learners with a concrete understanding.

Related Learning Theories

Bruner's Theory: Emphasizes structured learning by transitioning knowledge from the Concrete stage to the Pictorial (Iconic) stage, and finally to the Abstract stage. The Bar Model functions effectively as a visual link in this process.

Piaget's Theory: Suggests that lower secondary students are at a stage where they begin to develop abstract thinking. Therefore, using visual tools like the Bar Model helps them grasp complex concepts more easily.

The Bar Model Concept

The Bar Model is a visual tool based on the Singapore Math approach that uses rectangular bars to represent quantities and problem scenarios. It enables learners to visualize quantitative relationships and analyze problems systematically, effectively transforming abstract problems into clear, concrete visual representations.

Methodology

This study is a quasi-experimental research employing a Nonequivalent Control Group Design. The participants consist of 100 Grade 7 students of Nawaminthrachinuthit Satriwitthaya Phutthamonthon school under the researcher's instruction, divided into an experimental group of 50 students taught using the Bar Model and a control group of 50 students receiving conventional instruction on the topic of 'Percentage.' Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to compare academic achievement and analyze differences between the two groups.

Research Instruments

1. Lesson plans using the Bar Model
2. Mathematics achievement tests (Pre-test and Post-test)
3. Behavior observation records for qualitative data collection
4. Student satisfaction questionnaires

Data Collection

The researcher followed these procedures:

1.) A pre-test was administered to both groups to compare their baseline knowledge before the intervention. The test scores were then analyzed using a t-test to ensure there was no statistically significant difference in prior knowledge of 'Percentage' between the two groups.

2.) Instruction was implemented according to the research plan. The experimental group was taught the topic of 'Percentage' with training in using the Bar Model for analyzing and solving problems, while the control group received conventional instruction.

3.) A post-test was administered to compare the differences between the two groups after the intervention. The test scores were analyzed using a t-test to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the groups' performances.

4.) Qualitative data were collected through student satisfaction questionnaires and observations of student participation and engagement.

Data Analysis

- Descriptive Statistics: Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation (S.D.) were used for data analysis.
- Inferential Statistics: Both Paired Samples t-test and Independent Samples t-test were employed to test hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level.
- Qualitative Analysis: Content Analysis was applied to data collected from interviews and observation forms.

Results

Academic Achievement: The experimental group, which learned using the Bar Model to analyze and solve percentage problems, achieved a mean score ($\bar{x}$) of 17.52, while the control group achieved a mean score ($\bar{x}$) of 14.66. The t-test results indicated ($t = 16.92$) that the experimental group's achievement was significantly higher than that of the control group at the .05 level ($\alpha = 1.66$).

Satisfaction: Among the 50 students in the experimental group, 43 students (86.00%) expressed the highest level of satisfaction toward using the Bar Model for solving percentage problems, while 7 students (14.00%) expressed a high level of satisfaction.

Conclusion

Based on the study on promoting learning to enhance mathematics academic achievement in the topic of 'Percentage' using the Bar Model for Grade 7 students of Nawaminthrachinuthit Satriwitthaya Phutthamonthon school, it was found that the learning activities utilizing the Bar Model successfully achieved the research objectives as follows:

1) Learning through the use of the Bar Model for analyzing and solving percentage problems resulted in significantly higher academic achievement compared to conventional learning at the .05 statistical significance level.

2) Students who used the Bar Model to analyze and solve percentage problems expressed satisfaction at the "highest" and "high" levels, with the vast majority of students reporting the highest level of satisfaction.

Discussion and Recommendation

Discussion

1. Transforming Abstract to Concrete: Using the Bar Model helps students analyze complex word problems and visualize data relationships more concretely, effectively reducing confusion in percentage calculations.

2. Student Satisfaction and Attitude: The high levels of satisfaction indicate that students have gained greater confidence in problem-solving and developed a more positive attitude toward mathematics.

3. Interactive Learning: Integrating the Bar Model with digital media and interactive activities yields more effective results than traditional lecture-based instruction.

Recommendation

Application: Educational institutions should encourage teachers to implement Bar Model strategies in mathematics instruction, particularly for complex topics such as fractions, ratios, and percentages.

Expansion: This research should be expanded to other schools to further validate the effectiveness of the tool on a broader scale.

Technology Integration: Future studies should explore the integration of Bar Models into online learning platforms or applications to assist with exam preparation.

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THE EFFECTS OF BOARD GAME-BASED LEARNING ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITIES IN QUADRATIC EQUATIONS IN ONE VARIABLE AMONG GRADE 9 STUDENTS

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Abstract

This research study examines the effects of board game-based learning on academic achievement and problem-solving abilities in "Quadratic Equations in One Variable" among Grade 9 students. The objectives were to compare students' academic achievement after using the board game against a 60% proficiency criterion and to investigate student satisfaction toward this learning approach. The target group consisted of 40 students from Class 3/3 at Wat Rai Khing Wittaya School, selected through purposive sampling. The research instruments included a specifically designed board game comprising four main components: Chance Cards, Challenge Cards, Title Deeds, and the Game Board. The research findings indicated that board game-based learning is an innovative tool that encourages high levels of student engagement, fosters a positive attitude, and reduces anxiety in mathematics. The game mechanics allowed learners to practice problem-solving skills through direct experience and peer interaction. Consistent with the hypotheses, post-learning academic achievement was significantly higher than pre-learning levels and exceeded the established 60% criterion. Furthermore, students expressed a high level of satisfaction due to the enjoyable and challenging nature of the activity, which enabled them to apply their knowledge with greater accuracy and speed.

Introduction

Mathematics plays a pivotal role in 21st-century learning success by fostering creativity and critical analytical skills. It serves as a fundamental pillar for human resource development and national economic growth. Consequently, mathematics education must undergo continuous development to remain aligned with evolving socio-economic changes.

The mathematics curriculum is categorized into three main strands: Numbers and Algebra; Measurement and Geometry; and Statistics and Probability. These strands emphasize essential skills and processes, such as problem-solving and creative thinking.

Traditional instructional methods, particularly lecture-based approaches, often result in suboptimal learning achievement. Therefore, educators should transition into facilitators,

providing opportunities for student participation, knowledge exchange, and an enjoyable learning environment. Integrating games into instruction is an effective strategy that enables students to learn through fun, direct experience, and active engagement, which is highly suitable for mathematics education.

This research aims to develop and implement a board game for teaching "Quadratic Equations in One Variable" for Grade 9/3 students. The researcher developed the board game, achievement tests, and lesson plans, all of which were validated by experts. These tools were utilized to compare learning achievement before and after the intervention, as well as to evaluate post-learning achievement against the established criteria.

Objective

1. The Effects of Board Game-Based Learning on Academic Achievement and Problem-Solving Abilities in Quadratic Equations in One Variable among Grade 9 Students
2. To study students' satisfaction towards learning mathematics.

Research Question

1. Do the effects of board game-based learning on academic achievement and problem-solving abilities in Quadratic Equations in One Variable among Grade 9 students meet or exceed the predetermined criteria?
2. What is the level of satisfaction among Grade 9 students toward mathematics learning using board games to enhance academic achievement and problem-solving abilities in Quadratic Equations in One Variable?

Literature Review and Theory

Research on the effects of board game-based learning on academic achievement and problem-solving abilities in "Quadratic Equations in One Variable" for Grade 9 students. From the past to the present, contemporary instructional methods have often been a contributing factor to the lack of success in mathematics education—specifically, the reliance on traditional lecture-based teaching. It is essential for mathematics teachers to shift their role from lecturers to facilitators, creating opportunities for students to voice their opinions and actively participate in the learning process. Educators should seek pedagogical approaches that make learning enjoyable and foster a positive attitude toward mathematics. Encouraging the exchange of ideas among peers not only enhances engagement but also stimulates a greater desire to learn the subject.

Active Learning Management through Educational Games Educational games are a learner-centered instructional method designed to facilitate learning through play. The primary objective is to ensure that students achieve learning outcomes either during or after the gameplay. By integrating academic content with enjoyment, students engage in meaningful learning experiences. In this context, educational games refer to play-based activities that support various aspects of childhood development, with a specific focus on cognitive skills. These games feature simple rules suitable for early childhood, providing fun while using diverse media and game types to build conceptual understanding of the subject matter. Benefits of Educational Games: 1) Enhances Memory: Games help reinforce retention of the material. 2) Accelerates Learning: They stimulate students to engage more deeply with different types of required skills. 3) Maintains Classroom Order: Effectively managed games help keep the classroom organized. 4) Promotes Collaboration: They can be played in teams, reducing individual anxiety regarding winning or losing. 5) Encourages Physical Movement: Students can move parts of their body appropriately. If there is a competition, the scoring and verification process should be kept simple. 6) Utilizes Accessible Resources: Teachers should use equipment that is easy to create or repurpose as instructional tools.

In summary, the use of board games in learning management not only improves academic achievement but also serves as a vital tool for creating enjoyment. It effectively

stimulates students' enthusiasm for studying complex mathematical topics, such as Quadratic Equations in One Variable.

Methodology

Research Instruments: 1) A mathematics learning management plan on quadratic equations in one variable. 2) A board game, including board design, rules, card design, equipment used for playing, and the appropriate number of cards for 3–9 players. The design began with determining the learning content intended for players, then integrating it into a concise board game format. The board game consists of four components: Lucky Cards, Challenge Cards, Land Deeds, and the Game Board. The instruments were evaluated by experts using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), selecting items with IOC values of 0.5 or higher (the analysis showed that 15 out of 20 items met the criteria). 3) An achievement test for mathematics on quadratic equations in one variable.

Components of the Board Game on Quadratic Equations in One Variable



Game board



Instructions for playing



Lucky cards



Challenge cards



Land deeds



Game rules

Data Collection: The researcher collected data according to the experimental plan as follows: 1) Administer a pre-test to measure students' mathematics achievement before the learning management on quadratic equations in one variable. 2) Conduct instruction for the target group using the planned lessons as follows: Lesson 1: Review of quadratic equations, Lessons 2–3: Solving quadratic equations by factorization, Lesson 4: Solving quadratic equations by completing the square, Lessons 5–6: Solving quadratic equations using the formula, Lessons 7–8: Word problems on quadratic equations and Lessons 9–10: Enhancing learning management by promoting problem-solving skills through the board game on quadratic equations. 3) Administer a post-test to measure students' mathematics achievement after the learning management. 4) Present and analyze the collected data according to the research objectives. 5) Reflect on the results to improve learning management.

The data regarding the effects of board game-based learning on students' academic achievement and problem-solving abilities in Quadratic Equations in One Variable were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation.

Results

Analyze the effects of learning management using board games on academic achievement and problem-solving abilities in Quadratic Equations in One Variable. This analysis utilizes Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation (S.D.) to compare the results before and after the learning management of 40 students in Grade 9/3. before and after the intervention: The pre-test results, out of a full score of 25, showed an average score of $\bar{x} = 14.2$, a standard deviation of S.D. = 1.81, and a mean percentage of 56.5%. The post-test results, out of a full score of 25, showed an average score of $\bar{x} = 18.15$, a standard deviation of S.D. = 2.39, and a mean percentage of 72.8%. When comparing pre-test and post-test scores, it was found that the students' post-test scores were significantly higher than their pre-test scores, exceeding the set criterion of 60% with a statistical significance level of .05 .

Student Satisfaction Toward Learning Management: The satisfaction of 40 students in Grade 9/3 regarding the board game-based learning management for Quadratic Equations was evaluated across three areas: Area 1: Content and Learning Media; Item 1: The board game content regarding quadratic equations is comprehensive, accurate, and easy to understand. Item 2: The "Chance" and "Challenge" cards in the board game are appropriate for the students' ability levels. Item 3: The rules and gameplay procedures are clear, easy to understand, and practical. Finding: Overall satisfaction in Area 1 was at the highest level ($\bar{x} = 4.72$, S.D. = 0.08) Area 2: Learning Management and Instructional Process; Item 1: Learning management using board games encourages student participation and motivates learning. Item 2: The board game-based approach promotes problem-solving and analytical thinking skills in quadratic equations. Item 3: The learning management provides opportunities for students to exchange knowledge and collaborate with peers. Finding: Overall satisfaction in

Area 2 was at the highest level ($\bar{x} = 4.59$, S.D. = 0.10) Area 3: Benefits and Overall Satisfaction; Item 1: Learning through board games significantly improved students' understanding of quadratic equations. Item 2: Students are satisfied and wish to implement board game-based learning in other mathematics topics in the future. Finding: Overall satisfaction in Area 3 was at the highest level ($\bar{x} = 4.56$, S.D. = 0.06)

Conclusion

1. The results of learning management using board games on academic achievement and problem-solving abilities in Quadratic Equations in One Variable showed that the mean scores before and after the learning management were 14.2 and 18.15, respectively. When comparing the pre-learning and post-learning scores, it was found that the students' post-learning test scores were higher than the pre-learning scores, exceeding the 60 percent criterion with statistical significance at the .05 level.

2. Students' satisfaction towards learning management promoting problem-solving skills through board games on the topic of Quadratic Equations in One Variable, overall, was at the highest level.

Recommendation

1. Teachers should apply board games to learning management in other contents of Mathematics to promote thinking and problem-solving skills.
2. Board games should be designed to suit the learners' ability levels and align with the learning objectives.
3. The classroom environment should be organized to facilitate group activities to promote learner participation.
4. After organizing board game activities, there should be a lesson summary to help learners gain a more correct and clearer understanding.

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SATISFACTION OF THAI VISITORS USING THE GOLDEN JUBILEE MUSEUM OF AGRICULTURE

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Abstract

This research aimed to: 1) examine the satisfaction of Thai visitors using the Museum of Agriculture, Celebrating His Majesty the King, in three aspects: service process, staff/service providers, and facilities; 2) compare satisfaction levels based on residential area; and 3) investigate problems and recommendations. The sample consisted of 400 service recipients of The golden jubilee museum of agriculture. Data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using percentages, means, standard deviations, and independent t-tests.

The findings revealed that overall satisfaction was at the highest level (89.60%). Staff/service providers received the highest satisfaction score (90.20%), followed by facilities (89.80%) and service process (88.40%). The comparison indicated that visitors with different residential areas showed statistically significant differences in satisfaction at the 0.05 level, with those residing in Bangkok and metropolitan areas reporting higher satisfaction than those from upcountry. Key recommendations included increasing directional signage, improving restroom adequacy, and adding drinking water service points.

Keywords: Visitor Satisfaction, The golden jubilee museum of agriculture

Introduction

The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives initiated the establishment of a public organization to manage the museum with greater administrative flexibility and efficiency. The golden jubilee museum of agriculture was established under the Royal Decree Establishing The golden jubilee museum of agriculture B.E. 2552, effective from June 23, 2009. Its objectives are to disseminate the honor and genius of the Thai monarchy in relation to agriculture, to serve as a hub for promoting the sufficiency economy philosophy in agriculture, and to provide academic knowledge to government agencies, private sectors, and the general public.

Museum services are core activities that directly impact the organization's image and visitor impressions. Understanding visitor satisfaction levels is crucial for developing service quality efficiently and meeting visitor needs effectively.

Objectives

1. To examine visitor satisfaction regarding service processes, staff/service providers, and facilities of The golden jubilee museum of agriculture.
2. To compare visitor satisfaction levels classified by residential area (Bangkok and metropolitan area vs. upcountry).
3. To investigate problems and recommendations regarding museum services.

Literature Review

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow (1954) explained that human needs are arranged in a hierarchical order consisting of five levels: physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Quality services must appropriately meet visitors' needs, particularly safety and comfort, which are fundamental factors influencing satisfaction.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg (1971) classified factors affecting satisfaction into two categories: motivation factors (e.g., achievement, recognition, advancement) and hygiene factors (e.g., working conditions, interpersonal relationships, administrative policies). Both factors affect service satisfaction similarly to job satisfaction.

Service Quality Concept (SERVQUAL)

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) developed the SERVQUAL concept, which explains that service quality results from comparing visitors' expectations with their actual perceptions. When actual perceptions exceed expectations, high satisfaction occurs. Service quality comprises five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

Millet's Public Service Concept

Millet (1954) stated that service satisfaction can be measured through equitable service, timely service, ample service, continuous service, and progressive service.

Methodology

Population and Sample

Population: Thai Visitors requesting museum services at The golden jubilee museum of agriculture, totaling 341,419 persons (January 2026 – March 2026).

Sample: A total of 400 respondents were selected using simple random sampling, with proportions adjusted from the original sample of 400 while maintaining all original percentage ratios.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used as the research instrument, divided into three sections:

Section 1: General information including gender, age, educational level, current employment status, and residential area.

Section 2: Satisfaction questions regarding museum services using a 5-level rating scale, covering three aspects:

- ☐ Service process (5 items)
- ☐ Staff/service providers (5 items)
- ☐ Facilities (5 items)

Section 3: Open-ended questions for recommendations.

Data Collection

Data were collected from 400 sample respondents between January 2026 and March 2026 using interview-based questionnaires. Completed questionnaires were checked for accuracy before analysis.

Data Analysis

1. General information was analyzed using frequency and percentage.
2. Satisfaction levels were analyzed using means and standard deviations.
3. Differences between residential area groups were compared using independent t-tests.
4. Open-ended responses were analyzed using content analysis.

Reliability

The questionnaire had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.921. **Interpretation Criteria for Satisfaction Levels**

Mean Range	Satisfaction Level
4.21 – 5.00	Highest
3.41 – 4.20	High
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
1.81 – 2.60	Low
1.00 – 1.80	Lowest

RESULTS

Part 1: General Information of the Sample

Table 1 Number and Percentage of Sample by Gender (n=400)

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	110	27.4
Female	290	72.6
Total	400	100.0

Table 2 Number and Percentage of Sample by Age (n=400)

Age	Number	Percentage
Under 20 years	29	7.2
20-29 years	63	15.7
30-39 years	114	28.4
40-49 years	93	23.2
50-59 years	87	21.8
60 years and above	14	3.7
Total	400	100.0

Table 3 Number and Percentage of Sample by Educational Level (n=400)

Educational Level	Number	Percentage
Primary school	44	11.0
Secondary school	68	17.0
Vocational certificate (VOC.)	18	4.5
Diploma/High vocational	30	7.5
Bachelor's degree	199	49.8
Others	41	10.2
Total	400	100.0

Table 4 Number and Percentage of Sample by Residential Area (n=400)

Residential Area	Number	Percentage
Bangkok and Metropolitan	276	69.0
Upcountry	124	31.0
Total	400	100.0

Part 2: Satisfaction Levels of Visitors**Table 5** Means, Standard Deviations, and Satisfaction Levels by Aspect and Overall (n=400)

Aspect	Mean	S.D.	Level	Percentage
Service process	4.42	0.48	Highest	88.40
Staff/service providers	4.51	0.44	Highest	90.20
Facilities	4.49	0.50	Highest	89.80
Overall	4.48	0.41	Highest	89.60

Table 6 Means, Standard Deviations, and Satisfaction Levels for Service Process (n=400)

Item	Mean	S.D.	Level
1. Preliminary information provided about museum services	4.58	0.55	Highest
2. Clear signage showing service procedures	4.44	0.62	Highest
3. Appropriate duration of museum tour services	4.45	0.58	Highest
4. Clear and appropriate sequence of service steps	4.44	0.59	Highest
5. Availability of personnel to receive comments/evaluation forms	4.20	0.78	High
Total	4.42	0.48	Highest

Table 7 Means, Standard Deviations, and Satisfaction Levels for Staff/ Service Providers (n=400)

Item	Mean	S.D.	Level
1. Appropriate personality and attire of staff	4.50	0.56	Highest
2. Strong knowledge of the service provided	4.58	0.52	Highest
3. Enthusiastic and attentive service	4.52	0.55	Highest
4. Cheerful and smiling service	4.55	0.53	Highest
5. Ability to provide advice and answer questions well	4.38	0.58	Highest
Total	4.51	0.44	Highest

Table 8 Means, Standard Deviations, and Satisfaction Levels for Facilities (n=400)

Item	Mean	S.D.	Level
1. Appropriate atmosphere of service area	4.55	0.58	Highest
2. Clear signage/ symbols indicating directions and service points	4.48	0.61	Highest
3. Adequate and appropriate seating/ waiting areas	4.57	0.64	Highest
4. Clean and adequate restrooms	4.20	0.75	High

Item	Mean	S.D.	Level
5. Convenient and adequate parking	4.62	0.59	Highest
Total	4.49	0.50	Highest

Part 3: Comparison of Satisfaction by Residential Area

Table 9 Comparison of Satisfaction by Residential Area (n=400)

Aspect	Bangkok & Metro (n=276)	Upcountry (n=124)	t	Sig.		
	Mean (S.D.)	Level	Mean (S.D.)	Level		
Service process	4.53 (0.39)	Highest	4.18 (0.57)	High	6.82*	0.00
Staff/ service providers	4.58 (0.42)	Highest	4.34 (0.48)	High	5.13*	0.00
Facilities	4.57 (0.45)	Highest	4.30 (0.59)	High	4.98*	0.00
Overall	4.56 (0.35)	Highest	4.28 (0.49)	High	6.35*	0.00

*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level

Part 4: Recommendations

Key recommendations from visitors, ranked by frequency, were as follows:

1. Increase directional signage and area maps, particularly signs leading to restrooms, service points, and walkways within the museum.
2. Improve restrooms to be cleaner and more adequate, especially during periods with large numbers of visitors.
3. Add drinking water service points or low-cost drinking water vendors, particularly in outdoor museum areas.
4. Provide modern feedback channels, such as QR codes for satisfaction evaluations.

Discussion

The findings revealed that overall visitor satisfaction with museum services was at the highest level (89.60%). Staff/service providers received the highest satisfaction score (90.20%), followed by facilities (89.80%) and service processes (88.40%). These results align with several contemporary studies over the past 5-6 years.

Zhou and Ramli (2025) studied *Factors Influencing the Visitor Satisfaction of Intangible Cultural Heritage Museums in China* and found that service management and facilities significantly positively influenced visitor satisfaction. This aligns with the present

study, which found that staff/service providers (a component of service management) received the highest satisfaction scores, and facilities were also rated at the highest level.

Arias (2025) studied *Predictors of Visitors' Satisfaction of Public Museum Services* and found that staff professionalism was a key predictor of satisfaction, with exhibition content explaining 51.36% of variance. This corresponds with the present study, where visitors highly valued staff knowledge (Mean=4.58) and cheerful service demeanor (Mean=4.55).

Han (2026) studied *Service and technology factors shaping digital visitor experience* and found that tangibility was the only dimension significantly impacting visitor satisfaction. This aligns with the present study, where tangible facilities such as parking (Mean=4.62), service atmosphere (Mean=4.55), and seating areas (Mean=4.57) received the highest satisfaction ratings. However, restrooms (Mean=4.20) remained a lower-scoring area requiring improvement.

Putri et al. (2024) studied *Factors Affecting Museum Re-Visit* and found that service quality, destination image, and customer satisfaction significantly influenced revisit intention. This supports the importance of continuous satisfaction monitoring to maintain service quality and promote future return visits.

Differences by Residential Area

The results indicated that visitors from different residential areas showed statistically significant differences in satisfaction at the 0.05 level. Those residing in Bangkok and metropolitan areas (Mean=4.56) reported higher satisfaction than those from upcountry areas (Mean=4.28) across all aspects. This may be because visitors traveling from upcountry have higher expectations, incur greater travel time and costs, and therefore apply higher evaluation standards compared to those living nearby. This finding aligns with Parasuraman et al. (1988), who posited that satisfaction results from the comparison between expectations and actual perceptions.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and visitor recommendations, the organization should prioritize service quality development in the following areas:

1. **Facilities:** Increase the number of restrooms to be adequate, improve cleanliness, and add drinking water service points, particularly in outdoor museum areas.
2. **Communication and Signage:** Increase directional signage, area maps, and signs indicating key points to enable visitors to self-navigate and access services more conveniently.
3. **Feedback Mechanisms:** Develop modern feedback systems, such as QR codes instead of paper evaluation forms, to increase participation and enable timely improvements based on collected data.
4. **Staff Standards:** Maintain and continuously develop staff standards, which represent the organization's strength and key asset.

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SERVICE QUALITY AFFECTING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AT MUSEUM SIAM, BANGKOK

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Abstract

The service quality of museums was important for customers and the government policy emphasized service quality in responding to the customer needs. This research aimed to 1) study service quality, 2) study customer satisfaction, and 3) study service quality affecting customer satisfaction at Museum Siam, Bangkok. The sample group was the customers at Museum Siam; data were gathered by using the questionnaire and systematic gathering of 224 sets; data were analyzed by using mean, standard deviation, and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that 1) the overall service quality of Museum Siam was at a very high level ; 2) the overall customer satisfaction at Museum Siam was at a very high level; and 3) the service quality affecting customer satisfaction at Museum Siam including knowing customers, service credibility, response, and delivering confidence. These variables could be predicted at 60.2% (originally 57.2%, and Museum Siam or other museums could apply them for improving the service quality for higher customer satisfaction, learning experience, and happiness.

Keywords: Service Quality, Satisfaction, Museum Siam

Introduction

Nowadays, the learning and cultural engagement of Thai people have increased continuously caused by various factors such as lifestyle changes, digital transformation, and behavioral shifts from social and environmental changes. Both government and public sectors emphasize these issues and define problem-solving guidelines for their good quality of life. A trend of cultural tourism affects a higher number of visitors to museums and service issues such as a delay in the queue or lack of interactive exhibits cause visitor dissatisfaction, especially during peak hours.

The museum is a key learning institute intimately connected to the people and needs to improve the concreteness of service quality to meet people's expectations. The government has defined a reinventing project for improving the museum service from 2008 emphasizing relationship building and good courtesy of museum staff, guides, and service providers; exhibition process; good service quality; clean, beautiful, convenient, and appropriate location and environment which is subsidized by the government for this reinventing project responding to customer satisfaction towards the museum service.

Museum Siam (Discovery Museum) was established to promote Thai identity and lifelong learning, emphasizing global standard of museum services on educational principles and professional standards with fair pricing based on professional ethics and integrity, including improving the standard of learning services for people, environment, and natural resource concerns. In addition to the exhibitions, the museum supports various sections and associations to benefit society both direct and indirect such as providing educational workshops, cultural activities, and arranging traditional and festival activities. Museum Siam provides various service areas such as permanent exhibition halls, temporary exhibition halls, activity rooms, information counter, souvenir shop, and café, and many visitors at these areas cause a long waiting time during peak seasons.

From the above, it could be assumed that the 11th National Development Plan has a significant strategy of emphasis on education promotion, cultural preservation, and consumer protection in learning services to strengthen the physical, mental, social, and intellectual capacities of Thai people including promoting the standard of museum service system. Nowadays, the learning needs of Thai people have increased continuously due to various factors that both government and public sectors emphasize and define problem-solving guidelines for their good quality of life. As a trend of cultural tourism and the museum is the first learning institute intimately connected to the people, it affects a higher number of visitors and service issues, and thus has to improve the concreteness of service quality according to people's expectations, responding to customer satisfaction towards the museum services. Consequently, the researcher conducted a study of service quality affecting customer satisfaction at Museum Siam, Bangkok

Objectives

1. To study the service quality of Museum Siam
2. To study customer satisfaction at Museum Siam
3. To study the service quality affecting customer satisfaction at Museum Siam

Literature Review

Museum Siam and the Evolution of Thai Museology

Museum Siam, inaugurated in 2008 under the National Discovery Museum Institute (NDMI), represents a paradigm shift in Thai museology. Moving away from the traditional "fine arts" or "curiosity cabinet" models typified by the National Museum Bangkok, Museum Siam was established as a "Discovery Museum." Scholarly discourse generally categorizes the institution as a pioneer in shifting the role of the museum from a state-sanctioned repository of artifacts to a site of interactive public pedagogy.

A primary theme in the literature is the transition of historical narrative. Traditional Thai museums have historically focused on Royal- Nationalist History, emphasizing monarchical lineages and fine arts (Winichakul, 1994). However, researchers note that Museum Siam introduced a "Social History" approach.

The inaugural exhibition, *"Essays on Thailand"* (Reang Khwam Kae Pha Thai), and the subsequent *"Decoding Thainess"* (Thod Rahat Thai), are frequently cited as attempts to deconstruct the monolithic definition of "Thainess." Scholars argue that by asking "What does it mean to be Thai?", the museum encourages visitors to view national identity as a fluid, multicultural construct rather than a static, ancient inheritance.

Another significant body of research focuses on the museum's pedagogical strategies. Museum Siam is often analyzed through the lens of Constructivist Learning Theory, which posits that learners construct knowledge through experience.

- Interactive Design: Unlike traditional museums where touch is forbidden, Museum Siam utilizes digital media, tactile exhibits, and "Edutainment" (educational entertainment).
- Visitor Engagement: Studies on visitor satisfaction (e.g., studies often found in the *Journal of Mekong Societies*) highlight that this interactive approach has been successful in engaging the Thai youth demographic, who previously viewed museums as "boring" or "sacred" spaces.

The architectural significance of Museum Siam is a recurring sub-theme. Housed in the former neoclassical building of the Ministry of Commerce, the site is a prime example of Adaptive Reuse.

Architectural historians point out the irony and intentionality of placing a "post-modern" museum inside a colonial-style bureaucratic building. The physical space itself acts as a bridge between the absolutist past and the democratic, globalized present. The 2017 renovation of the

permanent exhibition further emphasized the integration of the building's historical features with cutting-edge technology, a move praised for preserving heritage while maintaining functional relevance.

Despite its progressive reputation, some critical scholars argue that Museum Siam still operates within a state-funded framework. While it allows for "play" and "questioning," critics suggest that the boundaries of these questions are often curated to maintain social cohesion. Some literature suggests that while the museum "deconstructs" Thainess, it eventually reassembles it into a modernized, more "marketable" version of national identity that aligns with Thailand's creative economy goals.

Methodology

1. The sample group of this study was 400 customers of as the sample size was determined in case of the population was unknown by Cochran's formula (W.C Cochran, 1997 referred in Bussara Prakobtham, 2013).

2. The tool of this study was the questionnaire on service quality affecting customer satisfaction at Museum Siam.

3. The researcher measured the validity and reliability by testing the improved questionnaires from 3 professors with 30 similar sample groups to find the validity by Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient and the value was 0.85.

4. The researcher checked the completeness of the questionnaires, and data were analyzed the statistical values as follows;

4.1 Analyzing the level of satisfaction towards the services and the level of services by Mean and Standard Deviation.

4.2 Measuring a correlation of all independent variables by the agreement conditions by Linear Regression Analysis and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

4.3 Analyzing a relation of all independent variables affecting customer Satisfaction at Museum Siam by Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis.

4.4 Creating a model of all independent variables affecting customer Satisfaction at Museum Siam by the formula as follows;

$$Y = a + b_1 x_1 + b_2 x_2 + b_3 x_3 + \dots$$

If a = Constant value of forecasting equation
 $b_1, b_2, b_3, \dots$ = Regression coefficient value of forecasting variables
 $x_1, x_2, x_3, \dots$ = Forecasting variables

Scope of Research

The scopes of a study of service quality affecting customer satisfaction at Museum Siam are as follows;

1. Scope of Content

1.1 Service quality comprising: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (knowing and understanding customers).

1.2 Customer satisfaction comprising: equality of service provision, timing of service provision, adequacy of service provision, continuity of service provision, and progress of service provision.

2. Scope of Population

The population of the study was the customers (visitors) of Museum Siam.

3. Scope of Variables

The independent variables were service quality comprised of:

1. Tangibility
2. Reliability
3. Responsiveness
4. Assurance
5. Empathy (knowing and understanding)

The dependent variable was customer satisfaction.

4. Scope of Time

The study and data gathering were conducted from August to December 2019.

Results

1. The overall service quality was at a high level comprising of the concreteness of services, reliability, response, reassurance, and knowing and understanding, consecutively as shown in Table 1;

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of service quality level of Museum Siam by aspects and the overall result

Service quality of Museum Siam	Level of decision-making		
	x	S.D.	Level
1. The concreteness of services	4.122	0.586	High
2. The reliability	4.183	0.621	High
3. The response	4.141	0.554	High
4. The reassurance	4.162	0.537	High
5. Knowing and understanding	4.117	0.689	High
Total	4.188	0.582	High

2. The overall customer satisfaction was at a high level comprising of the equality of service providing, timing of service providing, adequacy of service providing, continuity of service providing, and progress of service providing, consecutively as shown in Table 2;

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of customer satisfaction level of Museum Siam by aspects and the overall result

Customer satisfaction at Museum Siam	Level of decision-making		
	x	x	x
1. The equality of service providing	4.179	.550	High
2. The timing of service providing	4.266	.542	High
3. The adequacy of service providing	4.597	.627	High
4. The continuity of service providing	4.458	.633	High
5. The progress of service providing	4.699	.557	Highest
Total	4.184	.617	High

3. The service quality affecting customer Satisfaction at Museum Siam comprising of knowing and understanding the customers (x_5), reliability (x_2), response (x_3), and reassurance (x_4) by the forecasting model of customer Satisfaction at Museum Siam; $1.350 + 0.588x_3 + 0.569x_4 + 0.487x_5 + 0.210x_2$ assumed the service quality of Museum Siam was 57.2% and Multiple Correlation Coefficient was 0.746 as shown in Table 3;

Table 3: Appropriate model analysis of service quality affecting customer satisfaction at Museum Siam

Factors affecting the satisfaction	B	S.E.	t	p-value
1. Constant value	1.340	0.231	5.782*	0.000
2. Knowing and understanding the customers (x_5)	0.481	0.068	7.147*	0.000
3. The reliability (x_2)	0.202	0.069	3.427*	0.000
4. The response (x_3)	0.573	0.064	4.735*	0.000
5. The reassurance (x_4)	0.565	0.052	4.395*	0.000
R= 0.746 , R²= 0.579 , Adj R²= 0.572 , F= 84.057 , p-value= 0.000				

*A significance level of 0.05

Discussion

From the finding of this study, the researcher could discuss the significant issues as follows;

1. Service quality – overall was at a very high level, where knowing and understanding had the highest average, indicating that staff treats all visitors as relatives, understanding visitor needs, then providing services that respond accurately and satisfactorily. This aligns with Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry's five dimensions of service quality.

2. Customer satisfaction – overall very high, with progress of service provision scoring highest, indicating continuous improvement based on visitor feedback. Consistent with John's theory.

3. Service quality affecting satisfaction – comprising responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and reliability. Museum Siam should focus on understanding visitor needs to improve service patterns beyond competitors, matching visitors' expectations of WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and HOW they want to experience the museum.

Recommendations

1. Improve tangibility: Provide adequate interactive exhibits and informational materials for visitors daily.

2. Enhance staff service personality (e.g., friendly smiles, eloquent explanations) to build a good organizational image.

Suggestions for further study

1. Gather in-depth qualitative data (interviews) for more accurate information to apply as improvement guidelines for executives and staff at Museum Siam.

2. Study visitor needs and requirements in other dimensions to accurately improve services and increase customer satisfaction.

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PASSENGER BEHAVIOR AND ITS IMPACT ON AIRLINE OPERATIONS EFFICIENCY

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Abstract

This study examines passenger behavior and its impact on airline operational efficiency. The research focuses on three main types of passenger behavior uninformed, noncompliant, and disruptive behavior, and analyzes how these behaviors affect airline operations such as check-in, boarding, and turnaround time. Psychological frameworks, including the Theory of Planned Behavior, Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis, and Equity Theory, are applied to explain the underlying causes of these behaviors.

A qualitative research approach was used, based on observation and real-life experiences in airline ground operations. The findings reveal that passenger behavior significantly affects operational efficiency, particularly in terms of delays, increased workload, and service disruptions. Case-based analysis shows that minor issues, such as baggage disputes or late arrivals, can escalate into operational problems when combined with emotional responses.

The study concludes that passenger behavior is influenced by psychological and situational factors rather than individual traits alone. It suggests that airlines should implement behavior-based management strategies, improve communication, and enhance staff training to effectively manage passenger behavior and improve operational performance.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore passenger behavior and its impact on airline ground operations. The qualitative approach is used to gain an in-depth understanding of real-life situations, human interactions, and behavioral patterns within the aviation service environment. Data were collected through non-participant observation and real-life experiences during ground operations at the airport, focusing on interactions between ground staff and passengers in both routine and challenging situations such as flight delays, communication issues, and non-compliant passenger behavior.

In addition, the study also utilizes secondary data sources, including online news articles and social media platforms. These sources provide additional insights into real-world aviation incidents and public reactions toward passenger-related events. The participants in this study include ground staff and passengers who were observed indirectly during service interactions. No personal identifying information was collected, and all observations were conducted ethically and professionally within the workplace environment.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify, categorize, and interpret recurring patterns of passenger behavior and their impact on operational efficiency. The analysis focused on key themes such as communication breakdown, emotional passenger

responses, compliance with airline regulations, and the effects of these behaviors on service flow, staff performance, and overall airport operations.

H1: Non-compliant passenger behavior negatively affects airline operational efficiency.

H2: Disruptive passenger behavior increases staff workload and causes operational delays.

H3: Uninformed passenger behavior reduces service efficiency and increases processing time.

Results and Discussion

The findings indicate that passenger behavior significantly affects airline operational efficiency, particularly in situations involving disruptive actions. Passenger behavior can be categorized into three main types: uninformed, non-compliant, and disruptive behavior. These behaviors often develop progressively, beginning with a lack of understanding and potentially escalating into conflict and operational disruption.

A real-life example can be observed in an incident involving Thai AirAsia, where a passenger made a careless remark about a “bomb” on a flight from Krabi to Bangkok. Although there was no malicious intent, the statement triggered full aviation security procedures, including passenger evacuation, baggage re-screening, and a flight delay of approximately 4-5 hours.

This case demonstrates that even minor passenger behavior can escalate into major operational disruptions. From a psychological perspective, this can be explained by the Theory of Planned Behavior and Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis, highlighting that a lack of awareness and emotional responses can significantly influence behavior and impact airline operations.

Conclusions

This study concludes that passenger behavior plays a crucial role in airline operational efficiency. The three main types of behavior uninformed, non-compliant, and disruptive affect service processes in different ways, particularly in terms of delays, service quality, and staff workload.

The findings indicate that non-compliant behavior supports H1, as it leads to service disruptions and delays. Disruptive behavior, as illustrated by the case of Thai AirAsia, strongly supports H2 due to its significant impact on delays and increased workload. Additionally, uninformed behavior supports H3, as it reduces service efficiency and increases processing time.

Overall, airline operations are highly sensitive to passenger behavior, especially in safety-related situations. Therefore, airlines must implement strict behavioral management and enforce regulations effectively, as safety remains the highest priority in aviation.

Discussion And Recommendations

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that passenger behavior has a significant impact on airline ground operations. Various behaviors such as miscommunication, emotional reactions, lack of understanding of airline regulations, and non-compliance with procedures can lead to operational delays and increased workload for ground staff. In some cases, disruptive

behaviors, including false security-related claims such as bomb threats, can severely affect airport operations, requiring immediate security response and causing flight disruptions.

The study also found that communication plays a crucial role in reducing conflict between passengers and staff. Many issues arise from misunderstandings regarding baggage rules, travel documents, and boarding procedures. Ground staff are often required to manage not only operational tasks but also passengers' emotions, which requires strong interpersonal and problem-solving skills. These situations highlight the importance of emotional control and professionalism in maintaining service quality and operational efficiency.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed to improve airline ground operations. First, airlines should enhance passenger awareness by providing clear and simple information regarding travel rules, baggage policies, and check-in procedures through multiple channels such as websites, mobile applications, and airport announcements.

Second, it is recommended that airlines invest in training programs for ground staff, particularly in communication skills, conflict management, and emotional intelligence. These skills are essential in handling difficult passengers and maintaining smooth operations during high-stress situations.

Lastly, stronger security awareness campaigns should be implemented to educate passengers about the seriousness and consequences of false threats or disruptive behavior. Collaboration between airlines, airport authorities, and security agencies is also essential to ensure safety, efficiency, and a positive passenger experience.

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A STUDY OF GASTRONOMY TOURISM PERSPECTIVES: LEVERAGING GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS (GIS) FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

In the modern era, travel is no longer limited to sightseeing but has evolved into a quest for deep cultural experiences through "food." Japan serves as a premier model for successfully elevating local products through the Geographical Indication (GIs) system, systematically linking them with Gastronomy Tourism (MAFF, 2023). This article presents the background of gastronomy tourism and extracts key lessons from the Japanese experience to provide a strategic framework for Thailand.

Introduction: Background and Evolution of Gastronomy Tourism

The global tourism industry has experienced exponential growth following the easing of pandemic restrictions. For developing nations, tourism acts as a primary engine for generating national income and building a positive international image. This success relies on both "Push and Pull Factors," supported by robust government policies and digital marketing. *Conceptual Paradigms in Gastronomy Tourism*

In the past, food was viewed as a secondary component of travel. Today, it has transitioned into a primary motivator. Hall and Mitchell (2001) define gastronomy tourism as travel to food producers, food festivals, and restaurants to encounter unique culinary experiences. This aligns with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2012), which identifies food as "Intangible Cultural Heritage," serving as a vital link between local identity and the traveler.

Socio-Cultural Dimensions through Food

Culinary consumption in tourism is more than just satisfying hunger; it is a form of cultural communication. Bessière (1998) explains that food represents cultural heritage and local wisdom, helping to establish "Territorial Identity." Furthermore, Hjalager and Richards (2002) highlight that gastronomy tourism serves as a tool for revitalizing vanishing local cultures and transforming them into economic value.

Psychology and Consumer Behavior

The challenge of this tourism sector lies in the traveler's psyche. Cohen and Avieli (2004) introduced the paradox between Neophilia (the desire to try new things) and Neophobia (the fear of unfamiliar food or concerns regarding hygiene). Meanwhile, Lin et al. (2011) found that the image of local food significantly influences destination choice. Travelers evaluate "Authenticity" based on original ingredients and traditional cooking methods rather than modifications made solely to please tourists.

Sustainability and Supply Chain Management

Recent research emphasizes sustainability. Sudsawat (2022) notes that effective gastronomy tourism requires integration across sectors—from farmers to restaurateurs. This corresponds with the Farm-to-Table concept, which minimizes environmental impact and distributes income directly to communities. Additionally, Yokkhun (2021) emphasizes the role

of technology and social media in "Storytelling," adding value to raw materials by turning them into narratives.

Synthesized Conclusion

From the literature review, gastronomy tourism can be defined as a "Process of Creating Symbolic Experiences" consisting of three P's of core elements:

1. People: Motivation and the search for authenticity.
2. Place: Identity, raw materials, and local culture.
3. Process: Ethical and sustainable supply chain management.

The Evolution of Gastronomy Tourism

The evolution of gastronomy tourism is complex and can be categorized into five key eras:

- Early Foundations: Gastronomy roots began in 18th-century France with Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, whose work *The Physiology of Taste* (1825) established food as both a science and an art reflecting civilization.
- The Michelin Era: The birth of the "Michelin Guide" in 1900 transformed food into a "Motivation for Travel," encouraging motorists to travel further to discover exceptional dining and lodging (Richards, 2012).
- Academic Formalization: Lucy Long (1998) proposed the term "Culinary Tourism" to describe how travelers use food to explore different cultures. This was later expanded by Hall and Mitchell (2001).
- Experience Economy: In the 2010s, the UNWTO elevated the concept to "Gastronomy Tourism," emphasizing the fusion of cultural heritage and creativity.
- Sustainability & Digital Era: Currently, focus has shifted toward sustainable food systems and traceability. Travelers seek authenticity through GI-certified ingredients (Hall & Gossling, 2016).

Lessons from Japan's GI-Driven Gastronomy Development

Japan has evolved from *meibutsu* (regional specialties) from past to Geographic Indications (GI), nowadays, which is a shift from traditional local reputation to formalized, internationally recognized, intellectual property, protecting quality and authenticity. This transformation modernized the traditional *omiyage* (a gift) culture, creating stricter legal standards for regional branding. At the present day, Meibutsu becomes the standard process system to craft the local products to a premium product by using GI symbol. The Japanese GI system (The Japan GI Act) is not merely for legal protection but is a tool for creating a regional competitive advantage. Japan GI has significant details as following:

1. Re-contextualization of Terroir: Japan successfully adapted the European "Terroir" concept to an Asian context, focusing not only on physical geography but also on "Monozukuri" (the spirit of manufacturing). This creates "Scarcity" and "Uniqueness" that is difficult to replicate (Ishii, 2021).
2. Peer-to-Peer Monitoring: Suzuki & Kashiwagi (2019) note that the strength of Japan's GI lies in "Producer Associations" that set their own standards (Self-Standardization). This builds a "High-Trust Society" and reduces government oversight costs.
3. Price Premium Analysis: According to MAFF (2023), GI products in Japan command prices 1.5 to 2 times higher than non-GI counterparts. The GI label serves as a "Quality Signaling" mechanism that reduces "Information Asymmetry" between producers and buyers.

Linking GI to Gastronomy Tourism

Japan views GI products as tourism resources rather than just agricultural goods:

- Experience Chain Management: The "Farm-to-Table" concept has been developed into "Gastronomy Routes," integrating farmers, accommodation, and restaurants (Japan Tourism Agency, 2022). This decentralizes wealth from major cities to rural areas.

- Storytelling and Packaging: In terms of cultural semiotics, Japanese GI packaging acts as a "Cultural Ambassador." It connects to the concept of "Omiyage" (souvenirs), which strengthens social bonds (OECD, 2021).
- Destination Branding: GI products act as "Anchor Attractions" for provincial branding. For example, Niigata Prefecture uses its "Koshihikari Rice" and "GI Sake" as pillars for its winter tourism.

From the points of views, GI products act as the connective tissue between rural producers and urban consumers. This "Gastronomy Route" infrastructure ensures that tourism revenue flows directly into the hands of local farmers and hospitality providers, rather than pooling in major metropolitan hubs. Japan has successfully leveraged the GI tag as a "Cultural Ambassador." By framing these products within the tradition of Omiyage, the GI label transcends its role as a quality marker and becomes a tool for strengthening social bonds and communicating regional identity.

Therefore, the integration of GI into Japan's tourism strategy moves beyond simple consumption. It fosters a virtuous cycle where the protection of a product's origin preserves the cultural heritage and landscape of the region, ensuring that the very "flavor" that attracts tourists remains authentic and sustainable for generations.

Conclusion and Application for Thailand

Based on this analysis, Thailand should shift its focus from "GI Registration for Protection" to "GI for Global Branding." This can be achieved through three pillars:

1. Strengthening Producer Associations.
2. Integrating GI into Provincial Tourism Development Plans.
3. Elevating local storytelling to meet international standards.

Moreover, in order to develop gastronomy tourism with GI to success in international market should be done as following:

- Gastronomy tourism extends beyond the act of dining; it utilizes Geographical Indication (GI) as a critical mechanism to establish international consumer confidence.
- The focus shifts from traditional agricultural sales to the creation of unique, "one-of-a-kind" culinary experiences.
- The core value lies in presenting the authenticity of food through its Terroir (local environmental factors) and indigenous culture.
- It must preserve the gastronomy value chain; Upstream: preserving raw ingredients and traditional wisdom derived from Local Resources; Midstream: enhancing value through specialized processing and strategic; Storytelling and Downstream: integrating products into tourism activities and expanding reach through international export markets.

Therefore, GI could be the policy-driven to develop Thailand's gastronomy tourism that encourage local communities to protect their valuable heritage through GI and to transition their local GI resources into international tourism markets which Fosters sustainable economic growth within local communities.

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ADOPTION OF AIRLINE IN-FLIGHT EXPERIENCE BETWEEN GENERATION Y AND Z

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Abstract

Digital transformation has reshaped the airline industry, making In-Flight Entertainment and Connectivity (IFE&C) a key component of passenger experience. This study examines and compares the adoption of digital in-flight services between Generation Y and Generation Z passengers in Thailand, focusing on connectivity, loyalty programs, sustainability, and technological innovation. A quantitative cross-sectional design was used, with data collected from 100 airline passengers through a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were applied.

The results show that high-speed internet connectivity is the most valued service for both generations. However, differences exist: Generation Z shows stronger interest in advanced technologies (AI, AR, VR), mobile-based systems, visible sustainability practices, and spontaneous purchasing behavior. In contrast, Generation Y emphasizes reliability, convenience, functional value, and traditional loyalty programs. The study suggests that airlines should adopt segmented strategies rather than a one-size-fits-all approach by combining reliability, innovation, and sustainability to enhance satisfaction, loyalty, and ancillary revenue.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In the modern aviation industry, digital transformation has evolved from a supporting function into a central strategic element. Airlines are no longer evaluated solely on safety or punctuality, but increasingly on the quality of digital services offered throughout the passenger journey. In-flight entertainment and connectivity (IFE&C) have become key differentiators that directly influence passenger satisfaction and airline competitiveness.

Historically, in-flight entertainment was limited to passive systems such as overhead screens or preloaded content. However, advancements in digital technology have transformed the cabin into an extension of passengers' digital lifestyles. Travelers now expect seamless connectivity that allows them to work, communicate, and access entertainment during flights.

Furthermore, the digital journey begins before boarding. From mobile booking and check-in to digital boarding passes, passengers engage with airline systems throughout their journey. This shift highlights the importance of integrating digital infrastructure across all touchpoints. The increasing use of personal devices has also contributed to the rise of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) trends. Passengers now prefer accessing content through smartphones and tablets, requiring airlines to develop flexible, mobile-friendly platforms.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite widespread adoption of digital technologies, differences exist in how various generations perceive and use these services. Generation Y, often referred to as digital adopters, tends to value functionality, reliability, and efficiency. In contrast, Generation Z, as digital natives, expects more immersive, interactive, and personalized experiences.

These differences create challenges for airlines attempting to design digital services that satisfy both groups. Additionally, growing environmental awareness introduces another dimension, as passengers increasingly expect sustainable practices to be integrated into airline operations. In the Thai aviation context, there is limited research examining how these generational differences influence digital service adoption, particularly in relation to in-flight experience.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study aims to compare the adoption of digital in-flight experiences between Generation Y and Generation Z. The specific objectives include:

- To examine passenger attitudes toward digital connectivity and in-flight services
- To analyze the role of emerging technologies such as AI and personalization
- To investigate the impact of sustainability on airline perception
- To identify factors influencing purchasing behavior and loyalty

2. Literature Review

2.1 Passenger Experience Transformation

The aviation industry has evolved into a digital service ecosystem where passenger experience covers the entire journey, from pre-flight to post-flight. Ground-based digital interactions, such as mobile check-in and boarding systems, significantly influence passengers' readiness to engage with in-flight services like IFE&C.

2.2 Generational Technology Adoption

Generation Y (Millennials) adopts technology for practical purposes, focusing on reliability and efficiency. In contrast, Generation Z (digital natives) expects interactive, immersive, and personalized experiences. These differences reflect varying priorities between functional value and experiential engagement.

2.3 Seamless Digital Journey

A seamless integration between ground and in-flight systems enhances passenger satisfaction and reduces travel-related stress. Inconsistent or poorly synchronized systems can negatively impact the overall experience, while well-integrated platforms encourage service usage and engagement.

2.4 Digital Sustainability

Sustainability has become a key consideration in passenger decision-making. Generation Y values practical initiatives, while Generation Z prefers visible and transparent actions such as paperless systems. Digital sustainability practices can strengthen trust and improve airline image.

2.5 Ancillary Revenue and Digital Engagement

Digital platforms play an important role in generating ancillary revenue. During waiting time at airports, passengers are more likely to engage with digital services and make purchases. This behavior is particularly strong among Generation Z, who are more responsive to real-time offers.

2.6 Human–Technology Interaction

Despite increased digitalization, human support remains essential. The “High-Tech, High-Touch” approach highlights the importance of staff assistance in helping passengers navigate digital systems and improving overall service adoption.

2.7 Digital Service Quality

Digital service quality now includes usability, accessibility, and reliability. Poor system performance or security concerns can reduce passenger satisfaction, emphasizing the need for user-friendly and secure digital platforms.

2.8 Role of Digitalization

Digitalization has transformed the passenger journey into a continuous, interconnected process. Mobile applications play a central role in enhancing convenience, although system inefficiencies and privacy concerns remain challenges.

2.9 Emerging Technologies

Technologies such as AI, IoT, and biometrics enable personalized and efficient services. While these innovations improve passenger experience, challenges related to cost, complexity, and user adaptation must be considered.

2.10 Digital Connectivity and Behavior

In-flight connectivity, especially Wi-Fi, is a critical factor in passenger satisfaction and airline competitiveness. Continuous digital access encourages engagement and increases the likelihood of additional purchases, particularly among younger passengers.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine differences in the adoption of digital in-flight experiences between Generation Y and Generation Z. The quantitative approach allows for systematic comparison of attitudes and behaviors, while the cross-sectional method captures current passenger perceptions within the evolving aviation context.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target population consists of airline passengers in Thailand who have prior experience with digital in-flight services. A convenience sampling method was used due to accessibility constraints. A total of 100 respondents participated in the study, providing sufficient data for comparison between Generation Y and Generation Z. Although this method may limit generalizability, it is appropriate for exploratory research.

3.3 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire divided into three sections: demographic information, digital connectivity and in-flight entertainment usage, and attitudes toward loyalty, sustainability, and innovation. A five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was used to measure responses.

3.4 Data Collection

The questionnaire was distributed online over a seven-day period. Participants were selected based on their experience with airline travel and digital services. The timing of data collection ensured that respondents provided relevant and recent insights into their travel experiences.

3.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were applied to analyze the data, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. These methods were used to identify patterns and compare responses between Generation Y and Generation Z, particularly in relation to digital service adoption and preferences.

3.6 Validity, Reliability, and Ethics

Content validity was ensured by designing the questionnaire based on relevant literature and research objectives. The use of a Likert scale supports consistency in measurement. Ethical considerations were addressed by ensuring voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality of all respondents, with data used solely for academic purposes.

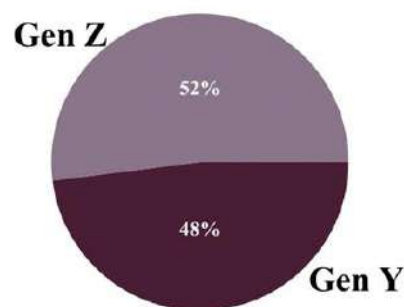
4. Results

4.1 Demographic Profile

The study collected data from 100 respondents. The gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 56% female and 44% male.

In terms of generational groups, 52% were Generation Z and 48% were Generation Y, allowing for effective comparison. Most respondents were students (40%) and company employees (35%), indicating a sample dominated by active and digitally engaged individuals.

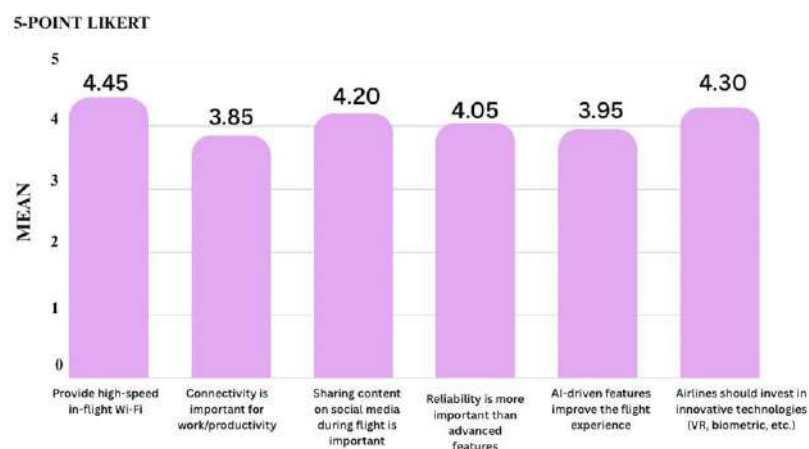
Regarding travel frequency, the majority traveled 1–2 times per year (42%), followed by 3–5 times (33%), suggesting that most respondents were occasional to moderate travelers.



4.2 Digital Connectivity Preferences

Digital connectivity emerged as the most important factor influencing passenger experience. High-speed in-flight Wi-Fi received the highest mean score (Mean = 4.45), indicating that it is considered a basic necessity rather than a premium service.

Passengers also showed strong agreement toward investment in new technologies such as AI and VR (Mean = 4.30), as well as access to social media (Mean = 4.20). However, system reliability (Mean = 4.05) remains essential, suggesting that innovation must be supported by consistent performance.



4.3 In-Flight Entertainment (IFE) Usage

Passengers reported frequent use of in-flight entertainment systems (Mean = 4.12). However, there is a strong preference for using personal devices (Mean = 4.08), reflecting the growing trend of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD).

This indicates that airlines should support mobile-based platforms alongside traditional seatback systems.

4.4 Generational Comparison

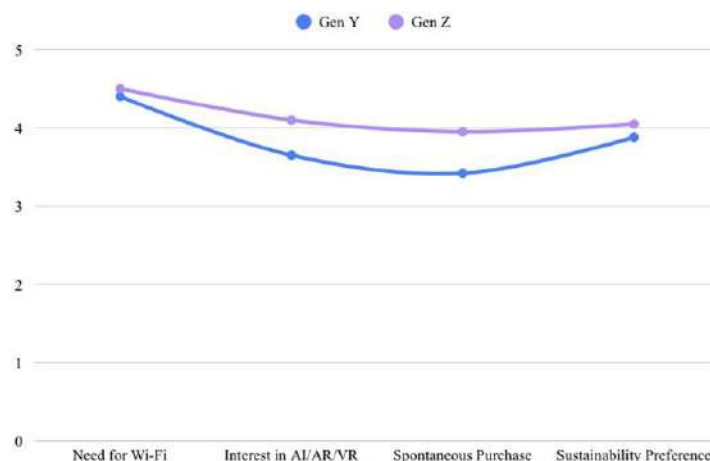
Clear differences were observed between Generation Y and Generation Z.

Generation Z showed stronger interest in advanced technologies such as AI personalization and immersive experiences (AR/VR). Generation Y emphasized reliability, ease of use, and functional value. These findings confirm that different generations have distinct expectations regarding digital services.

4.5 Ancillary Purchasing Behavior

The results indicate that Generation Z is more likely to make spontaneous purchases during flights, such as Wi-Fi upgrades or additional services.

In contrast, Generation Y tends to make planned purchases and shows greater price sensitivity.



4.6 Sustainability and Personalization

Both generations showed positive attitudes toward sustainability, but the effect was stronger among Generation Z, particularly for visible practices such as paperless services.

Additionally, AI-driven personalization received a positive mean score (3.95), indicating general acceptance. However, some concerns about privacy and over-automation were noted.

4.7 Summary of Findings

Overall, the results demonstrate that digital connectivity is the most critical factor in passenger experience. While both generations value digital services, their expectations differ significantly:

Generation Z prioritizes innovation, personalization, and sustainability

Generation Y prioritizes reliability, usability, and practicality

These differences highlight the importance of segmented strategies in airline service design.

5. Discussion

5.1 Digital Connectivity as Core Service

The findings confirm that high-speed Wi-Fi is no longer optional but a core component of the passenger experience. Generation Y focuses on reliability and efficiency, while Generation Z expects seamless and continuous connectivity. Pre-flight digital interactions also influence in-flight expectations.

5.2 Innovation and Experience

Generation Z shows stronger preference for immersive technologies such as AI and AR/VR, reflecting a shift toward experience-based consumption. However, innovation must remain user-friendly and reliable to meet Generation Y expectations.

5.3 Purchasing Behavior and Revenue

Generation Z demonstrates a higher tendency toward spontaneous purchases due to immediacy and convenience, especially during waiting time. In contrast, Generation Y is more planned and price-conscious. This highlights opportunities for real-time digital marketing.

5.4 Loyalty in the Digital Era

Traditional loyalty programs are less effective for Generation Z, who prefer immediate rewards. Airlines should adopt more flexible and experience-based loyalty strategies supported by digital platforms.

5.5 Sustainability

Sustainability is increasingly important, particularly for Generation Z, who prefer visible and transparent practices. Integrating sustainability into digital services can enhance trust and brand perception.

5.6 Human Interaction

Despite digital advancements, human support remains essential. Ground staff play an important role in assisting passengers and improving adoption of digital services.

Conclusion

This study shows that digital transformation has made connectivity, personalization, and sustainability essential parts of the airline passenger experience. High-speed Wi-Fi is now a basic expectation rather than a premium service. Clear differences exist between generations. Generation Z prefers innovative, immersive, and personalized experiences, while Generation Y focuses more on reliability and practicality. Generation Z is also more likely to make spontaneous purchases, whereas Generation Y prefers planned decisions. The findings suggest that airlines should not use a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, they should develop flexible digital strategies that balance innovation with reliability and align with different generational expectations to improve satisfaction, loyalty, and revenue.

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PERCEPTION OF TOURISM IMAGE AFFECTING TRAVEL DECISIONS OF KHAO LAK, PHANG NGA PROVINCE OF THAI MILLENNIAL TOURIST'S

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Abstract

This quantitative research aimed to: (1) examine the travel behavior of Thai millennial tourists visiting Khao Lak, (2) investigate their perception of the destination image of Khao Lak, and (3) analyze demographic factors affecting destination image perception and travel decision-making among Thai millennial tourists visiting Khao Lak. The sample consisted of 343 Thai millennial tourists who visited Khao Lak. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, as well as inferential statistics using one-way ANOVA. The findings revealed that most respondents were female, aged between 21 and 37 years, single, self-employed, earning a monthly income of 10,001–20,000 baht, and currently residing in southern Thailand. In terms of travel behavior, most tourists visited for leisure purposes, traveled with friends, used private cars as their main mode of transportation, stayed for approximately two days, and spent around 3,001–5,000 baht per trip. Most respondents obtained travel information from online media, particularly Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram. The study examined destination image perception across six dimensions. The highest-rated indicators in each dimension were as follows: tourism attractions are well known; transportation access is diverse; accommodations are modern and comfortable; tourist service facilities are widely available; food and beverage prices are reasonable; and tourist destinations are clean and hygienic. The results of hypothesis testing at the 0.05 significance level indicated that differences in gender, age, occupation, and monthly income significantly affected destination image perception and travel decision-making. Differences in marital status affected only the attraction dimension, differences in education level affected only the accommodation dimension, and differences in domicile affected only the accessibility dimension.

In conclusion, the destination image of Khao Lak was perceived positively by Thai millennial tourists, particularly in terms of reputation, accessibility, accommodation quality, value for money, and safety. These factors played an important role in influencing their decision to visit the destination.

Keywords: perception, destination image, travel behavior, Thai millennial tourists

Introduction

Tourism is an important industry that contributes significantly to Thailand's economy. Destination image plays a key role in influencing tourists' travel decisions because perceptions are formed through personal experience, word-of-mouth, and online media. Different generations may perceive destinations differently, which leads to different travel behaviors and decision-making processes.

Following the impact of COVID-19, domestic tourism has become increasingly important. Thai millennials, aged 21–37 years, represent a major tourism market because they have purchasing power, actively use social media, and often seek new travel experiences.

Khao Lak is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Phang Nga, known for its natural beauty, accommodation, and tourism facilities. However, the destination has traditionally

relied heavily on international tourists. Therefore, understanding the travel behavior and destination image perception of Thai millennial tourists is important for strengthening domestic tourism.

This study aimed to examine the travel behavior of Thai millennial tourists, investigate their perception of the destination image of Khao Lak, and analyze demographic factors affecting their travel decisions. The findings can provide useful information for tourism planning, destination image development, and promotional strategies to attract more Thai millennial tourists.

Objectives

- 1) To study the behavior of Thai millennial tourists visiting Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province.
- 2) To study the level of perceived image of Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province.
- 3) To study the demographic factors that influence the perceived image and thus the decision of Thai millennial tourists to visit Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province.

Methodology

This quantitative research examines the perception of image that influences the decision of Thai millennial tourists to visit Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province. The research methodology is detailed as follows:

3.1 Research Design 3.2 Population and sample 3.3 Variables and measurements 3.4 Instrumentation 3.5 Data collection 3.6 Data analysis

These were used to define the following criteria:

Average of 4.51 – 5.00 means the highest level of perceived tourism image.

Average of 3.51 – 4.50 means a high level of perceived tourism image.

Average of 2.51 – 3.50 means a medium level of perceived tourism image.

Average of 1.51 – 2.50 means a low level of perceived tourism image.

Average of 1.00 – 1.50 means the lowest level of perceived tourism image.

Part 4, Suggestions, is in the form of open-ended questions asking tourists to specify suggestions and other information related to the perceived image that influenced their decision to visit Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province. This is for Thai millennial tourists.

Results

The study on the perception of the tourism image that affects the decision of Thai millennial tourists to visit Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province is a quantitative research. The results of the study from questionnaires of 343 people are divided into 4 parts as follows: (1) general information of the sample group (2) the results of the analysis of the behavior of Thai millennial tourists (3) the results of the analysis of the level of perception of the image of Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province (4) the results of the analysis of demographic factors that affect the perception of the image that affects the decision of Thai millennial tourists to visit Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province.

Gender	Number of people	Percentage
Female	111	32.4
Male	230	67.1
Other	2	10.6
Total	343	100.0

The majority of the sample were female, numbering 230 people (67.1%), followed by males with 111 people (32.4%), and other genders with 2 people (0.6%).

Age		
21	5	1.5
22	7	2.0
23	22	6.4
24	12	3.5
25	29	8.5
26	49	14.3
27	38	11.1
28	38	11.1
29	29	8.5
30	47	13.7
31	19	5.5
32	25	7.3
33	8	2.3
34	4	1.2
35	8	2.3
36	3	0.9
Total	343	100.0

The sample group of tourists visiting Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province, are millennials, aged 21-37 years old

Status		
Single	179	52.2
Married	164	47.8
Total	343	100.0

In terms of marital status, the majority were single, numbering 179 people (52.2%), followed by those who were married, numbering 164 people (47.8%)

Education		
Below Bachelor's Degree	22	6.4
Bachelor's Degree	296	86.3
Higher than Bachelor's Degree	24	0.3
Total	343	100.0

In terms of educational attainment, the majority, 269 people (86.3%), had a bachelor's degree, followed by 24 people (7.0%) with degrees higher than a bachelor's degree, and 22 people (6.4%) with degrees lower than a bachelor's degree.

Occupation		
Students	43	12.5
Self-employed individuals	115	33.5
Private sector employees	87	25.4
Government officials/state employees	68	19.8
State enterprise employees	17	5.0
Freelancers	9	2.6
Housewives/Househusbands	4	1.2
Total	343	100.0

In terms of occupation, the majority were self-employed, numbering 115 people (33.5%), followed by private company employees at 87 people (25.4%), government officials/state employees at 68 people (19.8%), students at 43 people (12.5%), state enterprise employees at

17 people (5%), hired workers at 9 people (2.6%), and housewives/househusbands at 4 people (1.2%), respectively.

Income		
0 – 10,000 baht	29	8.5
10,001 – 20,000 baht	192	56.0
20,001 – 30,000 baht	94	27.4
30,001 – 40,000 baht	28	8.2
Total	343	100.0

In terms of monthly income, the majority, 191 people (55.7%), earn between 10,001 and 20,000 baht, followed by 94 people (27.4%) earning between 20,001 and 30,000 baht, and 29 people (8.5%) earning less than 10,000 baht.

Analysis of the behavior of Thai millennial tourists visiting Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province.

Behavior of Thai millennial tourists	Number of	Percentage
Purpose of the trip		
To relax and unwind	256	74.6
To have fun and enjoyment	39	11.4
To visit relatives	18	5.2
To meet and socialize with friends	25	7.6
To meet business friends	2	0.6
To attend a meeting	2	0.6
Total	343	100.00
People traveling together on this trip		
Solo traveler	11	3.2
Family	103	30.0
Friends	156	45.5
Colleagues	12	3.5
Couple	61	17.8
Total	343	100.00
Behavior of Thai millennial tourists	Number of	Percentage
Methods of getting there		
Private car	320	93.3
Rental car	14	4.1
Motorcycle	1	0.3
Public bus	7	2.0
Tour company vehicle	1	0.3
Total	343	100.00
Duration of your trip		
1 day	38	11.1
2 days	214	62.4
3 days	85	24.8
3days or more	6	1.7
Total	343	100.00

Travel expenses		
Less than or equal to 3,000 baht	50	14.6
3,001 – 5,000 baht	147	42.9
5,001 – 7,000 baht	124	36.2
7,001 – 9,000 baht	18	5.2
9,001 baht and above	4	1.2
Total	343	100.00
Gathering information about tourist attractions		
From groups of friends/close acquaintances	57	16.6
From online media such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok	258	75.2
From various advertising media such television/newspapers/magazines	28	8.2
Total	343	100.00

An analysis of the travel behavior of 343 Thai male millennial tourists visiting Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province, categorized by purpose of travel, companions, method of travel, duration of travel, expenditure, and research on tourist attractions, revealed that the majority of the sample visited for relaxation (256 people, 74.6%). Most traveled with friends (156 people, 45.5%), primarily by private vehicle (320 people, 93.3%), lasted approximately two days (214 people, 62.4%), spent between 3,001 and 5,000 baht (147 people, 42.9%), and researched tourist attractions online (258 people, 75.2%)

The results of the analysis of the perceived image of Thai millennial tourists showed that

variant	Level of image perception		
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	meaning
Attractiveness	4.464	0.6439	A lot
Accessibility	183.4	6850.0	A lot
Accommodation	566.4	6016.0	The most
Amenities	119.4	7272.0	A lot
Value for money	038.4	7288.0	A lot
Safety	816.3	7746.0	A lot

*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level

An analysis of the perceived image of Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province, among 343 Thai millennial tourists, revealed an overall high level of perception. The aspect with the highest average score was accommodation ($\bar{X} = 4.566$, SD. = 0.6016). Aspects with similar average scores included attractions ($\bar{X} = 4.464$, SD. = 0.6439), accessibility ($\bar{X} = 4.183$, SD. = 0.6850), facilities ($\bar{X} = 4.119$, SD. = 0.7272), and value for money ($\bar{X} = 4.083$, SD. = 0.7288). The aspect with the lowest average score was safety ($\bar{X} = 3.816$, SD. = 0.7746).

Analysis of the perception of image among Thai millennial tourists

subject	Level of image perception		
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	meaning
Attractive features			
1. Famous tourist attractions	4.693	0.5154	The most
2. Unique and distinctive tourist attractions with scenic views	4.484	0.6746	A lot
3. Diverse activities such as kayaking, snorkeling, and mountain climbing	4.326	0.6654	A lot
4. Diverse recreational facilities such as entertainment venues, shopping malls, and cafes	4.449	0.6685	A lot
5. Natural ecosystems such as beautiful sea water and abundant wildlife	4.367	0.6960	A lot
Total	4.464	0.6439	A lot

An analysis of the perceived image of Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province, among 343 Thai millennial tourists, revealed an overall high level of perception. The aspect with the highest average score was accommodation ($\bar{X} = 4.566$, SD. = 0.6016). Aspects with similar average scores included attractions ($\bar{X} = 4.464$, SD. = 0.6439), accessibility ($\bar{X} = 4.183$, SD. = 0.6850), facilities ($\bar{X} = 4.119$, SD. = 0.7272), and value for money ($\bar{X} = 4.083$, SD. = 0.7288). The aspect with the lowest average score was safety ($\bar{X} = 3.816$, SD. = 0.7746).

subject	Level of image perception		
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$
Accessibility			
1. Tourist attractions offer diverse transportation options	4.224	0.6747	A lot
2. Tourist attractions have clear signage	4.177	0.6263	A lot
3. Travel to tourist attractions is safe	4.195	0.7006	A lot
4. There are interconnected travel routes between tourist attractions	4.137	0.7385	A lot
Total	183.4	6850.0	A lot
Accommodation Aspects:			
1. The accommodations are modern and comfortable	4.705	0.4934	The most
2. The accommodations are reasonably priced	4.591	0.6185	The most
3. There is a wide variety of accommodation options	4.492	0.6253	A lot
4. The accommodations are clean and tidy.	4.586	0.6194	The most
5. There is sufficient accommodation for the number of tourists	4.457	0.6514	A lot
Total	4.566	0.6016	The Most
Facilities			
1. The tourist attraction has comprehensive tourist service points	4.457	0.6192	A lot
2. The tourist attraction has sufficient and suitable restaurants	4.201	0.7114	A lot
3. The tourist attraction has sufficient and suitable souvenir and gift shops.	4.046	0.7709	A lot
4. There is a tourist information center in the	3.912	0.7322	A lot

subject	Level of image perception		
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$
tourist area			
5. The tourist attraction has convenient parking	3.944	0.7293	A lot
6. The tourist attraction has sufficient and suitable restrooms	3.798	0.8004	A lot
Total	4.119	0.7272	A lot
Value for money			
1. The prices of food and beverages are reasonable	4.431	0.6073	A lot
2. The prices of goods and souvenirs are reasonable	4.070	0.7180	A lot
3. Public transportation services are reasonably priced	4.070	0.7139	A lot
4. Entrance fees to attractions within the tourist area are reasonable	4.023	0.7832	A lot
5. The tourist attractions are cheaper to visit than those in nearby provinces	3.825	0.7560	A lot
Total	4.083	0.7288	A lot
Safety Aspects			
1. The tourist attraction is clean and hygienic.	285.4	7798.0	A lot
2. The tourist attraction has sufficient police officers to provide security	3.962	0.7732	A lot
3. The tourist attraction has warning signs to inform tourists to exercise caution while visiting	3.854	0.7584	A lot
4. The tourist attraction has signs or public information with emergency contact numbers.	3.632	0.7526	A. lot
5. The tourist attraction has adequate lighting at night	3.349	0.8093	Normal
Total	3.816	0.7746	A lot

In terms of attractions, tourists have a high level of perceived image ($\bar{X} = 4.464$, $SD. = 0.6439$). When considering each item, it was found that tourists have the highest level of perceived famous tourist attractions ($\bar{X} = 4.693$, $SD. = 0.5154$), followed by attractions with unique characteristics and beautiful scenery ($\bar{X} = 4.484$, $SD. = 0.6746$), attractions with diverse activities such as kayaking, snorkeling, and hiking ($\bar{X} = 4.326$, $SD. = 0.6654$), attractions with diverse recreational areas such as entertainment venues, shopping malls, and cafes ($\bar{X} = 4.449$, $SD. = 0.6685$), and attractions with natural ecosystems such as beautiful seawater and abundant wildlife ($\bar{X} = 4.367$, $SD. = 0.6960$)

In terms of accessibility Tourists have a high level of perceived image ($\bar{X} = 4.183$, $SD. = 0.6850$). When considering individual items, it was found that tourists have a high level of perceived accessibility to tourist attractions and a variety of transportation options ($\bar{X} = 4.224$, $SD. = 0.6747$), followed by... Tourist attractions have clear signage ($\bar{X} = 4.177$, $SD. = 0.6263$), access to tourist attractions is safe ($\bar{X} = 4.195$, $SD. = 0.7006$), and there are well-connected travel routes between tourist attractions ($\bar{X} = 4.137$, $SD. = 0.7385$).

Regarding accommodation, tourists have the highest level of perceived image ($\bar{X} = 4.566$, $SD. = 0.6016$). When considering individual items, tourists have the highest level of perception that the accommodation is modern and comfortable ($\bar{X} = 4.705$, $SD. = 0.4934$), followed by... Accommodation was reasonably priced ($\bar{X} = 4.591$, $SD. = 0.6185$), offered a variety of choices ($\bar{X} = 4.492$, $SD. = 0.6253$), was clean and tidy ($\bar{X} = 4.586$, $SD. = 0.6194$), and

was sufficient for the number of tourists ($\bar{X} = 4.457$, $SD. = 0.6514$).

Regarding facilities, tourists perceived the image to be at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.119$, $SD. = 0.7272$). Considering each item individually, it was found that tourists perceived the tourist attractions to have comprehensive tourist services at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.457$, $SD. = 0.6192$), followed by The tourist attractions have sufficient and appropriate restaurants ($\bar{X} = 4.201$, $SD. = 0.7114$), sufficient and appropriate souvenir and gift shops ($\bar{X} = 4.046$, $SD. = 0.7709$), tourist information centers are available ($\bar{X} = 3.912$, $SD. = 0.7322$), convenient parking is available ($\bar{X} = 3.944$, $SD. = 0.7293$), and sufficient and appropriate restrooms are available ($\bar{X} = 3.798$, $SD. = 0.8004$).

Regarding value for money, tourists have a high level of perceived image ($\bar{X} = 4.083$, $SD. = 0.7288$). When considering each item individually, it was found that tourists have a high level of perceived appropriateness in the price of food and beverages ($\bar{X} = 4.431$, $SD. = 0.6073$), followed by... The prices of goods and souvenirs are reasonable ($\bar{X} = 4.070$, $SD. = 0.7180$). Public transport fares are reasonable ($\bar{X} = 4.070$, $SD. = 0.7139$). Entrance fees to various attractions within the tourist area are reasonable ($\bar{X} = 4.023$, $SD. = 0.7832$). The tourist attractions are cheaper to visit than nearby provinces ($\bar{X} = 3.825$, $SD. = 0.7560$).

Regarding safety, tourists have a high level of perception of the tourist area's image ($\bar{X} = 3.816$, $SD. = 0.7746$). When considering each item individually, it was found that tourists have a high level of perception of the tourist attractions' cleanliness and hygiene ($\bar{X} = 4.285$, $SD. = 0.7798$). This was followed by the tourist attractions having sufficient security personnel/police officers ($\bar{X} = 3.962$, $SD. = 0.7732$), and the tourist attractions having various warning signs. Tourist attractions provide information to encourage tourists to exercise caution when visiting ($\bar{X} = 3.854$, $SD. = 0.7584$). Tourist attractions have signs or publicize emergency contact numbers ($\bar{X} = 3.632$, $SD. = 0.7526$). Tourist attractions have sufficient lighting at night ($\bar{X} = 3.349$, $SD. = 0.8093$).

Discussion

A study of general information about Thai millennial tourists visiting Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province, with a sample size of 343 people, found that the majority of tourists were female (230 people), aged between 21 and 37 years old. The majority of the sample were single (179 people), and the majority were self-employed (115 people). The majority had a monthly income in the range of 10,001 – 20,000 baht (192 people), and the tourists currently reside in the southern region (331 people). This is consistent with the research by Chatchai Intasangkha et al. (2019) which studied the behavior and decision-making of community-based millennial tourists, a case study of Ban Dan Kwian, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. The results showed that the majority of the sample were female, aged between 26 and 29 years old, had a bachelor's degree, were self-employed, and had an average monthly income of 20,001 – 30,000 baht.

The study of the behavior of Thai millennial tourists found that the majority of the sample traveled for relaxation and leisure, traveled with friends, and used private vehicles for transportation. The average travel duration is 2 days, and the majority of tourists spend between 3,001 and 5,000 baht. Most tourists research tourist attractions from online media such as Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram. This aligns with the research by Angsuma Thiangprathet (2018), which studied the image of Thai tourism from the perspective of Americans. The study found that the majority of the sample group studied and received information from online media. Currently, online media is an important medium, and personnel use online media to access various channels, with Facebook being the most popular (53.91%), followed by Line (31.30%) (Sophon Pinijitjaroenkul and Parithar Buaphuen, 2017).

From the study of the level of perception of the image of Thai tourists, millennials visiting Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province, consisting of 6 aspects, when considered individually, it was found that: 1) The aspect of attraction has the indicator with the highest average value being the famous tourist attraction; 2) Accessibility... The indicator with the highest average score is accessibility to tourist attractions, with diverse transportation options. 3) Accommodation, the indicator with the highest average score is modern and comfortable accommodation. 4) Facilities, the indicator with the highest average score is that tourist attractions have comprehensive tourist service points. 5) Value for money, the indicator with the highest average score is reasonable prices for food and beverages. 6) Safety, the indicator with the highest average score is that tourist attractions are clean and hygienic. This is consistent with the research of Pranit Phukhit et al. (2022) who studied the perception of tourism image of Ubon Ratchathani Province. The study found that the perception of tourism image of Ubon Ratchathani Province is based on natural attractions with beautiful scenery, famous tourist attractions, diverse accommodations, safety for tourists, reasonable prices for goods and services in tourist attractions, and convenient transportation. Perception is therefore an important indicator of feelings towards tourist attractions and places. Creating awareness is the key to promoting tourism. Therefore, to make tourism promotion more effective, it should focus on stimulating awareness before traveling (Phuriwat Decha-um and Nuchanart Rattanasuwongchai, 2017).

The study of demographic factors affecting the perception of tourism image of Thai tourists. A statistically significant finding ($p < 0.05$) among millennial tourists visiting Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province, was that: 1) Gender significantly affected the perceived image level and thus the decision to visit Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province, among Thai millennial tourists; 2) Age significantly affected the perceived image level and thus the decision to visit Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province, among Thai millennial tourists; 3) Marital status significantly affected the perceived image level and thus the decision to visit Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province, among Thai millennial tourists, only partially, specifically in terms of attractions, as the analysis indicated that marital status did not significantly affect the perceived image of other aspects; 4) Education level significantly affected the perceived image level and thus the decision to visit Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province, among Thai millennial tourists, only partially, specifically in terms of accommodation, as the analysis indicated that education level did not significantly affect the perceived image of other aspects; 5) Occupation significantly affected the perceived image level and thus the decision to visit Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province, among Thai millennial tourists; and 6) Monthly income significantly affected the perceived image level and thus the decision to visit Khao Lak, Phang Nga Province, among Thai millennial tourists. 7) Differences in geographical location among millennials affect their perceived image and consequently their decision to visit Khao Lak, Phang Nga province, as a tourist destination for Thai tourists. The millennial group differs only partially in terms of accessibility, as analysis indicates that place of origin does not affect the level of perceived image in other aspects. This aligns with the research of Pornnapat Thanakit Suwisit (2018), who studied the tourism image that affects repeat visit behavior in secondary tourist destinations, with Nan Province as a case study. The study found that gender, age, education level, occupation, and monthly income of Thai tourists differed significantly in their repeat visit behavior to Nan Province. Specifically, the factor of returning to Nan Province when opportunities arise, and the attractiveness of tourist attractions, had a statistically significant impact on repeat visit behavior at the 0.05 level.

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GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING THE MARKETING MIX OF RAI PHONG PRAYA, PRACHUAP KHIRI KHAN PROVINCE, FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRO-TOURISM

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of Rai Phong Praya, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, and to develop guidelines for marketing mix development to support sustainable agro-tourism. A mixed-method approach was applied, using questionnaires collected from tourists and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including the farm owner, local community representatives, and tourism experts. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis.

The findings revealed that Rai Phong Praya has strong potential for agro-tourism development due to its integrated farming system, natural environment, and experiential tourism activities. However, limitations were identified in marketing communication, accessibility, and tourism infrastructure. The study also found that opportunities arise from the increasing demand for sustainable and wellness tourism, while threats include competition from other destinations and environmental uncertainties.

Based on the 7Ps marketing mix framework (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence), the study proposed guidelines emphasizing experiential tourism activities, digital marketing development, community participation, service quality improvement, and environmentally friendly management. The study concludes that effective marketing mix development can enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of Rai Phong Praya as an agro-tourism destination while supporting environmental conservation and local community development.

Keywords: Sustainable, Agro-Tourism, Guidelines for Developing, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand

Introduction

At present, the tourism industry plays a significant role in driving the national economy, particularly through new forms of tourism that emphasize sustainability and value creation for local communities. One form of tourism that has gained increasing attention is agro-tourism, which combines agricultural activities with tourism. This type of tourism provides opportunities for visitors to learn about agricultural lifestyles, experience nature, and actively participate in agricultural activities in a close and meaningful way.

Agro-tourism is considered one of the forms of tourism that aligns with tourism trends in 2025, particularly the concept of sustainable tourism or eco-tourism, which has gained increasing attention from tourists. This growing interest is largely driven by the intensifying impacts of climate change, along with rising awareness of environmental issues. As a result, the demand for the conservation and preservation of natural resources has continued to increase. Consequently, sustainable tourism has become a major trend that is widely popular today. In addition, wellness tourism has become another widely popular tourism trend, particularly following the pandemic situation, which affected both the physical and mental well-being of people. This type of tourism aims to provide relaxation and health recovery

from fatigue and stress caused by daily life, while also enhancing new experiences and improving quality of life. Related activities may include traveling to natural destinations, nature-based therapy, and participation in health-promoting activities such as cycling, hiking, and healthy cooking. Agro-tourism is considered a form of tourism that can effectively integrate the concepts of sustainable tourism and wellness tourism. It provides opportunities for tourists to participate in agricultural activities while simultaneously learning about and promoting health and well-being within a natural environment (Academic Service and Agricultural Technology Transfer Center, Chiang Mai University, 2024).

The trend of sustainable tourism has played an increasingly important role in shaping tourists' behavior in the modern era due to climate change and the degradation of natural resources. As a result, tourists have become more aware of and concerned about environmental conservation and community development. Consequently, tourist destinations that are able to respond to these concepts are likely to gain greater popularity.

Prachuap Khiri Khan Province possesses diverse tourism potential, including natural resources, local ways of life, and agricultural activities, all of which can be effectively developed into agro-tourism destinations. In particular, Rai Phong Praya is an agro-tourism destination distinguished by its integrated farming practices. However, in order for such a destination to remain competitive and sustainably meet the needs of tourists, systematic marketing planning and management are essential.

Therefore, research on the guidelines for developing the marketing mix of Rai Phong Praya, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, for sustainable agro-tourism is of great importance, as it can provide recommendations for developing the destination to effectively meet tourists' demands while simultaneously conserving natural resources.

Objectives

1. To study the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Rai Phong Praya, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.
2. To study the guidelines for developing the marketing mix of Rai Phong Praya, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, for sustainable agro-tourism.

Literature Review

Radchanee Korn Hudrudchai and Sasipim Poompimol (2026), Needs for Online Media Types on Agritourism among Generation Z Students of Khon Kaen University. Agritourism serves as a key mechanism for developing local economies, particularly in an era where online media plays a crucial role in shaping the travel decisions of Generation Z. However, there is still a lack of in-depth understanding regarding their media preferences. This study aimed to examine the general characteristics, media usage behaviors, and needs for platforms, media types, formats, and content related to agritourism online media among Gen Z students. It also aimed to compare differences in media needs based on gender, age, income and prior experience with agritourism. The sample consisted of 381 Gen Z students of Khon Kaen University, Thailand, who voluntarily responded to an online questionnaire. The research instrument was a three-level rating scale (reliability = 0.96). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-test, and ANOVA with LSD post hoc analysis. The findings revealed that most participants were female, with an average age of 20. While 76% had previously seen agritourism-related media online, 60% had never engaged in agritourism travel. The most preferred platforms were Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram, with a strong preference for short-form videos that inspire, entertain, and inform. The analysis revealed statistically significant differences in media needs across gender, income, and travel experience ($p < .05$). The study suggests that online media for communicating with Generation Z should focus on short-form videos and infographics, with concise and engaging content that aligns with their interests such as tourist attractions, food, safety, and promotions.

These insights can guide tourism authorities and entrepreneurs in designing effective communication strategies to promote agritourism.

Thanawat Patthamaritthikul and Achiraya Promlung, (2024), Guideline Potential Development of Agro Tourism in Wangnamkhiao District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. This study aims to 1) assess the potential of agro-tourism attractions, and 2) propose guidelines for the potential development of agro-tourism in Wangnamkhiao District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, through mixed-methods research. It comprises both quantitative research and qualitative research. This study's population included 15 members of the community, 2 government representatives, and 330 tourists. An in-depth interview form and questionnaire were utilized in this study and were evaluated using descriptive analysis, descriptive statistics, and content analysis. The study found that 1) the overall potential of agro-tourism attractions is high, and 2) the guidelines for developing agro-tourism potential should focus on four issues, including agro-tourism attraction management potential, agro-tourism site support potential, agro-tourism site service potential, and agro-tourism site attractive potential.

Prempreeda Tongla and Pensiri Samarak, (2018), The Management Potential of Chanthaburi Agro-tourism Attractions, The purposes of this research are as follows: 1) to survey the agro-tourism, 2) to investigate the potential of agro-tourism attractions, 3) to present appropriate tourism standards toward the attractions, and 4) to propose guidelines for developing the potential of agro-tourism attractions of Chanthaburi province. Data is collected from a survey process, an assessment of the agro-tourism attraction potential, interviews and a focus group discussion. The guidelines for developing agro-tourism potential are suggested by using content analysis. It was found that 14 Chanthaburi agro-tourism attractions have passed the standard at a 'good' level. The suitable agro-tourism standards for Chanthaburi province are the management potential, the tourist carrying potential, the tourist services potential, the tourists-attracting potential and the values potential. It was suggested that to develop the agro-tourism potential in Chanthaburi, the province should focus on increasing knowledge, developing new experiences and establishing agro-tourism network.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-method research approach combining both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to explore appropriate guidelines for developing the marketing mix of Rai Phong Praya, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, for sustainable agro-tourism.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of tourists visiting Rai Phong Praya, local community members, and individuals involved in tourism and agricultural management within Prachuap Khiri Khan Province.

For the quantitative study, the sample group included tourists visiting Rai Phong Praya. The sample size was determined using a statistical sampling formula and selected through convenience sampling.

For the qualitative study, key informants included the owner or manager of Rai Phong Praya, tourism stakeholders, local community leaders, and experts in tourism and marketing. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who could provide relevant and in-depth information.

The instruments used in this study consisted of:

Questionnaires

The questionnaires were designed to collect quantitative data from tourists regarding demographic characteristics, travel behavior, opinions toward the marketing mix elements, and factors influencing sustainable agro-tourism.

In-depth Interviews

Semi-structured interview questions were used to collect qualitative data from key informants regarding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and recommendations for marketing mix development.

Data Collection

Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires distributed to tourists visiting Rai Phong Praya. Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with key informants and stakeholders involved in agro-tourism management.

Results

1. SWOT Analysis of Rai Phong Praya

The findings revealed that Rai Phong Praya possesses several strengths that support its potential as a sustainable agro-tourism destination. The farm is distinguished by its integrated farming system, natural environment, and peaceful atmosphere, which are consistent with current tourism trends emphasizing sustainability and wellness tourism. In addition, visitors are able to participate in agricultural activities and experience local lifestyles, creating memorable and educational tourism experiences.

However, several weaknesses were identified. The destination still has limited promotional activities and lacks a strong online marketing presence. Some tourism facilities and signage were insufficient for accommodating larger numbers of tourists. Furthermore, there was limited public transportation access to the destination.

In terms of opportunities, the growing popularity of sustainable tourism and wellness tourism has increased demand for nature-based tourism experiences. Government policies supporting community-based tourism and sustainable tourism development also provide opportunities for Rai Phong Praya to expand its tourism potential.

Nevertheless, threats included increasing competition from other agro-tourism destinations, changing tourist behavior, and environmental challenges such as climate change and extreme weather conditions, which may affect agricultural activities and tourism operations.

2. Guidelines for Developing the Marketing Mix for Sustainable Agro-Tourism

The findings regarding the development of the marketing mix for Rai Phong Praya were based on the 7Ps marketing mix framework, as follows:

2.1 Product; Rai Phong Praya should develop a wider variety of agro-tourism activities that emphasize hands-on experiences, such as organic farming workshops, fruit harvesting, healthy cooking activities, and nature-based learning programs. In addition, the destination should highlight local identity and environmentally friendly practices to strengthen its image as a sustainable agro-tourism destination.

2.2 Price; Appropriate pricing strategies should be implemented by offering reasonable and value-based prices. Package programs combining accommodation, agricultural activities, and local food experiences should be introduced to attract different groups of tourists.

2.3 Place; Accessibility to Rai Phong Praya should be improved through clearer directional signs and transportation information. Online booking channels and digital platforms should also be developed to increase convenience for tourists.

2.4 Promotion; The study found that digital marketing plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable agro-tourism. Rai Phong Praya should increase its online presence through social media platforms, websites, and tourism-related applications. Promotional content should focus on sustainability, wellness, and authentic agricultural experiences.

2.5 People; Service providers and local community members should receive training in hospitality, communication skills, and sustainable tourism management to improve service quality and tourist satisfaction.

2.6 Process; Tourism management processes should emphasize convenience, safety, and environmental responsibility. Clear activity schedules, visitor management systems, and customer feedback systems should be implemented to improve service efficiency.

2.7 Physical Evidence; The physical environment should be developed to maintain cleanliness, safety, and harmony with nature. Facilities such as rest areas, parking spaces, information centers, and environmentally friendly accommodations should be improved to enhance tourists' overall experiences.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Rai Phong Praya has strong potential to be developed as a sustainable agro-tourism destination, particularly due to its integrated farming system, natural environment, and ability to provide experiential learning activities. These characteristics are consistent with the principles of sustainable tourism, which emphasize environmental conservation, community participation, and meaningful tourist experiences (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2023). The SWOT analysis revealed that while the destination has strong natural and experiential assets, it still faces limitations in marketing communication and infrastructure. This is consistent with previous studies that highlight marketing limitations and accessibility issues as common challenges in rural and community-based tourism development (Buhalis, 2000; Lane, 2009). In particular, insufficient digital marketing presence may reduce competitiveness in an increasingly technology-driven tourism market.

Regarding the marketing mix (7Ps), the findings suggest that product development should focus on experiential and participatory activities. This supports Kotler, Bowen, and Makens (2017), who emphasize that tourism products are primarily experiential in nature and require strong differentiation through authentic experiences. Similarly, the importance of digital promotion reflects modern tourism marketing trends where social media and online platforms significantly influence travel decisions (Sigala, 2018).

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARKETING VALUE ADDED FOR SOUVENIRS IN CHONBURI PROVINCE TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the situation of souvenir business marketing in Chonburi Province in order to understand current practices, challenges, and opportunities for improving marketing value added to support sustainable tourism. A qualitative research approach was employed, using semi-structured interviews with souvenir entrepreneurs, community producers, and tourism stakeholders in Chonburi Province. The data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify key patterns and insights. The findings revealed that souvenir businesses in Chonburi Province generally face limitations in product differentiation, branding, and marketing strategies. Most enterprises rely on traditional marketing methods with limited use of digital platforms, resulting in restricted market reach. In addition, souvenirs often lack strong cultural identity and storytelling, which reduces their perceived value among tourists. Despite these challenges, opportunities were identified in product development, cultural integration, and the use of digital marketing to enhance competitiveness. The study concludes that improving marketing value added through branding, innovation, and cultural representation is essential for strengthening the souvenir industry and promoting sustainable tourism in Chonburi Province. The findings provide practical implications for entrepreneurs and policymakers to support local economic development and tourism sustainability.

Keywords; Development, Marketing Value, Souvenirs, Sustainable Tourism

Introduction

Tourism is widely recognized as one of the key drivers of economic development, particularly in regions with rich cultural and natural resources. In Thailand, tourism plays a significant role in generating income, creating employment, and supporting local communities. However, increasing global competition and changing tourist behaviors have encouraged destinations to focus not only on attracting visitors but also on enhancing the value of tourism-related products and services to ensure long-term sustainability. Souvenirs are an important component of the tourism experience, as they serve as tangible

representations of a destination's identity, culture, and heritage. According to Swanson and Timothy (2012), souvenirs contribute significantly to tourists' memory-making process and can influence destination image and satisfaction. In addition, well-developed souvenir products can increase local economic benefits by extending tourist spending beyond accommodation and transportation into local creative industries.

Chonburi Province, one of Thailand's major coastal tourism destinations, is known for its beaches, cultural attractions, and proximity to Bangkok. Despite its popularity, the marketing value of local souvenirs in Chonburi remains relatively limited in terms of design innovation, branding, and added value. Many products lack differentiation and fail to fully reflect the cultural identity of the province, which may reduce their competitiveness in the tourism market. This study aims to explore the development of marketing value added for souvenirs in Chonburi Province to promote sustainable tourism. The findings are expected to provide practical guidelines for local entrepreneurs, policymakers, and tourism stakeholders in enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of souvenir products.

Objectives

To study the situation of Souvenirs Business Marketing in Chonburi Province

Literature Review

Marketing value added refers to the enhancement of a product's attractiveness and perceived worth through design, branding, packaging, storytelling, and distribution strategies. In tourism contexts, value-added products are essential for increasing competitiveness and differentiating local goods in a globalized market. Pine and Gilmore (1999) introduced the concept of the experience economy, emphasizing that economic value is increasingly derived from experiences rather than physical goods alone. Applying this concept, souvenirs should be designed to deliver emotional and cultural experiences, not just functional value.

The rise of digital platforms has transformed tourism marketing by expanding access to global markets. Social media and e-commerce allow small businesses to reach wider audiences and promote their products more effectively. However, adoption of digital marketing among local souvenir businesses remains uneven, particularly in developing destinations. This gap limits their ability to compete in modern tourism markets and reduces potential value creation.

Although previous studies have examined souvenirs, tourism marketing, and sustainable tourism separately, there is limited research focusing on the development of marketing value added for souvenirs at the provincial level in Thailand, particularly in Chonburi Province. This study addresses this gap by exploring how souvenir businesses can enhance their marketing strategies to support sustainable tourism development.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the current situation of souvenir business marketing in Chonburi Province. Qualitative research is appropriate for gaining in-depth understanding of social phenomena, behaviors, and meanings from the perspectives of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach allows the researcher to investigate marketing practices, challenges, and opportunities within the local souvenir industry in a detailed and contextualized manner.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Chonburi Province, Thailand, which is a well-known tourism destination with a variety of souvenir products influenced by local culture, coastal resources, and community-based enterprises.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument was a semi-structured interview guide. The interview questions were designed to explore:

- ☐ Current marketing practices of souvenir businesses
- ☐ Product development and branding strategies
- ☐ Customer targeting and market segmentation
- ☐ Challenges and limitations in marketing
- ☐ Opportunities for improving marketing value

Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with selected key informants. Each interview was conducted face-to-face at the informants' business locations or other convenient settings. With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis. Field notes were also taken to capture additional observations and contextual information.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This process involved coding the interview transcripts, identifying patterns, and grouping similar ideas into themes related to souvenir marketing situations in Chonburi Province. The analysis followed the steps of familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation to ensure a systematic understanding of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results

The findings from the qualitative analysis of souvenir business marketing in Chonburi Province revealed several key themes related to current marketing practices, challenges, and opportunities for development.

1. Product Identity and Design Limitations

Most souvenir businesses in Chonburi Province focus on generic product designs with limited local identity representation. Many products are mass-produced and lack uniqueness, which reduces their competitiveness in the tourism market. Entrepreneurs indicated that product development is often constrained by limited design knowledge and budget.

2. Limited Marketing Strategies

The study found that most souvenir businesses rely heavily on traditional marketing methods such as in-store sales and word-of-mouth. Online marketing and digital platforms are still underutilized, especially among small community-based producers. As a result, market reach remains limited to local and walk-in tourists.

3. Pricing and Value Perception

Participants reported that souvenir pricing is generally low to remain competitive, but this often leads to low perceived value among tourists. Many businesses struggle to balance cost, quality, and added value, which affects profitability and sustainability.

4. Lack of Branding and Storytelling

Another key issue identified was the absence of strong branding and cultural storytelling in souvenir products. Most products do not clearly communicate the cultural identity or uniqueness of Chonburi Province, which reduces emotional connection with tourists.

5. Opportunities for Value Addition

Despite these challenges, respondents recognized opportunities for improvement through product redesign, cultural integration, and digital marketing. Enhancing packaging, developing local narratives, and using online platforms were identified as key strategies to increase marketing value and support sustainable tourism development.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight several important issues regarding souvenir business marketing in Chonburi Province and its role in supporting sustainable tourism. The results indicate that many souvenir products lack strong local identity and differentiation, which limits their ability to create added value for tourists. This aligns with the argument of Swanson and Timothy (2012), who emphasized that souvenirs function not only as commercial goods but also as symbolic representations of place identity and tourist memory-making.

The limited use of digital marketing and branding strategies among small and community-based entrepreneurs reflects a broader challenge in developing destinations. Previous studies have shown that effective destination marketing requires integration of storytelling, branding, and digital platforms to enhance competitiveness in the tourism market (UNWTO, 2021). However, in Chonburi Province, reliance on traditional marketing methods reduces the potential reach and visibility of local souvenir products.

In addition, the findings reveal that low pricing strategies often result in low perceived value, which may negatively affect long-term business sustainability. This supports Pine and Gilmore's (1999) concept of the "experience economy," which suggests that value creation in tourism should go beyond physical products and focus on experiences, meaning, and emotional engagement. Without value-added development, souvenirs risk becoming commoditized products with limited economic benefit. Overall, the study suggests that developing marketing value added for souvenirs in Chonburi Province is essential for promoting sustainable tourism. Strengthening product identity, adopting digital marketing strategies, and enhancing cultural storytelling can help improve competitiveness and ensure long-term benefits for local communities.

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NEGOTIATING MEANING IN ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA: A CONVERSATION ANALYSIS OF FRONT DESK INTERACTIONS IN FOUR-STAR HOTELS IN BANGKOK

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores how meaning is negotiated in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) interactions within hotel front desk encounters in four-star hotels in Bangkok, Thailand. Drawing on Conversation Analysis (CA), the study examines naturally occurring interactions between Thai hotel staff and international tourists, both of whom are non-native speakers of English. A corpus of 30 recorded service encounters was analyzed to identify interactional strategies used to achieve mutual understanding in institutional settings.

Findings reveal that participants rely on a range of interactional practices, including clarification requests, repetition, paraphrasing, confirmation checks, and repair sequences. Rather than reflecting communication failure, misunderstandings are treated as collaborative resources for meaning-making. The study demonstrates that communicative success in ELF contexts is co-constructed moment-by-moment through adaptive interactional work rather than grammatical accuracy.

The study contributes to ELF and tourism communication research by providing fine-grained empirical evidence from authentic service encounters and highlights the importance of interactional competence in hospitality contexts.

Keywords: English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Conversation Analysis, Meaning Negotiation, Interactional Competence, Hospitality Communication

Introduction

The globalization of tourism has intensified the role of English as a primary medium of communication among speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. In many international service encounters, English functions not as a native language but as a shared communicative resource among non-native speakers. This phenomenon is widely conceptualized as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), where communicative effectiveness is prioritized over native-speaker norms.

In hospitality settings, particularly at hotel front desks, interactions involve complex communicative demands such as check-ins, requests, and problem resolution. These interactions are often characterized by linguistic variability and momentary misunderstandings, yet communication is typically successful. This raises important questions about how meaning is actually achieved in real-time interaction.

Although previous studies have examined ELF communication strategies and tourism discourse, much of the research has focused on generalized patterns or self-reported data. There remains limited micro-level analysis of naturally occurring interactions. To address this gap, this study employs Conversation Analysis (CA) to examine how hotel staff and tourists negotiate meaning in real interactional contexts.

Objectives

To identify and analyze the interactional strategies (e.g., clarification requests, repetition, paraphrasing, confirmation checks, and repair sequences) used by hotel staff and international guests to achieve mutual understanding.

To examine how misunderstandings are managed and resolved in ELF interactions within institutional service encounters.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative design using Conversation Analysis. The research site consists of four-star hotels in Bangkok, selected due to their high level of international tourist interaction.

Participants

- 6–8 front desk hotel staff (Thai Staff)
- Approximately 30 interactional events involving international tourists

Data Collection

Naturally occurring interactions at the hotel front desk were audio-recorded with consent. Data included check-in procedures, guest inquiries, and problem-solving interactions.

Data Analysis

Data were transcribed using CA conventions and analyzed sequentially to identify:

- Repair sequences
- Clarification requests
- Repetition and paraphrasing
- Alignment and confirmation practices

Results

4.1 Clarification and Repair

Participants frequently initiated repair sequences when misunderstandings occurred. These were typically resolved through clarification requests and reformulations.

4.2 Repetition and Paraphrasing

Hotel staff often repeated or rephrased guest utterances to ensure understanding, transforming informal language into institutional terms.

4.3 Co-construction of Meaning

Meaning was not transmitted unilaterally but co-constructed through sequential interactional work between participants.

Example Transcript (Conversation Analysis)

- 1 Guest: I booking yesterday night, maybe problem?
- 2 Staff: Yesterday night booking... you mean arrival today?
- 3 Guest: Yes, I come late flight.
- 4 Staff: Ah, late arrival noted.
- 5 Staff: Passport please.
- 6 Guest: Here you are.

Line-by-line Analysis

Line 1: Initiating Turn / Potential Trouble Source

Guest: “I booking yesterday night... maybe problem?”

This opening turn initiates the service encounter. Although the utterance is grammatically non-standard (“I booking” instead of “I made a booking”), it remains intelligible in context and successfully conveys the speaker’s communicative intent.

From a Conversation Analysis perspective, this turn functions as an **initiating action** that sets up a potential issue for clarification. Importantly, within English as a Lingua Franca, such non-standard forms are treated not as errors, but as interactionally meaningful resources that trigger negotiation of understanding.

Line 2: Repair Initiation (Other-initiated repair)

Staff: “Yesterday night booking... you mean arrive today?”

The staff’s response demonstrates an **other-initiated repair sequence**, where potential ambiguity in the guest’s utterance is identified and clarified. The repetition of “yesterday night booking” followed by a reformulated question indicates orientation to possible misunderstanding.

This move shifts the interaction from simple information exchange to **meaning negotiation**, a core feature of ELF communication. Rather than correcting grammar, the staff focuses on clarifying intent.

Line 3: Confirmation + Alignment

Guest: “Yes, I come late flight.”

The guest confirms the staff’s interpretation, thereby completing the repair sequence. Although the grammar is again non-standard, the utterance provides sufficient semantic clarity.

This turn demonstrates **alignment**, where both participants converge on shared understanding. In CA terms, this represents successful resolution of the trouble source.

Line 4: Reformulation into Institutional Register

Staff: “Ah okay, late arrival noted.”

Here, the staff reformulates the guest’s meaning into an institutionalized expression. This transformation from conversational language (“I come late flight”) into institutional discourse (“late arrival noted”) reflects the role of service staff in integrating interactional input into organizational procedures.

This step illustrates how meaning is not only understood but also **institutionally processed** within service encounters.

Line 5: Task Progression / Transition to Service Action

Staff: “Passport please.”

Following successful meaning negotiation, the interaction transitions to task-oriented action. This marks a shift from negotiation to transactional completion.

In CA terms, this indicates **sequence closure initiation**, where epistemic issues have been resolved and institutional work proceeds.

Line 6: Compliance / Transaction Completion

Guest: “Here you are.”

The guest complies with the request, signaling full alignment with institutional expectations. This completes the service sequence.

At this point, interaction moves from communicative negotiation to administrative processing, demonstrating efficient progression of service talk.

Discussion

The findings support recent ELF research (Jenkins, 2021; Cogo, 2021; Pitzl, 2022), which argues that communication in ELF contexts is not defined by grammatical accuracy but by interactional effectiveness. However, this study extends previous work by demonstrating how this effectiveness is achieved through sequential negotiation rather than pre-existing strategies.

In line with Conversation Analysis research (Heritage, 2022; Sidnell & Stivers, 2023), the data show that repair and clarification are central mechanisms through which understanding is co-constructed in institutional settings.

Importantly, misunderstandings are not treated as failures but as routine parts of interaction that trigger collaborative problem-solving.

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GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE WELLNESS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN TRAT PROVINCE, THAILAND

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Abstract

The research entitled “Sustainable Wellness Tourism Development in Trat Province” aims to conduct a SWOT analysis of wellness tourism attractions in Trat Province and establish guidelines for the sustainable development of wellness tourism in the area. The findings reveal that Trat Province possesses high potential in nature-based wellness tourism, attributed to its diverse natural resources, including mangrove forests, beaches, local culinary ingredients, and indigenous herbs. This potential is further enhanced by local wisdom and applied healthcare practices. However, significant obstacles remain, such as the standardization of establishments, a shortage of specialized personnel, and insufficient public relations. Furthermore, there is a lack of continuity in environmental management policies within tourism sites.

The researcher proposes three primary dimensions for developing sustainable wellness tourism in Trat Province: 1) **Management**: establishing collaborative networks between community enterprises and standardized establishments; 2) **Products and Services**: elevating wellness activities to reflect local identity, such as “Coop Steam Spa” (Spa Sum Kai) or forest bathing activities; and 3) **Environmental Responsibility**: implementing the Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Model to mitigate tourism impacts and ensure equitable income distribution back to the community.

Keywords: Wellness Tourism, Trat Province, Sustainability, Tourism Development

Introduction

The tourism industry is a vital engine driving Thailand's economy. In recent years, global tourist behaviors have shifted significantly toward prioritizing health and well-being. Consequently, wellness tourism has emerged as a high-growth market segment with substantial economic value. However, this rapid growth brings challenges regarding the sustainability of natural resources and the preservation of local community ways of life.

Trat Province, a coastal border province in Eastern Thailand, possesses outstanding potential for diverse tourism resources. It is renowned for its lush mangrove forests, pristine beaches, and famous archipelagos. Beyond its physical beauty, Trat is rich in cultural capital and traditional wisdom, particularly in indigenous herbs, organic culinary ingredients, and folk wellness practices. These unique identities, such as "Coop Steam Spa" (Spa Sum Kai) and nature-based therapy, align perfectly with the global trends of wellness tourism.

Despite these assets, the current development of wellness tourism in Trat Province faces several obstacles. Key issues include the inconsistent standardization of wellness establishments, a shortage of specialized personnel, and insufficient public relations to reach target markets. Furthermore, a lack of continuity in environmental management policies poses a risk to long-term sustainability. Without an integrated development plan—such as the implementation of the Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Model—the balance between economic gain and environmental preservation may be compromised.

Therefore, the researcher is interested in studying the "Sustainable Wellness Tourism Development in Trat Province." This research aims to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) and to establish development guidelines that emphasize collaborative networking and the elevation of local products and services. The ultimate goal is to ensure efficient resource utilization and equitable income distribution back to the local communities.

Objectives

To investigate the potential of nature-based therapy and local wisdom, including mangrove forests, herbal resources and traditional wellness practices within the context of Trat Province.

Literature Review

Aksonphairot et al. (2018) explored the application of service innovation theories and concepts to develop wellness tourism in Phuket. Their research resulted in the proposed "PHUKET Service Innovation Model," which provides a strategic framework for enhancing wellness tourism services through six key innovative dimensions: 1) Process and Work Structure Innovation: Focusing on improving operational efficiency and streamlining service delivery systems, 2) Human Resources Development Innovation: Enhancing the skills, expertise, and service mindsets of personnel within the wellness sector, 3) Unique Services and Branding Innovation: Developing a distinctive service identity and establishing a strong, recognizable brand for wellness destinations, 4) Knowledge Transferring Innovation: Implementing systematic knowledge management to ensure that expertise and local wisdom are shared and preserved, 5) Engagement and Networking Innovation: Building strong relationships with stakeholders and creating collaborative networks across the tourism value chain, 6) Technology Application Innovation: Integrating information technology and digital

tools to enhance service accessibility and the overall tourist experience.

Kongpradit, Chummee, and Kammadee (2025) explored the dynamics of wellness tourism in Eastern Thailand, emphasizing its dual role in health promotion and local economic stimulation. They defined wellness tourism as a travel paradigm focused on the restoration and enhancement of both physical and mental well-being through participation in effective health-oriented activities and services.

The study highlights that developing wellness tourism products is essential for bolstering local economies and meeting the rising global demand for holistic health recovery. Based on their comprehensive analysis, the researchers found that wellness tourism products are critical drivers for attracting high-value tourists, particularly in the Eastern region of Thailand. This area possesses a strategic advantage, utilizing its abundant natural resources and existing health services to create products that support long-term health promotion and rehabilitation.

Furthermore, the researchers concluded that the successful development and promotion of these products require a multi-dimensional approach: 1) Community Collaboration: Strengthening partnerships with local communities to ensure inclusive growth, 2) Digital and Marketing Competency: Advancing digital literacy and marketing strategies to reach broader audiences and 3) Targeted Service Customization: Tailoring services to meet the specific needs of different age demographics, particularly the elderly market, which demands specialized health interventions and care.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore and develop guidelines for Sustainable Wellness Tourism Development in Trat Province. A qualitative approach is appropriate because it allows an in-depth understanding of possesses high potential in nature-based wellness tourism, attributed to its diverse natural resources, including mangrove forests, beaches, local culinary ingredients, and indigenous herbs. This potential is further enhanced by local wisdom and applied healthcare practices. The qualitative research to gain in-depth insights into SWOT factors and local wisdom through interviews with experts and stakeholders and assess the demand and satisfaction levels of tourists visiting wellness sites in Trat Province.

Study Area

The study is conducted in Trat Province, Eastern in Thailand, where is possesses high potential in nature-based wellness tourism, attributed to its diverse natural resources, including mangrove forests, beaches, local culinary ingredients, and indigenous herbs.

Key Informants

In this research, Key Informants refer to individuals who possess extensive knowledge, expertise, or direct involvement in wellness tourism, community management, and provincial development in Trat Province. Key informants include:

- Tourism officers at the provincial level (Government)
- Community leaders
- Local tourism entrepreneurs
- Cultural practitioners / local wisdom experts

Data Collection

Qualitative Data (In-depth Interviews):

- The interviews focused on identifying SWOT factors, current management challenges, and the potential for integrating local wisdom into wellness products.
- Data was recorded via audio devices (with permission) and field notes to ensure accuracy during transcription.

Results

This chapter presents the findings of the study, which are divided into two main parts according to the research objectives: 1) The SWOT analysis of wellness tourism in Trat Province, and 2) The proposed guidelines for sustainable development.

SWOT Analysis of Wellness Tourism in Trat Province. Key findings include:

Strengths (S)

- Trat possesses diverse and pristine resources, particularly mangrove forests and coastal ecosystems, which are ideal for nature-based therapy and "Forest Bathing."
- The province features distinct indigenous wellness practices, such as the "**Coop Steam Spa**" (**Spa Sum Kai**) and the use of rare local herbs (e.g., Agarwood/Kritsana).
- Trat province is abundant in nature, mangrove forests, beaches, local culinary ingredients, and indigenous herbs
- Naturopathy tourism, a fast-growing sector of wellness travel, focuses on holistic, self-healing, and nature-based therapies like detox
- Trat offers pure, unpolluted air because there are no heavy industrial plants in the area

Weaknesses (W)

- Many local wellness establishments and community enterprises lack formal certification and standardized service protocols.
- There is a shortage of specialized personnel and practitioners who possess both traditional knowledge and professional service skills.
- Marketing efforts are primarily focused on general sightseeing rather than highlighting Trat as a specific "Wellness Destination."

Opportunities (O)

- National promotion of the **BCG Economy Model** provides funding and policy pathways for eco-friendly wellness projects.

- Improved infrastructure and connectivity in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) facilitate easier access for high-spending tourists.

Threats (T)

- Climate change and coastal erosion pose risks to the natural resources that wellness tourism depends on.
- Strong competition from established wellness hubs like Phuket or Koh Samui requires Trat to find a very specific niche.

Guidelines for Sustainable Wellness Tourism Development Key findings include:

- Establish a "Wellness Cluster" to link community-based tourism (CBT) groups with standardized private resorts.
- Develop a provincial-level "Wellness Certification" to elevate the credibility of local services.
- Utilizing digital platforms for storytelling and booking to reach health-conscious demographics and the elderly market.

Implement a "Zero-Waste Wellness" initiative within communities to align with the Circular Economy (BCG).

Discussion

The research entitled "Sustainable Wellness Tourism Development in Trat Province" aims to conduct a SWOT analysis of wellness tourism attractions in Trat Province and establish guidelines for the sustainable development of wellness tourism in the area. The results can be discussed through the following three main pillars: 1) Potential and Identity of Nature-Based Wellness, the discussion of the findings regarding **"Sustainable Wellness Tourism Development in Trat Province"** highlights several critical points that align with and expand upon existing academic frameworks, 2) Standardization and Human Capital, a significant point of discussion is the gap between "Potential" and "Standardization." While Trat has the raw resources, the **Weaknesses** identified—such as inconsistent service standards and a lack of specialized personnel—mirror the challenges found in other emerging wellness destinations in Thailand. This finding emphasizes that development cannot rely on natural resources alone. It requires **Human Resources Development Innovation**, as suggested in the **PHUKET Service Innovation Model**. For Trat to transition into a world-class wellness destination, there is an urgent need to bridge the gap between traditional healers and professional hospitality standards, and 3) **Integration of the BCG Model and Sustainability**, the proposed guidelines emphasize the BCG Model (Bio-Circular-Green Economy) as a mechanical necessity for Trat. This discussion aligns with the research by Kongpradit, Chummee, and Kammadee (2025), which argued that wellness tourism in Eastern Thailand must serve as a tool for local economic stimulation while preserving the environment. The findings suggest that "Sustainability" in Trat is not just about conservation, but about a Circular Economy where

tourism revenue is reinvested into community health and mangrove restoration. By implementing "Zero-Waste Wellness," Trat can differentiate itself from larger hubs (like Phuket or Samui) by positioning itself as a "Low-Carbon Wellness Destination," which is a highly attractive niche for the modern, environmentally-conscious traveler.

Summary of Discussion

Sustainable Wellness Tourism Development in Trat Province can be summarized into three core strategic conclusions: Trat Province's greatest strength lies in its **Nature-Based Wellness** assets. The high level of tourist interest in mangrove forests and "Forest Bathing" supports the theories of **nature-based therapy** discussed in the literature. A critical finding is the disparity between the province's high potential and its current service standards. The discussion highlights that **Human Resource Development** is the most urgent intervention needed. To transition from a local community destination to a standardized wellness hub, Trat must professionalize its local practitioners and establish clear service protocols across its community enterprises and the integration of the **Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy** is the essential mechanical link between tourism growth and environmental preservation. By positioning itself as a "**Low-Carbon Wellness Destination**," Trat can attract high-value segments, such as the elderly and eco-conscious travelers. This approach ensures that economic benefits are equitably distributed to local communities while maintaining the ecological integrity of the province's coastal resources.

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AN ASSESSMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF SERVICE QUALITY IN TRAT PROVINCE'S SPA INDUSTRY

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Abstract

The objective of this independent study was twofold: 1) to investigate the current status and factors influencing the service quality of spa businesses in Trat Province, and 2) to establish guidelines for enhancing service quality to meet professional standards and tourist expectations. This research utilized a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative data from surveys of spa service users and qualitative data from in-depth interviews with spa entrepreneurs and local tourism experts in Trat Province.

The research findings revealed that the service quality of spa businesses in Trat Province is currently at a high level. However, there are significant areas for improvement, particularly regarding the standardization of facilities and the continuous training of therapists. Key success factors identified include the integration of local identity—such as the use of indigenous herbs and traditional techniques like the “Coop Steam Spa”—which serves as a unique selling point that distinguishes Trat from other tourism hubs.

The researcher proposes the following guidelines for enhancing service quality: 1) Human Resource Development: Implementing standardized certification programs for therapists to ensure consistent service delivery; 2) Service Identity Innovation: Elevating local wisdom and unique treatments to create a memorable brand experience; and 3) Digital Quality Management: Utilizing digital platforms for customer feedback and appointment systems to enhance convenience and responsiveness. These guidelines aim to elevate the competitiveness of Trat's spa industry, ensuring sustainable growth and alignment with the province's nature-based wellness tourism goals.

Keywords: Service Quality, Spa Business, Service Identity Innovation, Service Enhancement, Wellness Tourism

Introduction

In the modern era, the global tourism industry has shifted significantly toward health and wellness. Tourists are no longer seeking only leisure but are increasingly looking for experiences that restore physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. According to the Global

Wellness Institute (GWI), wellness tourism—including spa services—is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the global economy. Thailand, recognized as the "Spa Capital of Asia," has a strategic advantage in this market due to its long history of traditional medicine and hospitality.

Trat Province, located in the Eastern region of Thailand, is an emerging destination with high potential for wellness tourism. It is rich in natural resources, ranging from pristine coastal areas to lush mangrove forests. However, as the demand for wellness travel increases, spa businesses in Trat face intense competition from established hubs like Phuket and Samui. To remain competitive, spa enterprises in Trat must focus on Service Quality (SERVQUAL).

Despite these assets, the current development of wellness tourism in Trat Province faces several obstacles. Key issues include the inconsistent standardization of wellness establishments, a shortage of specialized personnel, and insufficient public relations to reach target markets. Furthermore, a lack of continuity in environmental management policies poses a risk to long-term sustainability. Without an integrated development plan—such as the implementation of the Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Model—the balance between economic gain and environmental preservation may be compromised.

Currently, many spa establishments in the province are small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) or community-based operations. While they possess unique local wisdom, such as the "Coop Steam Spa" and indigenous herbal treatments, they often face challenges regarding service standardization, therapist certification, and systematic quality management. Without clear guidelines for enhancing service quality, these businesses may struggle to meet the expectations of high-value international and domestic tourists. Therefore, it is essential to study and develop a framework that elevates the standards of spa services in Trat Province to ensure sustainable growth and a distinct market identity.

Objectives

To study the current status and factors affecting the service quality of spa businesses in Trat Province and propose guidelines for enhancing the service quality of spa businesses in Trat Province to meet professional and international standards.

Literature Review

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry. Parasuraman et al. (1985). SERVQUAL Model assesses service quality across five critical dimensions: 1) Tangibles: The physical appearance of the spa, including facilities, equipment, and the grooming of therapists, 2) Reliability: The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately, 3) Responsiveness: The willingness to help customers and provide prompt service, 4) Assurance: The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence, and 5) Empathy: The caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.

Jintana Bunbongkarn (1996, p. 15). defines Service as something intangible, difficult to touch, and highly perishable. Services are created and delivered to the recipient immediately or almost instantaneously. Therefore, service is a process of activities delivered from the provider to the receiver; it is not a distinct physical object, but rather manifests in the form of time, place, and form. Most importantly, it is a psychological facilitator that creates satisfaction.

The word "Service" consists of seven letters, each of which can be defined as a core principle for professional practice:

The Meaning of SERVICE

S = Smiling & Sympathy

Providing service with a smile and practicing empathy. This means putting yourself in the customer's shoes and being understanding of the difficulties or inconveniences they may face.

E = Early Response

Responding to the customer's requests and needs promptly and efficiently.

R = Respectful

Demonstrating sincere respect and honoring the dignity of the service recipient.

V = Voluntariness Manner

Providing service with a willing and voluntary spirit, rather than performing tasks reluctantly or out of mere obligation.

I = Image Enhancing

Maintaining and promoting a positive image for both the service provider and the organization.

C = Courtesy

Delivering service with humility, politeness, and excellent manners.

E = Enthusiasm

Showing energy and eagerness while providing service, and striving to go above and beyond what the customer expects.

Puey Ungphakorn Institute for Economic Research (2020). The Thai Spa and Traditional Massage Industry is categorized into two main business types:

1. Spa Business: Focuses on holistic health and beauty treatments, where massage is one of the core services provided.

2. Health Massage Business: Focuses specifically on muscle therapy and relaxation through massage techniques alone.

The industry involves a significant portion of the Thai workforce, with an estimated employment of over 650,000 workers across both formal and informal sectors. Furthermore, it is an industry that relies heavily on demand from international tourists. Thailand's health and wellness services are considered a major strength, boasting a global reputation and widespread

international recognition.

Currently, spa and health massage businesses in Thailand are regulated by the Department of Health Service Support (HSS) under the Ministry of Public Health. The HSS is primarily responsible for: 1) Setting standards and controlling the quality of establishments, 2) Reviewing and issuing operating licenses for businesses, and 3) Overseeing the registration of service personnel and practitioners within the industry.

Methodology

This study is focussing shifts specifically toward evaluating Service Quality. This chapter details how you will measure the gap between customer expectations and the actual service delivered by spa businesses in Trat. The researcher utilized a Sequential Explanatory Design:

- Quantitative Phase: A survey conducted to assess the current level of service quality as perceived by spa users.
- Qualitative Phase: In-depth interviews with experts and owners to explain the survey results and formulate the enhancement guidelines.

Study Area

The study area for this research is focused on Trat Province, the easternmost coastal province of Thailand. It is a strategic destination within the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) and is recognized for its unique combination of island-based tourism and mainland community-based wellness.

Trat features a wide spectrum of spa enterprises, ranging from Luxury Resort Spas on Koh Chang and Koh Kood to Community-Based Wellness Centers on the mainland (such as the Huai Raeng and Ban Nam Chiao communities). This diversity allows for a comprehensive study of service quality across different business scales. Key informants include:

- Tourism officers at the provincial level (Government)
- Community leaders
- Local tourism entrepreneurs
- Spa Business Owner

Data Collection Qualitative Data (In-depth Interviews):

- The primary tool was a Semi-Structured Interview Guide. This allowed the researcher to maintain a consistent focus on the five dimensions of **S E R V Q U A L** while remaining flexible enough to explore emerging topics, such as local wisdom integration and digital transformation in spa management.
- In-depth interviews were conducted with (Specify Number, e.g., 15) key informants, selected through Purposive Sampling based on their expertise and involvement in the spa and tourism sector.

Results

The findings focus on the evaluation of service quality and the identification of gaps between current practices and professional standards for spa businesses in Trat. Key findings include:

Analysis of Spa Service Quality in Trat Province (SERVQUAL)

The quantitative data from 400 respondents indicates that the overall perception of service quality is at a **High Level**. When categorized into the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model, the results are as follows:

- **Reliability** This dimension scored the highest. Tourists feel that spa businesses in Trat are dependable in providing the services as booked and maintaining accurate timing.
- **Assurance** Respondents expressed high confidence in the politeness and safety standards of the therapists, particularly in registered resort spas.
- **Empathy**: Tourists appreciated the individualized attention and the friendly "local charm" of the service providers.
- **Tangibles**: While scores were high, some respondents noted a need for more consistent modernization of equipment and décor in smaller community-based spas.
- **Responsiveness**: This dimension scored the lowest, with feedback pointing toward delays in communication during peak seasons and a need for faster digital booking confirmations.

Proposed Guidelines for Enhancing Service Quality

- **Standardized Excellence**, implement a provincial "Trat Spa Standard" training program focused on both technical skills and English communication.
- **Cultural Branding**, develop signature treatments that exclusively use Trat's indigenous herbs to create a unique sensory identity.
- **Digital Experience**, adopt centralized online booking systems and "Real-time Feedback" tools to improve the Responsiveness dimension.

Discussion

The discussion of the findings regarding "An Assessment and Enhancement of Service Quality" in Trat Province's Spa Industry provides a deeper understanding of how service standards interact with local identity. The results are discussed through the following three critical lenses:

The Gap in Service Quality Dimensions (SERVQUAL), the research found that while Reliability and Assurance scored high, Responsiveness and Tangibles showed room for improvement. This aligns with the Service Quality Gap Model by Parasuraman et al., which suggests that the "Service Performance Gap" often occurs when there is a lack of teamwork or inadequate physical support.

In the context of Trat, the lower score in Responsiveness suggests that as the province moves toward more high-end wellness tourism, the "speed" of service—particularly in digital communication and booking—has not yet kept pace with tourist expectations. This indicates that enhancing quality is not just about the massage itself, but about the entire Service Encounter from start to finish.

The discussion highlights that the most critical factor for quality enhancement is **Therapist Competency**. This aligns with **Human Resource Management (HRM)** theories in the hospitality industry, which state that employees are the "Internal Customers" who deliver the service quality.

Summary of Discussion

The discussion concludes that enhancing the service quality of spa businesses in Trat Province is not merely a matter of technical improvement, but a strategic integration of **Standardization** and **Identity**. The development of spa service quality in Trat requires a **Synergetic Approach** where the "Tangibles" of the BCG Economy (local, green products) meet the "Intangibles" of high-level service assurance and empathy.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS TOWARD COFFEE SHOP SERVICES IN BANGKOK

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the factors influencing customer expectations toward coffee shop services in Bangkok. A quantitative research method was employed using structured questionnaires to collect data from customers who visited coffee shops. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation. The findings indicate that key influencing factors include coffee quality and taste, price, staff service, store atmosphere and cleanliness, convenience, and shop uniqueness. Among these, coffee quality and service were identified as the most significant factors affecting customer expectations. The results provide valuable insights for coffee shop entrepreneurs to improve service quality and develop competitive strategies that align with customer needs.

Keywords: Factors, Customer expectations, Coffee shop, Service quality.

Introduction

In recent years, consumer behavior in Thailand has undergone significant transformation, particularly in urban areas such as Bangkok. Coffee consumption has evolved from a simple daily habit into a lifestyle activity that integrates social interaction, work, and leisure. Coffee shops have become multifunctional spaces that serve as social hubs, co-working environments, and experiential destinations. According to the Department of Business Development (2025), the Thai coffee industry continues to expand steadily. Thai consumers now consume more than 340 cups of coffee per person per year, contributing to a domestic market value of approximately 65 billion baht. This reflects the increasing importance of the coffee shop industry within Thai economy.

Modern consumers no longer seek only products but also experiences that create both emotional and functional value (Kotler, 2020). Customer experience including sensory, social, and functional aspects-plays a crucial role in influencing revisit intentions in urban specialty coffee shop (Hanafi et al, 2025). Furthermore, customer experience has direct impact on customer satisfaction, advocacy, and repurchase intention in the context of coffee consumption in Thailand (Meeprom, 2025).

The coffee shop business has gained increasing popularity in recent years, with a growing number of entrepreneurs entering the market. This expansion has led to intensified competition, requiring continuous improvement in both product and service quality to align with the rapidly changing market environment. As a result, coffee shop operators must needs in order to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction. Key factors influencing customer satisfaction include coffee quality and taste, price, staff service, store atmosphere and cleanliness, convenience, and shop uniqueness. These factors play a significant role in shaping customer satisfaction and influencing customers, decisions to revisit coffee shop.

However, previous studies have shown that many research efforts do not fully capture the evolving behavioral factors of modern urban consumers, particularly those influenced by changing lifestyles. This gap limits the ability of existing findings to provide comprehensive insights for developing effective competitive strategies in the coffee shop industry. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the factors influencing customer expectations toward coffee shop services in Bangkok. The finding are expected to provide valuable insights for coffee shop operators to improve service quality, enhance customer experience, and maintain competitiveness in dynamic market environment.

Objectives

To analyze the factors influencing customer expectations toward coffee shop services in Bangkok.

Methodology

The population of this study consisted of customers who used coffee shop services in Bangkok. The sample group was selected using a convenience sampling method from Thai customers who voluntarily participated in answering the questionnaire.

Data Collection

The research instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire divided into two sections:

Part 1: Demographic information of respondents, including gender, age, occupation, and income.

Part 2: Factors influencing customer expectations toward coffee shop services, including: Coffee quality and taste, Price, Staff service, Store atmosphere and cleanliness, Convenience, Shop uniqueness.

The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including: Frequency, Percentage, Mean ($\bar{x}$), Standard Deviation (S.D.). The interpretation criteria of mean scores were as follows:

Mean Score Interpretation

4.21 – 5.00 Very High

3.41 – 4.20 High

2.61 – 3.40 Moderate

1.81 – 2.60 Low

1.00 – 1.80 Very Low

Results

The result are categorized into six major factors as shown in the following tables.

Table 1: Factors Influencing Customer Expectations Toward Coffee Quality and taste

Factors	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Level	Rank
Coffee should have a distinctive aroma and smooth taste with balanced intensity and richness.	4.88	0.345	Very High	1
Coffee shops should use fresh coffee beans with an appropriate roasting level and pleasant aroma.	4.82	0.405	Very High	4
Every beverage should maintain consistent taste standards regardless of time or staff member preparing the drink.	4.87	0.347	Very High	2
The temperature of hot and cold beverages should be appropriate and the ice level should be balanced.	4.80	0.485	Very High	5
Coffee shops should provide a variety of coffee bean or menu options to accommodate customer preferences.	4.82	0.418	Very High	3
Overall	4.83	0.299	Very High	-

Table 2: Factors Influencing Customer Expectations Toward Price

Factors	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Level	Rank
Drink prices should correspond to ingredient quality and serving size.	4.87	0.373	Very High	2
Prices should be clearly displayed, including additional charges.	4.88	0.338	Very High	1
There should be a worthwhile membership or reward point system.	4.84	0.339	Very High	5
Drink prices should be reasonable compared with similar coffee shops.	4.86	0.381	Very High	3

The menu should offer beverages across various price ranges.	4.84	0.409	Very High	4
Overall	4.85	0.302	Very High	-

Table 3: Factors Influencing Customer Expectations Toward Staff Service

Factors	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Level	Rank
Staff should speak politely and provide friendly service consistently.	4.94	0.238	Very High	1
Staff should accurately prepare and serve beverages quickly.	4.90	0.319	Very High	2
Staff should have good knowledge of beverage menus and provide recommendations.	4.90	0.301	Very High	4
Staff should be ready to assist and solve customer problems effectively.	4.90	0.308	Very High	3
Staff should pay attention to customers' special requests such as sweetness level or allergies.	4.89	0.311	Very High	5
Overall	4.90	0.226	Very High	-

Table 4: Factors Influencing Customer Expectations Toward Store Atmosphere and Cleanliness

Factors	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Level	Rank
Tables, chairs, and service counters should be clean and well maintained.	4.78	0.452	Very High	4
Store decoration, lighting, and temperature should create a relaxing atmosphere.	4.85	0.360	Very High	1
Restrooms should be clean and appropriate.	4.83	0.360	Very High	2
Music volume and seating arrangement should provide suitable privacy.	4.82	0.395	Very High	3
Cups, straws, and food containers should be hygienic and safe.	4.78	0.428	Very High	5
Overall	4.81	0.329	Very High	-

Table 5: Factors Influencing Customer Expectations Toward Convenience

Factors	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Level	Rank
Coffee shops should be conveniently located near transportation or parking.	4.80	0.448	Very High	2
Seating arrangement should be suitable and comfortable.	4.83	0.418	Very High	1
Facilities such as Wi-Fi and electrical outlets should be available.	4.76	0.462	Very High	5
Service should be fast and efficient.	4.79	0.416	Very High	4
The store should be neat and organized.	4.80	0.414	Very High	3
Overall	4.79	0.350	Very High	-

Table 6: Factors Influencing Customer Expectations Toward Shop Uniqueness

Factors	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Level	Rank
Store decoration should be unique and distinguishable from competitors.	4.80	0.415	Very High	5
The shop should offer signature beverages or menu items.	4.82	0.402	Very High	2
The atmosphere and identity of the shop should be memorable.	4.80	0.433	Very High	4
The uniqueness of the coffee shop should create a positive service experience.	4.81	0.412	Very High	3
The uniqueness of the coffee shop influences revisit intention.	4.84	0.389	Very High	1
Overall	4.81	0.331	Very High	-

Table 7: Summary Table of Results

The results are categorized into six major factors influencing customer expectations toward coffee shop services in Bangkok. The following table summarizes the top three expectations in each factor based on mean scores.

Major Factors	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
Coffee Quality and Taste	Distinctive aroma and smooth taste ($\bar{x}$ = 4.88)	Consistent beverage taste standards ($\bar{x}$ = 4.87)	Variety of coffee bean/menu options ($\bar{x}$ = 4.82)
Price	Clear price display including additional charges ($\bar{x}$ = 4.88)	Reasonable pricing with ingredient quality ($\bar{x}$ = 4.87)	Reasonable pricing compared with competitors ($\bar{x}$ = 4.86)
Staff Service	Polite and friendly staff service ($\bar{x}$ = 4.94)	Accurate and fast beverage preparation ($\bar{x}$ = 4.90)	Staff readiness to assist customers ($\bar{x}$ = 4.90)
Store Atmosphere and Cleanliness	Relaxing atmosphere through decoration and lighting ($\bar{x}$ = 4.85)	Clean and appropriate restrooms ($\bar{x}$ = 4.83)	Suitable music volume and seating arrangement ($\bar{x}$ = 4.82)
Convenience	Suitable and comfortable seating arrangement ($\bar{x}$ = 4.83)	Convenient location near transportation or parking ($\bar{x}$ = 4.80)	Neat and organized store arrangement ($\bar{x}$ = 4.80)
Shop Uniqueness	Shop uniqueness influences revisit intention ($\bar{x}$ = 4.84)	Signature beverages or menu items ($\bar{x}$ = 4.82)	Unique atmosphere and service experience ($\bar{x}$ = 4.81)

The findings indicate that customers place significant importance on service quality, product quality, pricing transparency, store atmosphere, convenience, and uniqueness. Among all factors, polite and friendly staff service received the highest mean score, reflecting the importance of interpersonal service experience in shaping customer expectations and revisit intentions.

Discussion

This study concludes that several factors influence customer expectations toward coffee shop services in Bangkok, including coffee quality and taste, price, staff service, store atmosphere and cleanliness, convenience, and shop uniqueness.

The results of this study indicate that staff service is the most influential factor affecting customer expectations toward coffee shop services in Bangkok. This finding is consistent with previous studies emphasizing the importance of service quality in creating customer satisfaction and loyalty (Saputra et al., 2025; Zeithaml et al., 2018). Employee service strongly influenced customer expectations, as customers expected employees to be polite, friendly, knowledgeable, and capable of recommending suitable beverages. This result aligns with the findings that communication skills and product knowledge help employees build customer trust and satisfaction (Raviwan, 2024). Similarly, the Specialty Coffee Association emphasized that coffee shop employees should create customer experiences and communicate coffee stories rather than only serving beverages (Specialty Coffee Association [SCA], 2023). Good employee service was found to increase customer satisfaction and encourage repeat visits.

Regarding coffee quality and taste, customers placed strong importance on aroma, flavor balance, consistency, and specialty coffee characteristics. Customers expected coffee shops to use high-quality coffee beans and maintain consistent brewing standards. This finding is consistent with studies explaining that coffee quality is associated with terrier, processing methods, roasting, and brewing techniques (Menon, 2016). Excellent coffee quality also depends on clarity, sweetness, balance, and the absence of defects (Hoffmann, 2023). In addition, aroma, acidity, and complexity significantly influence customer perception of specialty coffee (Suwan, 2022). Consistent coffee quality was also found to strengthen customer trust and brand loyalty.

In terms of pricing, customers expected prices to reflect the quality of products and services received. Customers tended to evaluate whether coffee quality, atmosphere, and service matched the price paid. This finding supports the concept that price represents the exchange of total value between customers and businesses (Kotler, 2020). Furthermore, appropriate pricing contributes to customer satisfaction and long-term business sustainability (Athachai, 2024). Customers preferred pricing that represented value for money rather than simply low prices.

Overall, the findings indicate that customer expectations toward coffee shops are multidimensional and involve both tangible and intangible aspects. Coffee shop operators should therefore focus on maintaining beverage quality, improving service standards, creating attractive atmospheres, integrating digital technology, and developing sustainable business practices to remain competitive and strengthen customer loyalty in Bangkok's growing coffee shop industry.

Conclusion

This study concludes that several factors influence customer expectations toward coffee shop services in Bangkok, including coffee quality and taste, price, staff service, store atmosphere and cleanliness, convenience, and shop uniqueness. Among these factors, staff service was found to be the most influential factor, followed by price and coffee quality. The findings provide useful insights for coffee shop entrepreneurs to improve service quality, enhance customer satisfaction, and strengthen competitiveness in the coffee shop industry. Based on the findings of this study, coffee shop operators in Bangkok should focus on improving staff service quality, as employee behavior and communication skills were found to strongly influence customer expectations and satisfaction. Employees should be trained to provide polite, friendly, and knowledgeable service while being able to recommend beverages appropriately. In addition, coffee shops should maintain high standards of coffee quality and consistency by using quality coffee beans and effective brewing techniques. Pricing strategies should also reflect value for money and align with customer perceptions of product and service quality. Furthermore, coffee shop operators should create comfortable and attractive atmospheres that support relaxation, working, and social interaction. The integration of digital technology, such as online ordering systems, digital payment methods, and loyalty programs, may also improve customer convenience and overall experience. Finally, coffee shops should emphasize sustainability practices and develop unique brand identities through signature menus and environmentally friendly operations in order to strengthen customer loyalty and competitiveness in the growing coffee shop industry. Future studies should expand the sample size and include customers from different regions in Thailand to improve the generalizability of the findings. In addition, future research may explore the impact of digital technology and sustainability practices on customer loyalty in the coffee shop industry.

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SERVICE QUALITY MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL RESTAURANTS IN CHIANGMAI PROVINCE

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Abstract

This study, titled *Service Quality Management Guidelines for Local Restaurants in Chiang Mai Province*, aims to explore service quality management practices and develop practical guidelines for improving service standards in local restaurants. A qualitative research approach was employed to gain in-depth insights into customer expectations and operational challenges. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with restaurant owners, staff, and customers using purposive sampling, and analyzed through thematic analysis.

The findings indicate that service quality is influenced by five key dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Customers place strong emphasis on consistent service, prompt responses, personalized interactions, and culturally authentic dining experiences. In addition, staff competence and the physical environment significantly affect overall customer satisfaction. Based on these findings, the study proposes service quality management guidelines focusing on staff training, service standardization, customer engagement, and the integration of local cultural identity. These recommendations aim to enhance service quality and strengthen the competitiveness of local restaurants in Chiang Mai Province.

Keywords: Service quality, restaurant management, qualitative research, customer satisfaction, Chiang Mai Province

Introduction

In recent years, the restaurant industry has become increasingly competitive, particularly in tourism-driven areas such as Chiang Mai Province. Local restaurants play a vital role in supporting the regional economy and preserving cultural identity; however, they face growing challenges in meeting customers' rising expectations for service quality. Service quality is widely recognized as a key determinant of customer satisfaction, loyalty, and business sustainability (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

Qualitative research offers valuable insights into customers' perceptions and experiences, allowing for a deeper understanding of service interactions and management practices (Creswell, 2013). In the context of local restaurants in Chiang Mai, factors such as staff behavior, responsiveness, reliability, and cultural authenticity contribute significantly to perceived service quality.

This study aims to explore service quality management practices in local restaurants and develop practical guidelines tailored to the unique characteristics of Chiang Mai Province. By examining perspectives from restaurant operators and customers, the research seeks to provide actionable recommendations to enhance service standards and competitiveness in the local food service sector.

Objectives

To find service quality management guidelines for local restaurants in Chiangmai province

Literature Review

Service quality has long been recognized as a critical factor influencing customer satisfaction, loyalty, and overall business performance in the hospitality industry. The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) identifies five key dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These dimensions have been widely applied in restaurant settings to assess how customers perceive service delivery and identify gaps between expectations and actual experiences.

In the context of restaurant management, service quality extends beyond physical facilities to include employee behavior, communication, and cultural sensitivity. Studies by Bitner (1992) emphasize the importance of the servicescape, referring to the physical environment in which service is delivered, which significantly affects customer perceptions and satisfaction. Additionally, Grönroos (1984) distinguishes between technical quality (what is delivered) and functional quality (how it is delivered), both of which are essential in shaping customer experiences in restaurants.

Qualitative research methods are particularly useful in exploring the complexities of service quality in local restaurant contexts. Creswell (2013) highlights that qualitative approaches enable researchers to capture participants' perspectives, meanings, and lived experiences. In tourism-driven destinations such as Chiang Mai Province, local restaurants must balance service efficiency with cultural authenticity to meet diverse customer expectations. Previous research suggests that incorporating local identity and personalized service can enhance customer satisfaction and create a competitive advantage (Kim & Kim, 2016).

This study builds on existing literature by focusing specifically on service quality management practices in local restaurants in Chiang Mai Province. It seeks to generate context-specific guidelines that reflect both theoretical frameworks and real-world experiences of restaurant operators and customers.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore service quality management practices in local restaurants in Chiang Mai Province. A qualitative design is appropriate for this research as it allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of service quality within their real-life context (Creswell, 2013).

The study adopts a phenomenological approach to capture the lived experiences of both restaurant operators and customers regarding service quality. Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with key informants, including restaurant owners, managers, staff, and customers selected through purposive sampling. This sampling technique ensures that participants have direct experience with the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2002).

Data collection was conducted until data saturation was achieved, where no new themes emerged from additional interviews. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Field notes were also used to capture contextual details and non-verbal cues during the interviews.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data, following the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), including data familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study applied criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Techniques such as member checking and triangulation were also used to enhance the rigor of the research.

This methodological approach enables the study to generate rich, context-specific insights and develop practical service quality management guidelines tailored to local restaurants in Chiang Mai Province.

Results

The findings of this qualitative study reveal several key themes related to service quality management in local restaurants in Chiang Mai Province. Data analysis identified five major dimensions influencing customer perceptions and experiences: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, which are consistent with the SERVQUAL framework (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

First, **reliability** emerged as a critical factor, with customers emphasizing the importance of accurate orders, consistent food quality, and dependable service. Restaurant operators highlighted the need for standardized procedures and staff training to ensure service consistency. Second, **responsiveness** was reflected in the promptness of service and the ability of staff to address customer needs efficiently. Customers valued quick responses, especially during peak hours.

Third, **assurance** was associated with staff knowledge, professionalism, and the ability to build trust with customers. Participants noted that well-trained staff who could confidently explain menu items and provide recommendations enhanced customer confidence. Fourth, **empathy** played a significant role in shaping positive dining experiences. Personalized attention, friendliness, and understanding of customer preferences were highly appreciated, particularly in small, locally owned restaurants.

Finally, **tangibles**, including the cleanliness of the restaurant, ambiance, and physical appearance of staff, were found to influence initial impressions and overall satisfaction. The integration of local cultural elements into restaurant design was also highlighted as an important factor that enhances the uniqueness of the dining experience in Chiang Mai.

These findings align with previous studies emphasizing the multidimensional nature of service quality and its impact on customer satisfaction (Bitner, 1992; Grönroos, 1984). Based on these results, the study proposes practical guidelines focusing on staff training, service standardization, customer engagement, and the incorporation of local cultural identity to improve service quality management in local restaurants.

Discussion

This study on *service quality management guidelines for local restaurants in Chiang Mai Province* highlights the multidimensional nature of service quality and reinforces its critical role in shaping customer satisfaction and business sustainability. The findings confirm the applicability of the SERVQUAL framework, particularly in terms of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, as key determinants of customer perceptions (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

The prominence of reliability and responsiveness in the findings suggests that operational consistency and timely service are essential for meeting customer expectations in local restaurant settings. This aligns with Grönroos (1984), who emphasizes the importance of functional quality, or how services are delivered, in influencing customer evaluations. In the context of Chiang Mai, where tourism and local culture intersect, maintaining consistent service standards while handling fluctuating customer volumes is especially important.

Furthermore, the results underscore the importance of empathy and personalized service, which reflect the unique characteristics of local restaurants. Customers value warm, friendly interactions and culturally embedded service experiences. This supports Bitner's (1992) concept of servicescape, where both social and physical environments contribute to customer satisfaction. The integration of local identity into service delivery not only enhances customer experiences but also differentiates local restaurants from standardized chain establishments.

The role of assurance, particularly staff knowledge and professionalism, indicates the need for continuous training and development. Well-informed employees contribute to customer trust and perceived service quality. Additionally, tangible elements such as cleanliness and

ambiance remain fundamental, reinforcing the idea that both physical and intangible factors jointly shape service quality perceptions.

Overall, this study extends existing literature by providing context-specific insights into service quality management in Chiang Mai's local restaurant sector. It suggests that effective service quality management should combine standardized practices with flexibility for personalization and cultural expression. These findings offer practical implications for restaurant operators seeking to enhance competitiveness and customer satisfaction in a dynamic hospitality environment.

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DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR HOMESTAYS TO WELCOME INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS

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Abstract

This study titled *Digital Marketing Strategies for Homestays to Welcome International Tourists* aims to explore how homestay operators use digital marketing tools to attract and engage international tourists. A qualitative research approach was adopted to gain in-depth insights into the practices, experiences, and challenges of homestay owners. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with homestay operators and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that homestays primarily utilize social media marketing, online travel agencies, content marketing, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and search engine visibility to reach international markets. Social media platforms are the most widely used tools for promoting cultural experiences and building customer engagement. However, many operators still lack structured digital marketing strategies and advanced technical skills. Based on the findings, the study suggests the need for capacity building and the development of strategic digital marketing guidelines to enhance competitiveness. Strengthening digital marketing practices can help homestays improve visibility, attract more international tourists, and promote sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: Digital marketing, homestays, international tourists, qualitative research, tourism marketing

Introduction

In the digital era, tourism businesses increasingly rely on online platforms to attract and engage international tourists. Homestays, as a form of community-based accommodation, play a significant role in offering authentic cultural experiences; however, they often face challenges in effectively utilizing digital marketing strategies to reach global audiences. With the growing dependence on digital channels for travel planning, the ability to implement effective online marketing has become essential for competitiveness and sustainability.

Digital marketing encompasses various tools and platforms, including social media, search engines, and online travel agencies, which enable businesses to communicate value and build relationships with customers (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2017). For homestays, these tools provide opportunities to showcase unique local experiences, cultural identity, and personalized services to international tourists. Previous studies highlight that online presence, user-generated content, and electronic word-of-mouth significantly influence tourists' decision-making processes (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). A qualitative research approach is particularly

suitable for exploring digital marketing strategies in the homestay sector, as it allows for an in-depth understanding of operators' experiences, challenges, and perspectives (Creswell, 2013). By focusing on homestay providers and international tourists, this study seeks to identify effective digital marketing practices and develop strategic guidelines tailored to the needs of small-scale accommodation businesses. This research, titled *Digital Marketing Strategies for Homestays to Welcome International Tourists*, aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing practical insights into how homestays can leverage digital tools to enhance visibility, attract international guests, and improve overall competitiveness in the global tourism market.

Objectives

To find out Digital marketing strategies for homestays to welcome international tourists.

Literature Review

The study titled *Digital Marketing Strategies for Homestays to Welcome International Tourists* is grounded in the growing importance of digital technologies in the tourism and hospitality industry. Digital marketing has transformed how tourism businesses communicate with potential customers, enabling small-scale accommodations such as homestays to access global markets at relatively low cost. Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017) emphasize that digital marketing integrates online and offline interactions, focusing on customer engagement through multiple digital touchpoints.

Social media platforms play a crucial role in influencing travel decisions, particularly among international tourists. Xiang and Gretzel (2010) highlight that user-generated content, online reviews, and social networking sites significantly shape tourists' perceptions and choices. For homestays, platforms such as online travel agencies and social media channels provide opportunities to showcase authentic experiences and build trust with potential guests. Additionally, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has been identified as a key factor affecting booking intentions and destination image (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008).

Search engine visibility and content marketing are also essential components of effective digital marketing strategies. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) note that search engine optimization (SEO) and high-quality online content enhance a business's online presence and accessibility. For homestays, storytelling and visual content that reflect local culture and lifestyle can create emotional connections with international tourists.

Qualitative research methods are widely used to explore digital marketing practices in tourism contexts, as they allow for an in-depth understanding of stakeholder perspectives and experiences (Creswell, 2013). Previous studies suggest that small tourism businesses often face challenges such as limited digital skills, resource constraints, and lack of strategic planning (Thomas, Shaw, & Page, 2011). Therefore, developing practical and context-specific digital

marketing strategies is essential for improving the competitiveness of homestays in the global market.

This study builds on existing literature by examining digital marketing strategies specifically for homestays and aims to provide actionable guidelines to help them effectively attract and serve international tourists.

Methodology

This study, titled *Digital Marketing Strategies for Homestays to Welcome International Tourists*, adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the experiences, perceptions, and practices of homestay operators in utilizing digital marketing. A qualitative design is appropriate as it enables an in-depth understanding of complex phenomena within real-life contexts, particularly in small tourism businesses (Creswell, 2013).

The research employs a multiple case study approach, focusing on selected homestays that actively engage in digital marketing to attract international tourists. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring that they have relevant experience in managing online platforms such as social media, online travel agencies, and websites (Patton, 2002). Key informants include homestay owners, managers, and selected international guests.

Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews and supplemented by document analysis of digital content, such as social media pages, websites, and online reviews. This triangulation of data sources enhances the credibility and richness of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Interviews were conducted until data saturation was achieved.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006), involving coding, categorization, and theme development to identify key digital marketing strategies and challenges. To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied criteria including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, supported by techniques such as member checking and peer debriefing.

This methodological approach allows for the development of practical and context-specific digital marketing strategies that can support homestays in effectively attracting and serving international tourists.

Results

The findings of this qualitative study on *Digital Marketing Strategies for Homestays to Welcome International Tourists* reveal several key themes related to how homestay operators utilize digital platforms to attract and engage international guests. The analysis identified five main strategies: social media marketing, online travel agency (OTA) utilization, content marketing, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and search engine visibility.

First, **social media marketing** emerged as the most commonly used strategy. Homestay operators actively use platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to showcase accommodation, local culture, and guest experiences. Visual storytelling and regular updates were found to significantly increase engagement with international audiences.

Second, **online travel agencies (OTAs)** such as Airbnb and Booking.com were identified as essential channels for reaching global customers. Participants reported that positive reviews and high ratings on these platforms strongly influence booking decisions, supporting the importance of electronic word-of-mouth (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008).

Third, **content marketing** plays a crucial role in attracting tourists by highlighting authentic local experiences. Homestay owners emphasized the use of photos, videos, and storytelling to create emotional connections with potential guests, aligning with digital marketing principles discussed by Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017).

Fourth, **electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM)** was found to significantly affect trust and credibility. International tourists rely heavily on online reviews and recommendations when selecting homestays. Finally, **search engine visibility** through basic SEO practices was noted as important, although many operators had limited knowledge in this area.

Overall, the findings indicate that while homestay operators are actively engaging in digital marketing, their strategies are often informal and based on experience rather than structured planning. These results suggest the need for capacity building and strategic guidance to enhance digital competitiveness in the homestay sector.

Discussion

This study on *Digital Marketing Strategies for Homestays to Welcome International Tourists* highlights the growing importance of digital platforms in shaping the competitiveness of small-scale accommodation businesses. The findings indicate that homestays primarily rely on social media, online travel agencies (OTAs), content marketing, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and basic search engine visibility to reach international tourists. These results are consistent with Xiang and Gretzel (2010), who emphasize the critical role of online platforms in influencing travel planning and decision-making. The dominance of social media marketing reflects the shift toward visually driven and interactive communication in tourism promotion. Homestay operators use platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to share authentic experiences, which helps create emotional engagement with potential guests. This supports Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017), who argue that digital marketing is centered on customer engagement through multiple touchpoints rather than traditional one-way communication. The importance of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) found in this study reinforces previous research by Litvin, Goldsmith, and Pan (2008), who identify online reviews and peer recommendations as highly influential in hospitality decision-making. International

tourists tend to trust user-generated content more than official advertisements, making reputation management on OTAs essential for homestays.

However, the study also reveals limitations in strategic digital marketing practices. Many homestay operators use digital tools informally without structured planning or advanced techniques such as search engine optimization. This aligns with Thomas, Shaw, and Page (2011), who note that small tourism enterprises often face challenges such as limited digital skills and resource constraints. Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of how homestays engage with digital marketing in practice and highlights the need for capacity building and strategic support. Developing structured digital marketing guidelines can help homestays enhance visibility, improve customer engagement, and strengthen their competitiveness in the international tourism market.

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GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING CHINESE RESTAURANTS TO ATTRACT INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS

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Abstract

This study titled *Guidelines for Developing Chinese Restaurants to Attract International Tourists* aims to explore key factors influencing the development and attractiveness of Chinese restaurants for international tourists. A qualitative research approach was employed to gain in-depth understanding of service practices, cultural adaptation, and customer experiences. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with restaurant owners, staff, and international customers, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

The findings reveal five main themes: service quality, cultural authenticity, menu adaptation, communication, and restaurant atmosphere. These factors collectively influence international tourists' dining experiences and satisfaction. The results highlight the importance of balancing authentic Chinese culinary identity with appropriate adaptation to meet diverse tourist expectations. Based on the findings, the study proposes practical guidelines focusing on service improvement, cultural presentation, communication enhancement, and customer-oriented adaptation strategies. These guidelines aim to strengthen the competitiveness of Chinese restaurants in the international tourism market.

Keywords: Chinese restaurants, international tourists, service quality, cultural adaptation

Introduction

The global tourism industry has become increasingly competitive, with food and dining experiences playing a crucial role in shaping tourist satisfaction and destination image. Chinese restaurants, in particular, are an important component of culinary tourism, offering cultural identity and unique dining experiences that appeal to international visitors. However, many Chinese restaurants face challenges in adapting their services and marketing strategies to meet the expectations of diverse international tourists.

Service development and quality enhancement in restaurants are essential for attracting and retaining foreign customers. According to Kotler, Bowen, and Makens (2016), food service quality and customer experience are key determinants of tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. In addition, culinary authenticity, service adaptation, and cultural presentation significantly influence international tourists' dining choices (Cohen & Avieli, 2004).

Qualitative research is suitable for exploring restaurant development strategies, as it allows for an in-depth understanding of stakeholders' experiences, perceptions, and operational practices (Creswell, 2013). Through this approach, insights can be gained from restaurant owners, staff,

and international tourists regarding effective strategies for improving service and attractiveness. This study, titled *Guidelines for Developing Chinese Restaurants to Attract International Tourists*, aims to explore current development practices and propose practical guidelines to enhance competitiveness in the international tourism market. The research focuses on improving service quality, cultural presentation, and customer experience to support sustainable growth in the restaurant sector.

Objectives

To find out Guidelines for Developing Chinese Restaurants to Attract International Tourists

Literature Review

The development of Chinese restaurants to attract international tourists is closely linked to the broader field of culinary tourism and service quality management. Food is not only a basic need for travelers but also a significant cultural experience that shapes destination image and tourist satisfaction. Cohen and Avieli (2004) emphasize that ethnic food, such as Chinese cuisine, can serve both as an attraction and a challenge, depending on how well it is adapted to tourists' expectations.

Service quality is a key factor influencing customer satisfaction in restaurants. The SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) identifies reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles as essential dimensions of service quality. In the context of Chinese restaurants, these dimensions are reflected in food consistency, staff service behavior, restaurant ambiance, and communication with international customers.

In addition, cultural adaptation plays an important role in attracting foreign tourists. Mak, Lumbers, and Eves (2012) highlight that while authenticity is valued, some level of adaptation in taste, menu design, and service style is necessary to meet diverse international preferences. This balance between authenticity and adaptation is critical for restaurant competitiveness in global tourism markets.

Qualitative research approaches are widely used in hospitality studies to explore complex service experiences and stakeholder perspectives. Creswell (2013) notes that qualitative methods allow researchers to gain deep insights into behaviors, meanings, and contextual factors influencing service delivery. This is particularly relevant for understanding how Chinese restaurants can develop effective strategies to attract international tourists.

Furthermore, previous studies indicate that challenges such as language barriers, lack of intercultural communication skills, and limited marketing strategies can hinder the international competitiveness of ethnic restaurants (Tsai & Lu, 2012). Therefore, developing practical and context-specific guidelines is essential for improving service quality and customer experience in Chinese restaurants.

This study builds on existing literature by focusing on developing guidelines for Chinese restaurants to enhance their attractiveness to international tourists through improved service quality, cultural presentation, and customer-oriented practices.

Methodology

This study titled *Guidelines for Developing Chinese Restaurants to Attract International Tourists* employs a qualitative research approach to explore service development practices and strategies within Chinese restaurants. A qualitative design is appropriate as it allows for an in-depth understanding of experiences, perceptions, and contextual factors influencing restaurant development and international tourist attraction (Creswell, 2013).

The study uses a multiple case study approach focusing on selected Chinese restaurants that serve international tourists. Participants were chosen through purposive sampling, including restaurant owners, managers, staff, and international customers with relevant experience. This sampling method ensures that participants can provide rich and relevant information related to the research objectives (Patton, 2002).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation. Interviews focused on service practices, cultural adaptation, menu design, and customer interaction. Observations were used to examine service delivery, restaurant environment, and customer behavior. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006), involving coding, categorization, and theme development. To ensure research rigor, the study applied trustworthiness criteria including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking and triangulation of data sources were also used to enhance validity.

This methodological framework enables the development of practical and context-specific guidelines for improving Chinese restaurants' competitiveness and attractiveness to international tourists.

Results

The findings of this qualitative study on *Guidelines for Developing Chinese Restaurants to Attract International Tourists* reveal several key themes that influence restaurant attractiveness and service development. Data analysis identified five main areas: service quality, cultural authenticity, menu adaptation, communication, and restaurant atmosphere.

First, **service quality** was found to be a primary factor affecting international tourists' satisfaction. Respondents emphasized the importance of reliability, responsiveness, and staff professionalism, consistent with the SERVQUAL dimensions proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988). Customers valued attentive and efficient service, especially when language barriers were minimized.

Second, **cultural authenticity** played an important role in attracting tourists seeking unique dining experiences. However, restaurant operators noted the need to balance authenticity with comfort and familiarity to meet diverse international preferences. This finding aligns with Cohen and Avieli (2004), who highlight the dual role of ethnic food as both attraction and challenge in tourism.

Third, **menu adaptation** emerged as a key strategy. Participants indicated that offering multilingual menus and adjusting spice levels or presentation styles helped improve customer satisfaction. Fourth, **communication** was identified as a significant challenge, particularly due to language barriers between staff and international customers. Restaurants that provided basic multilingual support or visual menus were more successful in enhancing customer experience. Finally, **restaurant atmosphere and environment** were found to influence tourists' overall impressions. Cleanliness, interior design, and cultural decoration contributed to a positive dining experience and strengthened destination image.

Overall, the results suggest that successful development of Chinese restaurants for international tourists requires a balanced integration of service quality, cultural presentation, and customer-oriented adaptation strategies.

Discussion

This study on *Guidelines for Developing Chinese Restaurants to Attract International Tourists* highlights that successful restaurant development depends on an integrated approach combining service quality, cultural authenticity, and customer-oriented adaptation. The findings confirm that service quality remains a fundamental factor influencing international tourists' satisfaction, consistent with the SERVQUAL dimensions proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988).

The importance of cultural authenticity identified in this study supports Cohen and Avieli (2004), who argue that ethnic food experiences can both attract and challenge tourists depending on how well they are adapted to foreign expectations. In the case of Chinese restaurants, maintaining authentic culinary identity while adjusting certain elements such as spice level, presentation, and service style is essential to satisfy diverse international customers. Another key insight is the role of communication and language accessibility. The findings suggest that language barriers significantly affect service experience, which aligns with Tsai and Lu (2012), who emphasize that intercultural communication skills are critical in ethnic restaurant settings. Simple strategies such as multilingual menus and visual aids can greatly improve customer understanding and satisfaction.

The study also highlights the importance of restaurant atmosphere and environmental design in shaping tourist perceptions. This supports Bitner's (1992) concept of "servicescape," which explains how physical surroundings influence customer behavior and experience. A well-

designed dining environment that reflects Chinese cultural identity can enhance the overall tourist experience.

Overall, this research contributes practical implications by suggesting that Chinese restaurants should adopt a balanced strategy combining service quality improvement, cultural adaptation, and effective communication. These findings provide useful guidance for enhancing competitiveness in the international tourism market.

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GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTING LOCAL SOUVENIR SHOPS FOR INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS

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Abstract

This study titled *Guidelines for Promoting Local Souvenir Shops for International Tourists* aims to explore effective promotional strategies for local souvenir shops targeting international visitors. A qualitative research approach was employed to gain in-depth insights into shop owners' practices, challenges, and customer expectations. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with souvenir shop operators and international tourists, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal five key themes influencing promotion effectiveness: product authenticity, product presentation, pricing strategy, customer service, and digital promotion. Authentic cultural representation and visually attractive product display were found to be the most influential factors in attracting international tourists. However, many souvenir shops still rely on informal marketing practices and lack structured promotional strategies. Based on the findings, the study proposes practical guidelines focusing on cultural storytelling, improved product display, customer-oriented service, and enhanced digital marketing. These guidelines aim to strengthen competitiveness and increase the visibility of local souvenir shops in international tourism markets.

Keywords: Souvenir shops, international tourists, promotion strategies, cultural tourism, qualitative research, destination marketing

Introduction

Local souvenir shops play an important role in tourism destinations by providing cultural products that represent local identity and heritage. These shops not only contribute to the local economy but also enhance tourists' experiences by offering meaningful memories of their visits. However, in many destinations, including emerging tourism areas, local souvenir shops face challenges in effectively promoting their products to international tourists due to limited marketing strategies, inconsistent product quality, and lack of customer engagement.

Tourist purchasing behavior in souvenir markets is strongly influenced by authenticity, cultural value, and perceived quality of products. According to Swanson and Timothy (2012), souvenirs serve as symbolic representations of travel experiences and are closely linked to cultural identity and memory creation. In addition, Kim and Littrell (2001) emphasize that tourists are more likely to purchase souvenirs that reflect local culture and uniqueness.

Qualitative research is suitable for exploring promotional strategies in souvenir shops, as it allows for an in-depth understanding of shop owners' experiences, challenges, and marketing

practices (Creswell, 2013). Through this approach, insights can be gathered from both business operators and international tourists to identify effective ways of improving promotion strategies.

This study, titled *Guidelines for Promoting Local Souvenir Shops for International Tourists*, aims to explore current promotional practices and develop practical guidelines to enhance the visibility, attractiveness, and competitiveness of local souvenir shops in international tourism markets.

Objectives

To find out Guidelines for Promoting Local Souvenir Shops for International Tourists

Literature Review

The promotion of local souvenir shops for international tourists is closely linked to the concepts of cultural tourism, consumer behavior, and destination marketing. Souvenirs are widely recognized as important elements of the tourist experience, serving as tangible symbols of travel memories and cultural identity. Swanson and Timothy (2012) explain that souvenirs carry both emotional and symbolic value, representing the connection between tourists and destination culture.

Tourist purchasing behavior in souvenir markets is influenced by factors such as authenticity, cultural significance, price, and product uniqueness. Kim and Littrell (2001) found that tourists are more likely to purchase souvenirs that reflect local culture and provide meaningful experiences rather than generic products. This highlights the importance of cultural representation in souvenir design and marketing.

Marketing communication and promotion strategies also play a key role in attracting international tourists. Pike (2015) emphasizes that effective destination marketing requires clear branding, storytelling, and the use of digital platforms to reach global audiences. For local souvenir shops, integrating online promotion with in-store experiences can enhance visibility and customer engagement.

Qualitative research methods are widely used in tourism and retail studies to explore consumer experiences and business practices in depth. Creswell (2013) notes that qualitative approaches are particularly useful for understanding meanings, perceptions, and contextual factors influencing behavior. This is relevant for identifying challenges and opportunities faced by souvenir shop owners in promoting their products to international tourists.

Previous studies also indicate that small retail businesses often struggle with limited marketing knowledge, lack of digital skills, and weak product differentiation (Littrell, Baizerman, Kean, Gahring, Niemeyer, Reilly, & Stout, 1994). Therefore, developing practical and context-specific promotional guidelines is essential to improve competitiveness in the global tourism market.

This study builds on existing literature by focusing on developing guidelines for promoting local souvenir shops to international tourists through improved marketing strategies, cultural representation, and customer engagement.

Methodology

This study titled *Guidelines for Promoting Local Souvenir Shops for International Tourists* adopts a qualitative research approach to explore promotional practices and strategies used by local souvenir shop operators. A qualitative design is appropriate as it allows for an in-depth understanding of experiences, perceptions, and contextual factors influencing promotion in tourism retail settings (Creswell, 2013).

The study employs a multiple case study approach focusing on selected local souvenir shops that serve international tourists. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, including shop owners, managers, and international tourists who have experience purchasing souvenirs. This approach ensures rich and relevant data related to promotional strategies and customer expectations (Patton, 2002).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations. Interviews focused on marketing practices, product presentation, customer interaction, and promotional challenges. Observations were used to examine in-store promotion, product display, and customer behavior. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006), which involved data familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation. To ensure research rigor, the study applied trustworthiness criteria including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Techniques such as triangulation and member checking were also used to enhance validity.

This methodological framework supports the development of practical and context-specific guidelines to improve the promotion and competitiveness of local souvenir shops in international tourism markets.

Results

The findings of this qualitative study on *Guidelines for Promoting Local Souvenir Shops for International Tourists* reveal several key themes influencing the effectiveness of promotional strategies. Data analysis identified five main areas: product authenticity, product presentation, pricing strategy, customer service, and digital promotion.

First, **product authenticity** emerged as the most important factor affecting international tourists' purchasing decisions. Participants emphasized that souvenirs reflecting local culture, identity, and craftsmanship were more attractive, supporting Swanson and Timothy (2012), who highlight souvenirs as cultural symbols and memory objects.

Second, **product presentation and display** were found to significantly influence customer interest. Well-organized displays, storytelling elements, and visually appealing arrangements encouraged tourists to explore and purchase products. Third, **pricing strategy** was identified as a key concern, with tourists preferring reasonable and transparent pricing.

Fourth, **customer service interaction** played an important role in shaping the shopping experience. Friendly communication, basic language support, and helpful explanations increased customer satisfaction and trust. Finally, **digital promotion** such as social media and online visibility was noted as increasingly important for attracting international tourists, aligning with Pike (2015), who emphasizes destination marketing through digital platforms.

Overall, the results indicate that many souvenir shops rely on informal promotional practices, with limited strategic planning. Strengthening structured marketing approaches and enhancing cultural storytelling are essential for improving competitiveness in the international tourism market.

Discussion

This study on *Guidelines for Promoting Local Souvenir Shops for International Tourists* highlights the importance of combining cultural authenticity, effective presentation, customer service, and digital promotion to enhance the competitiveness of souvenir businesses. The findings confirm that authenticity is the most influential factor in attracting international tourists, consistent with Swanson and Timothy (2012), who emphasize that souvenirs function as cultural symbols and memory representations of travel experiences.

The importance of product presentation and storytelling supports the idea that tourists are not only purchasing products but also seeking meaningful experiences. Well-designed displays and cultural narratives help increase perceived value and emotional connection, which aligns with Kim and Littrell (2001), who note that cultural meaning strongly influences souvenir purchasing behavior.

Customer service was also identified as a key factor influencing satisfaction. Friendly interaction and basic communication support improve trust and encourage purchase decisions. This finding is consistent with Littrell et al. (1994), who argue that interpersonal interaction plays a significant role in tourist retail experiences, especially in small-scale souvenir businesses.

Additionally, the study found that digital promotion is becoming increasingly important, although many shops still lack structured online marketing strategies. This supports Pike (2015), who emphasizes that destination marketing and retail promotion must increasingly rely on digital platforms to reach international markets.

Overall, this study suggests that souvenir shops should move from informal promotional practices toward more structured strategies that integrate cultural storytelling, improved

customer engagement, and digital marketing tools. These improvements can enhance visibility, competitiveness, and sustainability in the international tourism market.

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GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING SERVICE QUALITY OF GAS STATIONS IN THAILAND FOR INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS

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Abstract

This study, titled *Guidelines for Improving Service Quality of Gas Stations in Thailand for International Tourists*, aims to explore service quality issues and develop practical improvement guidelines for gas stations serving international travelers. A qualitative research approach was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of tourists' experiences, service expectations, and operational practices. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and direct observations involving international tourists and gas station staff and were analyzed using thematic analysis.

The findings reveal five key dimensions influencing service quality: service efficiency, staff behavior, facility quality, communication support, and customer convenience. Communication barriers and inconsistent facility standards were identified as major challenges affecting international tourist satisfaction. However, positive staff attitudes and efficient service processes were found to enhance customer experiences.

Based on these findings, the study proposes practical guidelines focusing on staff training, multilingual communication support, facility improvement, and customer-oriented service design. These recommendations aim to improve service quality at gas stations and strengthen Thailand's tourism infrastructure for international travelers.

Keywords: Service quality; gas stations; international tourists; Thailand tourism; customer experience; qualitative research

Introduction

Service quality in fuel retailing has become increasingly relevant to international tourism in Thailand. Gas stations are no longer only refuelling points; they also function as travel-support hubs that provide restrooms, convenience stores, parking areas, food and beverage services, basic safety support, and, in some locations, route or destination information. For international tourists who travel independently by car, van, or motorcycle, the service quality experienced at gas stations can influence travel comfort, perceived safety, and the overall destination experience.

Service quality is commonly linked to customer satisfaction and loyalty in service industries. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) conceptualise service quality through reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. In the gas station context, these dimensions are reflected in service speed, payment reliability, staff helpfulness, restroom cleanliness, clear signage, and the availability of tourist-friendly services. Lovelock and Wirtz (2016) further emphasise that service organisations need to adapt their offerings to diverse customer needs, particularly in multicultural service environments.

Recent regional studies also suggest that customer value is increasingly shaped by practical service design, stakeholder orientation, and credible service delivery. Cheah (2018), in the context of social enterprise performance in Malaysia and Singapore, highlights the importance of performance-oriented management in service-oriented organisations. Similarly, Tan and Cheah (2025) show that consumers respond not only to positive intentions

but also to the perceived value and credibility of the offering. Although gas stations are not social enterprises, these insights are useful because international tourists similarly evaluate services based on practical usefulness, trust, convenience, and visible service quality.

This study therefore examines how gas stations in Thailand can improve service quality for international tourists. It focuses on service experiences, operational gaps, and practical guidelines that can support Thailand's tourism infrastructure and improve the experience of international road travellers.

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to develop practical guidelines for improving the service quality of gas stations in Thailand for international tourists. Specifically, the study aims to identify key service-quality issues experienced by international tourists, examine operational challenges faced by gas station staff and managers, and propose actionable improvements in service efficiency, communication, facility quality, and customer convenience.

Literature Review

Service quality and tourism support services

Service quality plays a crucial role in shaping customer satisfaction and overall travel experience. In gas stations, service quality extends beyond fuel provision to include staff behaviour, facility cleanliness, convenience store standards, accessibility, communication, and safety. The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) remains useful for assessing such services because it captures both functional and physical aspects of the customer experience.

Gas stations located along tourist routes perform both functional and experiential roles. From a tourism perspective, these locations act as service touchpoints that can strengthen or weaken the traveller's perception of a destination. Pearce (2014) notes that transport-related service points contribute to tourist satisfaction because they shape mobility, comfort, and destination accessibility. Poorly maintained restrooms, unclear signage, slow service, or communication difficulties can therefore affect not only the gas station experience but also the broader tourism image of the destination.

Customer-oriented service design and collaboration

Customer-oriented service design is especially important in multicultural tourism settings. International tourists often require clear information, predictable service standards, convenient payment options, and staff who can respond to basic questions. Grönroos (2007) argues that service quality is shaped by both technical quality, or what is delivered, and functional quality, or how it is delivered. For gas stations, this means that fuel availability alone is insufficient if tourists face uncertainty, poor communication, or uncomfortable facilities.

The wider Southeast Asian literature also supports the need for service organisations to integrate customer value, operational capability, and collaboration. Cheah et al. (2023) propose a transdisciplinary university-industry collaboration framework for developing a social business model, which is relevant to this study because service improvements often require collaboration among operators, universities, tourism agencies, and local stakeholders. Such collaboration can support staff training, service audits, multilingual materials, and evidence-based service innovation. This study builds on these service and collaboration perspectives by developing practical guidelines for tourist-oriented gas station services in Thailand.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore service quality issues and improvement strategies in gas stations serving international tourists. A qualitative approach is appropriate because it allows the study to capture tourists' service experiences, staff-customer interactions, and operational challenges in real service settings (Creswell, 2013).

The study uses a multiple-case approach involving selected gas stations located along major tourist routes in Thailand. Participants were selected through purposive sampling and included international tourists, frontline staff, and gas station managers with direct experience of the service setting. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and direct observation. Interview questions focused on service efficiency, communication, facility quality, customer satisfaction, and suggestions for improvement. Observations examined cleanliness, signage, payment processes, staff behaviour, accessibility, and customer flow.

The data were analysed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis involved familiarisation with the data, initial coding, theme development, review, and interpretation. To enhance trustworthiness, the study applied credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability principles (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Triangulation between interview and observation data was used to strengthen the interpretation of findings.

Results

The findings identify five main service-quality themes: service efficiency, staff behaviour, facility quality, communication support, and customer convenience.

First, service efficiency was important to international tourists, especially in relation to refuelling speed, queue management, payment processing, and the availability of convenience services. Tourists expected smooth and predictable service during long-distance travel, which reflects the reliability and responsiveness dimensions of service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988).

Second, staff behaviour strongly shaped tourists' service experience. Friendly, polite, and helpful staff created a positive impression even when language ability was limited. However, communication barriers sometimes caused confusion in fuel selection, payment procedures, directions, and requests for facilities.

Third, facility quality was a major determinant of overall satisfaction. Clean restrooms, safe parking areas, clear walking paths, well-stocked convenience stores, and suitable rest areas contributed to tourist comfort. Inconsistent cleanliness and unclear facility layout reduced confidence and weakened the overall service impression.

Fourth, communication support was a recurring issue. Multilingual signage, simple English instructions, visual icons, QR-based information, and basic staff communication skills were considered important for international tourists. Fifth, customer convenience, including tourist information, payment flexibility, clear directions, and basic safety support, was found to improve satisfaction and encourage positive travel experiences.

Practical Guidelines

Based on the findings, gas station operators should implement a concise set of service improvement guidelines that combine operational efficiency, tourist-friendly communication, and facility standardisation.

Service area	Key issue	Recommended guideline
Service efficiency	Slow or unclear refuelling and payment processes	Standardise service flow, improve queue management, and provide clear payment instructions.
Staff behaviour	Inconsistent tourist-oriented service behaviour	Provide short, practical training on courtesy, basic English phrases, and handling common tourist requests.
Facility quality	Uneven restroom, parking, and convenience-store standards	Introduce regular facility audits, visible cleaning schedules, and minimum service standards for tourist routes.
Communication support	Language barriers and unclear signage	Use multilingual signs, universal icons, QR-based travel information, and basic English service scripts.
Customer convenience	Limited tourist information and support services	Provide route maps, emergency contacts, tourist information boards, seating areas, and flexible payment options.
Continuous improvement	Limited structured feedback and collaboration	Work with tourism agencies, universities, and industry partners to conduct service audits, training, and customer feedback reviews.

Discussion

The study confirms that service quality at gas stations is multidimensional. International tourists evaluate not only fuel availability but also service speed, staff helpfulness, physical facilities, communication, and convenience. These findings are consistent with the SERVQUAL perspective, especially reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibles (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988). They also support Grönroos' (2007) view that service delivery depends on both technical and functional quality.

The findings further show that communication and facility standards are central to tourist satisfaction. Basic multilingual support, clear signs, and visual service guidance can reduce uncertainty for travellers. Facility improvements are also important because tourists often use gas stations as rest stops rather than only refuelling points. In this sense, gas stations contribute to the tourism experience and to the perceived readiness of the destination (Pearce, 2014).

From a practical perspective, service improvement should not depend only on individual station managers. Cheah et al. (2023) suggest that university-industry collaboration can support applied service innovation, which is relevant for developing training modules, service audit tools, and customer feedback mechanisms for gas stations. In addition, the customer-value perspective reflected in Tan and Cheah (2025) reinforces that tourists are more likely to respond positively when service improvements are visible, useful, and credible.

Conclusion

This study develops practical guidelines for improving the service quality of gas stations in Thailand for international tourists. The findings show that service efficiency, staff behaviour, facility quality, communication support, and customer convenience are the most important areas for improvement. Gas station operators should prioritise standardised service processes, basic multilingual communication, clean and accessible facilities, tourist-friendly information, and continuous feedback systems. These improvements can enhance tourist

satisfaction, strengthen Thailand's tourism infrastructure, and position gas stations as important service touchpoints within the broader travel experience.

The study is limited by its qualitative design and focus on selected gas stations. Future research may apply a quantitative survey to test the relative importance of each service-quality dimension and compare tourist perceptions across different regions of Thailand.

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GUIDELINES FOR STUDYING STORYTELLING AS A TOOL FOR TOURISM COMMUNICATION: A CASE STUDY OF TOURS IN CHINA

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Abstract

This study titled *Guidelines for Studying Storytelling as a Tool for Tourism Communication: A Case Study of Tours in China* aims to explore how storytelling is used as an effective communication tool in guided tour experiences and to develop practical guidelines for improving tourism communication. A qualitative research approach was employed to gain in-depth understanding of tour guides' storytelling practices and tourists' experiences. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and participant observations in selected tour settings in China, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

The findings reveal that storytelling effectiveness is shaped by narrative structure, cultural interpretation, guide performance, emotional engagement, and tourist response. Storytelling was found to enhance tourist understanding, emotional connection, and overall satisfaction by transforming factual information into meaningful experiences.

Based on the findings, the study proposes guidelines focusing on narrative design, cultural interpretation skills, guide training, and interactive communication strategies. These guidelines aim to improve the quality of tourism communication and enhance tourist experiences in guided tours.

Keywords: Storytelling, tourism communication, guided tours, China tourism

Introduction

Tourism communication plays a crucial role in shaping visitor experiences, understanding, and satisfaction. In guided tours, storytelling has emerged as a powerful communication tool that transforms factual information into meaningful and memorable experiences. Particularly in culturally rich destinations such as China, storytelling helps tourists connect with history, traditions, and local identities in a more engaging way.

Storytelling in tourism is not only about delivering information but also about creating emotional and experiential connections between tourists and destinations. According to Mossberg (2008), storytelling enhances the tourist experience by adding meaning, emotion,

and context to destinations. Through narratives, tour guides can influence how tourists perceive and remember their travel experiences.

In addition, Chronis (2012) emphasizes that storytelling in tourism allows for the co-creation of experiences between guides and tourists, making tours more interactive and personalized. This is particularly important in cultural destinations where interpretation of heritage and history requires more than factual explanation.

Qualitative research is suitable for studying storytelling in tourism communication, as it enables an in-depth exploration of meanings, interactions, and experiences (Creswell, 2013). Through this approach, researchers can better understand how storytelling is used by tour guides and how it is received by tourists in real-world settings.

This study, titled *Guidelines for Studying Storytelling as a Tool for Tourism Communication: A Case Study of Tours in China*, aims to explore how storytelling is used in guided tours and to develop practical guidelines for improving tourism communication effectiveness through narrative techniques.

Objectives

To find out *Guidelines for Studying Storytelling as a Tool for Tourism Communication: A Case Study of Tours in China*

Literature Review

Storytelling has become an important tool in tourism communication, particularly in guided tour experiences where information is transformed into meaningful narratives. It plays a key role in enhancing tourist engagement, understanding, and emotional connection with destinations. Mossberg (2008) describes storytelling as a method that adds emotional and experiential value to tourism, allowing visitors to interpret destinations in a more memorable way.

In cultural tourism contexts such as China, storytelling is especially significant because it helps interpret complex historical and cultural information. Chronis (2012) highlights that storytelling in tourism is a co-creative process between tour guides and tourists, where meaning is jointly constructed through interaction and narrative exchange. This enhances both engagement and satisfaction during tours.

Tour guides play a central role in delivering effective storytelling. Their ability to use narrative techniques, emotional expression, and cultural interpretation influences how tourists perceive destinations. According to Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier (2009), narrative-based communication improves tourists' cognitive and emotional experiences, making tours more impactful and memorable.

Qualitative research methods are widely used in studying storytelling in tourism because they allow for an in-depth understanding of human experiences, interactions, and meanings (Creswell, 2013). Such approaches are particularly useful in examining how narratives are constructed and received in real tour settings.

Previous studies also indicate that storytelling enhances destination image, tourist satisfaction, and memory retention (McCabe & Foster, 2006). However, the effectiveness of storytelling depends on guide skills, cultural context, and audience engagement. Therefore, developing structured guidelines for storytelling in tourism communication is essential for improving tour quality.

This study builds on existing literature by focusing on storytelling practices in tours in China and aims to develop practical guidelines to enhance tourism communication through effective narrative strategies.

Methodology

This study titled *Guidelines for Studying Storytelling as a Tool for Tourism Communication: A Case Study of Tours in China* employs a qualitative research approach to explore how storytelling is used in guided tours and how it influences tourist experiences. A qualitative design is appropriate as it allows for an in-depth understanding of narratives, interactions, and meanings within real tourism settings (Creswell, 2013).

The study adopts a case study approach focusing on selected guided tour services in China that actively use storytelling as part of their tourism communication. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, including tour guides and international tourists who have experienced guided tours. This ensures the collection of rich and relevant data related to storytelling practices (Patton, 2002).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Interviews focused on storytelling techniques, guide–tourist interaction, emotional engagement, and tourist perceptions. Observations were conducted during tours to capture real-time narrative delivery and audience responses. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006), involving systematic coding, categorization, and theme development. To ensure research rigor, the study applied trustworthiness criteria including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation of interviews and observations was used to enhance validity.

This methodological framework supports the development of practical guidelines for improving storytelling as an effective tourism communication tool in guided tours in China.

Results

The findings of this qualitative study on *Guidelines for Studying Storytelling as a Tool for Tourism Communication: A Case Study of Tours in China* reveal that storytelling is a central mechanism shaping tourists' experiences and meaning-making during guided tours. Data analysis identified five key themes: narrative structure, cultural interpretation, guide performance, emotional engagement, and tourist response.

First, **narrative structure** was found to be essential in organizing tour information into meaningful and memorable experiences. Tour guides who used clear chronological or thematic storytelling were more effective in maintaining tourist attention and understanding. This aligns with Mossberg (2008), who emphasizes that storytelling enhances the value of tourism experiences by creating coherence and meaning.

Second, **cultural interpretation** played a significant role in enhancing tourists' understanding of Chinese history, traditions, and heritage sites. Guides who incorporated cultural symbols and local perspectives helped tourists connect more deeply with destinations.

Third, **guide performance** influenced the effectiveness of storytelling. Voice tone, body language, and interaction skills were found to enhance engagement and credibility. Fourth, **emotional engagement** emerged as a key outcome, with tourists reporting stronger emotional connections when stories included personal anecdotes or historical legends.

Finally, **tourist response** indicated that storytelling improved satisfaction, memory retention, and willingness to recommend tours. Participants noted that storytelling made tours more enjoyable compared to factual presentations alone.

Overall, the results suggest that storytelling is a powerful communication tool in tourism, particularly in guided tours in China, where cultural richness can be effectively conveyed through narrative techniques.

Discussion

This study on *Guidelines for Studying Storytelling as a Tool for Tourism Communication: A Case Study of Tours in China* highlights storytelling as a key mechanism for enhancing tourist engagement, understanding, and emotional connection during guided tours. The findings show that narrative structure, cultural interpretation, guide performance, emotional engagement, and tourist response are central elements influencing the effectiveness of storytelling. These results are consistent with Mossberg (2008), who emphasizes that storytelling adds meaning and emotional value to tourism experiences.

The study confirms that storytelling transforms guided tours from simple information delivery into interactive and meaningful experiences. This aligns with Chronis (2012), who argues that storytelling in tourism is a co-creative process where meaning is jointly constructed between tour guides and tourists. In the Chinese tour context, cultural and historical narratives help tourists better understand complex heritage sites and strengthen destination appreciation.

Guide performance was found to significantly influence storytelling effectiveness. Voice modulation, body language, and interaction skills enhance tourist attention and emotional engagement. This supports Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier (2009), who highlight that narrative-based communication improves both cognitive and emotional tourist experiences.

The findings also indicate that storytelling increases tourist satisfaction and memory retention, making tours more enjoyable and meaningful. However, the effectiveness of storytelling

depends on guide training, narrative skills, and audience interaction, suggesting the need for structured communication guidelines.

Overall, this study contributes to tourism communication literature by demonstrating that storytelling is not only an interpretive tool but also a strategic communication method. Developing clear guidelines for storytelling can enhance tour quality and improve the overall tourist experience in China.

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GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING THAI STREET FOOD TO WELCOME CHINESE TOURISTS

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Abstract

This qualitative study titled “Guidelines for developing Thai street food to welcome Chinese tourists” aims to explore how Thai street food can be improved to better meet the needs and expectations of Chinese tourists while maintaining its cultural authenticity. As Chinese tourists represent one of the largest visitor groups in Thailand, understanding their food preferences is essential for enhancing satisfaction and promoting sustainable food tourism development. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with Chinese tourists, Thai street food vendors, and tourism stakeholders, along with relevant document analysis. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns related to taste preferences, hygiene standards, service communication, and cultural expectations. The findings reveal four main areas for development: taste adaptation (especially reduced spiciness), improved hygiene and food safety, enhanced communication through bilingual support, and preservation of authentic Thai food culture. The study suggests that successful development of Thai street food should balance cultural authenticity with selective adaptation to international tourist needs. The results provide practical guidelines for policymakers and street food entrepreneurs to improve service quality and strengthen Thailand’s position as a leading food tourism destination.

Keywords: Thai street food, Chinese tourists, food tourism, qualitative research

Introduction

Street food plays a significant role in shaping the cultural identity and tourism experience of many destinations, particularly in Southeast Asia. In Thailand, street food is not only an essential part of daily life but also a key attraction for international tourists. With the continuous growth of Chinese outbound tourism, understanding the food preferences and expectations of Chinese tourists has become increasingly important for the Thai tourism and food service sectors. Previous studies have highlighted that food is a central component of the tourist experience and can strongly influence destination satisfaction and image (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Hall & Sharples, 2008). This qualitative study, titled “**Guidelines for developing Thai street food to welcome Chinese tourists**”, aims to explore ways in which Thai street food can be adapted to better meet the needs of Chinese visitors while maintaining its cultural authenticity. It focuses on aspects such as taste preferences, hygiene standards, service communication, and cultural familiarity. By drawing on insights from tourism and food culture

literature, as well as perceptions of stakeholders, this research seeks to develop practical guidelines that enhance the competitiveness of Thai street food in the Chinese tourism market.

Objectives

To find out Guidelines for developing Thai street food to welcome Chinese tourists.

Literature Review

Food tourism has been widely recognized as an important component of the overall travel experience, influencing destination image, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention. According to Hall and Sharples (2008), local food serves not only as sustenance but also as a cultural attraction that allows tourists to experience the identity of a destination. In the context of Thailand, street food represents a distinctive cultural asset that contributes significantly to the country's tourism appeal (World Tourism Organization, 2012).

Chinese tourists are among the largest international visitor groups in Thailand, and their food preferences have been shown to be influenced by taste familiarity, hygiene standards, and cultural dietary habits. As Kim, Eves, and Scarles (2009) noted, food neophobia and cultural proximity play important roles in shaping tourists' food choices. For Chinese travelers, preferences often include mild flavors, familiar cooking styles, and concerns about food safety and cleanliness (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011).

In addition, cultural adaptation of local food offerings has been identified as a strategy to enhance tourist satisfaction without compromising authenticity. Cohen and Avieli (2004) emphasize that balancing authenticity and adaptation is essential in food tourism development. For Thai street food, this may involve adjusting spice levels, improving service communication, and ensuring hygienic preparation while maintaining traditional identity.

Therefore, this study titled “**Guidelines for developing Thai street food to welcome Chinese tourists**” builds on existing literature by exploring how Thai street food can be strategically developed to meet the expectations of Chinese tourists while preserving its cultural uniqueness.

Methodology

This study titled “**Guidelines for developing Thai street food to welcome Chinese tourists**” adopts a qualitative research approach to explore perceptions, experiences, and recommendations related to Thai street food development for Chinese tourists. A qualitative method is appropriate as it allows in-depth understanding of meanings, behaviors, and cultural factors influencing food consumption in tourism contexts (Creswell, 2014).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key informants, including Thai street food vendors, tourism stakeholders, and Chinese tourists visiting Thailand. This method enables flexible questioning while maintaining focus on key research objectives, allowing participants to express their views in detail (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In addition, document

analysis of relevant academic literature, tourism reports, and policy documents was conducted to support and triangulate the findings.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the steps of coding, categorizing, and identifying key themes related to food preferences, cultural adaptation, hygiene standards, and service improvement. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a useful method for identifying patterns within qualitative data and interpreting their meanings in relation to the research questions.

The study ensures trustworthiness through triangulation of data sources, member checking, and careful documentation of the analysis process to enhance credibility and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Results

The findings of this study titled “**Guidelines for developing Thai street food to welcome Chinese tourists**” reveal several key themes related to the expectations and experiences of Chinese tourists and the required improvements in Thai street food services.

First, **food taste adaptation** emerged as a major theme. Many Chinese tourists preferred milder flavors, less spicy food, and familiar ingredients. This finding supports the idea that cultural proximity influences food acceptance among tourists (Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009). While Chinese tourists appreciated the authenticity of Thai street food, excessive spiciness was often identified as a barrier to enjoyment.

Second, **hygiene and food safety** were identified as the most critical concern. Participants emphasized the importance of clean cooking environments, proper food handling, and visible hygiene practices. This aligns with previous research indicating that food safety significantly affects tourist satisfaction and destination image (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011).

Third, **service communication and language support** were highlighted as important areas for improvement. Chinese tourists expressed difficulties in understanding menus and communicating with vendors. The use of basic Chinese language signage or visual menus was suggested as a practical solution.

Finally, **cultural experience and authenticity** remained highly valued. Despite the need for adaptation, tourists still expected to experience authentic Thai street food culture. This supports Cohen and Avieli (2004), who argue that balancing authenticity and adaptation is essential in food tourism development.

Overall, the results indicate that successful development of Thai street food for Chinese tourists should focus on adjusting taste, improving hygiene standards, enhancing communication, and preserving cultural authenticity.

Discussion

This study titled “ **Guidelines for developing Thai street food to welcome Chinese tourists**” highlights the importance of balancing cultural authenticity with targeted adaptation to meet the expectations of Chinese tourists. The findings suggest that while Thai street food is highly attractive as a cultural experience, certain modifications are necessary to enhance satisfaction and accessibility.

The need for **taste adaptation**, particularly reducing spiciness, reflects the influence of food neophobia and cultural familiarity in tourist food consumption. This is consistent with Kim, Eves, and Scarles (2009), who argue that tourists are more likely to accept local food when it aligns with their taste preferences and previous food experiences. However, complete modification of traditional flavors is not recommended, as authenticity remains a core value in food tourism.

The strong emphasis on **hygiene and food safety** confirms previous research indicating that perceived cleanliness significantly impacts destination image and tourist trust (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011). For Thai street food vendors, improving visible hygiene practices can therefore enhance competitiveness without altering cultural identity.

In addition, the importance of **communication and service accessibility** suggests that language barriers remain a limitation in fully satisfying Chinese tourists. Providing bilingual menus, food labels, or visual ordering systems can improve the overall experience and reduce misunderstandings.

Finally, the study supports Cohen and Avieli’s (2004) argument that successful food tourism development requires a balance between **authenticity and adaptation**. Thai street food should maintain its unique cultural character while making selective adjustments to meet market demands.

Overall, the discussion indicates that the development of Thai street food for Chinese tourists should focus on three key principles: cultural preservation, selective adaptation, and service enhancement.

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GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING DIGITAL MARKETING FOR HOTELS IN THE KHAO SAN ROAD AREA, BANGKOK

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Abstract

This qualitative study titled “Guidelines for Developing Digital Marketing for Hotels in the Khao San Road Area, Bangkok” explores effective digital marketing strategies that can enhance the competitiveness of hotels in one of Bangkok’s most popular tourist districts. In today’s digital era, online platforms significantly influence how travelers search for, evaluate, and book accommodation, making digital marketing a key factor in hotel performance (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with hotel managers, digital marketing staff, and tourism stakeholders, along with analysis of hotel websites, social media platforms, and online travel agencies. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and strategies in digital marketing practices.

The findings reveal four main areas of importance: social media engagement, online reviews and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), search engine optimization and OTA visibility, and customer relationship communication. These elements play a significant role in increasing hotel visibility, building customer trust, and influencing booking decisions (Leung et al., 2013; Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014).

The study provides practical guidelines for hotels in the Khao San Road area to improve their digital marketing strategies and strengthen their competitiveness in the international tourism market.

Keywords: Digital marketing, hotels, Khao San Road, Bangkok, qualitative research, tourism marketing, social media, online travel agencies, eWOM

Introduction

The rapid growth of digital technology has significantly transformed the global tourism and hospitality industry. Hotels increasingly rely on digital marketing strategies to attract customers, enhance brand awareness, and remain competitive in a highly dynamic market. According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), digital marketing enables businesses to

engage with customers through online platforms such as social media, search engines, and websites, which are now essential tools in travel decision-making.

Khao San Road in Bangkok is one of the most well-known tourist areas, particularly popular among backpackers and international travelers. The high concentration of budget accommodations in this area creates intense competition among hotels, making effective digital marketing a key factor for business success. Buhalis and Law (2008) emphasize that information and communication technologies have reshaped how tourists search for and book accommodation, increasing the importance of online presence for hotels.

In addition, online reviews and social media content play a crucial role in shaping tourist perceptions and booking decisions. Leung et al. (2013) found that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) significantly influences traveler behavior, especially among independent tourists who frequently visit destinations like Khao San Road.

Therefore, this study titled “Guidelines for Developing Digital Marketing for Hotels in the Khao San Road Area, Bangkok” aims to explore effective digital marketing approaches that hotels can use to improve visibility, attract international tourists, and enhance competitiveness in this highly competitive tourism area.

Objectives

To find out Guidelines for Developing Digital Marketing for Hotels in the Khao San Road Area, Bangkok.

Literature Review

Digital marketing has become an essential component of modern hospitality management, particularly in highly competitive urban tourism destinations. It enables hotels to communicate directly with potential guests, build brand awareness, and influence booking decisions through online platforms. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) define digital marketing as the use of digital technologies, mainly the internet and social media, to achieve marketing objectives through customer engagement and interaction.

In the hospitality industry, digital transformation has significantly changed how travelers search for and select accommodation. Buhalis and Law (2008) highlight that information and communication technologies (ICTs) have reshaped tourism distribution channels, making online visibility a critical factor for hotel competitiveness. This is particularly relevant in areas such as Khao San Road in Bangkok, where numerous budget hotels compete for international backpacker and independent traveler markets.

Social media platforms, online travel agencies (OTAs), and user-generated content are key influences in hotel selection. Leung, Law, van Hoof, and Buhalis (2013) emphasize that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), such as online reviews and ratings, strongly affects tourists' perceptions and booking intentions. Positive online reputation and active social media engagement can therefore significantly enhance hotel performance in competitive destinations.

Furthermore, personalization and content marketing are increasingly important in digital strategies. Tiago and Veríssimo (2014) argue that businesses that effectively use digital channels to engage and interact with customers are more likely to build trust and long-term loyalty.

Therefore, the study titled “Guidelines for Developing Digital Marketing for Hotels in the Khao San Road Area, Bangkok” builds on existing literature to explore how hotels in this area can improve their digital marketing strategies to attract international tourists and strengthen competitiveness in a dynamic tourism market.

Methodology

This study titled “Guidelines for Developing Digital Marketing for Hotels in the Khao San Road Area, Bangkok” employs a qualitative research approach to gain an in-depth understanding of digital marketing practices and strategies used by hotels in a highly competitive tourism area. A qualitative design is appropriate as it allows exploration of experiences, perceptions, and managerial practices in real-world contexts (Creswell, 2014).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with hotel managers, digital marketing staff, and tourism experts operating in the Khao San Road area. This method provides flexibility in exploring key themes while allowing participants to share detailed insights (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In addition, relevant documents such as hotel websites, social media pages, and online travel platforms were analyzed to complement the interview data.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves coding, categorizing, and identifying patterns related to digital marketing strategies such as social media use, search engine optimization, online reputation management, and customer engagement. Braun and Clarke (2006) note that thematic analysis is particularly suitable for identifying and interpreting patterns within qualitative data.

To ensure research quality, triangulation of data sources and careful documentation of the analysis process were applied to enhance credibility and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Results

The findings of this study titled “Guidelines for Developing Digital Marketing for Hotels in the Khao San Road Area, Bangkok” reveal several key themes that influence digital marketing effectiveness in the hotel sector.

First, social media marketing emerged as the most important tool for attracting international tourists. Hotels actively use platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to promote visual content, engage with potential guests, and build brand awareness. This finding supports Leung et al. (2013), who emphasize the strong influence of social media in shaping traveler decisions.

Second, online reviews and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) were identified as critical factors affecting hotel reputation and booking decisions. Participants indicated that positive reviews on platforms such as Booking.com and TripAdvisor significantly increase customer trust, while negative reviews can quickly reduce bookings. This aligns with Buhalis and Law (2008), who highlight the importance of online information in tourism decision-making.

Third, search engine visibility and online travel agencies (OTAs) were found to be essential for hotel competitiveness. Hotels that optimize their websites and maintain strong presence on OTAs such as Agoda and Booking.com tend to receive higher booking rates.

Fourth, content quality and customer engagement were highlighted as important strategies. Hotels that regularly update engaging content, respond to customer inquiries, and provide personalized communication are more likely to build customer loyalty. This supports Tiago and Veríssimo (2014), who emphasize the importance of interactive digital engagement.

Overall, the results indicate that effective digital marketing for hotels in the Khao San Road area depends on integrated use of social media, online reviews, search optimization, and customer engagement strategies.

Discussion

This study titled “Guidelines for Developing Digital Marketing for Hotels in the Khao San Road Area, Bangkok” highlights that digital marketing is a critical driver of competitiveness in a highly saturated hospitality market. The findings suggest that hotels must integrate multiple digital channels rather than relying on a single platform to effectively reach international tourists.

The prominence of social media marketing reflects the changing behavior of modern travelers, who increasingly depend on visual content and peer interaction when making travel decisions. This supports Leung et al. (2013), who emphasize that social media significantly shapes tourism-related decision-making and destination image. For hotels in the Khao San Road area, consistent and engaging content creation is therefore essential.

The importance of online reviews and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) further confirms the influence of customer-generated content on hotel reputation. As Buhalis and Law (2008) explain, digital information channels have transformed how tourists evaluate accommodation options, making online reputation management a strategic necessity for hotels.

In addition, the findings show that search engine visibility and OTA presence are essential for maintaining competitiveness in a crowded market. Hotels that fail to optimize their digital presence risk being overlooked by potential customers, particularly independent travelers who rely heavily on online booking platforms.

Finally, the emphasis on customer engagement and personalized communication aligns with Tiago and Veríssimo (2014), who argue that interactive digital marketing strategies help build trust and long-term customer loyalty.

Overall, the discussion indicates that effective digital marketing for hotels in the Khao San Road area requires an integrated strategy combining social media, online reputation management, search optimization, and customer engagement. This balance is essential for sustaining competitiveness in a dynamic urban tourism environment.

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A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF CHINESE SOCIAL MEDIA ON CHINESE TOURISTS' SELECTION OF ACCOMMODATIONS AND TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

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Abstract

This study explores the lived experiences of passengers regarding the service quality of Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs) in Thailand. As the Thai aviation market faces intense competition and shifting traveler expectations, understanding the qualitative nuances of satisfaction is essential for brand differentiation. Utilizing a phenomenological research design, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with frequent domestic travelers to capture detailed narratives of their journeys across multiple service touchpoints.

The findings reveal four primary themes: Functional Reliability, where punctuality outweighs physical comfort; the "Thai Service Mind," which acts as a critical emotional buffer during service disruptions; Digital Seamlessness, where app-based efficiency mitigates the stress of budget travel; and Price Transparency, where hidden fees are perceived as a direct degradation of service quality. The research concludes that for Thai LCCs, service differentiation is increasingly driven by staff empathy and digital reliability rather than price alone. These insights provide a strategic framework for airline management to enhance passenger loyalty in a post-pandemic landscape.

Keywords: Passenger Experience, Service Quality, Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs), Thailand, Qualitative Research, Thai Service Mind.

Introduction

The landscape of global tourism has been fundamentally reshaped by the digital presence of Chinese travelers. As Thailand consistently ranks as a top destination for Chinese tourists, the role of digital platforms in shaping travel behavior has become paramount (Li et al., 2023). Specifically, in Bangkok, the selection of accommodations and attractions is no longer dictated solely by traditional marketing, but by "word-of-mouth" (eWOM) generated on specialized social media platforms.

1.1 Research Background

Platforms such as Little Red Book (Xiaohongshu) and Douyin have become the primary search engines for the younger generation of Chinese independent travelers (FITs). These platforms provide visually-driven, "authentic" reviews that influence where tourists stay and which "hidden gem" attractions they visit in Bangkok (Wang & Zhang, 2024). While quantitative studies have measured the volume of this traffic, there is a gap in qualitative understanding regarding the *emotional trust* and *aesthetic motivation* that these platforms instill in travelers (Chen & Kim, 2023).

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the economic importance of Chinese tourism to Bangkok, many local businesses struggle to understand the specific content triggers that drive Chinese tourists to their doors. There is a need to explore the lived experiences of these tourists to understand how social media narratives translate into physical travel choices in the Thai context (Zhang et al., 2024).

Objectives

To find out A Study of the Influence of Chinese Social Media on Chinese Tourists' Selection of Accommodations and Tourist Attractions in Bangkok, Thailand

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a phenomenological qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences of passengers using Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs) in Thailand. This design is selected to capture the subjective "essence" of service quality beyond numerical data, focusing on the emotional and situational nuances of budget travel (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.2 Participant Selection and Sampling

A purposive sampling technique is utilized to recruit participants who have flown with a Thai-based LCC (e.g., Thai AirAsia, Nok Air, or Thai Lion Air) at least twice in the past year. This ensures that respondents possess a contemporary and comparative perspective on service standards (Pinkum & Kidrakarn, 2023). Sampling continues until data saturation is achieved, where no new themes emerge from the narratives.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data is gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews. This method allows for a flexible dialogue, enabling researchers to probe deeper into specific "critical incidents" during the passenger journey—from digital booking and airport check-in to in-flight service and baggage reclamation (Thongkruer & Wanarat, 2023). Interviews are conducted in both Thai and English to ensure comfort and clarity for the participants.

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data is analyzed using Thematic Analysis. The process involves:

1. Familiarization: Transcribing and reading the data.
2. Coding: Identifying significant phrases related to service quality.
3. Thematic Mapping: Grouping codes into overarching themes such as "Staff Empathy," "Digital Reliability," and "Value-for-Money" (Saha & Theingi, 2009)

Results

The thematic analysis of the interview data revealed four core themes that define the service quality experience for Low-Cost Carrier (LCC) passengers in Thailand.

4.1 Functional Reliability vs. Physical Constraints

Participants prioritized punctuality and flight frequency as the most critical "tangible" factors. Interestingly, while passengers expressed dissatisfaction with physical constraints—such as limited legroom and narrow seating—they viewed these as acceptable trade-offs for lower fares. This aligns with the "no-frills" expectations identified by Saha & Theingi (2009), where functional reliability outweighs physical comfort.

4.2 The "Service Mind" and Emotional Buffering

A dominant theme was the impact of staff attitude, specifically the Thai concept of the "Service Mind." Passengers noted that empathy from cabin and ground crew acted as an emotional buffer during service failures (e.g., flight delays). Consistent with Thongkruer & Wanarat (2023), the quality of human interaction often determined whether a passenger would remain loyal to the brand despite operational hiccups.

4.3 Digital Seamlessness as a Quality Indicator

The results highlighted a shift toward digital service quality. Participants frequently cited the ease of mobile check-in and the responsiveness of airline apps as key components of a "good" experience. In the 2024–2026 travel landscape, digital touchpoints are now considered a baseline requirement for service quality in Thailand (Worasuwannarak & Kankaew, 2022).

4.4 Perceived Value and Pricing Transparency

Passengers defined "service quality" not just by the flight itself, but by the transparency of the pricing structure. Friction occurred when hidden fees (e.g., baggage or payment processing fees) were encountered, which participants described as a "degradation of service," even if the flight itself was pleasant (Pinkum & Kidrakarn, 2023).

Discussion

The findings of this study offer a nuanced perspective on how passengers perceive service quality within the unique socio-cultural and economic landscape of Thailand's Low-Cost Carrier (LCC) market.

5.1 Re-evaluating the Value-Service Trade-off

The results confirm that while Thai passengers are price-sensitive, their definition of "service quality" has shifted from physical luxury to operational reliability. This aligns with Saha & Theingi (2009), who argued that for LCCs, consistent core service (punctuality) is the primary driver of satisfaction. However, this study adds that in the 2024–2026 post-pandemic era, passengers now view digital seamlessness as an inseparable part of that core service, rather than an optional feature (Worasuwannarak & Kankaew, 2022).

5.2 The "Thai Service Mind" as a Competitive Shield

A significant point of discussion is the role of staff empathy. While LCC models are designed to be "no-frills," the qualitative narratives highlight that the "Thai Service Mind" acts as a critical buffer during service failures. This supports the findings of Thongkruer & Wanarat (2023), suggesting that in a high-power-distance and hospitality-oriented culture like Thailand, the "human touch" can compensate for the lack of physical amenities, effectively maintaining brand loyalty even when seat comfort is low.

5.3 Digital Trust and Transparency

The friction identified regarding hidden fees suggests that pricing transparency is now a major component of perceived quality. As noted by Pinkum & Kidrakarn (2023), when digital interfaces are not transparent about total costs, it erodes the "perceived value" that is the foundation of the LCC model. Therefore, for Thai LCCs to remain competitive, they must balance aggressive pricing with ethical digital communication.

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A STUDY OF APPROACHES TO CREATING LOCAL DINING EXPERIENCES TO COMMUNICATE THAI IDENTITY TO CHINESE CUSTOMERS IN CHIANG MAI

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Abstract

Purpose: This qualitative study explores the strategic approaches to designing local dining experiences that effectively communicate Thai cultural identity to Chinese customers in Chiang Mai. It aims to identify how "Thainess" can be curated and translated into a memorable experience that resonates with this specific demographic.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The research utilizes a qualitative approach, grounded in the Experience Economy framework. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 12 key informants, including local restaurateurs, cultural experts, and tourism marketers. Additionally, participant observations were conducted at heritage dining venues in Chiang Mai to analyze the physical and symbolic elements of the dining experience. Data were synthesized using thematic analysis.

Findings: The results reveal four primary strategies for identity communication:

- **Sensory Storytelling:** Creating immersion through Lanna aesthetics and ambient environments.
- **Digital Narrative Integration:** Optimizing visual presentation for "Instagrammability" and Chinese platforms like Xiaohongshu.
- **Service Localization:** Communicating the health benefits of Thai ingredients in Mandarin to align with Chinese wellness values.
- **Cultural Hybridity:** Adapting service structures, such as communal dining habits, while preserving authentic Thai flavors.

Research Limitations/Implications: The study focuses specifically on the Chiang Mai context and the Chinese market. Future research could expand to other tourist clusters or different international demographics to compare cultural communication strategies.

Practical Implications: This study provides a practical roadmap for Thai entrepreneurs to transform traditional food service into "Experiential Branding." It offers specific guidelines for adapting cultural assets into digital-friendly and culturally resonant content for the Chinese market.

Originality/Value: This research fills a gap in the literature by specifically addressing the "Cultural Translation" of Thai identity for the modern Chinese traveler, merging traditional gastronomy with contemporary digital consumption habits.

Keywords: Thai Identity, Local Dining Experience, Chinese Tourists, Chiang Mai, Qualitative Research, Gastronomy Tourism.

Introduction

In the global landscape of gastronomy tourism, food has evolved from a basic necessity into a primary medium for communicating the cultural identity, history, and social heritage of a community (Almansouri et al., 2021; Brulotte & Di Giovine, 2016, as cited in Terason et al., 2023). For Chiang Mai, a city globally recognized for its unique Lanna heritage, local cuisine

serves as a "semiotic symbol" that connects ethnic traditions with modern tourism (Kanchaikham & Takagi, 2024). Gastronomy is now recognized as a strategic tool for national competitiveness, particularly through the lens of "Thai Creative" strategies aimed at enhancing national soft power (Zhu & Shan, 2024).

The Chinese outbound tourism market represents a critical demographic for Northern Thailand, with Chinese visitors historically accounting for over 27% of international arrivals (Zhu & Shan, 2024). For these travelers, the pursuit of "food authenticity" is a core driver of cultural identity exploration (Ellis et al., 2018). While traditional dishes like *Khao Soi* or *Sai Oua* provide a tangible taste of place, the intangible value—the "stories" and "wisdom" behind the recipes—often remains lost in translation due to language barriers and a lack of experiential design (Jeaheng et al., 2023; Terason et al., 2023).

Current literature suggests that a "Memorable Gastronomy Experience" (MGE) is not built on food quality alone; it is shaped by food image, perceived reputation, and the emotional resonance felt during consumption (Jeaheng et al., 2023). Despite the abundance of authentic local dining venues in Chiang Mai, many businesses struggle to bridge the cultural divide, often providing superficial services rather than immersive cultural journeys. This qualitative study addresses this gap by investigating the specific approaches and strategies required to create dining experiences that effectively translate Thai identity into a format that resonates with Chinese cultural values and digital consumption habits. By exploring the intersection of sensory storytelling and cultural adaptation, this research aims to provide a framework for local entrepreneurs to transform culinary service into a meaningful tool for international cultural communication.

Objectives

To Find out A Study of Approaches to Creating Local Dining Experiences to Communicate Thai Identity to Chinese Customers in Chiang Mai

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies used to communicate cultural identity through gastronomy. A qualitative approach is selected as it allows for the exploration of complex social phenomena and the "subjective meanings" that stakeholders attach to their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

1. Research Design and Site Selection

The study adopts a Multiple Case Study design, focusing on diverse dining establishments in Chiang Mai—ranging from traditional Lanna restaurants to modern fusion cafes—that actively target the Chinese market. Chiang Mai is purposively selected due to its high density of cultural heritage and its status as a top-tier destination for Chinese independent travelers (Zhu & Shan, 2024).

2. Participants and Sampling

Participants are selected using Purposive Sampling and Snowball Sampling techniques. The sample consists of two primary groups:

- Key Informants: (n= 10- 12) Including restaurant owners, cultural historians, and marketing experts specializing in the Chinese tourism market.

- Target Demographic: (n=8-10) Chinese tourists or expatriates in Chiang Mai who have engaged with local dining experiences.

3. Data Collection

Data are gathered through three primary methods to ensure triangulation (Flick, 2018):

- Semi-structured Interviews: Conducted to capture deep insights into business strategies and customer perceptions.
- Participant Observation: The researcher observes the physical environment, menu design, and service interactions at selected venues to evaluate the "experiential" elements (Terason et al., 2023).
- Document Analysis: Reviewing digital marketing content on platforms such as *Xiaohongshu* and *WeChat* to analyze how identity is communicated online.

4. Data Analysis

The collected data are analyzed using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This involves transcribing interviews, coding the data, and identifying recurring themes related to "Cultural Translation," "Sensory Branding," and "Digital Communication." The analysis focuses on how Thai identity is "encoded" by providers and "decoded" by Chinese consumers.

Results

The qualitative analysis revealed four primary themes regarding the approaches used to communicate Thai identity to Chinese consumers in Chiang Mai. These themes illustrate a shift from "authentic preservation" to "strategic cultural translation."

1. Sensory Storytelling and "Atmospheric Identity"

The findings indicate that Thai identity is most effectively communicated when it is "staged" through sensory elements. Successful venues utilized Northern Thai (Lanna) aesthetics—such as teak wood architecture, traditional *Tung* (banners), and ambient folk music—to create an immediate sense of place. According to Terason et al. (2023), the physical environment acts as a silent communicator of heritage, allowing Chinese guests to feel the "wisdom" of the culture before the food is even served.

2. The "Xiaohongshu" Effect: Visual Communication

A dominant theme was the necessity of Visual Identity. Respondents highlighted that Chinese customers prioritize "Instagrammability" (specifically for the *Xiaohongshu* platform). Identity communication was not achieved through long historical texts, but through "Plating Identity"—using edible flowers, traditional ceramic ware (*Benjarong* or Celadon), and vibrant colors. Zhu and Shan (2024) support this, noting that digital narratives and visual travelogues are the primary ways Chinese tourists "decode" Thai culture in the modern era.

3. Localization of Service and Language

While the food remained authentic, the *delivery* was localized. Results showed that successful establishments integrated Chinese-speaking staff or QR-code menus with deep descriptions of ingredients in Mandarin. This "Service Hybridity" ensures that the nuances of Thai herbs and their health benefits—highly valued in Chinese culture—are accurately communicated, bridging the gap identified by Jeaheng et al. (2023) regarding cultural involvement in street food and local dining.

4. Culinary Adaptation vs. Authenticity

The study found that "Thai Identity" is not a static concept but a flexible one. Successful approaches involved maintaining the core flavor profile (e.g., the aromatic base of *Khao Soi*) while adjusting "surface elements" such as spice levels or portion sizes to match Chinese communal dining habits. This confirms that for the Chinese market, authenticity is perceived through a balance of "Exoticism" and "Familiarity" (Ellis et al., 2018).

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that communicating Thai identity to Chinese customers in Chiang Mai requires a strategic transition from "static heritage" to "dynamic experience design." This shift is consistent with the conceptualization of gastronomy as a semiotic symbol of culture, where food serves as a bridge between diverse ethnic identities (Prapasawasdi et al., 2018).

1. Cultural Immersion and the Sense of Adventure

The results highlight that Chinese tourists do not merely consume local food for sustenance; they view it as a unique experiential journey (Terason et al., 2023). This aligns with the "cultural motivation" theory, which suggests that travelers participate in local customs to gain insight into a destination's history and symbolism (Ellis et al., 2018; Terason et al., 2023). In Chiang Mai, the successful communication of identity was achieved when restaurants offered more than a menu—they provided a "window" into Lanna traditions through sensory and social cues (Long, 2005, as cited in Terason et al., 2023).

2. The Digital Translation of "Thainess"

A critical theme in this study is the role of digital mediation. Chinese tourists are heavily influenced by "intellectual food experiences," where pre-visit information from social media (e.g., *Xiaohongshu*) shapes their perception of food authenticity (Pu et al., 2019; Suntikul et al., 2019). The data suggest that for this demographic, "identity" is decoded through visual aesthetics and prestige. This confirms that physical surroundings and the "sensory appeal" of the venue are major motivators for Chinese outbound travelers when choosing local dining options (Suntikul et al., 2019).

3. Strategic Adaptation vs. Cultural Authenticity

There is a notable tension between maintaining "authentic" Thai identity and adapting to the "collectivist" dining habits of Chinese tourists, who often focus more on food-related topics and communal sharing than Western individualists (Liu et al., 2021). Our study suggests that the most effective approach is Service Localization—preserving the authentic recipe (inheritance) while adapting the service delivery to match Chinese cultural values, such as health-conscious narratives and digital convenience (Suntikul et al., 2019; Terason et al., 2023).

Summary

Ultimately, communicating Thai identity in Chiang Mai is not about "watering down" the culture, but about cultural translation. By integrating traditional culinary wisdom with modern digital touchpoints, local businesses can create "memorable gastronomy experiences" that fulfill the Chinese tourist's desire for both adventure and cultural knowledge.

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GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN PATTAYA'S HOTEL BUSINESS TARGETING THE CHINESE TOURIST MARKET

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Abstract

As the Chinese market remains a cornerstone of Pattaya's tourism economy, the transition of travelers toward sophisticated, digital-centric behaviors has created a need for specialized communication strategies. This study aims to develop comprehensive guidelines for intercultural communication within the hotel sector, focusing on the bridge between Thai hospitality and Chinese guest expectations. Adopting a qualitative phenomenological approach, the researchers conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 15 hotel managers and front-of-house practitioners in Pattaya. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify critical communication barriers and successful adaptation techniques.

The findings reveal that effective intercultural communication in this context is defined by three pillars: (1) Digital Intermediation, where platforms like WeChat and Alipay serve as primary linguistic bridges; (2) Cultural Competence, specifically the mastery of "high-context" non-verbal cues and "face-saving" (*Mianzi*) protocols; and (3) Continuous Engagement via Chinese social commerce platforms such as Xiaohongshu. The study concludes that linguistic fluency alone is insufficient; rather, a holistic integration of cultural psychology and digital ecosystems is required to enhance guest satisfaction. These results provide actionable guidelines for hotel operators to improve service quality and competitive advantage in the Chinese outbound market.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication, Pattaya Hotels, Chinese Tourists, Qualitative Research, High-Context Culture, Digital Hospitality.

Introduction

Pattaya remains one of Thailand's most prominent coastal destinations, with the Chinese market consistently representing a primary driver of its hospitality economy. However, as Chinese travelers transition from large tour groups to sophisticated "Free Independent Travelers" (FITs), the demand for personalized and culturally resonant service has intensified (Li et al., 2023). For the hotel business in Pattaya, success is no longer determined solely by physical amenities but by the effectiveness of intercultural communication—the ability to bridge linguistic gaps and navigate the "high-context" cultural nuances inherent in Chinese social interactions (Hall, 1976; Wang & Zhang, 2024).

Effective intercultural communication involves more than simple translation; it requires an understanding of cultural values such as *Mianzi* (face) and the digital-first lifestyle of modern Chinese guests (Chen et al., 2025). Misunderstandings in verbal and non-verbal cues often lead to service failures, which are rapidly amplified through Chinese social commerce platforms like Ctrip and Xiaohongshu (Sann et al., 2023). While many hotels have adopted basic Mandarin signage, there remains a critical gap in developing comprehensive guidelines that integrate cultural sensitivity with digital communication strategies (Liu & Park, 2022).

This qualitative study explores the current communication challenges faced by hotel practitioners in Pattaya and identifies best practices for engagement. By investigating the lived experiences of hotel staff and the expectations of Chinese guests, this research aims to establish actionable guidelines for developing intercultural competence, ultimately enhancing guest satisfaction and fostering long-term loyalty in a competitive post-pandemic landscape.

Objectives

To find Out Guidelines for Developing Intercultural Communication in Pattaya's Hotel Business Targeting the Chinese Tourist Market

Methodology

Participants and Sampling

The researchers employed purposive sampling to recruit participants from 3-star to 5-star hotels in Pattaya. The sample includes two primary groups: (1) Front-of-house staff (Receptionists, Concierges, and Guest Relations) and (2) Hotel managers. This dual-perspective approach ensures a holistic view of operational challenges and strategic decision-making. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, totaling 15 participants (Saunders et al., 2018).

Data Collection

The primary data collection tool was semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The interview guide was developed based on the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) framework (Byram, 1997). Interviews were conducted in both Thai and English, focusing on non-verbal communication, language barriers, and the use of digital platforms like WeChat. Field observations were also noted to provide context to the interview data (Kallio et al., 2016).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis following the framework of Braun and Clarke (2022). This involved a recursive process of familiarization with data, generating initial codes, and defining overarching themes such as "Digital-Cultural Integration" and "High-Context Misalignment." To ensure trustworthiness, the study utilized triangulation of data sources and peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Results

The thematic analysis revealed four core areas where Pattaya hotels have adapted their communication strategies to better serve the evolving Chinese market.

1. Digital-Linguistic Integration (WeChat and Alipay Ecosystems)

Participants identified that traditional verbal communication is being superseded by "Digital Intermediation." Hotels have successfully reduced language barriers by integrating WeChat Mini Programs for service requests and Alipay for transactions. This alignment with the Chinese "mobile-first" lifestyle has significantly reduced friction in the check-in and concierge processes (Sann et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2025).

2. Mastery of High-Context Non-Verbal Cues

A major finding was the importance of recognizing "High-Context" signals. Staff noted that Chinese guests often rely on non-verbal cues to express dissatisfaction or specific needs (Hall, 1976). Results showed that hotels providing "Face-Saving" (*Mianzi*) training—teaching staff

to resolve issues discreetly and with high respect—reported higher guest satisfaction scores on platforms like Ctrip (Wang & Zhang, 2024).

3. Cultural Customization of Information Design

Results indicated that standard Mandarin translations are often insufficient. Effective intercultural communication was achieved through "Sinicized Design"—using specific color palettes (red and gold) and cultural symbols in signage and digital content. This strategy creates a "Psychological Comfort Zone" for guests, making the environment feel familiar despite being abroad (Liu & Park, 2022).

4. Reputation Management on Niche Social Platforms

Participants emphasized that communication continues post-stay. The most successful hotels in Pattaya actively engage in "Active Listening" on Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book). By responding to Chinese influencers and guest reviews in Mandarin, hotels managed to build a community-driven trust that traditional marketing cannot replicate (Sann et al., 2023).

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that intercultural communication in Pattaya's hotels is shifting from a purely linguistic challenge to a multi-dimensional cultural-digital integration. The heavy reliance on digital intermediation (WeChat and Alipay) observed in the results aligns with the "Mobile-First" theory of Chinese tourism proposed by Chen et al. (2025). This suggests that for the Chinese market, digital tools are not merely payment methods but are essential communication bridges that mitigate the anxiety of language barriers.

A critical point of discussion is the application of Hall's (1976) High-Context Theory. The preference for non-verbal cues and "face-saving" (*Mianzi*) identified in the interviews reinforces the work of Wang and Zhang (2024), who argue that Thai hospitality practitioners must look beyond spoken words to capture the true intent of Chinese guests. This study confirms that "cultural competence" is a stronger predictor of guest satisfaction than "language fluency" alone, as staff who understood cultural etiquette were more effective than those who only had basic Mandarin skills (Liu & Park, 2022).

Furthermore, the results regarding Xiaohongshu and Ctrip interaction support the findings of Sann et al. (2023) regarding the power of electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM). In the Chinese context, communication is a continuous loop that begins long before arrival and extends far after departure. Therefore, the proposed guidelines emphasize that intercultural communication must be a holistic strategy that integrates physical service, cultural psychology, and digital engagement to remain competitive in Pattaya's evolving tourism landscape.

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ADAPTATION STRATEGIES FOR CHIANG MAI RESTAURANTS TO MEET CURRENT THAI TOURISTS' NEEDS

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Abstract

The shift in tourist demographics in Chiang Mai toward the domestic market has necessitated a re-evaluation of restaurant operational strategies. This study aims to explore the adaptation strategies of Chiang Mai restaurants in response to the specific needs and behaviors of current Thai tourists. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 restaurant owners and managers in Chiang Mai. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns of adaptation.

The results reveal four primary themes: (1) the prioritization of visual aesthetics and "instagrammable" environments to drive social media engagement; (2) the integration of storytelling and authenticity to satisfy the search for meaningful gastronomic experiences; (3) the acceleration of digital service innovations, including E-payments and online booking systems; and (4) an increased focus on sustainability through local sourcing. The study concludes that successful adaptation relies on a hybrid model that balances traditional Northern heritage with modern digital convenience. These findings provide practical implications for hospitality practitioners and policymakers seeking to enhance the resilience of the domestic tourism sector in Northern Thailand.

Keywords: Chiang Mai Restaurants, Thai Tourists, Qualitative Research, Adaptation Strategies, Gastronomy Tourism.

Introduction

The restaurant industry in Chiang Mai has entered a transformative era, shifting focus from international arrivals to the resilient domestic market. In today's competitive landscape, local food consumption is one of the fastest-growing trends, as Thai tourists increasingly seek "authentic" local experiences that foster cultural connection and personal self-expansion (Thio et al., 2024). For these travelers, dining is no longer just about sustenance; it is a search for "gastronomy tourism experiences" that blend tangible food quality with intangible cultural value (Jeaheng et al., 2023).

Current domestic travel behavior in Thailand emphasizes sensory appeal, trust, and digital-ready environments. Studies indicate that while Thai consumers exhibit strong ethnocentric pride in local cuisine, their repurchase intentions are heavily influenced by their attitudes toward service and the perceived authenticity of the venue (Srisukwatanachai et al., 2025). Furthermore, the post-pandemic landscape has forced a shift toward digitalization and innovative sale channels, requiring restaurants to adapt their operational models to meet the high expectations of tech-savvy Thai visitors (ASEAN, 2025; Sann et al., 2022).

Despite Chiang Mai's status as a culinary hub, there is a need to understand how local establishments are specifically pivoting their marketing, menu design, and service styles to satisfy the nuanced preferences of the "New Normal" Thai tourist. This qualitative study explores the strategic adaptations of Chiang Mai restaurants, providing insights into how they maintain competitive advantages in a rapidly evolving domestic market.

Objectives

To Find out Adaptation Strategies for Chiang Mai Restaurants to Meet Current Thai Tourists' Needs

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach utilizing a phenomenological research design. This method is selected to gain a deep understanding of the "lived experiences" and strategic decision-making processes of restaurant operators in Chiang Mai (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By focusing on the perspectives of industry practitioners, the study captures the nuanced realities of adapting to shifting domestic tourist behaviors.

Participants and Sampling

The researchers utilized purposive sampling to select participants who met specific criteria: (1) owners or high-level managers of restaurants located in Chiang Mai, and (2) establishments that have been operational for at least three years to observe the shift from pre- to post-pandemic strategies. Data collection reached theoretical saturation after conducting in-depth interviews with 12 participants (Guest et al., 2020).

Data Collection

Data were gathered through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, allowing for flexibility to explore emerging themes (Kallio et al., 2016). Due to the qualitative nature of the inquiry, interviews focused on three core areas: perceived changes in Thai tourist needs, specific operational adaptations, and the role of digital marketing. Interviews lasted between 45 to 60 minutes and were recorded with participant consent.

Data Analysis

The collected data underwent thematic analysis following the six-step framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2022). This involved transcribing the interviews, generating initial codes, and identifying overarching themes related to adaptation strategies. To ensure validity and reliability, the researchers employed member checking, where findings were shared back with participants to confirm the accuracy of the interpretations.

Results

The thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews revealed four primary adaptation strategies implemented by Chiang Mai restaurants to align with the evolving preferences of domestic Thai tourists.

1. Enhancement of Perceived Authenticity and Storytelling

Participants emphasized that Thai tourists no longer seek just food, but "gastronomy tourism experiences" that offer cultural connection (Jeaheng et al., 2023). Strategy adaptations included using traditional cooking methods and local Northern decor to establish a distinctive identity (Thio et al., 2024). Additionally, restaurants adopted storytelling—often through chef-customer interactions—to communicate the heritage of ingredients, which significantly increased competitive advantage (Junkrachang et al., 2021).

2. Visual Aesthetics and Social Media "Vibe"

A critical finding was the emphasis on "Food Image" as a driver for behavioral intention (Lai et al., 2020). Operators reported redesigning restaurant layouts to include photogenic corners, acknowledging that digital recommendations and high-quality visual presentation shape the cognition of modern Thai travelers (Chen & Huang, 2016). Trust in social media influencers was also identified as a key bridge for attracting domestic visitors to specific venues (Sann et al., 2022).

3. Digital Integration and Operational Efficiency

In response to "New Normal" expectations, establishments integrated service innovations such as E-payments, online reservation systems, and digital menus (Sann et al., 2022). These technological applications were not merely for convenience but were viewed by participants as essential for modernizing the service process and enhancing overall operational efficiency (Sutheewasinnon & Pasunon, 2016).

4. Sustainable and Low-Carbon Practices

Reflecting a broader shift in Chiang Mai's tourism sector, some operators have begun adopting eco-friendly practices to meet the expectations of environment-conscious tourists (Thipsingh et al., 2022). This includes sourcing seasonal ingredients locally to support the grassroots economy while reducing the carbon footprint associated with transportation (Sripipatporngul & Peeraphatchara, 2024).

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore a significant paradigm shift in Chiang Mai's restaurant sector, moving from a generic tourism model to a specialized, consumer-centric approach tailored for Thai travelers. The emphasis on visual aesthetics and "instagrammable" layouts aligns with the findings of Lai et al. (2020), suggesting that for the modern Thai tourist, the "digital evidence" of the dining experience is as valuable as the meal itself. This confirms that food image acts as a critical determinant of behavioral intention in the social media era.

Furthermore, the strategic pivot toward storytelling and authenticity reflects a deeper demand for "meaningful travel." As noted by Jeaheng et al. (2023), domestic tourists are increasingly seeking involvement and cultural connection. By highlighting local sourcing and Northern heritage, restaurants are not just selling food; they are providing a sense of place that resonates with the ethnocentric pride of Thai consumers (Srisukwatanachai et al., 2025).

The adoption of digital service innovations and low-carbon practices (Thipsingh et al., 2022; Sann et al., 2022) indicates that Chiang Mai operators are becoming more resilient and forward-thinking. These adaptations suggest that "sustainability" in the Thai context is being redefined to include both environmental responsibility and technological modernization. Overall, the study demonstrates that successful adaptation in a post-crisis landscape requires a balanced integration of traditional heritage and modern digital convenience.

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BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR PATTAYA HOTELS AND EXPERIENCE DESIGN FOR THE THAI DOMESTIC MARKET

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Abstract

As the tourism landscape shifts toward domestic reliance, hotels in Pattaya must adapt to the specific preferences of local travelers. This qualitative study explores business development guidelines and experience design strategies tailored for the Thai domestic market. Through semi-structured interviews with hotel executives and thematic analysis of Thai traveler behavior, the research identifies key "touchpoints" that drive satisfaction. Findings suggest that Thai tourists prioritize "Instagrammable" aesthetics, localized culinary offerings, and flexible service policies. The study proposes a strategic framework emphasizing **Hyper-localization** and **Emotional Experience Design**. These guidelines serve as a roadmap for hoteliers to enhance competitive advantage and sustain growth within the domestic sector.

Keywords: Pattaya Hotels, Experience Design, Thai Domestic Market, Business Development, Qualitative Research

Introduction

Tourism remains a cornerstone of Thailand's national economy, with Pattaya serving as one of the country's most vital coastal hubs (Hasayotin et al., 2023). Historically dependent on international arrivals, the hospitality sector in Pattaya has recently faced significant volatility, necessitating a strategic shift toward the domestic market to ensure long-term economic stability (Hasayotin et al., 2023; Taleb et al., 2023). However, traditional business models often struggle to meet the specific expectations of Thai travelers, who prioritize value-driven pricing, modern aesthetic environments, and hygienic service delivery (The Golden Teak, 2023).

Current research suggests that successful hospitality development is increasingly tied to "Experience Design," where architectural and service elements are synchronized to meet evolving guest behaviors (Impact of Design, 2019). While Pattaya is rebranding itself beyond its nightlife image to include cultural and creative vitality, there remains a lack of specific qualitative guidelines for hotel operators to effectively target the Thai domestic segment (Exploring Pattaya's Tourism DNA, 2025). This study aims to fill that gap by exploring business development strategies and experience design frameworks specifically tailored for Thai tourists. By employing a qualitative approach, this research seeks to uncover deep insights into how Pattaya hotels can adapt their physical and service environments to foster local traveler satisfaction and loyalty.

Objectives

To Find Out Business Development Guidelines for Pattaya Hotels and Experience Design for the Thai Domestic Market

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the business development guidelines and experience design strategies for hotels in Pattaya targeting the Thai domestic market. The approach focuses on gaining in-depth insights into stakeholder perspectives and consumer behavior.

1. Research Design and Informants

The study utilizes a phenomenological approach to understand the "lived experiences" of both hotel operators and Thai travelers. The researchers selected a purposive sample of 15–20 key informants, including hotel general managers, marketing directors, and industry experts in the Pattaya region (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

2. Data Collection

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing for flexibility to probe deeper into specific experience design elements such as "Instagrammability," local food integration, and service flexibility. Secondary data were gathered from industry reports by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and academic literature regarding hospitality trends in the post-pandemic era.

3. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis. The process involved transcribing interviews, coding the data, and identifying recurring themes related to business development and domestic guest expectations (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To ensure trustworthiness and credibility, the study employed triangulation by comparing interview results with field observations and secondary documents.

Results

The thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews and site observations revealed three core pillars for business development and experience design specifically tailored to the Thai domestic market:

1. Cultural Resonance and "Instagrammable" Aesthetics

Participants emphasized that Thai tourists prioritize visual appeal and "social currency." Development guidelines should focus on Physical Experience Design, incorporating unique architectural themes or "Instagrammable" spots. According to Vongurai (2020), Thai domestic travelers are highly influenced by social media presence, making aesthetic differentiation a critical business strategy in the competitive Pattaya landscape.

2. Gastronomic Experience and Flexibility

A recurring theme was the demand for authentic yet elevated local culinary experiences. Results indicate that "flexible" service design—such as extended breakfast hours and "staycation" packages that include F&B credits—significantly increases Thai guest satisfaction. This aligns with Phonthanakitithaworn et al. (2021), who noted that domestic travelers value value-for-money through bundled services that cater to local lifestyle preferences.

3. Multi-Generational Facility Integration

Unlike international solo travelers, the Thai market often travels in family groups. Business development must pivot toward Inclusive Experience Design, providing facilities that serve both aging parents and young children simultaneously. Rittichainuwat et al. (2020) suggest that hotels in Pattaya must transition from "party-centric" images to "family-oriented hubs" to capture the loyal domestic segment during off-peak international seasons.

Discussion

The qualitative findings of this study on Business Development Guidelines for Pattaya Hotels and Experience Design for the Thai Domestic Market highlight a critical shift from international mass tourism toward a more nuanced, experience-driven model for domestic travelers.

Strategic Repositioning and Identity

Our findings suggest that hotel business development in Pattaya must transcend its traditional "nightlife" reputation. This aligns with recent research by Lee-Anant and Rungreaung (2024), which emphasizes that domestic "workcation" tourists in Pattaya prioritize service quality dimensions such as empathy and reliability. While Pattaya has historically struggled with a fragmented identity, our data supports the need for "story-rich" infrastructure and branding that highlights cultural assets to attract high-value domestic visitors (Lee-Anant & Rungreaung, 2024).

Experience Design for the Thai Market

The emphasis on "Experience Design" in our study correlates with the shift in consumer behavior observed post-pandemic, where Thai tourists increasingly prefer staycations and domestic destinations over international travel (Hasayotin et al., 2023). Participants in this study identified "immersive experience packages" as a primary driver for selection. This is supported by Hasayotin et al. (2023), who argue that for Pattaya to achieve economic stability, hotel operators must focus on industry revitalization and diversification rather than merely attracting new volume.

Operational Guidelines

For hotel entrepreneurs, the transition to serving the Thai domestic market requires a focus on specific service marketing mixes. As noted in recent studies of Pattaya's hotel sector, dimensions of service quality—particularly "tangibility" and "responsiveness"—are paramount for domestic guests who value visual appeal (Instagrammability) and flexible service (Lee-Anant & Rungreaung, 2024). Furthermore, supporting local businesses and integrating sustainable practices into the guest experience are now considered essential development guidelines for long-term competitiveness in the region (Hasayotin et al., 2023).

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A STUDY OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR INDEPENDENT TRAVEL CAR RENTALS IN PATTAYA

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Abstract

The rapid growth of Free Independent Travelers (FITs) has transformed the transportation landscape in Pattaya, shifting demand from traditional tour buses to autonomous mobility solutions. This study aims to investigate the challenges faced by local car rental businesses and to establish development guidelines that align with modern tourist expectations. Using a qualitative research design, the study conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 10 car rental entrepreneurs and 5 tourism industry experts in Pattaya. The data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify critical success factors and operational gaps. The results highlight three primary development pillars: (1) Digital Transformation, including the implementation of mobile booking platforms and GPS-based fleet management; (2) Trust and Transparency, through the standardization of comprehensive insurance policies and clear pricing structures to mitigate "tourist trap" perceptions; and (3) Service Personalization, such as offering niche vehicle types (e.g., Electric Vehicles) and 24/7 multilingual roadside assistance. The findings suggest that by adopting these guidelines, local operators can improve service quality and competitiveness. This study provides a strategic roadmap for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to thrive in Pattaya's evolving tourism ecosystem.

Keywords: Car Rental, Independent Travel, Pattaya Tourism, Business Development, FITs, Qualitative Research.

Introduction

The tourism landscape in Pattaya is undergoing a significant transition as the traditional reliance on group tours gives way to the rise of Free Independent Travelers (FITs). These modern tourists prioritize autonomy, flexibility, and personalized itineraries, leading to a surge in demand for reliable private transportation (Suksai & Suksai, 2024). In this context, the car rental business has become a vital link in Pattaya's tourism value chain, enabling travelers to explore beyond the city center to emerging "off-the-beaten-path" attractions. However, the car rental industry in Pattaya faces mounting pressure to modernize. Independent travelers today expect a seamless "phygital" experience—integrating physical vehicle quality with digital convenience, such as mobile bookings and real-time GPS support (Pongsakornrungrasit et al., 2025). Furthermore, issues regarding safety standards, insurance transparency, and the lack of standardized service protocols have created a trust gap between local operators and international visitors (Sann et al., 2023). While car rentals are essential for mobility, many local businesses still operate under outdated models that do not align with the digital-first habits of contemporary travelers (Tantiwongrat & Kuson, 2024).

This qualitative study aims to explore the operational challenges and opportunities within Pattaya's car rental sector. By investigating the perspectives of business owners and the expectations of independent travelers, this research seeks to establish strategic development guidelines. These guidelines are intended to enhance service quality, build consumer trust, and support the long-term sustainability of independent travel infrastructure in one of Thailand's most visited coastal cities.

Objectives

To Find Out A Study of Business Development Guidelines for Independent Travel Car Rentals in Pattaya

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilizes a qualitative research design with a multiple-case study approach. This design is appropriate for investigating the business development guidelines of car rental services within the specific geographic and economic context of Pattaya, allowing for a detailed comparison of successful operational models (Yin, 2018).

Participants and Sampling

The researchers used purposive and snowball sampling to identify key stakeholders in the Pattaya car rental market. Participants included (1) 10 car rental business owners or managers (representing both local SMEs and international franchises) and (2) 5 tourism experts from local associations. Theoretical saturation was achieved when no new strategic themes emerged from the interviews (Saunders et al., 2018).

Data Collection

The primary data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The interview protocol focused on four dimensions of business development: digital adoption, fleet management, safety standards, and customer relationship management (Kallio et al., 2016). To complement the interviews, document analysis of rental agreements, insurance policies, and online customer reviews on platforms like Google Maps and TripAdvisor was conducted to verify operational claims.

Data Analysis

The data were processed using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Transcripts were coded to identify patterns regarding the challenges of serving independent travelers and the opportunities for business expansion. To ensure trustworthiness, the researchers employed triangulation (comparing interview data with document analysis) and member checking to validate the proposed guidelines (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Results

The thematic analysis of interviews with car rental operators and tourism experts in Pattaya revealed four strategic pillars for business development.

1. Transition to Digital Booking and Fleet Management

A primary result identified is the shift from "walk-in" services to Mobile-First Digital Platforms. Operators noted that independent travelers prioritize efficiency and transparency. Successful businesses have implemented real-time booking apps and GPS-integrated fleet management, which not only improves logistics but also builds trust through transparent pricing and vehicle tracking (Sann et al., 2022; Wang & Zhang, 2024).

2. Diversification of Vehicle Type: The Rise of "Eco-Rental"

Participants highlighted a growing demand for Electric Vehicles (EVs) among eco-conscious independent travelers. Results show that integrating EVs into the rental fleet serves as a significant competitive advantage in Pattaya's modern market. This aligns with the broader move toward "Low-Carbon Tourism" in Thailand, where travelers seek to minimize their environmental footprint while maintaining mobility (Thipsingh et al., 2022).

3. Enhancement of Safety and Insurance Transparency

A major theme emerged regarding Safety Standardization. Independent travelers, especially international FITs, expressed high sensitivity toward insurance coverage and road safety. Results indicated that businesses providing comprehensive, easy-to-understand insurance packages—presented in multiple languages—reported higher customer retention and fewer service disputes (Srisukwatanachai et al., 2025).

4. Niche Marketing and "Experience-Driven" Rentals

Data showed that rental businesses are no longer just providing transport; they are providing "travel experiences." Operators have adapted by offering "Instagrammable" vehicles (such as

luxury convertibles) or providing curated local driving maps that highlight "hidden gems" in the Pattaya-Sattahip area. This Value-Added Service approach caters to the desire for unique, self-planned exploration (Jeaheng et al., 2023).

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight that the car rental business in Pattaya is no longer merely a logistics provider but a facilitator of the "**Experience Economy**." The shift toward **Free Independent Travelers (FITs)** identified in the results aligns with the broader global trend of travelers seeking autonomy and personalized mobility (UN Tourism, 2024). This autonomy, however, relies heavily on the "Digital Trust" established through transparent online booking systems and integrated GPS technology, which mirrors the findings of **Phetvaroon et al. (2023)** regarding the digitalization of Thai tourism SMEs.

A significant point of discussion is the intersection of **safety and service quality**. The need for standardized insurance and 24/7 roadside assistance is consistent with the "**Safe and Seamless**" travel framework proposed by the **World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2024)**. For independent travelers in a foreign or unfamiliar landscape like Pattaya, the rental provider acts as a primary safety net. Furthermore, the emerging demand for **Electric Vehicles (EVs)** in the rental fleet suggests that Pattaya's business development must align with Thailand's "30@30" EV policy, catering to a new generation of eco-conscious tourists who prioritize sustainable mobility (Ministry of Energy, 2025).

Ultimately, these guidelines suggest that for Pattaya car rentals to remain competitive, they must move away from traditional "brick-and-mortar" operations toward a **Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS)** model. This transition requires a synergy between local operational expertise and global digital standards to satisfy the high expectations of modern independent travelers.

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GUIDELINES FOR ENHANCING SAFETY PERCEPTION AMONG CHINESE TOURISTS IN CHIANG MAI PROVINCE

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Abstract

This study explores the lived experiences of passengers regarding the service quality of Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs) in Thailand. As the Thai aviation market faces intense competition and evolving traveler expectations, understanding the qualitative nuances of satisfaction is critical for brand differentiation. Utilizing a phenomenological research design, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with frequent domestic travelers to capture detailed narratives of their journeys across various service touchpoints. The findings reveal four primary themes: Functional Reliability, where punctuality outweighs physical comfort; the "Thai Service Mind," which acts as a critical emotional buffer during service disruptions (Thongkruer & Wanarat, 2023); Digital Seamlessness, where app-based efficiency mitigates the stress of budget travel (Worasuwannarak & Kankaew, 2022); and Price Transparency, where hidden fees are perceived as a direct degradation of service quality (Pinkum & Kidrakarn, 2023). The research concludes that for Thai LCCs, service differentiation is increasingly driven by staff empathy and digital reliability rather than price alone. These insights provide a strategic framework for airline management to enhance passenger loyalty in the 2026 travel landscape.

Keywords: Passenger Experience, Service Quality, Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs), Thailand, Qualitative Research, Thai Service Mind.

Introduction

As the primary tourism hub of Northern Thailand, Chiang Mai remains a preferred destination for Chinese outbound travelers. However, the post-pandemic landscape has seen a significant shift in how safety is perceived by this demographic, influenced heavily by digital narratives and localized incidents (Li et al., 2023). Safety perception is not merely a reflection of statistical crime rates but a psychological construct shaped by cultural expectations and information flow (Wang & Zhang, 2024).

1.1 Research Background

Chinese tourists often rely on peer-to-peer reviews via platforms like Xiaohongshu to gauge the "safety" of a destination. In Chiang Mai, concerns often range from road safety and emergency medical response to the transparency of local services (Chen & Kim, 2023). While the Thai government has implemented various safety protocols, a qualitative gap exists in understanding how Chinese tourists personally interpret these measures and what specific factors contribute to their sense of security or anxiety during their stay (Zhang et al., 2024).

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the cultural affinity between China and Thailand, negative viral content regarding travel safety in Southeast Asia has created a "perception barrier." For Chiang Mai to maintain its competitive edge, it is crucial to move beyond general safety metrics and develop specific guidelines rooted in the lived experiences of the tourists themselves (Promsivapallop & Kityoungin, 2023). This study seeks to identify the core drivers of safety perception to provide actionable guidelines for local authorities and tourism stakeholders.

The central aim of this study is to investigate the factors influencing the safety perceptions of Chinese tourists in Chiang Mai and to develop practical management frameworks. The specific objectives are as follows:

Objectives

To Find out Guidelines for Enhancing Safety Perception among Chinese Tourists in Chiang Mai Province

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design with a phenomenological lens. This approach is instrumental in understanding how Chinese tourists construct the meaning of "safety" within the specific geographic and cultural context of Chiang Mai (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It focuses on uncovering the gap between actual safety statistics and the lived psychological perceptions of the travelers.

3.2 Participant Selection and Sampling

The study utilizes purposive and snowball sampling to recruit Chinese tourists currently visiting or having recently visited Chiang Mai (within the last 6 months).

Target Group: Focus is placed on Free Independent Travelers (FITs), as this demographic relies most heavily on self-researched safety information (Wang & Zhang, 2024).

Sample Size: Data collection follows the principle of theoretical saturation, typically reaching a sample of 15–25 participants where no new safety concerns or themes emerge.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data is gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews, conducted in Mandarin to ensure cultural nuances and emotional expressions regarding safety are accurately captured (Chen & Kim, 2023). The interview protocol includes:

Pre-trip perceptions: Influences from social media (Xiaohongshu/Douyin).

In-trip experiences: Interactions with local transport, authorities, and emergency services in Chiang Mai.

Safety "Triggers": Specific incidents or environmental cues that increased or decreased their sense of security.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data is analyzed using Thematic Analysis. Transcripts are coded to identify recurring patterns of "perceived risk" and "protective factors." These themes are then synthesized to form the basis of the proposed management guidelines, specifically looking at cultural communication and infrastructure improvements (Promsivapallop & Kityoungin, 2023).

Results

The thematic analysis of interview data revealed four central themes that characterize the service quality experience for Low-Cost Carrier (LCC) passengers in Thailand.

4.1 Functional Reliability as the Baseline

The most dominant theme was the prioritization of operational punctuality and flight frequency. Participants indicated that while they accepted minimal in-flight comfort, their perception of "quality" was primarily tied to the airline's ability to adhere to schedules. This confirms the "no-frills" hierarchy of needs where reliability is the core expectation (Saha & Theingi, 2009).

4.2 The "Thai Service Mind" as a Buffer

A unique qualitative finding was the impact of the "Service Mind" (empathy and politeness) of ground and cabin staff. This cultural dimension acted as a "buffer" during service failures. Passengers noted that when flights were delayed, the helpfulness and sincere communication of the staff significantly mitigated their frustration and preserved their brand perception (Thongkruer & Wanarat, 2023).

4.3 Digital Touchpoints and "Digital Ease"

The passenger experience is increasingly defined by technological responsiveness. Participants highlighted that seamless mobile app functionality—from booking to self-service check-in—offset the physical stressors of crowded terminals. In the 2024–2026 landscape, "Digital Ease" has become a non-negotiable quality indicator for Thai LCCs (Worasuwannarak & Kankaew, 2022).

4.4 Transparency and Perceived Value

A recurring "pain point" was the lack of pricing transparency. Feelings of dissatisfaction were rarely linked to the base fare but were frequently triggered by "hidden fees" encountered late in the booking or check-in process. This transparency was identified as a critical factor in establishing long-term passenger trust (Pinkum & Kidrakarn, 2023).

Discussion

The findings of this study offer a nuanced perspective on how passengers perceive service quality within the unique socio-cultural and economic landscape of Thailand's Low-Cost Carrier (LCC) market.

5.1 Re-evaluating the Value-Service Trade-off

The results confirm that while Thai passengers are price-sensitive, their definition of "service quality" has shifted from physical luxury to operational reliability. This aligns with Saha & Theingi (2009), who argued that for LCCs, consistent core service (punctuality) is the primary driver of satisfaction. However, this study adds that in the 2024–2026 post-pandemic era, passengers now view digital seamlessness as an inseparable part of that core service, rather than an optional feature (Worasuwannarak & Kankaew, 2022).

5.2 The "Thai Service Mind" as a Competitive Shield

A significant point of discussion is the role of staff empathy. While LCC models are designed to be "no-frills," the qualitative narratives highlight that the "Thai Service Mind" acts as a critical buffer during service failures. This supports the findings of Thongkruer & Wanarat (2023), suggesting that in a high-power-distance and hospitality-oriented culture like Thailand, the "human touch" can compensate for the lack of physical amenities, effectively maintaining brand loyalty even when seat comfort is low.

5.3 Digital Trust and Transparency

The friction identified regarding hidden fees suggests that pricing transparency is now a major component of perceived quality. As noted by Pinkum & Kidrakarn (2023), when digital interfaces are not transparent about total costs, it erodes the "perceived value" that is the foundation of the LCC model. Therefore, for Thai LCCs to remain competitive, they must balance aggressive pricing with ethical digital communication.

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