An Investigation of Tourist Behaviors through the Revisit Intention Model (RIM) on Street Food in Bangkok, Thailand: Working Paper

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Abstract

For Thai tourism as a color to paint, Thai government and the Tourism Authority of Thailand have been drawn Thai people attention for several years to allow Thais to popularize tourism in Thailand. “In 2019, the direction of Thai tourism aims to respond to the national strategy by emphasizing three major issues: eating style, value-added content, and environmental care, and continues promoting tourism in secondary cities and communities.” With this purposed direction in mind, TAT will continue to work on the 3 original focus points of 2018, namely 1) Using the way of eating leads to the experience of local experience, 2) Create more value with content and 3) Create environmental consciousness and adding a story to raise secondary urban identity to be the main ingredient in product creation (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2019). With a richness in flavors and a variety of menus, Thai foods and beverages are among other things that domestic and international tourists wish to experience while they are travelling. Therefore, Thai foods and beverages are one of the main colors in travelling business. The essential question that should be addressed is how to increase the attractiveness of Thai food tourism thought service value, gastronomic characters, along with tourist behaviors in terms of tourist satisfaction and word of mouth management as a result to revisit intention by employing Revisit Intention Model (RIM). This study of tourist behavior would bring the key information to supporting important marketing activities to contribute to the development and promotion and sale of tourism-related products. According to the significance of Thai Foods and beverages in Tourism, the article pays attention to the relationship between service value, gastronomy, and tourist behaviors in terms of satisfaction, word of mouth and revisit intention within context of Thailand Street Foods especially in Bangkok in order to develop a better understanding of domestic and international tourists’ behaviors towards the gastronomic tourism in Thailand. This paper is about to present the revised model and the result of reliability and validity among selected measurements and structural equation modeling (SEM) to determine whether the purposed relationships existed. The further detail will be discussed in more detail.

Key Words: Tourist Behaviors, Revisit Intention Model, Street Foods

JEL Classification: C 19, G13, G 14
1. Introduction

Thailand had been promoted as one of the best tourist destinations in the world and it has been predicted to generate more revenue than those of other competitors such as London, Paris, Dubai, and Singapore based on Mastercard’s 2018 Global Destination Cities (Purchase, 2018). Thailand is one of the countries with long history therefore, there are a wide range of Thai heritage including national arts, culture, crafts or foods which have attracted several tourists around the world. The total number of foreign tourist arrivals to Thailand has a tendency to increase dramatically according to the country survey data from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in 2018 showing that the number of international visitors is expected to reach 40 million people in 2019 from 34.4 million people in 2018 representing approximately 7.53 percent increase over the same period of 2017 and expected to generate 733 billion Baht just only in the first quarter and a total revenue of 2.77 trillion Baht for the entire year (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2018). The most acceptable reason is that Thailand has a unique characteristic from visitors’ viewpoint. There are plenty of activities and Thai foods that they can enjoy with (Sritama, 2016).

According to the significance of Thai Foods and beverages in Tourism, the article pays attention to the relationship between service value, gastronomy, and tourist behaviors in terms of satisfaction, word of mouth and revisit intention within context of Thailand Street Foods especially in Bangkok in order to develop a better understanding of domestic and international tourists’ behaviors towards the gastronomic tourism in Thailand. The mixed research technique is primarily used as main research methodology in this study. Therefore, the data are derived from both the questionnaires developed by the quantitative research methodology and in-depth interview and observations as the main research techniques in the qualitative research. The major aim of this paper is to develop the structural model for understanding domestic and international tourists’ behaviors in response to service value, gastronomic characters among the selected Bangkok street food areas, Thailand.

In the following section, a brief summary of related literature is provided to shed some light on the potential relationship between selected variables in order to form the structural model used to assist researchers, practitioners and others to have a better understanding of how to recognize tourists’ behaviors. In the qualitative part, the study then provides the in-depth information regarding to viewpoint of domestic and international visitors towards Thailand Street Foods and the areas for further study is finally presented.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Revisit Intention

The most important point to note here is that revisit intention and customer satisfaction are inseparable in the sense that the higher the satisfaction a restaurant or a business delivers, the higher the possibility that customers will revisit (Ho Kim, Jae Ko, & Min Park, 2013). When a company offers goods or services, there is always the possibility that similar goods and services are offered on the market by other competitors. Since the customers always have many alternatives, it is very important that the companies do all that is within their disposal to ensure that they increase the value of the existing consumers besides attracting the new ones (Yan, Wang, & Chau, 2013). Taking these effective steps will automatically attract the customers repurchase behaviors. There are different fields where customer revisit intention has been studied like tourism services, catering services, hospital services, retail businesses, bank services and telecom services. Logistic regression or structural equation modeling constructed and estimated several number of customer retentions driving factor models in those models, the factors such as satisfaction, trust, the number of previous visits, perceived switching cost and customer value were considered (Huang & Hsu, 2009; Lee, Kim, Ko, & Sagas, 2011). Accordingly, the revisit intention can be described by several variables and the main purpose of this variable to attract the tourist to repurchase the product and service or come to visit again, furthermore, revisit intention can be created the relationship between the product and tourist in long-term.

2.2 Service Value

By definition, service value, or service quality, refers to the overall impression of the consumers in regard to the relative inferiority or superiority of the organization as well as the services that the same organization offers (Liu & Lee, 2016). In many contexts of the businesses, high level of service quality delivered by the organizations to its clients is a very crucial factor of success. Worth noting is that these business contexts may include, but not limited to major professional sporting events. In the context of sport, SPORTSERV scale is used to determine the level of perceived service quality that spectators enjoy in close reference to tangibles, responsiveness, security, access and reliability, similarly, the process of service delivery can also be a very crucial factor in service evaluation (Ho Kim et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2011). Other aspects that determine service quality include employees, price, facility access, concessions, fan comfort, game experience, show time, convenience and even smoking. Most modern researches have come up with four most salient targets of event quality evaluation in regard to sporting events that are; game performance, in game entertainment, staff quality and general physical surrounding (Brady & Cronin, 2001). Of importance to note also is the fact that the most significant dimensions of service evaluation
are deeply ingrained in the core product and the service outcomes, therefore, the service value can be represented the perception of tourist that evaluated the reasonable price and quality among the products.

2.3 Gastronomy

Gastronomy refers to the relationship between food and the culture that several scholars tends to investigate in the gastronomy tourism. For instance, Correia, Moital, Da Costa, and Peres (2008) examined the determinants of gastronomic tourists' satisfaction: a second-order factor analysis has focusses on the general satisfaction of the journey in tourists’ experiences has tended to include the general elements of the gastronomic experience in their list of satisfaction items such as gastronomy, variety of food and quality of food. Similarly, Wang and Jie (2013) considered the food quality, price-quality relationship, atmosphere, hygiene, location and convenience are some of attributes that are perceived to facilitate recognition of food service satisfaction of tourists. Hence, gastronomy can be described as the food experiences of tourist towards tangible and intangible products. To be more specific, atmosphere as a essential component of gastronomy can be defined as the design of the retail chain outlet that produces specific emotional effects on the buyer that enhances his purchasing ability (Hussain & Ali, 2015). Therefore, the role of store atmosphere in the success of retail outlet cannot be neglected. This means that a pleasant atmosphere of the retail chain outlets is one of those elements which are extremely desired. Retail chain industry has its success tied or attributed to convenience, choice of goods, huge space and low prices. Therefore, atmosphere has to do with our feelings towards the shopping experience which cannot be seen. Pleasant atmospheric stimulus in the store increases the customers’ probability of staying longer thus spending more through buying of goods. The environment has a huge impact on the environments’ emotion and satisfaction. The impression of the retail chain outlets enhances the customer satisfaction level and purchase experience. Despite the fact that there is limited empirical research on the impact of the store atmosphere on the consumer behavior, there are several researchers who have identified the effect of atmosphere on the behavior of consumers. For a conducive atmosphere to be maintained in the stores, the collective impact of all major atmospheric such as cleanliness, music, temperature, lighting, color, display or layout and scent or fragrance at one point in time must be considered (Hussain & Ali, 2015).

2.4 Satisfaction

Satisfaction, by definition, can be referred to as the feeling that a customer experiences upon completing a purchase, in the phase following the acquisition of a service (Yan, Wang, & Chau, 2013). A function of expectations and perceived product or attributes of the service are all representations of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is an emotional reaction that is normally manifested in situations when perceived performance of a product or service
exceeds expectations. Of worth to note is that both cognitive and on affective reactions to service encounters are very crucial in satisfaction. Satisfaction based on transaction and overall satisfactions are the two main distinct types of satisfaction that are known. Transaction based satisfaction emerges when a customer happens to judge the product or service based or gained in one purchase experience. Overall satisfaction is based on the total customer experience that has formed as a result of previously made purchases (Marinkovic, Senic, Ivkov, Dimitrovski, & Bjelic, 2014).

2.5 Word of Mouth (WOM)

WOM is defined as a form of advertising communication where the recipient of the advertisement becomes sender of the information for others looking for such information (Monika & Jose, 2017). It is simply a practice where exchange of information in regard to a product available in the market takes place. WOM have been found to be mainly powerful when customers are making buying decisions about the products or services that are new in the market place and customers are only aware of those products and services but do now know well about them. Nowadays, WOM are found and accessible through diverse channels like networking sites, blogs, online forums or purchase reviews available on respective online buying websites. WOM plays a very tangible role than any other situation when products that are newly released are used because they are riskier due to the deficiency that occurs due to poor passage of information to the potential customers. The reason behind this is again the credibility of information that WOM provides that reduces the risks accompanying the customer’s buying decisions (Wang & Jie, 2013).

2.6 Research Questions/Proposition (If Applicable)/Term Definitions

Proposition 1: Service value has a positive influence on revisit intention towards gastronomic tourist in Bangkok.

Proposition 2: Gastronomy has a positive influence on revisit intention towards gastronomic tourist in Bangkok.

Proposition 3: Gastronomic tourists’ satisfaction has a positive influence on revisit intention towards gastronomic tourist in Bangkok.

Proposition 4.1: Service value has an indirect effect on revisit intention which is mediated by Gastronomic tourists’ satisfaction.

Proposition 4.2: Gastronomy has an indirect effect on revisit intention which is mediated by Gastronomic tourists’ satisfaction.

Proposition 5: Word of mouth has a positive influence on revisit intention towards gastronomic tourist in Bangkok.

Proposition 6.1: Service value has an indirect effect on revisit intention which is mediated by word of mouth.
Proposition 6.2: Gastronomy has an indirect effect on revisit intention which is mediated by word of mouth.
Proposition 7: Service value has a positive influence on word of mouth towards gastronomic tourist in Bangkok
Proposition 8: Gastronomy has a positive influence on word of mouth towards gastronomic tourist in Bangkok

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Questions

This investigation employed the quantitative methods to describe the antecedents of revisit intentions for gastronomy tourism in Bangkok. Quantitative approach, revisit intention has been considered as the exogenous variable while service value, gastronomy, satisfaction, and word of mouth has been measured as the endogenous variables. Furthermore, the two mediator variables have considered in the conceptual framework included satisfaction and word of mouth. This study relies primarily on the collection and analysis of primary data which come from all tested measurements. The derived data are analyzed by using bivariate and multivariate statistical techniques to determine whether the purposed relationships existed including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation (SD.), factor analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM).

3.2 Modeling Volatility

Quantitative approach can be described through the questionnaire based on several items from reviewing the literature included six theories which related to investigate in this phenomenon. Revisit intention and satisfaction can be represented by 8 items based on Huang and Hsu (2009) has been confirmed the items to describe and analyze the revisit intention
(GFI = .996, NFI = .998, CFI = 1.00) and satisfaction (GFI = .99, NFI = .99, CFI = .9) by measurement model which in Hong Kong context. Moreover, Correia et al. (2008) had confirmed 3, 5, and 4 items to measure the service value (α = 0.93) and gastronomy (α = 0.77) respectively in the gastronomy tourism in Portugal context, and this measurement model had fit of the data empirically (GFI = .98, NFI = .89, CFI = .95). Lastly, word of mouth contained 2 items (α = 0.77, CR = .81, AVE = .683) to explain this variable in the airline industry (Liu & Lee, 2016). Accordingly, this investigation considered to develop the items based on the items of Huang and Hsu (2009), Correia et al. (2008), and Liu and Lee (2016) because several frameworks which confirmed the reliability and validity by measurement model based on exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in the hospitality circumstances. Furthermore, majority of researchers considered 7-point Likert scales to analyze and interpret the meaning; consequently, this examination included 17 items in the form of 7-point Likert scale. According to Hair and colleagues (2010), the appropriate numbers of observed variables is considered, once a researcher has satisfied the acceptable minimum of sample size. They should have one more observation than the number of observed covariance. In the meantime, Hoyle (2012), a discussion on how many indicators should be included for each latent variable. One of ideas included that for a single latent variable should have at least 2 reflective indicators.

3.3 Data

The main objective of this quantitative study is to explore both direct and indirect relationships between service value, gastronomy, satisfaction, word of mouth and revisit intention within context of Thailand Street Foods especially in Bangkok. Based on comprehensive research, the total population of approximately 21 million foreign visitors who visit Bangkok (Department of Tourism, 2016). According to Hair and his colleagues (2010, p.661), the acceptable sample size is 200 for modeling Structural Equations Model (SEM) and the more simple size is included, the more sensitive model is. They also suggest that an appropriate range of simple size should be around 100 to 400 which could provide a sound basis for model’s estimation. Therefore, the total sample of 400 are drawn from the five target areas and the subjects are asked the questions regarding the selected variables. The study employs the multi-Stage sampling as follows: 1) Stratified sampling is used to separates the population into sub-populations. The population units in each sub-population will have the same characteristics (homogenous) and simple randomness to obtain the number of samples according to the proportion of sample size and population. In this study, the top five tourist destinations are selected from the fifty districts in Bangkok area including Thailand Chinatown (Yaowarat), Old Town (Banglamphu), Sukhumvit, Silom and Sathorn, and Saphan Lueng. 2) Cluster sampling is then applied by dividing the population according to the area and then sampling the population from that proposed areas according to the desired
amount which data will be randomly selected. In this case, the cluster sampling is then used to select domestic and foreign travelers from one of the selected areas. 3) convenience sampling is finally employed to collect the data from targeted sample of each selected destinations.

3.4 Pretest Result

In this study, the researcher used the results of three experts who had been specifically selected for verifying the developed instrument. The result from each expert was used to calculate content accuracy for the research instrument. By using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). The results showed that there is no value that is less than 0.5 which is a cutting point for validity testing. This means all items in the research instrument is acceptable for further analysis (Pallant, 2007, p.7).

In conducting reliability testing, 30 samples of any other participants who are quite similar with the targeted samples were selected to answer the developed questionnaire and then test the reliability. All the scale questions were tested by using Cronbach alpha, a well-developed statistical test for measuring reliability of the scale which should have a minimum level of 0.7 values. (Pallant, 2007, p.7) This study presented an average value of 0.978 with total items of 24. This means all items in the research instrument is acceptable for further analysis. Therefore, researcher will continue to the following step which is the field work for data collection.

4. Expected Benefits

The product of the research will be of great value to both internal and external stakeholders because it will:

1. Provide a useful tool in the form of a structural model that facilitates the decision-making process for increasing domestic and international tourists’ revisit intention.
2. Provide reliable, solid information on domestic and international tourists’ perceptions towards revisit intention of street food in Bangkok, Thailand
3. Provide a ground for further research on the effects of service value, gastronomy, satisfaction, and word of mouth on revisit intention
4. Expand the body of knowledge in the field of Tourism Management especially for Thailand Street Food.
5. Benefit the Dusit Thani College in terms of gaining in-depth knowledge about Street Food in Thailand and propose the guideline for improving the food-related tourism in Thailand.

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