

Factors affecting foreign tourists' satisfaction and willingness to pay more for visiting Bangkok

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate factors that affect tourists' satisfaction and willingness to pay higher fees for visiting Bangkok. The population sampled in this study consisted of tourists who have visited Bangkok. Data was collected during May and June 2016, and it was analyzed using regression analysis. It was found that the tourists' perceptions of destination image, perceived value, and experience quality had a significant effect on the level of their satisfaction, which in turn has a significant effect on their willingness to pay more on travel. These findings could help tourism sector-based businesses better understand destination competition, and find ways of increasing visitors' satisfaction and their willingness to pay higher fees.

Keywords – satisfaction, willingness to pay more, Bangkok tourism

Paper type – Research Paper

1. Introduction and problem statement

In recent decades, there has been a steady rise in the number of tourists. This is due to increasing personal incomes, the expansion of low-cost airlines, more robust and reliable transportation systems, and an advancing information network (Lipman, 2007). The rise in low-cost airlines has enabled more people to travel, and an evolving information technology network has enabled them to select products and services of a destination at reasonable prices.

Tourism is fast becoming a mainstay industry of Thailand’s economy. In 2014, tourism contributed 19.3% to the country’s national GDP and 14.1% of total employment. It has been predicted that these could rise to 25.8% and 20.2% in 2025, respectively (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2015). According to primary data published by The Ministry of Tourism and Sport of Thailand, in recent years there has been a surge in the number of international tourists visiting Thailand: this peaked in 2013 at 26.5 million; in 2014, this had declined slightly to 24 million.

Thailand has an abundance of natural and cultural tourist attractions, as well as a wide variety of festivities, shopping venues and authentic cuisines, all of which attract a great many international visitors every year. The numbers of international tourists from different regions around the world visiting Thailand during the years 2012 to 2015 are listed in Table 1 below:

Table 1 International tourist arrivals to Thailand by areas during 2012-2015

Year	East Asia	Europe	The Americas	South Asia	Oceania	Middle East	Africa	Total
2012	12,525,214	5,650,619	1,083,433	1,286,861	1,046,755	605,477	155,544	22,353,903
2013	15,911,375	6,305,945	1,166,633	1,347,585	1,021,936	630,243	163,008	26,546,725
2014	14,603,825	6,161,893	1,099,709	1,239,183	942,706	597,892	164,475	24,809,683
2015	19,871,773	5,629,122	1,235,095	1,403,977	921,355	658,129	161,640	29,881,091

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sport of Thailand - tourist statistics for 2012-2015.

As Thailand’s capital city, Bangkok is the center of Thailand’s politics, economy, culture and cuisine (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d). Bangkok has received many awards, including the “World’s Best City Award” in 2013, and the "Best City in Asia" award in every year from 2005 to 2013 (except in 2009) (The Nation, 2013). According to a survey by Travel and Leisure magazine, Bangkok was listed as one of the top ten best cities in the world for the second time in 2015 (Travel and Leisure, 2015).

Recently, the head of the Thai tourism authority proposed to charge all foreign tourists 360 baht each time they enter the country, whether by air, land or sea. The governor said that the purpose of this surcharge is to raise revenue for maintaining and improving tourism facilities (Charuvastra, 2016). The policy amounts to an extra travel cost for foreign tourists, and might discourage some tourists from visiting the country.

According to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (World Economic Forum, 2015), political unrest and terrorism-related violence have more detrimental effects on tourism receipts than on tourist numbers. When these problems arise, the tourist profile changes, and tourists become more price-sensitive. In 2008, there were violent clashes in Thailand: consequently, the average expenditure per tourist fell by 9% (World Economic Forum, 2015). The change in average expenditure per tourist visiting Thailand from 2008 to 2009 is shown in Figure 1:

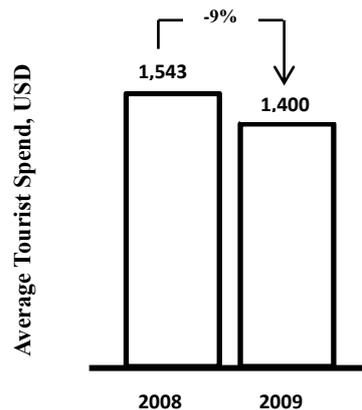


Figure 1 Change in average expenditure per tourist in Thailand

Source: Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, 2015 (World Economic Forum)

When checked the tourism receipts from international tourist arrivals of Thailand in 2014, it was found that there was a decline of 8.08%, since the political unrest in 2013 (Department of Tourism, 2015).

In light of the terrorist attacks in Thailand in 2015, this might not be an appropriate time for Thailand's tourism authority to impose surcharges on tourists visiting the country.

There is a general consensus that satisfied customers are willing to pay more for a product or service (e.g. Vlosky, Ozanne and Fontenot, 1999; Finkelman, 1993).

The aim of this paper is to investigate whether a higher level of satisfaction among tourists might induce them to paying higher fees for visiting Bangkok. Several scholars have investigated the relationships between the level of satisfaction among tourists, their revisit intentions, and their recommendation intentions. However, few researchers have considered the relationship between satisfaction and one's willingness to pay more for visiting a destination; this is particularly the case with tourism in Thailand. This knowledge gap is redressed in this paper.

2. Literature review

2.1 The effect of destination image on satisfaction

Destination image is defined as a tourist's perception of tourism resources, services, hospitality, and social norms and regulations of a destination (Ahmed et al., 2006). The image of a destination in a tourist's mind – or destination image – is based on his or her beliefs, ideas and attitude associated with the destination (BignéAlcañiz, Sánchez García and Sanz Blas, 2009). Destination image is considered to be a factor that affects a tourist's travel decisions at all stages including before, during and after his or her holiday experience (Bigne, Sanchez and Sanchez, 2001; Birgit, 2001). Therefore, destination image consists of information about how an area is perceived by tourists (Ispas and Saragea, 2011). Marketers who try to predict tourists' intentions and develop a tourism destination have found that destination image is a helpful tool for analyzing and identifying a destination's strengths and weaknesses (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Beerli and Martin, 2004b).

Destination image is a direct antecedent of tourist satisfaction (Bigne, Sanchez and Sanchez, 2001). Puh (2014) has claimed that a good destination image has a positive impact on tourism satisfaction, and Chi and Qu (2008) report that destination image has a notable effect on both attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction.

2.2 The effect of perceived value on satisfaction

Around the turn of this century, tourism experts were attaching importance to perceived value (Ahmed et al., 2006). A growing number of researchers have analyzed perceived value in the tourism industry (Dumand and Mattila, 2005; Oh and Jeong, 2003). Perceived value is considered a better predictor of satisfaction and behavior intentions (Chen and Chen, 2010). Tourism operators can benefit from studying perceived value, as this information enables them to understand consumers' spending behavior and to predict their behavior intentions more effectively (McDougall and Levesque, 2000; Cronin, Brady and Hult, 2000).

Scholars agree that the consequence of perceived value is satisfaction (Sanchez et al., 2006). Petrick (2004) by using SER-PERVAL as the measurement scale, proved that perceived value is a good predictor of cruise passengers' satisfaction. Yang and Peterson (2004) claim that satisfaction acts as a mediator in the relationship between perceived value and loyalty. Following a study of university students' travel behavior, Gallarza and Saura (2006) concluded that perceived value is a direct antecedent of students' satisfaction.

2.3 The effect of experience quality on satisfaction

Experience refers to individuals gaining sensory stimuli, information and emotions after participating in certain activities or events (Ying, Jusoh and Khalifah, 2012). Otto and Ritchie (1996) have stated that tourism is a service industry. Service quality has been discussed in much previously published tourism literature. However, many scholars believe that experience quality is different from service quality (e.g. Chen and Chen, 2010; Schlesinger, Cervera and Pérez-Cabañero, 2015). They claim that service quality is objective, whereas experience quality is subjective. Service quality is only a measurement of cognitive factors of the quality of experience, and affective factors that might well explain experience quality are neglected.

Cole and Scott (2004) reported that experience quality has both direct and indirect impacts on park visitors' overall satisfaction and revisit intentions. Cole and Illum (2006) also found a direct effect of festival visitors' experience quality on their overall satisfaction. Kao et al. (2008) examined the relationship between experience quality and satisfaction in a study of theme park tourism, and confirmed a positive relationship between the two variables.

2.4 The effect of satisfaction on a tourist's willingness to pay more

Song and Cheung (2010) define satisfaction as a significant evaluation regarding the services of a tourism destination. Yoon and Uysal (2005) have stated that assessments of satisfaction can be used to evaluate a destination's performance in terms of products and services. According to Altunel and Erkut (2015), if tourists' post-travel experiences exceed their expectations, they will be satisfied; and vice versa.

Willingness to pay more is based on the amount that consumers are willing to pay for a product or service (Cameron and James, 1987). As Rao and Bergen (1992) suggest, if quality and value outweigh the fair price of a product, then customers would be willing to pay more for it. Tourists' willingness to pay more is an important subject in tourism research (Dixit, Hall and Dutta, 2014).

Satisfaction has been used as a benchmark to measure willingness to pay more since it has a positive impact on one's willingness to pay more (Affizzah, Radam and Baizura, 2006). Baker and Crompton (2000) also confirmed in their study that satisfaction has a significant effect on one's willingness to pay more. Vlosky, Ozanne and Fontenot (1999) argue that in order to encourage customers to pay more for a product or service, a seller must be able to satisfy their needs.

2.5 Hypotheses

Four hypotheses were tested in this study; these are laid out in the conceptual framework in Figure 2:

H1: Destination image has an effect on satisfaction.

H2: Perceived value has an effect on satisfaction.

H3: Experience quality has an effect on satisfaction.

H4: Satisfaction has an effect on a tourist's willingness to pay more for visiting.

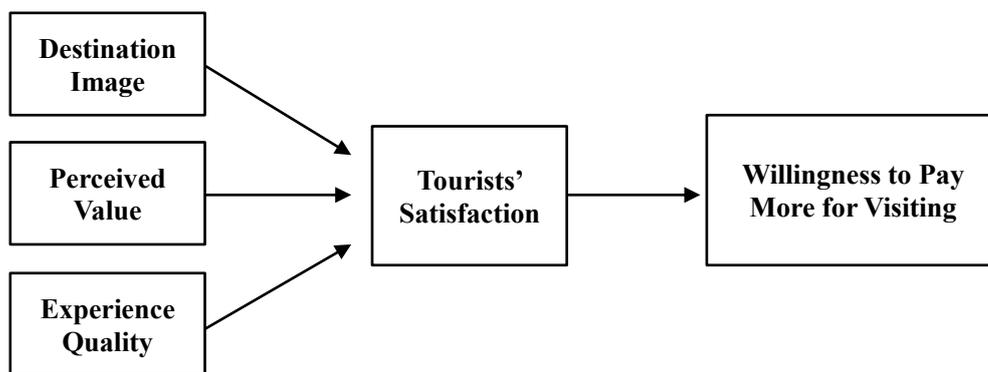


Figure 2 Conceptual framework

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

A quantitative method was chosen for this study, whereby a questionnaire was used to collect primary data from a sample of international tourists. According to The Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand, the total number of international tourists arriving in Thailand during the years 2011 to 2015 was 122,821,872; the average number of tourists per year during this period was 24,564,375. The sample size for this study was calculated by using Yamane's (1967) formula at 95% confidence level. Since the population was 24,564,375, a suitable sample size for this study was 400.

Questions about destination image in this study were sourced from previous studies by Beerli and Martin (2004a), Chen and Tsai (2007), Tran (2011), Chen and Phou (2013) and Puh (2014). Questions were categorized into four elements: environment, infrastructure, culture and society, and entertainment.

Perceived value was measured using the PERVAL scale, which was developed by Sweeney and Soutar (2001). It included emotional value, price, social value and quality.

Dimensions used to analyze experience quality were based on Otto and Ritchie's (1996) theory. There were four dimensions in the measurement scale: hedonics, peace of mind, involvement, and recognition.

Questions about tourists' satisfaction were adapted from previous research studies by Della Corte et al. (2015), Naidoo, Ramseook-Munhurrun and Seegoolam (2011), and Omar et al. (2015). They were categorized into five dimensions of destination attributes: accessibility, attractions, activities, amenities, and accommodation.

Questions about willingness to pay more were adapted from studies by Rajamohan (2006), and Loureiro and de Araújo (2014).

Destination image, perceived value, experience quality and willingness to pay more sections were measured by 5-point Likert scale at agreement level, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Satisfaction section was measured by 5 points Likert scale at the level of satisfaction, from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).

3.2 Data collection

There were 400 complete questionnaires that were collected from international tourists who traveled to Bangkok between 12th May and 16th June 2016. Questionnaires were distributed at Suvarnabhumi Airport, Don Muang Airport, King Power Complex and the Terminal 21 shopping mall. These locations were chosen due to the high concentration of tourists passing through them, and thus more comprehensive data was obtained.

3.3 Data analysis

Multiple regression analysis was applied to test the effects of destination image, perceived value, and experience quality factors on the sampled tourists' satisfaction. Simple linear regression was used to test the effect of satisfaction on willingness to pay more.

3.4 Reliability test

The reliability of the survey questions was measured by Cronbach's Alpha. Nunally and Bernstein (1994) have recommended that the Cronbach's Alpha value of a reliable and acceptable survey should achieve 0.7. The reliability test results of each factor have been shown in Tables 2-6.

Based on the results of reliability for destination image ($\alpha=0.85$, 12 items), perceived value ($\alpha=0.84$, 12 items), experience quality ($\alpha=0.90$, 12 items), satisfaction ($\alpha=0.89$, 15 items) and willingness to pay more ($\alpha=0.88$, 3 items), Cronbach's alpha were all above 0.7, which indicates that the questionnaire of this research is reliable.

Table 2 Reliability Test Result of Destination Image

Statements		Cronbach's Alpha
Destination Image		0.85
Natural Environment	-The scenery of the city is beautiful -The city is clean -Bangkok is a city with pleasant climate	
Infrastructures	-Bangkok has quality roads -The public transport system is good -Bangkok has good capacity of being a traffic hub of Thailand	
Entertainment	-Bangkok has a great nightlife -Bangkok is a good shopping place -Bangkok has varied gastronomy	
Social Environment	-The people are friendly -The people are hospitable -The people here have a different culture and customs	

Table 3 Reliability Test Result of Perceived Value

Statements		Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived Value		0.84
Emotional Value	-I feel excited while visiting Bangkok. -I feel good on this trip -I enjoy this trip	
Price	-Traveling in Bangkok is value for money -Traveling in Bangkok cost reasonable price -The cost was the main criterion for the decision of traveling to Bangkok	
Social Value	-Many people that I know have traveled to Bangkok -Taking this trip would change the way I am perceived by others -Taking this trip would make a good impression on other people	
Quality	-The tourism in Bangkok has an acceptable standard of quality -The tourism in Bangkok has consistent quality -The result was as expected	

Table 4 Reliability Test Result of Experience Quality

Statements		Cronbach's Alpha
Experience Quality		0.90
Hedonics	-I am doing something memorable that enriches my life	
	-I am having a "once in a lifetime" experience	
	-After travelling in Bangkok, I can share memories of my trip	
Peace of mind	-Visiting Bangkok makes me feel a sense of personal security	
	-Visiting Bangkok makes me feel that my property is safe	
	-Visiting Bangkok makes me feel that my privacy is assured	
Involvement	-I was educated and informed about where I visited	
	-That I am involved in the process of this trip	
	-That I have control over the outcome	
Recognition	-A sense of cooperation from others	
	-That I am important	
	-That I am being taken seriously	

Table 5 Reliability Test Result of Satisfaction

Statements		Cronbach's Alpha
Satisfaction		0.89
Attraction	-Well-kept and restored sites	
	-Unique and authentic sites	
	-Knowledgeable sites for visitors	
Activity	-Availability of a variety of activities	
	-Organization of cultural events	
	-Interesting events/festivals	
Amenity	-Telecommunication service (e.g. Internet, WIFI)	
	-Bank service (e.g. Money exchange, ATM)	
	-Public toilets	
Accommodation	-Availability of accommodation	
	-Quality of accommodation	
	-Hospitality of hotel staffs	
Accessibility	-Clear and helpful directions to show around attractions	
	-Availability of information for tourists	
	-Check-in/check-out process at the airport	

Table 6 Reliability Test Result of Willingness to Pay More

Statements		Cronbach's Alpha
Willingness to Pay More		0.88
-I will pay a higher fee to visit Bangkok, despite other competing destination's price being lower		
-I will continue to come to Bangkok, even if the fee is increased		
-I am willing to spend extra than the original plan to experience Bangkok		

4. Results

4.1 Respondents' profiles

The numbers of female and male respondents in the sample were nearly identical. The largest age group consisted of people aged 21 to 30, which accounted for 34.75% of respondents; 48% of the participants held bachelor degrees; 30.00% of respondents stated that they earned over 40,000 baht per month; 27.75% of the participants were company employees; 46.00% of them were single; and, 33.75% of the respondents were from Asia.

4.2 Hypothesis testing

As described below and illustrated in Table 7, three of the hypotheses were proved in this study:

Hypothesis 1: Destination image has an effect on satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived value has an effect on satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: Experience quality has an effect on satisfaction.

Table 7 Statistical results on the effects of destination image, perceived value, and experience quality on satisfaction (multiple regression analysis).

variables	Unstandardized	Standardized	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
	coefficients	coefficients				
	B	Beta				
(Constant)	0.77		5.07	0.00		
Destination image	0.20	0.21	5.05	0.00	0.66	1.53
Perceived value	0.28	0.27	5.58	0.00	0.49	2.06
Experience quality	0.34	0.37	7.69	0.00	0.51	1.97

R=0.73 R²=0.54 Adjusted R²=0.54 F=154.19

Note: Significant at the 0.05 level

The multiple linear regression equation was $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \dots + \beta_pX_p$. With dependent variable Y (satisfaction), and independent variables X1, X2, and X3 (destination image, perceived value, and experience quality), the multiple regression equation for the effects of destination image, perceived value and experience quality on satisfaction can be written as: $Y = 0.77 + 0.21X_1 + 0.27X_2 + 0.37X_3$.

According to Table 7, 54% ($R^2=0.54$) of the variance in the dependent variable (satisfaction) was explained by the three independent variables (destination image, perceived value, and experience quality).

Therefore, destination image ($p<0.01$), perceived value ($p<0.01$), and experience quality ($p<0.01$) were found to have a significant effect on satisfaction, because the p-values of independent variables were all below 0.05. Thus, hypothesis 1, hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 can be accepted. Furthermore, it was found that experience quality ($\beta=0.37$) had a larger beta than that of destination image ($\beta=0.21$) and perceived value ($\beta=0.27$), and therefore had more of an effect on the tourists' satisfaction.

The correlation among the predictors was tested by calculating variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance values. Tolerance is the reciprocal value of VIF. If the VIF value exceeds 10, there is a multicollinearity problem in the model. In this study, destination image (tolerance=0.66; VIF=1.53), perceived value (tolerance=0.49; VIF=2.06), and experience quality (tolerance=0.51; VIF=1.97) were found to have acceptable tolerance and VIF values.

As described below and illustrated in Table 8, hypothesis 4 was proved in this study:

Hypothesis 4: Satisfaction has an effect on a tourist's willingness to pay more for visiting.

Table 8 Linear regression analysis results on the effect of satisfaction on willingness to pay more.

variable	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Beta		
Constant	0.30		0.95	0.34
satisfaction	0.81	0.46	10.43	0.00

$R=0.46$ $R^2=0.22$ Adjusted $R^2=0.21$ $F=108.70$
 Note: Significant at the 0.05 level

The equation of simple linear regression was found to be $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X$. With the dependent variable Y (willingness to pay more) and the independent variable X (satisfaction), the regression equation for this relationship can be written as $Y = 0.30 + 0.46X$.

As shown in Table 8, 22% ($R^2=0.22$) of the variance in the dependent variable (willingness to pay) was explained by the independent variable (satisfaction).

Therefore, a significant effect of satisfaction on willingness to pay more was detected since the p-value was less than 0.05. Therefore, hypothesis 4 can be accepted.

5. Conclusion

This research aimed to investigate factors that affect tourists' satisfaction and willingness to pay higher fees for visiting Bangkok. The population sampled in this study consisted of tourists who have visited Bangkok. Data was collected during May and June 2016, and it was analyzed using regression analysis.

In this study, it was found that destination image, perceived value, and experience quality had a significant effect on the level of satisfaction among the sampled tourists, and that their satisfaction had a significant effect on their willingness to pay more for visiting Thailand. In addition, no multicollinearity problems in the proposed model were found. With the biggest beta value, experience quality was found that have more effect on tourists' satisfaction than destination image and perceived value.

6. Discussion

6.1 The effect of destination image on satisfaction

In testing hypothesis 1, it was found that destination image had a significant effect on satisfaction. Similar findings exist in published literature. In a study of Mediterranean destinations, Puh (2014) proved that destination image has a positive impact on tourism satisfaction, and concluded that positive destination image leads to greater tourist satisfaction. A tourist destination with a well-managed image might therefore have a competitive advantage. Ramseook-Munhurrin, Seebaluck and Naidoo (2014) studied tourists' satisfaction and loyalty towards Mauritius, and claimed that destination image is a predictor of satisfaction. They argue that a tourist destination should be devoted to enhancing its image in order to increase tourism receipts, jobs and government revenues. Kim, Holland and Han (2013) built a model of tourists' destination loyalty towards Orlando, and they concluded that destination image has a significant effect on satisfaction. Ghanian et al. (2014) investigated the satisfaction index of tourists towards tourist destinations in western Iran: they found that the more favorable the destination image, the higher the overall satisfaction. Chen and Phou (2013) conducted a survey at the Angkor temple area in Cambodia, and found that destination

image has a direct effect on visitors' satisfaction.

The main reason why the findings in this paper are identical to those in many previous studies might be that this study also concerns tourism. However, there are some differences between this paper and previous studies. For instance, this paper is based on a survey in Bangkok, whereby the sample consisted of tourists who visited Bangkok during a fairly short time period.

6.2 The effect of perceived value on satisfaction

In testing hypothesis 2, it was found that perceived value does have a significant effect on satisfaction, something that has been reported in previous studies. Sanchez et al. (2006) note that the result of perceived value is satisfaction. Lai and Chen (2011) demonstrated that satisfaction relies on perceived value in their study of KMRT passengers' satisfaction in Taiwan. Williams and Soutar (2009), in an adventure tourism study, found that the four dimensions of perceived value have significant effects on satisfaction. Petrick (2004), as well as Gallarza and Saura (2006), have proved that perceived value is a direct antecedent of satisfaction. On a similar note, Bradley and Sparks (2012) state that perceived value can predict tourists' satisfaction. Bajs (2015) conducted a study into tourists' perceived value, satisfaction and intentions in Dubrovnik, and concluded that perceived value has a highly significant influence on visitor's satisfaction. It is perhaps not surprising that, according to the results of this study, perceived value was found to have a significant effect on tourists' satisfaction. According to several previous studies, perceived value plays a fundamental role in the success of the tourism market.

6.3 The effect of experience quality on satisfaction

In testing hypothesis 3, it was found that experience quality has a significant effect on satisfaction. This has been found in many previous studies. Chen and Chen (2010) state that tourists' satisfaction often depends on obtained experience. Cole and Scott (2004) state that experience quality affects responses to tourists' desired psychological benefits, and they confirmed that tourists do seek certain psychological benefits when they participate in tourism activities, and that those benefits affect their level of satisfaction. Cole and Illum (2005) also deduced a direct effect of experience quality on overall satisfaction in their study, which was an adaption of a study by Cole and Scott (2004). Papadimitriou (2013) studied experience quality and satisfaction among tourists attending a festival, and concluded that experience quality has a stronger effect on satisfaction than other relevant factors.

It was also revealed in this study that experience quality has a stronger impact on tourists' satisfaction than destination image and perceived value. However, in a relevant previous study, Jin, Lee and Lee (2015) claim that destination image has a stronger effect on satisfaction than experience quality and perceived value. The reason could be because they adopted the measurement scale of experience quality that was used by Kao et al. (2008), which consisted of immersion, surprise, participation and fun. For this study, the measurement scale used by Otto and Ritchie (1996) was chosen: this consists of hedonics, peace of mind, involvement, and recognition. Kao et al. (2008)'s scale was only used to examine the relationship between experience quality and satisfaction in theme-park tourism, and so only applies in a similar field. Otto and Rithie (1996)'s scale was designed for measuring experience quality in different tourism industries such as tourist attractions, hotels and aviation, and so is more appropriate for this study.

6.4 The effect of satisfaction on one's willingness to pay more

In testing hypothesis 4, it was found that satisfaction has a significant effect on one's willingness to pay more. Some scholars state that customers' willingness to pay more for a product or service largely depends on the extent to which their needs are satisfied (Vlosky et al., 1999). Finkelman (1993), as well as Reichheld and Sasser (1990), also support the idea that satisfied customers are willing to pay higher prices. Affizzah et al. (2006) used satisfaction as a benchmark to measure the willingness of a tourist to pay more: they found that satisfaction has a positive impact on this variable. López-Mosquera and Sánchez (2014) also claim that satisfaction is one of the determinants of one's willingness to pay more. However, there have also been some studies that do not support the relationship between satisfaction and one's willingness to pay more. For example, Lu and Hsiao (2010) found no evidence that Taiwanese social network site users' satisfaction affected their intention to pay more social networking site subscription fees. Papadimitriou (2013) has claimed that satisfaction has a significant effect on loyalty but has no effect on one's willingness to pay more for a festival. One possible reason for these conflicting results is that neither study concerned tourism.

7. Implications

The findings in this paper might be beneficial to business leaders in Bangkok's tourism industry, as well as Thai government officials who regulate this industry. It was found in the survey results that if they are more satisfied, then they are more willing to pay more to visit Bangkok, and that satisfaction can be enhanced by increases in destination image, perceived value and experience quality.

Tourism industry business managers should be able to recognize which tourism offerings can be improved or adjusted. The environment and infrastructure in Bangkok could be improved, since many of the respondents awarded low scores against these two dimensions. Chi and Qu (2008) argue that once a destination image comes into being, it is hard to change. Thus, it is essential to build and maintain a positive image of a destination. Promotion of a positive destination image will make tourists feel more satisfied and increase their willingness to pay more for visiting.

The tourism organization should cooperate with other related government sectors to improve the city's image by improving the quality of the environment and facilities, such as improving road quality, reducing local traffic congestion and removing litter.

It has been demonstrated in this study that perceived value has a significant effect on tourists' satisfaction. It is therefore recommended that tourism industry marketers should pay attention to both functional value (product value/quality, monetary value) and affective value (emotional value, social value). Tourism service providers should be educated on the impact of product value on tourists' satisfaction. Bangkok's tourism industry should work to achieve an acceptable, consistent standard of quality.

Moreover, price discounts are not the only means of generating value for consumers. Sweeney and Soutar (2001) demonstrated that emotional value and social value have an impact on consumers' decision-making process as well. Marketers should segment the market according to the different desires of tourists. They could abandon a traditional, sales-oriented strategy for a strategy that considers more dimensions of value.

In this study, it was found that the effect of experience quality on satisfaction was stronger than that of destination image and perceived value. This is because tourists participate in tourism activities in search of psychological benefits (Cole and Scott, 2004). Tourism industry managers and marketers need to find ways of heightening tourists' experience quality in terms of hedonics, peace of mind, involvement and recognition. Most of

the participants surveyed held low opinions of personal security and privacy in Bangkok: peace of mind is one element that needs to be addressed. It is suggested that tour agencies, hotels and telecommunication companies should make better efforts to protect customer privacy and avoid disclosing customer information. Furthermore, the local police force should strive to improve public security, and to prevent and overcome potential security issues.

In order to improve tourists' involvement, the tourism authority could organize more cultural events, and attract tourists' attention and increase their involvement by offering a convenient channel for participation. Besides, they could fund and release films about tourism destinations featuring international celebrities; those are more likely to have a greater and longer appeal to tourists all over the world.

Tourism industry-based organizations and companies should co-operate together to improve tourists' overall satisfaction and thus enhance their willingness to pay. For example, tourism companies could increase training for tour guides so as to help them improving their language and debriefing skills, so that they can help tourists understand the historic culture that each tourist destination represents. Customs officials could simplify immigration procedures and thus reduce visitors' waiting times at customs counters. Placing sign boards around attractions to guide visitors would also be beneficial. In addition, there is a need for more tourist information centers in the city.

8. Limitations of the study and recommendations for further research

This study was limited to tourists who were visiting Bangkok during a short time period. Due to limitations in terms of population and time, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other tourism destinations. Other destinations and different sampling periods should be considered in future studies.

In this study, destination image, perceived value, and experience quality were identified as the antecedents of satisfaction and one's willingness to pay more. However, there might be other factors that affect those two variables. Other predictors such as trust, motivation and expectation should be explored in future studies.

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