

Revisited Foreign Tourist's Perception toward Crime and Violence Issue in Bangkok, Thailand

Mahachai Sattayathamrongthian, Yingsak Vanpetch

Abstract: This research aims to examine: tourist's perceptions, the factors related to revisiting Thailand, and significant relationship between tourist's experience and duration of their stays in Thailand. The information was collected by surveying foreign tourists in Bangkok area using mixed research methodology. Quantitative Research Area was assigned to collect data from foreign tourists using a questionnaire. The participants for this study were selected through the process of accidental sampling. The samples are the 512 foreign tourists who visited Bangkok from April 1st to 30th, 2019. The study can be concluded that the most influencing factor to tourism in Thailand is the suggestions and advice received from tourist's acquaintances, which mostly give positive influences toward the decision to visit Thailand. The real advice and suggestions from tourist's acquaintances carried more influence than from other media.

Keyword: Thai tourism, tourist's perception, crime issue, international tourism, tourist decision-making.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over ten years ago, Thailand tourism continuously growth from less than 1 million peoples a month to over two million people a month in the present (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2015). The acceleration in government spending and the recovery in the tourism sector are among the few bright spots supporting the economy (Oliver Holmes report, 2015).

The travel industry is one of the most significant segments driving the Thai economy, which can ceaselessly create high pay for Thailand. The number of global visitor landings to Thailand in 2018 contacted 38.12 million individuals, up 7.1 percent. Although the second half of 2018 has shown the slow pace of international tourist arrivals due to the different factors from each nationality, the number recovered during the last two months of 2018 thanks to the tourist season and the Visa on Arrival expense waved for 21 nations.

Thus, in 2018, Thailand got around THB 2.01 trillion in income from the landing of international visitors. (Kasikornbank, 2019) Unfortunately, Thailand has a moderate crime rate contrasted with different nations in Asia. This is for the most part well-behaved individuals, yet there is a great deal of medication maltreatment in the nation, and going connected at the hip with that are burglaries and

frivolous wrongdoing, and every so often some genuine violations.

Table 1 – Crime index of Bangkok (source: numbeo, 2019)

Crime rates in Bangkok, Thailand		
Level of crime	41.91	Moderate
Crime increasing in the past three years	58.71	Moderate
Worries being mugged or robbed	39.11	Low
Worries attacked	32.33	Low
Worries being insulted	31.59	Low
Worries being subject to a physical attack because of your skin color, ethnic origin or religion	20.12	Low
Problem people using or dealing drugs	53.89	Moderate
Problem property crimes such as vandalism and theft	43.54	Moderate
Problem violent crimes such as assault and armed robbery	39.63	Low
Problem corruption and bribery	83.33	Very High
Safety walking alone during daylight	79.82	High
Safety walking alone during night	55.48	Moderate
Bangkok, Thailand: The crime index is 41.23, and the safety index is 58.77 in 2019		
Caracas, Venezuela (The highest crime index): The crime index is 85.26, and the safety index is 14.74 in 2019		
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (The Lowest crime index): The crime index is 10.61, and the safety index is 89.39 in 2019		

Contributors: 246, this data was based on perceptions of visitors of this website in the past three years. If the value is 0, it means it is perceived as very low, and if the value is 100, it means it is perceived as very high. Despite the crime and violence issue, the number of tourists visiting Thailand significant increased from 35.35 million in 2017 to 38.28 million in 2018.

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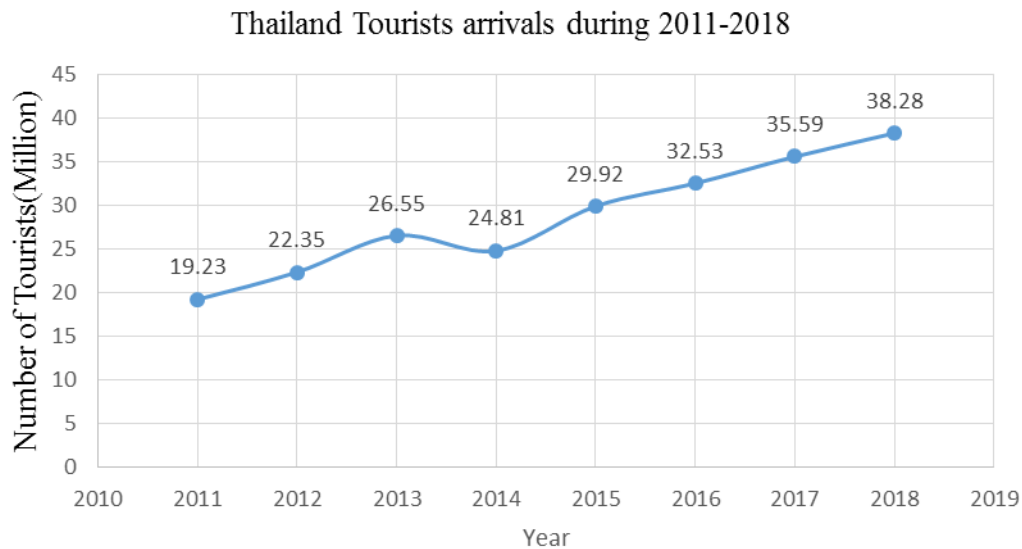


Figure 1 Thailand Tourists arrivals during 2011-2018 (source: Ministry of Tourism and Sport, 2018)

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To observe the revisited tourists' perception toward crime and violence issue and the factors related to the decision to revisit Thailand.
2. To examine the relationship between general tourists' perception, duration of stay in Thailand, and the travel experience.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The researchers apply a Model of the Pleasure Travel Destination Choice Process based on Um and Crompton Pizam, A. and Manfield, Y. (2000); Andreeva et al. (2016, 2017); Ushakov (2015).

External inputs have consisted of three components: symbolic stimuli, experience stimuli, and social stimuli, including general attitude toward the terrorist situation, which create a set of awareness in selecting the travel destination.

Internal factors are psychological factors of the tourist, such as motive, attitude toward something, value, and personal characteristic. These factors significantly affect the decision making and initiation of choices.

The internal factors will naturally create consideration of alternative destination choices, where individuals will compare their perceptions of each country before making a decision. Furthermore, the evolution of an evoked set, the tourists carefully consider destinations by compare and contrast between possible destinations, time of staying, safety issue, and all in-depth information.

According to Gabriela M. Grando (2015), when compare and contrast between two destinations with similar benefits, but with a threat to one, individuals would choose the less costly option that is perceived to be safe from a possible threat. Sonmez and Graefe (1998a, p. 118) stated that tourist decision making might be interrupted when risk is introduced as a factor in destination choices.

IV. RESEARCH METHODS

After the literature review and conceptualization of the research structure, the researchers decided to employ the following research methods to obtain data for the study:

Quantitative Method

The quantitative research area was assigned to collect data from foreign tourists using a questionnaire. The participants for this study were selected through the process of accidental sampling. The samples are the 512 foreign tourists who were visiting Bangkok from April 1st to 30th, 2019 (W.G Cochran, 1953). The advisors reviewed the questionnaire from the Rajamangala University of Rattanakosin and as well as other researchers.

Part One: The personal information includes gender, age, marriage status, education, and nationality.

Part Two: The tourist behaviors: spending, expected time to stay in Thailand, factors related to visiting decision, problems during the trip and tourist's satisfaction

Part Three: Overall satisfaction includes revisiting decision, expectation, and recommendation to another interested tourist.

Qualitative Research

The qualitative research method was employed to collect data from foreign tourists in Bangkok tourist attraction: Grand Palace, Khaosarn Road, Silom, Siam Centre, and in the front of Central World. This part of the research data was obtained through the personal interviews conducted on the tourists. A typical interview is more than simply asking questions and receiving responses; the goal is to create a safe and open dialogue whereby the participant may authentically discuss his or her experiences or meanings. The topics are the reasons why they want to visit Thailand, the influential source of information, their perceived risk before and after visiting the country.

The breakdown of the participants' is as follow:



Table 1: Research participants 'ethnicities

No	Gender	age	nationality	Total Visiting	Purpose
1	male	25	Chinese	3	Vacation
2	female	27	American	2	Vacation
3	male	41	Sweden	2	Vacation
4	female	45	Sweden	2	Vacation
5	male	22	American	4	Vacation
6	female	50	Japanese	2	business
7	male	55	American	5	Vacation
8	female	38	American	4	business
9	male	35	American	2	business
10	female	51	British	2	Vacation
11	male	38	Sweden	2	Vacation
12	female	26	Chinese	5	Vacation
13	male	28	Chinese	4	business
14	female	28	Chinese	5	business
15	female	31	Indonesia	3	Vacation

V. RESULT

The following are the results of the research study using qualitative and quantitative data gathering methods.

Table 2 - Demographic of questionnaire respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	213	41.6
	Female	299	58.4
	Total	512	100
Age	0-15	33	6.45
	16-30	233	45.51
	31-45	158	30.86
	46-60	56	10.94
	61&up	32	6.25
	Total	512	100
Marital Status	Single	252	57.8
	Married	245	38.3
	Separated	15	3.4
	Total	512	100

Most of the participant is female, age between 16-30, and single.

Table 3 - Respondents' nationality and educational background

		Frequency	Percentage
Education:	High School	90	17.58
	Diploma or vocational degree	125	24.41
	Bachelor Degree	177	34.57
	Higher than Bachelor Degree	120	23.44
	Total	512	100
Nationality:	European	210	41.02
	American, Latin American	149	29.10
	Asian	133	25.98
	Australian, New Zealand	16	3.13
	African, Middle East	4	0.78
	Total	512	100
Income	Less or equal to \$10,000	84	16.41
	\$10,001-\$20,000	75	14.65
	\$20,001-\$30,000	108	21.09

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	\$30,001-\$40,000	97	18.95
	\$40,001-\$50,000	85	16.60
	\$50,001 and over	19	3.71
	Missing info	44	8.59
	Total	512	100

The respondents' average annual income data revealed that the incomes could be distributed into almost every income group. This means that the tourists are from various income levels.

Table 4 - The number of times the respondents' have visited Thailand

Time visiting Thailand	Frequency	Percentage
First time	287	56.05
More than 1time	225	43.95
Total	512	100.0

From the data collected, most of the participating tourists have visited Thailand for the first time, as high as 56.05%, while 43.95% of the respondents have visited Thailand more than once before.

Table 5 - Factors related to respondents' tourist destination visiting decision

	N	Mean	Sd	Significant level
Thai Culture and Lifestyle	512	4.2431	.87433	Extremely influential
Cost of living in Thailand	512	3.5814	1.07162	Very influential
Thai Food	512	3.9136	1.11389	Very influential
Safety issue	512	3.1077	1.17754	Moderately influential
Thai Good and Souvenir	512	2.8518	1.28458	Moderately influential
Nightlife	512	2.7629	1.29165	Moderately influential
Tourism Campaign	512	2.6564	1.28501	Moderately influential
Education or Training	512	2.2759	1.36203	Slightly influential
Business opportunity	512	2.0986	1.27774	Slightly influential

Table 7 demonstrate that the top three factors related to tourists' visiting decision are Thai Culture and Lifestyle, Cost of living in Thailand and Thai Food. Surprisingly, the safety issue only has moderate influent on the tourists' visiting decision.

Table 6 - Problems and concerns for tourists during the visit

Problems	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Frequency Level
Transportation and Traffic	512	3.3179	1.04931	Sometime
Dirty and bad sanitation	512	2.9722	.95084	Sometime
Price of goods and services	512	2.4186	1.09529	Rarely
Scams on tourist	512	2.3357	1.22060	Rarely
Safety issue and robbery	512	2.2581	1.13469	Rarely
Accommodation	512	2.2181	1.12219	Rarely
Immigration	512	2.1831	1.04905	Rarely
Local Thai people	512	2.1465	1.16852	Rarely
Tourist information officer	512	2.0935	1.16774	Rarely
Thai Tourist Guide	512	2.0939	1.19828	Rarely
Law enforcement	512	1.9743	1.06104	Rarely
Crime	512	1.8519	1.05368	Rarely

The research data indicated that transportation and traffic problem and dirty sanitation are perceived by foreign tourists to be more significant concerns. Crime is the least concerns when tourists visit Thailand.

Table 7 - Tourists' satisfaction

Tourist Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Better than expectation	290	56.6
Same as expectation	179	34.96

Worse than expectation	43	8.3
Total	512	100

Table 8: Tourists' revisiting decision

Revisiting decision	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	430	83.98
No	15	3.5
Not sure	50	9.7
Missing	17	3.32
Total	512	100

Overall, most of the foreign tourists' satisfaction is considerably kind, and most of them would consider revisiting Thailand for vacation again.

Table 9: Tourists' estimated spending during the duration of stay

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Spending	458	100.00	12000.00	1866.1648	1855.57351
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Average Spending/day	458	1.11	2500.00	166.5607	272.63528

A typical foreign tourist spends on the average of 1866.1648 USD per visit and spends 166.56 USD per day on average.

Table 10 - Tourists' perception toward Thailand and the crime issue incident

	Symbol	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Significant level
1. How well do you know Thailand?	Knw	478	2.554	1.25637	Fair
2. Will the crime issue in Bangkok make you less likely to visit Thailand?	Prob1	493	2.554	1.25183	Slightly Influential
3. Will fraud on tourist affect your decision in visiting Thailand?	Prob2	473	3.108	1.29448	Moderately Influential
4. Will safety issue affect your decision in visiting Thailand?	Prob3	494	3.145	1.30716	Moderately Influential

Safety issue and cheating on tourist are moderately influence the tourist's perception towards visiting Thailand. The crime issue in Bangkok slightly influences the tourist's perception of visiting Thailand. Tourists concerns about general traveling safety issues more than the safety raised by the crime issue incident in Bangkok.

Multiple Regression Equation:

$$Y = a + b_1 * X_1 + b_2 * X_2 + \dots + b_n * X_n + e \quad (1)$$

The first multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between various tourists' perceptions of the current problems in Thailand and the duration of stay in Thailand.

$$\text{Staying} = 20.106 + 6.060 \text{Knw} - 3.869 \text{Prob1} - 4.327 \text{Prob3} + e$$

T value (3.608) (-1.983) (-2.231)
R = .253 R² = 0.058 SEE = 35.122 F = 4.959 Sig of F = 0.000

Having a better knowledge and understanding of the real situation in Thailand positively affects tourists' duration of stay in the country. The multiple regression analysis indicates that with one scale of knowledge about Thailand would increase the duration of stay by six days. The crime and violence issue created a negative effect on foreign tourists' duration of stay. According to the equation concerning the bombing incident and safety issue concerns, one scale of influence would decrease the duration of stays of the foreign tourists by four and five days, respectively. Consequently, this equation can be applied to 5.8% of foreign tourists.

The second multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between foreign tourist's spending and the duration of stay for foreign tourists in Thailand.

$$\text{Spending} = 1,343.725 + 26.992 \text{Stay} + e \quad (2)$$

T value = 6.818
R = 0.342 R² = 0.114 SEE = 1752.872 F = 46.491 Sig of F = 0.000

The foreign tourists' duration of stay positively affects the tourist's spending; indicating that one day of staying in Thailand significant increases tourist's spending by an estimate of 26.992 USD. This equation can use utilized to make the predictions 11.4% of foreign tourists.

VI. CONCLUSION

Tourist's perception and the factors related to visiting Thailand

Among many factors that play a significant role in appealing elements for tourists' demand and choosing to travel toward the particular destination, the top three factors related to tourist's visiting decision are Thai culture and lifestyle, cost of living in Thailand and Thai Food. Surprisingly, the safety issue only moderately influences the tourist's visiting decision despite the tragedy. David Scowsill (The nation, 2015), president and chief executive officer of the World Travel and Tourism Council. "When any country gets hit, it follows the same pattern. The government makes an effort to rebuild the travel industry, and once the incident disappears from the media, forgotten, and tourists will return."

According to the short-interviews, all of the tourists participated in the interview consider the crime and violence and safety issue as a moderate influential factor related to their Thailand visiting decision. The American tourists expressed that they felt comfortable during their visits and were planning to go to Phuket the week after. The Swedish tourists had planned to visit Thailand four months ago. After he saw the news about the murder case on the internet, he had collected all the related information on the internet, social media, and still decided to visit Thailand. They came to Thailand because of the reviews they found on the internet and the recommendations from friends. The Chinese and British tourists perceived risk in Bangkok is relatively low. One of the British tourists was working in Bangkok four years ago and came back to visit during his vacation time.

Moreover, according to the South China Morning Post report on August 19th (South China Morning Post website, 2015), the journalists were present at the site to interview the tourists. Most of the tourists felt comfortable to visit them despite the crime issue. The question of whether or not the crime issue has major influential factors on tourists' decision to visit Thailand cannot be concluded. This is because the tourists that consider crime incident as an extreme influent to their decisions may not be in Thailand or maybe not available during this research study.

Information from people's suggestions, social stimulus and internet are very influential to the foreign tourist's decision. The overall foreign tourist's satisfactions are considerably good, creating a positive impression on social stimulus, which, in turn, would pass on the information through the internet, social media, and other channels. However, transportation infrastructure problems, congested traffic condition, dirty and lousy sanitation are still considered to be of significant concerns and require improvement.

The external inputs are significantly affected by the set of awareness. However, regarding to tourist's revisiting decision, 83.98% of tourists want to revisit Thailand, and the fear of explosion slightly impacts the first stage of selecting travel destination, according to Gilham (2001), because the

chances of being killed or injured as a result of terrorist activity are considered to be very small, low perceived risk.

The study result demonstrates that the crime tragedy appears only to have a short-term impact on tourism of Thailand. Tourists may perceive a destination to be risky but not necessary to worry about going there (Larsen et al., 2009). The foreign tourists might not recognize the probabilities of risk (Williams and Baláž, 2014) and pay more attention to the devices of their acquaintances more than other media. The proportions of those who want to return to Thailand were also higher.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further researches should focus on other national and international studies comparing normal circumstances. It is more effective to hire interpreters to accompany the research group to help to translate and communicating with foreign tourists when collecting data onsite. The data would have been more diverse if the sample group can be expanded to include tourist who has been to Thailand before the major crime incident.

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