

A Comparison of Chinese and American Tourist Satisfaction in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Successful tourist destinations will attract more visitors from different countries. However, culture diversification may need well management to respond and satisfy customer needs. Understanding of differences among tourists and their requirements is important for the tourism industry which may lead to an increased share of the tourism market. The objective of this study is to compare the level of American and Chinese tourists' satisfaction in Thailand. 390 respondents were considered to be the sample. The researcher applied Independent Sample t-test to test all hypotheses. The results of this study by using cross-tabulation analysis, American and Chinese tourists mostly were male, aged over 45 years old. They travel in Thailand with their families. Moreover, they are private company employees who hold at least a Bachelor's degree. American tourists mostly take a long period of time to travel while Chinese tourists are more likely to take a shorter journey. The findings indicate that American and Chinese tourists are not statistically significant different in satisfaction levels in terms of destination attractions and environment, destination facilities and services, accessibility of destination, and destination image. In contrast, American and Chinese tourists have significant differences in satisfaction levels in terms of overall price. However, each of these four attributes need to be improved to attract additional tourists.

OVERVIEW OF STUDY

Understanding American and Chinese tourists' needs, their perception of destination, and their different levels of satisfaction are very important to tourism industry in Thailand. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has initiated new strategies to create a competitive

edge in the market and develop tourism products in order to improve tourism in Thailand. Kozak (2001) studied the differences between satisfaction levels of two nationalities visiting the same destination. The researcher mentioned that cross-cultural customer satisfaction measurement is a new subject in

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the field of tourism and therefore seems worthy of further investigation. Satisfaction levels measured by various factor analyses consist of destination attractions and environments, and these largely determine tourists' choice and motivation. Destination facilities and services are elements within the destination, or linked to it, which make it possible for visitors to stay and participate in the attractions. Accessibility of the destination affects the cost, speed and the convenience with which a traveler may reach a destination. Image of the destination is important because the attitudes and images that tourists have towards products strongly influence their buying decision. Finally, the price factor is one that can lead to tourist satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a destination (Middleton, 1994).

While the world population is continuously increasing, the tourism industry is growing even faster. Tourism is one of the industries that can generate a considerable income, create a modern industrial economy, and a leisure society. It is a sector that can only be defined in terms of demand and depends on the growth of tourism. The key unit of measurement is the number of visitors or tourists who visit Thailand as a destination. The increase in the number of tourists indicates that they have positive attitude and are satisfied with the destination. Whether traveling for business or pleasure the visitor spends money and creates demand for tourism products and services, adding considerably to the potential for further growth.

Table1: The World's Top Tourism Destinations

Rank	Country	Arrivals (Million)		Market Share (%)	
		2004	2005	2004	2005
1	France	75.1	76.0	9.8	17.2
2	Spain	52.4	55.6	6.9	12.6
3	United States	46.1	49.4	6.0	37.0
4	China	41.8	46.8	5.5	30.1
5	Italy	37.1	36.5	4.9	8.3
6	United Kingdom	27.8	30.0	3.6	6.8
7	Mexico	20.6	21.9	2.7	16.4
8	Germany	20.1	21.5	2.6	4.9
9	Turkey	16.8	20.3	2.2	4.6
10	Russian Federation	19.9	20.0	2.6	4.5

Rank	Country	Arrivals (Million)		Market Share (%)	
		2004	2005	2004	2005
11	Austria	19.4	20.0	2.5	4.5
12	Canada	19.2	18.6	2.5	13.9
13	Malaysia	15.7	16.4	2.1	10.6
14	Ukraine	15.6	-	2.0	-
15	Poland	14.3	15.2	1.9	3.4
16	Hong Kong	13.7	14.8	1.8	9.5
17	Greece	13.3	14.3	1.7	3.2
18	Hungary	12.2	10.0	-	2.3
19	Thailand	11.7	11.6	1.5	7.4
20	Portugal	11.6	-	1.5	-

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2006

According to the world's top tourism destinations (See Table 1), Thailand ranks 19th. It means that Thailand has the advantage of being one of the most chosen destinations. It has potential in the tourism industry because the number of arrivals and the market share is positive which means that Thailand has the opportunity to expand its tourism market. The attractions in Thailand are partly aesthetic- the beauty of the country's natural and constructed environments; the Thai enjoyment of things beautiful-orchids, textiles, temples, people; the civility and grace of its people; their appreciation of the present moment, and the ease with which the ugly and painful is slipped out of sight. "Amazing Thailand Year" was celebrated in 1998. Even in the midst of financial

crisis, Thailand amazes. Tourists materials for this campaign feature beautiful men and women wearing the heritage of Thailand on elaborate headdresses including flowers, Thai food, women from upland minorities, boats, Buddhist monks and Buddha images, flanked by Ban Chiang burial pottery, orchids, painted umbrellas, elephants and waterfalls.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) reports that in 2004 Thailand welcomed approximately 12 million international tourists, which created national revenue of 383,900 million baht. With so many potential products and lots of support from the government, the industry will be able to grow even further. And Thailand has always been trying to place itself at the top of tourist destination tables by improving and

promoting events such as Amazing Thailand. Although in 2005, the percentage change of Thailand decreased by 1.4% because it was the period of post-SARS rebound, tsunami, and seaquake. Despite this, Thailand still has the opportunity to expand its tourism market because its current market share has increased by 7.4%.

In case of Southeast Asian region such as Thailand, the tourism industry plays an important role in its economic strategy. Having referred to the international tourist arrivals by country of residence in year 2006, the number of foreign visitors that arrived in Thailand was 10,092,740. The Chinese and American tourist proportions are indicated in Table 2 that follows:

Table 2: International Tourist Arrivals to Thailand

International Tourists Arrivals to Thailand					
Country of Nationality	2005		2006		Change of Percentage
	Number	% Share	Number	% Share	
China	61,846	4.78	156,727	9.04	+ 153.41
USA	97,835	7.56	106,111	6.12	+ 8.46

Source: Immigration Bureau, Thai Police Department, 16 March 2006

As noted in Table 2 above, Chinese tourist arrivals in 2006 numbered 156,727 while American tourist arrivals were 106,111. Both have almost a similar number of tourists who arrive in Thailand. The percentages of change and market share are positive. Both are the potential customers for Thailand's tourism industry and both tend to be the potentially lucrative customers because of their high purchasing power. Most travelers from these two countries

are successful in their professions and have a positive attitude. These are the reasons why this study focused on the satisfaction levels of these two countries.

For China and United States of America, among the world's 50 Most Populous Countries in 2007, China holds the first rank and United States of America, the third. It indicates China has the largest population in the Asian region, and America, in the Western region (See Table 3).

Table 3: China and United States of America Facts

Criteria	China	United States of America
Population (2007)	1,321,851,888	301,139,947
Population growth rate	0.6%	0.9%
GDP (trillion, 2006)	\$ 10.17	\$ 12.41
Real growth rate	10.7%	3.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Database, 2007(<http://www.allcountries.org/uscensus/population.html>)

● Chinese tourists: Mainland China

According to Consumer and Travel Trade Research in China: Quantitative report for January 6, 2006 ([http://www.tourismbc.com/PDF/China%20Travel%20Trade%20Research%20\(2006\).pdf](http://www.tourismbc.com/PDF/China%20Travel%20Trade%20Research%20(2006).pdf)), China's population reached a remarkable 1.3 billion, making it the most populous country in the world. And it now has the fastest-growing economy in the world. Chinese tourists are curious, optimistic and status-conscious. They want to see the world and how the other half lives. It shows the need for personal enrichment and respect from their peers. Chinese tourists are still very generic and focused on broad touring and sightseeing activities. French (2006) mentioned that Chinese will be a greatest wave on international travels. In the last five years, the growth in Chinese outbound travel is the highest in the world.

● American tourists: United States of America

According to US Department of Commerce, 2006 (www.commerce.gov/), the United States is the world's third largest country by total area and population. The United States' population is approximately 0.3 billion. Larger populations lead to the possibility of tourism industry growth. The United States has the largest national economy in the world. The United States has vast economic, political, and military influence on a global scale, which makes its foreign policy a subject of great interest and discussion around the world.

As indicated in Table 3, the GDP and population growth rate of China and United States of America are quite similar level. It may be a good opportunity for the tourist industry in Thailand to gain more market share. Also, this opportunity is supported by the statistics in Table 2 which shows the positive percentage of change in market share of both countries.

According to the top ranking of the international tourist arrival forecasts to regional tourist areas in Thailand (see Table 4), the main city destinations are Bangkok, Pattaya, Phuket, Chiang Mai, Hat Yai, and Kanchanaburi, respectively, in 2005. This study targeted only the first five regions of Thailand. Although Hat Yai ranks fifth, it is located in the same region with Phuket. Therefore, this study is focused on

Kanchanaburi instead which is in the sixth rank. Similarity, the figures for international tourist arrivals in 2006 show the first five ranks have changed to be Bangkok, Pattaya, Phuket, Chiang Mai, and Kanchanaburi. Therefore, this research focused on the differences in tourist satisfaction levels toward Thailand as a destination from the Chinese and American tourists' perception.

Table 4: International Tourist Arrival Forecasts to Regions in Thailand

Region	2005	2006
Bangkok	13,314,125	14,329,530
Pattaya	4,729,683	5,213,830
Phuket	4,604,518	4,840,390
Chiang Mai	3,544,271	3,985,010
Hat Yai	1,661,325	1,710,810
Kanchanaburi	1,498,521	1,888,395

Source: Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), 2004

Research Objectives

As tourist numbers increase, researchers are beginning to examine the attributes which make Thailand an appealing travel destination. The characteristics of Asian and Western people are extremely different. Therefore, the objectives of this research focus on the relationship between Chinese and American tourists and their satisfaction of destination attributes.

The research objectives were developed as follows:

1. To identify the difference in satisfaction levels toward destination attractions and environment between Chinese and American tourists;
2. To analyze the difference in satisfaction levels toward destination facilities, services and leisure activities between Chinese and American tourists;

3. To test the difference in satisfaction levels toward accessibility of the destination between Chinese and American tourists;

4. To study the difference in satisfaction levels with the image of the destination of Chinese and American tourists;

5. To evaluate the difference in satisfaction levels with the level of price between Chinese and American tourists.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the conception of cross-culture, several major models on destination concepts, tourist satisfaction, tourism product and related studies are reviewed. Discussed below are major models of different culture tourists' satisfaction as well as a discussion of empirical research.

Cross-Culture

Culture has been called the way of life for an entire society or culture is a shared way of life (Haslett, 1989). As such, it includes codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals, norms of behavior such as law and morality, and systems of belief. Also, it includes behavior, social rules of behavior, perceptions regarding human nature, interpersonal relationships and so forth which passed from one generation to the next generation and different cultures will have different value systems (Kanungo, 2006).

Schutte and Deanna (1998) found that the concept of culture is the sum of learned beliefs, values and customs that create

behavior norms for given society. Belief refers to the accumulated feeling and priorities that individuals have about things and possessions. Values are situations, non-specific, serving as guide for culturally appropriate behavior widely accepted by the members of a particular society. Also, Tylor (1997) described culture in the following way: "Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

Davies (1998), Schutte and Deana (1998), Trompenaars (1993), and Bloom (1987), implied that Asia is a high context culture which refers to people generally addressing broader issues and regarding their counterparts in a more diffuse context than that of the specific situation. In such societies, relationship building is prime importance or they fulfill socially oriented needs. Time spent getting to know counterparts is not considered an integral issue in fulfilling long-term objectives. Knowing one's counterpart fully from the start will avoid the risk of unfortunate surprise later on.

Asian cultures differ from low context Western culture in places such as America. There people tend to focus on the specific issues at hand or do one thing at a time, regard their counterparts as having a specific role in a given situation, and keep distance/space. A person will feel the necessity to get down to business and focus on the issues. Americans, as a part of the

Western culture, are often criticized by others as being superficial and perhaps in sense because they are often immediately friendly even to those they do not know well but then do not develop such friendships beyond a certain level.

Pizam (1999) suggested two methods to carry out cross-cultural research in the field of consumer behavior.

- Indirect method is how "outsiders" such as local residents or tour guides see tourists or how they perceive difference in the behavior of tourists across various nationalities.

- Direct method aims at exploring whether any differences exist in the behavior, values or satisfaction levels of tourists representing different nationalities and speculating as to their possible reasons.

The main difference between these methods is that the latter reflects tourists' opinions about themselves or their experiences. Choi and Chu (2000) found differences in factors determining the overall satisfaction levels of Asian and Western tourists. It seems obvious that nationality might have a significant effect on consumer or tourist behavior. Therefore, such differences in attitudes and behavior focus on the importance of destination management in exploring the feature customer group, segmenting tourism marketing and releasing new marketing strategies which are appropriate for each market.

A cross-cultural analysis requires a systematic comparison of similarities and differences in values, ideas, attitudes and

symbols (Engel and Blackwell, 1982). Any cross-cultural differences between tourist' perceived satisfaction levels with their holiday experiences at the same destination is important to the decision-making process of destination management regarding destination positioning and market segmentation strategies. Also, an intercultural interaction is defined as face-to-face contact among people from very different cultural backgrounds and most tourism experience is formulated by encounters of different culture activated by international tourists (Brislin, 1981).

Tourist Satisfaction

Kozak (2001) defined satisfaction as an importance in carrying out destination performance is due to the close relationship between the level of tourist satisfaction and future behavior. According to Kozak and Rimmington's (2000) study, the researchers define tourist satisfaction as an importance to successful destination marketing because it influences the choice of destination, the consumption of products and services, and the decision to return. However, Johnson, Anderson, and Fornell (1995) have distinguished between two different general conceptualizations of satisfaction. These are transaction-specific satisfaction and cumulative satisfaction. The former is concerned with satisfaction as an individual, transaction-specific satisfaction measure or evaluation of a particular product or service experience. Cumulative satisfaction, on the other hand, is a cumulative, abstract construct that describes customer's

total consumption experience with a product or service.

Wit and Moutinho (1985) defined tourist satisfaction as something that can be seen as a response, which matches the dichotomous structure of quality: instrumental elements referring the response to technical qualities of a service whereas expressive elements of satisfaction are a response to the functional quality. Therefore, in order to make the concept clearer, satisfaction of tourist is separately described in the two concepts as psychology and service term.

- **Psychology concept:** This is the part of personality following the concept of tourist satisfaction. It consists of five concepts which are the nature of involvement, the role of stress, boredom and frustration, need analysis and the leisure motivation scale.

- **Service quality concept:** Tourist satisfaction is the emotional response to successful quality of service. Satisfaction is linked to the level of expectations. Therefore, the perception of a service already contains a response to that service. A tourist's response to service depends on three areas: the level of equity perceived, the degree to which expectations have been matched, and the perception of the actual performance.

There are tourist destinations, tourist attraction, destination reputation, destination loyalty and destination image concepts which are important to successful destination marketing and for understanding the relationship between level of tourists' satisfaction and future behavior.

Tourist destination

The tourist destination is a city, town or other area the economy of which is dependent to a significant extent on the revenues accruing from tourism. It may contain one or more tourist attractions or visitor attractions and possibly some "tourist traps". Natural attractions draw visitors to see what the world was like before tourism left previous, traditional cultures abandoned, as Western influence swept the world. Popular cities such as Paris, London, New York City, Madrid, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto and Rome have a large number of tourists each year, making them a huge tourist destination. David (2000) informs that the tourism industry consists of a number of different sectors including the travel, hospitality and visitor services sectors. Within each of these sectors there are a number of individual enterprises that provide a range of services to people who are traveling away from their home environment. Also, Seaton and Bennett (1996) defined destination marketing as the heartland of tourism marketing. The destination is the catalyst link that precipitates all the other industries in the tourism sector-transport, accommodation and attractions.

Destination reputation and Tourist attraction

According to Herbig and Milewicz (1993), reputation is a process that accumulates with judgments over time of the various groups who interact with an organization or geographical area. The credibility of a tourist destination is

viewed as the believability of its attractions. It is defined as an estimation of the consistency over time of an attribute of an entity. A tourist destination can have, therefore, numerous reputations-one of each attribute such as cost, product and service quality, natural and built environment, culture and heritage- or a global, destination reputation. Tourist destination reputation may be viewed as a mirror of the destination's history, which communicates information regarding the quality of its tourist services, its natural and built environment and its culture and heritage in comparison with competitors. Therefore, the nature of a tourist destination's reputation depends on the results of its perceived offerings in this period. If the destination repeatedly succeeds in fulfilling its promises, it develops a favorable reputation; failure to respect its promises may create a negative reputation. Tourist attraction is a place of interest where tourists visit include historical places, monuments and landmarks, zoos, aviaries, museums and art galleries, botanical gardens and arboretums, aquariums, buildings and structures (e.g., castles, libraries, former prisons, skyscrapers, bridges), national parks and forests, ski resorts and spas, theme parks and carnivals, ethnic enclave communities, historic trains, casinos, pubs and clubs, restaurants, and cultural events.

Destination Image

Destination image is described as the overall impression made on the minds of the

public about a geographical area (Kotler, Haider and Rein, 1993). It is related to the various physical, psychological and behavioral attributes of the tourist destination, such as name or brand, architecture of buildings, landscape, heritage attractions, myths and legends, quality of general and tourist infrastructure, tradition, ideology and local culture, and to the impression of quality communicated by each employee of local tourist enterprises with the destination's visitors. Destination image has two principal components:

- A functional or realistic component which is related to tangible characteristics which can be easily measured, and

- An emotional component which is associated with psychological dimensions which are subjectively perceived from visitors and manifested by feelings and attitudes towards a specific destination. These feelings are derived from individual experiences at a tourist destination.

Destination image can be used as effective means of predicting the outcome of the visitation experience process and considered as the most reliable cues which signal the ability of a destination to satisfy the visitor's desires.

Destination Concept/ Destination Attributes

Middleton (1994) stated that the product may be defined as a bundle or package of tangible and intangible components based on activity at a destination. Destination attributes are categorized into five main components:

1. Destination attractions and environment are largely determining consumer's choice and influence prospective buyers' motivation. They are dividable by the following four criteria;

Natural attractions: landscape, seascape beaches, climatic and other geographical features of the destination and its natural resource.

Built attractions: buildings and tourism infrastructure including historic and modern architecture, monuments, promenades, parks, and gardens, convention centers, marinas, ski slopes, industrial archaeology, and managed visitor attractions generally golf courses, specially shops and the market retail areas.

Cultural attractions: history and folklore, religion and art, theatre, music, dance and other entertainment, and museums; some of these may be developed into special events, festivals, and pageants.

Social attractions: way of life of residents or host population, language and opportunities for social encounters.

2. Destination facilities and services are possible places for visitors to stay and participate in the attractions. These would include:

Accommodation units: hotels, holiday villages, apartments, villas, campsites, caravan parks, condominium, farms, and guesthouse.

Restaurants, bars, and cafés: ranging from fast food to luxury restaurants.

Transport at the destination: taxis, coaches, car rental, cycle hire.

Sports/Activity: golf clubs, sailing schools.

Other facilities: craft courses, language schools.

Retail outlets: shops, travel agents, souvenirs, and camping supplies.

Other services: hairdressing, information services, equipment rental, and tourist police.

3. Accessibility of the destination affects the cost, speed and the convenience with which a traveler may reach a destination. This would involve:

Infrastructure: roads, airports, railways, seaports and marinas.

Equipment: size, speed and range of public transport vehicles.

Operational factors: routes operated, frequency of services, prices charged.

Government regulations: the range of regulatory controls over transport operations.

4. Image of the destination is an important part of tourism product component because the attitudes and images customers have towards products strongly influence their buying decisions. Images and expectations of travel experiences are closely linked in prospective customers' minds.

5. Price to the consumer is composite in nature and includes everything tourists purchase, see, experience and feel from the time they leave home until the time they return such

as food and beverage, souvenirs, amusement and entertainment. Any visit to a destination carries a price, which is the sum of what it costs for travel, accommodation, and participation in a selected range of services at the available attractions. Because most destinations offer a range of products, and appeal to a range of segments, price in the travel and tourism industry covers a very wide range.

Tourism product

Brass (1997) found that the tourism product can be classified into two main components: attractions and facilities. Attractions are those natural and human-made features and events that stimulate people to visit a destination. For example, a bird sanctuary may act as the key attraction enticing avid naturalists to a destination. Facilities, on the other hand, provide necessities to both residents and tourists, and include roads, railway, airports, parking areas, hospitals, police, water and power services and accommodation. Together, the mix of destination attractions and facilities create a set of intangible "subjective experiences" for tourists known as the tourism product.

Smith and Coller (1996) concluded that destinations include tourism products that are composite in nature and includes everything tourists purchase, see, experience, and feel from the time they leave home until the time they return. It also involved experiences and expectations that are not directly purchased but nevertheless still form part of the overall

package. The more people there are involved, the greater the risk of some thing going wrong and the greater the chance that tourists' experiences will not live up to their expectations. Services provided by industry personnel are a vital component of the tourism product. These consist of the accommodation, transportation, entertainment, attractions, catering, shopping, financial services, information, facilities, and infrastructure needs.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Kozak (2001) studied the differences in satisfaction level with destinations across two nationalities. This study attempted to explore if there were any differences between satisfaction levels of two nationalities, British and German, visiting Turkey and Mallorca and if they were culture-oriented. Culture was measured by asking respondents their country of origin. This study therefore referred to broad national culture rather than the individual culture or the subcultures of many ethnic groups living in those countries. Findings demonstrated that British tourists were more satisfied with almost all individual destination attributes than their German counterparts. The repetition of the similar survey in a second destination confirmed the reliability of these findings. This study suggests that it appears to be difficult to justify whether such differences are culture-based or other factors could have influenced results. Cross-cultural customer satisfaction measurement is a new subject in the field of tourism and therefore seems

worthy of further investigation. It is also an area which indicates limitations to be achieved such methods may yet still have their role in cultural studies.

As the objectives of this research were to study and compare Chinese and American tourists' satisfaction toward the destination attributes in Thailand, the model of the destination attributes and tourist satisfaction developed by Middleton (1994) was applied in this study. The author concluded that the product may be defined as a bundle or package of tangible and intangible components based on activity at a destination. The destination attributes are categories into five main components:

- **Destination attractions and environment:** natural, built, cultural, social attractions.

- **Destination facilities and services:** accommodation units, restaurants, transport, activity, facilities, retail outlets, other services.

- **Accessibility of the destination:** infrastructure, equipment, operational factors, government regulations.

- **An image of the destination** is an important part of tourism product component because the attitudes and images customers have towards products strongly influence their buying decisions. Images and expectations of travel experiences are closely linked in prospective customers' minds.

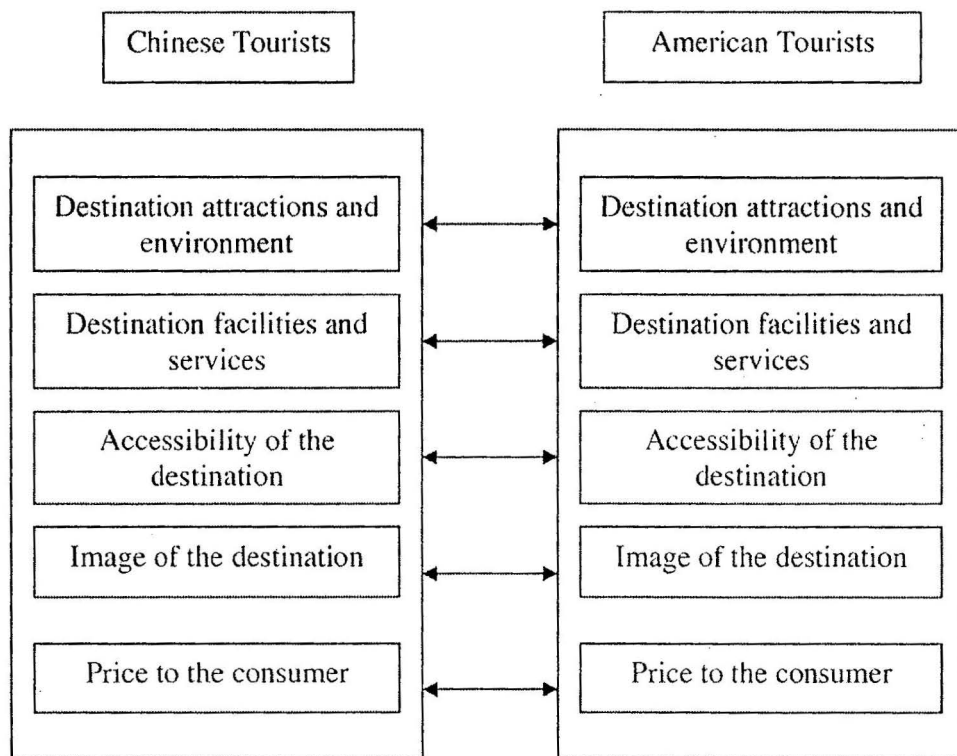
- **Price to the consumer** is composite in nature and includes everything tourists purchase, see, experience and feel from the time they leave home until the time they return such as food and beverage, souvenirs, amusement and entertainment.

In this research, a comparative assessment of Chinese and American tourists' satisfaction with Thailand as a destination emphasizes the understanding of the relationship between destination attributes and tourists' satisfaction levels as the basis of the conceptual framework.

Conceptual framework

Conceptual framework of a comparison in different levels of satisfactions between American and Chinese tourists in Thailand

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of a comparison in different levels of satisfactions between American and Chinese tourists in Thailand



Research Hypotheses

Based on the research objectives of the study, the following research hypotheses were developed:

- H1:** There is a difference in satisfaction levels toward destination attractions and environment between Chinese and American tourists.
- H2:** There is a difference in satisfaction levels toward destination facilities, services, and leisure activities between Chinese and American tourists.
- H3:** There is a difference in satisfaction levels toward accessibility of the destination between Chinese and American tourists.

- H4:** There is a difference in satisfaction levels with the image of the destination between Chinese and American tourists.

- H5:** There is a difference in satisfaction levels with the level of price between Chinese and American tourists.

Research Design

In this study, the researcher applied descriptive research and survey technique by distributing questionnaire to collect the primary data from Chinese and American tourists who travel to Thailand. The sample consisted of 390 respondents traveling to five different regions

in Thailand. These were selected from the top five highest ranking cities which have the highest number of international tourist arrivals to Thailand. The researcher applied non-probability

sampling technique to collect the data. The result of sampling technique is the proportion of population as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Proportion of population between the different regions and tourism places

Region	Tourism Places	Chinese	American	Total
Bangkok	Wat Phra Kaeo	39	39	78
Pattaya	Beaches	39	39	78
Phuket	Patong Beach	39	39	78
Chiang Mai	Doi Suthep	39	39	78
Kanchanaburi	Erawan National Park	39	39	78
Total		195	195	390

According to Table 5, the researcher applied 390 sample size divided into two nationalities. The questionnaires were distributed to 195 Chinese and 195 American tourists from five regions. The result was 39 sets of questionnaires for each region.

Composition of the Sample

The sample used for this research consisted of 195 Chinese and 195 American tourists to Thailand. For the American group, male respondents comprised 111 (56.9% of the total) and 32.8% were more than 45 years old. A majority of the American tourists had a Bachelors degree (52.8%). Most were married (56.4%). The American tourists were more likely to travel

(88.7%) in Thailand with their family (52.8%) and stay more than one week but less than one month (67.2%). Most (84.1%) visit Thailand one time per year. The American tourists reported that the most enjoyment came from visiting islands or beaches (36.4%).

Most of the Chinese tourists were male (53.8%) with 30.3% more than 45 years old. About half (50.8%) have graduated with a Bachelors degree. Most are married (63.1%). The vast majority (96.4%) of Chinese tourists in Thailand travel with their family. Chinese tourists stay for shorter periods than Americans and they visit one time per year (72.8%). Islands or beaches (45.6%) are the major source of their enjoyment.

5.2 Reliability Analysis Scale (Alpha)

The reliability of the instrument was accessed by calculation of Cronbach's coefficient

Alpha. The reliability analysis result is as follows:

Table 6: Reliability

Variables	Coefficient Alpha
Destination attractions and environment	0.899
Destination facilities, services, and activities	0.896
Accessibility of the destination	0.899
Destination Images	0.812
Level of prices	0.804
All sub-variables of destination attributes	0.962

The reliability analysis has been analyzed by using the SPSS. From 390 sets of questionnaire, the researchers concluded that the questionnaire has a reasonable degree of reliability as result in the value of alpha being

equals to 0.962. Note that when the reliability analysis value (alpha value) exceeds 0.7, the research would prove to be reliable or all questions under destination attributes are reliable (Nunnaly, 1978).

Means and Standard Deviation

Table 7 shows the mean for Chinese and American groups.

Table 7: Means and Standard Deviation of Chinese and American groups

Destination Attributes	Means		Standard Deviation	
	Chinese	American	Chinese	American
Destination attractions and environments	51.03	51.28	7.528	6.551
Destination facilities and services	52.1231	52.5641	7.57065	6.26146
Accessibility of destination	29.4359	30.0359	5.49974	4.36997
Destination image	19.3179	19.3231	3.30595	3.08859
Level of price	15.7897	16.2410	2.40958	1.98145

Table 8: Summary of Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Result	The result of hypothesis testing
Hypothesis 1	Failed to reject Ho	There is no difference in satisfaction levels toward destination attractions and environment between Chinese and American tourists
Hypothesis 2	Failed to reject Ho	There is no difference in satisfaction levels toward destination facilities, services, and leisure activities between Chinese and American tourists
Hypothesis 3	Failed to reject Ho	There is no difference in satisfaction levels toward accessibility of destination between Chinese and American tourists
Hypothesis 4	Failed to reject Ho	There is no difference in satisfaction levels with the image of the destination between Chinese and American tourists
Hypothesis 5	Rejected Ho	There is a difference in satisfaction levels with the level of price between Chinese and American tourists

CONCLUSIONS

According to the results of the hypotheses testing, there are four hypotheses which failed to reject null hypotheses and one hypothesis was rejected. The findings indicate that American and Chinese tourists have similar satisfaction levels toward destination attractions and environment, destination facilities and services, accessibility of destination, and destination image. In contrast, American and Chinese tourists have different satisfaction levels with the prices charged to consumers. From the result of this analysis, it can be concluded that the backgrounds of Chinese tourists are mostly

similar to American tourists in this study.

According to the demographic of Chinese tourists, they have more education level than in the past because most are graduated with Bachelor's degree. And China is developing through the implementation of high technology. Chinese acknowledge the Western culture and thinking. The currency of China and United States of America are different and the value of money is different. There are significant differences in terms of the exchange rate and the costs to residents in each domestic market. Given this, the costs of tourism in Thailand to Americans may be quite low when compared

to the same activities in the more expensive United States. By contrast, the costs of tourism in Thailand to Chinese consumers may appear to be higher when compared with the low costs of the same activities in their home country. Therefore, it is understandable that this study found differences in the satisfaction levels of Chinese and American tourists in the area of price satisfaction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this study, there are several recommendations for the tourism industry and the Tourism Authority of Thailand to improve customer satisfaction in order to attract more tourists in the future. First, for facilities, services, and leisure activities; the tourism industry should focus on improvement of tourism services and facilities dimension to ensure that tourists' perception are matched or exceeded. Also, the tourism planners must provide facilities and attractions that are affordable and appealing to local tastes. The cooperation from both government and private sectors are the main mechanism to set the same direction in policy and practice. Second, for destination and environments, in order to attract tourists to travel to Thailand, the Tourism Authority of Thailand and tourism businesses should understand tourists' needs and offer appropriate tourism products to them. Moreover, Thailand should create new destinations and new products in other aspects to attract the new targets to visit Thailand such as less visited, provinces or regions.

Third, for the accessibility of destination, the government should improve basic public utility services sufficient and provide the preventive measures for safety of lives and treasury of the tourists. The Tourism Authority of Thailand should develop tourism campaigns focusing on heightening the quality and standard of services with emphasis on the safety of tourists. It should also increase the efficiency and upgrade the quality of transportation system and basic infrastructure for attracting tourists to Thailand. Fourth, for the destination image, from a marketing perspective, the word of mouth recommendations from friends and relatives was the most important source in forming tourist images. Therefore, the tourism planners should keep in mind that providing a pleasant experience for their tourists has a major effect on the development of positive images for non-visitors. However, the destinations spend considerable time and money to create and enhance a favorable image. Therefore, the cooperation from both government and private sectors are the main mechanism to support the new potential destination images.

The results show that the satisfaction levels of destination attractions, facilities, accessibility, and destination image are similar which may cause from a great advance in high technology and the accuracy of information. All nationalities in this world can get the same level and the same time of new information which may affect to similar perception and satisfaction level of destination attractions.

Finally, for the level of price to consumer, Chinese and American tourists are different in satisfaction levels with the level of price to spend or buy for food & beverage, souvenirs, entertainment and transportation. Based on this, the marketers should produce and set different level of appropriate price and quality for product and service to meet customers' need. There are many good big markets in Bangkok and its vicinity which provide good quality and cheap price for products and services. With cooperation from both government and private sectors, the tourism industry should develop a good public relations campaign communicating the many benefits of coming to Thailand.

FURTHER STUDY

Further study is needed to investigate destination attributes along with different

variables such as motivation, hygiene-sanitation-cleanliness, hospitality and customer care in order to better understand tourist satisfaction. Additional theories can be used to study the satisfaction level in areas such as accommodation, adventure tourism and recreation, attractions, events and conferences, food and beverage, tourism services, transportation, and travel trade. An in-depth understanding of tourists' satisfaction is very beneficial in helping the Thai tourism industry create appropriate strategies for attracting additional international consumers. Further research could focus on different types of travelers, such as long-stay backpackers and ecotourism travelers. This kind of research will help learn what motivates international tourists to come to Thailand as a destination. It could also better explain satisfaction and dissatisfaction levels and how to solve travel-related problems.

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