

## ABSTRACT

Tourist risk is a barrier for tourism expansion. Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore are usually arranged into a one package tour program for Chinese mainland tourists. As such, exploring the tourists' risk weighting, comparing their perceived risk in these destinations, and providing related suggestions comprise important information for local and regional tourism development of the Mainland Chinese tourist market.

Safety of transportation, law and order, hygiene, accommodation, weather, sightseeing spot, and medical support are listed as the independent variables in this study framework, which also serve as evaluation criteria. Perceived relative safety of Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore are the dependent variables.

In order to measure tourists perceived risk quantitatively while considering evaluators' uncertainty of natural language description, this study employs an Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) method to determine the weighting of various risk evaluation criteria and applies fuzzy logic to make subjective judgments. A Fuzzy Multiple Criteria Decision-Making (fuzzy MCDM) approach is used to conduct the evaluation of tourist risk to make the study more objective.

In terms of importance, the seven safety components are arranged in declining order as follows: law & order, hygiene, medical support, accommodation, sightseeing location, transportation and weather. In general, Singapore is perceived as the safest destination, Malaysia second and lastly Thailand. Comparing the seven safety components of the individual destinations together with importance weights, for Thailand, safety performances of hygiene and law & order need urgent improvement; safety performances of transportation, medical support, sightseeing location, and weather

have competitive advantages. For Malaysia, hygiene safety demands immediate attention; safety performances of transportation, medical support, and sightseeing location have competitive advantages. For Singapore, almost all of the safety factors are satisfactory.

Tourist risk reduction is not the sole responsibility of the tourism industry. Regional and international cooperation, seeking prevention of terrorism should be promoted and institutionalized. Compared to Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia should endeavor to improve perceptions regarding keeping social order and law enforcement to make tourists feel at ease. Better control of preventive epidemic systems to diminish tourists' possibility of contracting infectious diseases is also required. The "zero-dollar tour" must be controlled for Southeast Asia tourism. The tourism business sector also needs to attend to national and regional benefits apart from internal safety management. For the three destinations studied, those safety factors having competitive advantages are well worth publicizing.

