International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation.

Tourist behavior in selecting street food: A case study of Mueang District, Surat Thani province, Thailand

Nattapong Phurungrit [1*], Jintanee Ru-Zhue [2], Somnuk Aujirapongpan [3]
[1-3] School of Accountancy and Finance, Walailak University, Nakorn Si Thammarat, 80160, Thailand

* Corresponding Author: **Nattapong Phurungrit**

Article Info

Abstract

This study aims to explore the behavior of tourists in choosing street food in the Mueang district of Surat Thani province, Thailand. Data was collected through a questionnaire from 400 tourists, both Thai and foreign, who visited the Mueang district. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula at a 95% confidence level, using non-probability sampling and purposive sampling. Descriptive statistics used included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Inferential statistics applied were ANOVA and multiple regression. The results revealed that factors related to the marketing mix and psychological aspects were generally considered significant. In terms of street food purchasing behavior, most tourists visited 6-10 times primarily to consume single-dish meals such as rice dishes, noodles, Pad Thai, fried mollusks, rice noodles, etc. Moreover, tourists tend to buy food between 15:01 to 18:00 and usually dine with friends. The majority spent between 501 to 1,000 baht per meal and relied on Google as their primary information source. Hypothesis testing showed that: 1) Personal factors significantly influence tourist behavior in selecting street food in the Mueang district. 2) Marketing mix elements significantly correlate with this behavior, notably in terms of promotion and service processes at a 0.05 significance level. 3) Psychological factors, especially motivation and learning, also play a significant role at a 0.05 significance level.

Keywords: Purchasing behavior, Street food, Tourists, Thailand

Introduction

Thailand is renowned as a significant player in both agriculture and industry, especially in the tourism sector. This has attracted attention from both locals and international tourists, making Thailand a popular travel destination. This in turn, significantly contributes to the nation's income. Moreover, the Thai government has implemented essential policies through the Ministry of Tourism and Sports. These policies aim to develop and promote various tourism modalities within the country, including eco-tourism, health tourism, and agricultural tourism. By endorsing and enhancing new tourist destinations and involving local communities more in tourism management, the model of tourism cooperatives is introduced. This decentralizes income to the local regions, improving the livelihoods of local residents. The promotion of tourism not only invigorates the nation's economy with a circulation of income worth hundreds of millions of baht but also benefits the country's GDP. On the flip side, the rapid growth of tourism has had detrimental effects on the environment within these tourist destinations. Typically, there is a constant tug-of-war between conservation of natural and societal environments and tourism development. Since tourism relies heavily on the physical, social, and cultural environment, the more it expands, the more it utilizes these resources (Kaewkrom *et al*., 2018) [7].

From the analysis of the international tourism situation in 2022, it was found that the tourism sector has shown positive adjustments. Moreover, with the relaxation of travel restrictions in preparation for fully reopening the country, the number of foreign tourists traveling to Thailand increased by 1,124,227 people in July 2022, following the cancellation of the "Thailand Pass" registration. Combined with the 2022 Thai tourism promotion policies, there was a rise to 2.24 million foreign tourists (TAT Review, 2023) [21].

Surat Thani Province, located in the southern part of Thailand, is renowned as the "City of a Hundred Islands" for its stunning natural beauty and unique culture and traditions, such as the Phra Chak or Phra Dragging ritual, the School Rambutan Festival, and buffalo fighting. Even the culinary delights stand out, with the differences in local cuisine attracting numerous communities (Office of Suratthani Culture, 2022) [15]. This led to the emergence of diverse tourism-related businesses, especially street food or roadside restaurants, which are frequented by many foreign tourists. The government has been proactive in promoting and highlighting Surat Thani's street food offerings to enhance its potential and publicize it to neighboring countries. As the sixth-largest province in Thailand and the largest in the southern region, Surat Thani is a significant and competitive province on the international stage, boasting both natural and cultural tourist attractions of global renown and local wisdom (Office of Tourism and Sports, 2018) [16].

Surat Thani province has witnessed a significant surge in tourism, leading the country in growth when compared to 2021. The number of tourists visiting the province exceeded 3.6 million, a six-fold increase. Consequently, the province experienced a significant boost in its revenue from tourism, amounting to 27,661 million baht from 3,690,642 tourists, marking a 912.04% increase (National News Bureau of Thailand, 2022) [13]. This success is attributed to proactive efforts to promote, support, and develop the tourism industry. The Surat Thani tourism network has engaged with government agencies, academics, businesses, private sectors, and community-based tourism groups to foster collaboration aimed at promoting and developing Surat Thani's community-based tourism to be internationally recognized. This has resulted in an increased number of tourists visiting Surat Thani (Office of Tourism and Sports Suratthani, 2018) [16]. In alignment with the goal of enhancing revenue from tourism through community-based tourism mechanisms, there were plans to promote tourism in the mainland areas of Surat Thani from 2018 to 2021, aiming to introduce potential tourist attractions to both local and international visitors (The Government Public Relations Department Suratthani, 2018) [15].

This sparked the researcher's interest in studying the behavior of tourists in choosing street food in Mueang Surat Thani district. The findings will be utilized to adapt and guide improvements in food quality and services to meet tourists' needs. This would benefit street food vendors and promote Mueang Surat Thani district, Thailand as a future gastronomic tourism destination. The research have the objective:

1. To study the purchasing behavior of tourists towards street food in the Mueang district of Surat Thani province, Thailand.
2. To investigate the relationship between marketing mix factors and psychological factors in relation to the purchasing behavior of tourists for street food in the Mueang district of Surat Thani province, Thailand.

Literature review
Consumer/Tourist Behavior Concepts
From a review of literature on consumer behavior, Bogueva, Marinova & Raphaely (2017) [2] mentioned that marketing strategies of businesses can lead to success if they can meet consumer satisfaction. Therefore, it is crucial to study and identify stimuli or marketing strategies that can address the satisfaction of consumers. In addition, Apisit Langsoh (2018) [10] described consumer behavior as the actions of an individual related directly to acquiring and using goods and services. This includes decision-making processes that pre-exist and dictate such actions. The key point in this definition is that at any given moment, consumer actions may be influenced by pre-existing psychological and sociological processes which mold their attitudes and values. These pre-existing factors influence purchasing decisions, and understanding the entire process of behavior helps us to understand why consumers act in a certain way. Moreover, Kamonerat Saduakkarn (2020) [18] defined consumer behavior as the decision-making process and physical activities that an individual undertakes when evaluating, possessing, using, or consuming products and services. It means the behavior of a person in searching, purchasing, using, evaluating, and activities related to products or services with the hope that they can satisfy their needs.

From the study of consumer behavior, it can be concluded that it refers to the decision-making process and the physical activities of individuals related to the behavior of choosing street food by tourists in Mueang district, Surat Thani province. This behavior enlightens us as to why consumers act the way they do. Analyzing the behavior of consumers or the behavior of tourists helps to understand the comprehensive reasons affecting the choice of street food by tourists in Mueang district, Surat Thani province.

Regarding the behavior of tourists, Sujitra Numee (2019) [14] stated that tourist behavior means the actions or expressions of tourists related to the decision-making process to purchase tourism products. This process begins with pre-travel research using information gathered from perception, attitudes, and technology, eventually leading to a purchase. During the trip, the duration of visits is recorded, and after the trip, experiences are evaluated. Tourists also explore and interact with tourist sites and other environments, including services provided at the visited tourist sites, with the expectation of meeting their needs. Furthermore, Pattarakan Naksrisuk (2021) mentioned that tourist behavior refers to the decision-making process related to choosing travel styles. Tourism in various forms has diverse characteristics, and tourists carefully consider which style best suits each individual's behavior to maximize satisfaction during travel.

It can be concluded that the behavior of tourists refers to the diverse actions exhibited by tourists, which vary among individuals. These actions are driven by satisfaction, desires, and curiosity. Such behaviors significantly influence their decision-making process when choosing travel destinations. Tourists may or may not be aware of their actions, and regardless of whether others notice them, their actions aim to address specific situations, especially when choosing street food in Mueang district, Surat Thani province.

Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior Characteristics
Kotler and Armstrong (2014) [9] categorized the factors influencing consumer behavior into four main groups: cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors. These factors are beyond control, yet they are of paramount importance and are detailed as follows

1. Cultural Factors: These are fundamental determinants of an individual's wants and behaviors. They consist of:
▪ Subculture: Elements like geography, ethnicity, religion, and racial groups come into play. Marketers need to design products and marketing strategies that align with

these needs.
- Social Class: This can be measured by factors such as occupation, income, education, wealth, and other variables.

2. Social Factors: There are three primary aspects to consider
- Groups and Social Networks: Consumer behavior is largely influenced by social factors such as small consumer groups, family, social roles, and status. A group can directly influence its members.
- Family: Members of a family have a significant impact on purchasing behavior.
- Roles and Status: An individual can belong to multiple groups, such as families, clubs, or organizations. Within each group, an individual's position can be identified by both role and status. Thus, when consumers purchase products, they tend to align their choices with their respective roles

3. Personal factors play a pivotal role in the buying decision-making process, shaped by individual characteristics such as gender, age, occupation, financial status, lifestyle, personality, and self-concept.
4. Psychological factors consist of:
- Motivation: An individual has various needs, some of which arise from physiological states like hunger, thirst, and discomfort. Other needs stem from psychological desires, for example, the need for societal respect and acceptance. When such needs are intensely aroused, they transform into a driving force (or motive) directing the individual to seek satisfaction.
- Perception: This refers to the process through which individuals select, assimilate, and interpret information, culminating in understanding. Through the five senses - sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste, individuals can perceive stimuli differently, even if exposed to the same stimulus. This perceptual process consists of three subprocesses: selective attention, selective distortion, and selective retention.
- Learning: Learning emerges from an individual's behaviors, influenced by their experiences. Theorists assert that most human behaviors are a result of learning. Learning often involves the reactions of drives, stimuli, cues, responses, and reinforcements.
- Beliefs and Attitudes: Beliefs are organized sets of knowledge that individuals adhere to, based on facts, thoughts, or feelings. Attitudes, on the other hand, are an individual's evaluative feelings and tendencies toward something or an idea, determining whether they like or dislike it. It's notable that attitudes are generally resistant to change.

In light of the above, it's conclusive that studying consumer behavior necessitates an exploration of the criteria for purchase decisions. This includes external factors stemming from cultural and social aspects, internal psychological factors, and personal factors. These considerations are instrumental in determining consumer interest in a product, influencing product modifications, pricing decisions, distribution channel strategies, and marketing promotions to foster positive consumer attitudes towards the product

Marketing Mix
Reviewing literature related to the concept of the marketing mix, Kotler (2012) [8] defined the marketing mix as controllable variables or marketing tools that companies typically use in combination to satisfy the needs and wants of their target customers. Originally, the marketing mix comprised only 4 variables, known as the 4Ps: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. Later, three additional variables were incorporated: People, Physical Evidence, and Process, aligning with modern marketing concepts, especially in the service industry. Thus, the term '7Ps marketing mix' was coined, which aligns with Divyendu & Yadav (2019) [5] who posited that the marketing mix involves having products and/or services to meet the needs of target customers and satisfy them. Moreover, the product and/or service price should be at a level that consumers find acceptable and are willing to pay. There should be appropriate distribution channels ensuring easy accessibility for customers, and efforts should be made to attract customers, guiding them in making the right purchasing decision. In agreement, Aonsumle (2021) [1] stated that the marketing mix is an integration of pricing, sales promotion, products on sale, and distribution, designed to reach the target group. Furthermore, Deesuksaeng (2021) [4] emphasized the significance of the marketing mix as a crucial tool enabling businesses to achieve set objectives and cater to the needs and satisfaction of consumers, encompassing Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, and Process.
From the definition and significance of the marketing mix, it can be concluded that the marketing mix plays a pivotal role in marketing decisions. It acts as a controllable factor that can be adjusted based on the environmental circumstances and serves as a vital tool for entrepreneurs or marketers to conduct their business in order to achieve their objectives and cater to customer needs. Upon reviewing literature related to the marketing mix, it's evident that the 7Ps marketing mix, comprising Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence and Presentation, and Process, can be adapted for in-depth analysis. These factors, be it the physical characteristics, personnel, distribution, or promotional strategies, can be analyzed in congruence with the study of the selection of street food by tourists in Mueang district, Surat Thani province.

Information on Street Food Tourism
Currently, the majority of tourists are becoming weary of conventional tourism practices, such as visiting various attractions just to savor the breeze, sunlight, waves, and sand. As a result, many are seeking novel and more intriguing experiences beyond mere shopping. This shift in tourists' interests and tastes compels tourism sites and operators to reconsider and diversify their offerings to ensure their business viability. Offering alternative tourism activities that aren't limited to a singular format has become paramount. Culinary tourism, or food-oriented tourism, has emerged parallel to this, centering on the idea of traveling predominantly to discover unique foods and beverages. This concept underscores the importance of food and drink as primary objectives to promote and develop tourism in specific regions. This form of tourism is witnessing soaring popularity and exhibits a trend of continued growth, presenting ample commercial opportunities that can augment the revenue of the tourism sector (Suphattana Tachochalalai, 2018).

Street food is a profession that constitutes significant revenue in various countries, with vendors often investing minimally in food production due to their exemption from government taxes and rental fees. This is because their operations typically involve mobile stalls or carts situated alongside roads, making it a cost-effective option for many vendors. Street food in Southeast Asia, such as in Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand, is regarded as a crucial tourism hub, playing a pivotal role in both cultural and economic contexts (Suphattana Tachochalalai, 2018). The diversity of street food adds vibrancy and vitality to destinations, combined with the charm stemming from the direct interaction between sellers and tourists. This interaction not only enhances the dining experience but also fosters a keen interest in the origin of the products, the stories behind their preparation, and fosters a deep connection between street food vendors and tourists. Furthermore, street food typically refers to ready-to-eat or drink items sold on the streets or public places, such as markets or outdoor events. They usually come from food stalls, carts, or food trucks. While street food is often local, it is widely disseminated in its region of origin. Street food can also be categorized into finger foods and fast meals, usually priced lower than restaurant food. Today, people may opt for street food for various reasons, such as for reasonably priced and tasty meals in a friendly ambiance, to try native dishes of different nations, among others. Presently, street food can be segmented based on its sales points, including roadside pavements, public areas, privately rented spaces, and night bazaars (Monvipha Yacharoen *et al.*, 2021).

The growth of street food establishments coincides with the development of urban areas. Street food businesses have surged considerably, and those that maintain hygiene, offer safe food, and set reasonable prices have thrived. These eateries not only cater to local residents but also attract tourists to Surat Thani due to their delicious flavors and memorable dining experiences (Office of Tourism and Sports Suratthani, 2018) [16]. Moreover, street food stalls operating both during the day and at night have been allocated specific zones within the city by the local municipality, such as the San Chao Market, Mitkasem Market, Tha Ruea Non Market, Koh Samui, flea markets, and floating markets. These allocations allow tourists varied choices while promoting local economy and giving local residents livelihood opportunities. The municipality plays an active role in ensuring public health, cleanliness, and encouraging proper management to reap maximum benefits. Popular street food establishments in Surat Thani, as reported by Wongnai in 2022, include 'Bang Adul Fried Chicken' located in front of the Makro Surat Thani, 'Pi Yot Jumbo Shellfish', 'Kai Dao Breakfast', and 'Pad Thai Seafood Je Mui' in the San Chao Market.

Given the aforementioned, the researcher is interested in studying the behavior of tourists regarding their choice of street food in Mueang district of Surat Thani, Thailand. The objective is to understand the consumption behavior of tourists and the reasons for their preferences when selecting street food. The findings from this study can be instrumental in enhancing the allure of street food outlets, ensuring Surat Thani's Mueang district becomes the primary choice for tourists when considering street food.

Upon reviewing related concepts and literature, it can be concluded that individual factors such as gender, age, marital status, educational level, occupation, and income, in addition to the study of marketing mix factors and psychological factors, are intertwined with the behavior of tourists in choosing street food in Mueang district of Surat Thani, Thailand. Based on these findings, three hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Individual factors are significantly related to the behavior of tourists in selecting street food in the Mueang district of Surat Thani.

Hypothesis 2: Marketing mix elements significantly influence the behavior of tourists in choosing street food in the Mueang district of Surat Thani.

Hypothesis 3: Psychological factors play a significant role in shaping the behavior of tourists when selecting street food in the Mueang district of Surat Thani.

Research Methodology
Population and Sample
The target population of this study comprises tourists visiting the Mueang district of Surat Thani, with an unknown exact population size. Consequently, the sample size for this research was determined using the Cochran formula (1953). The calculated sample size was 384 consumers. To enhance the reliability of data analysis, the researcher expanded the sample size to 400 respondents.

Research Instruments
The researcher employed a questionnaire as the primary research tool. The questions, derived from an extensive literature review, cover various concepts ensuring alignment with the defined objectives. The questionnaire is segmented into four sections as follows:

- **Section 1:** This section contains questions about individual demographic factors. It comprises a multiple-choice format with six items, including gender, age, marital status, educational level, occupation, and income, presented in a checklist format.
- **Section 2:** This part pertains to the marketing mix factors. The questions are structured on a rating scale, divided into five levels.
- **Section 3:** This segment focuses on psychological factors. Similarly, the questions are based on a rating scale, divided into five levels.
- **Section 4:** This section addresses the behavior of tourists in choosing street food in the Mueang district of Surat Thani, presented in a checklist format.

Data Collection
In this research, data were collected from two sources as follows:
1. Primary Data: Obtained through the utilization of a questionnaire method, targeting tourists in the Mueang district of Surat Thani.
2. Secondary Data: Acquired by studying and compiling information from documents, research databases, academic books, related articles, and online resources to obtain the most comprehensive body of knowledge.

Statistical Analysis
The collected questionnaires were processed and analyzed using pre-defined statistical software. The methods of analysis included:

Descriptive Statistics
1. Analysis of individual factors and behaviors concerning the selection of street food by tourists in the Mueang

district of Surat Thani, using frequency distribution and percentage.
2. Analysis of data related to marketing mix factors and psychological factors by calculating the mean and standard deviation.

Inferential Statistics
1. The T-Test and F-Test were utilized to compare the relationships of individual factors and their opinions towards the street food selection behaviors of tourists in the Mueang district of Surat Thani.
2. The effects of marketing mix factors and psychological factors on the street food selection behaviors of tourists in the Mueang district of Surat Thani were analyzed using Multiple Regression.

Research Results
Analysis of Personal Factors of Survey Respondents
From a sample size of 400 respondents, a majority were foreign tourists, numbering 231 individuals, or 57.8%. Thai nationals accounted for 169 respondents, or 42.3%. The majority were female, at 256 individuals, or 64.0%, with males accounting for 144, or 36.0%. The age group 31-40 was most represented with 188 individuals, or 47.0%. This was followed by those aged over 41, numbering 114, or 28.5%, and the 21-30 age group, which had 88 respondents, or 22.0%. Most respondents were single, numbering 318, or 79.5%. Those who were divorced or widowed were 44, or

11.0%, and married respondents were 38, or 9.5%. When considering education levels, 138 respondents, or 34.5%, held a bachelor's degree. This was followed by those with a diploma or vocational certificate, at 128 or 32.0%, and high school education at 72, or 18.0%. In terms of occupation, private company employees were the majority, with 140 respondents, or 35.0%, followed by government or state enterprise employees, at 112, or 28.0%, and business owners or entrepreneurs at 84, or 21.0%. Most respondents had a monthly income of 20,001 - 30,000 Baht, totaling 233 individuals, or 58.3%. This was followed by those earning over 30,001 Baht, at 112, or 28.0%, and those earning 10,001 - 20,000 Baht, at 51, or 12.0%.

Analysis of Marketing Mix Factors
Overall, opinions regarding the marketing mix factors are highly positive, with an average score of 3.89. Considering each aspect individually, the product dimension received a high score with an average of 4.02. Following this, the personnel aspect scored an average of 3.99. The service process dimension scored an average of 3.96, while the pricing aspect had an average score of 3.87. The promotional strategies were rated with an average of 3.84. The environmental conditions in the context of street food received an average score of 3.80. Lastly, the distribution channels aspect scored an average of 3.75. These findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Opinions on Marketing Mix Factors

Factors related to Marketing Mix:	($\bar{x}$)	(S.D.)	Level of Opinion
Product	4.02	0.92	High
Price	3.87	0.96	High
Distribution Channel	3.75	0.96	High
Promotion	3.84	0.91	High
Personnel	3.99	0.98	High
Service Process	3.96	0.91	High
Environment in terms of Street Food	3.80	1.00	High
Total	**3.89**	**0.95**	**High**

Analysis of Psychological Factors
From the collected data of the sample group, the study concludes that opinions regarding psychological factors are overall very positive with an average score of 3.78. Breaking it down by category, it is observed that the attitude dimension received a high average score of 3.94. Following this, the perception dimension scored an average of 3.90. The motivation aspect received an average score of 3.84. The personality trait dimension had an average score of 3.62, and lastly, the learning dimension scored an average of 3.60. These findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Opinions on Psychological Factors

Psychological Factors	($\bar{x}$)	(S.D.)	Level of Opinion
Motivation	3.84	0.82	High
Perception	3.90	0.80	High
Learning	3.60	0.68	High
Personality	3.62	0.75	High
Attitude	3.94	0.81	High
Total	**3.78**	**0.77**	**High**

Analysis of Tourist Behavior in Choosing Street Food
From a sample group of 400 respondents, it was found that the majority visited to consume food 6-10 times, accounting for 182 respondents or 45.5%. The predominant type of food consumed was single dishes (various rice dishes, noodles, Pad Thai, fried mussels, Kanom Jeen, etc.), with 190 respondents or 47.5%. The popular time to purchase food was between 3:01 pm to 6:00 pm, with 132 respondents or 33.0%. Most dined with friends, totaling 186 respondents or 46.5%, and made purchasing decisions with friends, totaling 146 respondents or 36.5%. The majority spent between 501-1,000 Baht per meal, which equated to 120 respondents or 30.0%. Information was primarily sourced from Search Engines, especially Google, with 165 respondents or 41.3%.

Results of Hypothesis Testing 1: Personal factors that significantly affect the tourist behavior of choosing street food
Upon testing the hypothesis using the F-test (Analysis of Variance: ANOVA), it was discovered that differing personal factors such as gender, age, marital status, education level,

occupation, and income significantly impact the behavior of tourists in selecting street food in Mueang District, Surat Thani Province, with a statistical significance at the 0.05 level. This adheres to the previously set hypothesis as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Testing the Relationship between Personal Factors and the Behavior of Choosing Street Food by Tourists in Mueang District, Surat Thani Province.

Purchasing Behavior of Street Food by Tourists in Mueang District, Surat Thani Province	Personal Factors					
	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Education Level	Occupation	Monthly Income
Frequency of Food Consumption	0.65	0.00*	0.77	0.00*	0.12	0.17
Type of Food Consumed	0.00*	0.00*	0.03*	0.00*	0.07	0.11
Time Period for Food Consumption	0.00*	0.04*	0.00*	0.21	0.00*	0.60
Persons Accompanying during Food Consumption	0.13	0.04*	0.00*	0.84	0.03*	0.00*
Persons Involved in the Decision to Consume Food	0.00*	0.04*	0.84	0.00*	0.01*	0.17
Expense per Food Consumption Session	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.12	0.04*	0.00*
Type of Media	0.03*	0.59	0.01*	0.05	0.20	0.02*

*Sig. Statistically significant at the 0.05 level

Results of Hypothesis Testing 2: Marketing mix factors affect the tourist behavior of choosing street food

From the analysis of the relationship, it can be concluded that the marketing mix factors in relation to the behavior of tourists selecting street food in Mueang District, Surat Thani Province showed that both the promotional aspect and the service process aspect have a Sig. value less than 0.05. This indicates that marketing mix factors have a statistically significant relationship with the behavior of tourists choosing street food in Mueang District, Surat Thani Province, specifically in the areas of promotion and service process at the 0.05 level. This is consistent with the hypothesis set. As illustrated in Table 4, the regression equation can be expressed as:

$$Y = 16.644 - 0.881(X4) + 1.217(X6)$$

Where:
X4 represents the promotional aspect,
X6 represents the service process aspect,
Y represents the behavior of choosing street food.

Table 4: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis to study the relationship between marketing mix factors and the behavior of tourists in selecting street food in Mueang District, Surat Thani Province

Purchasing Behavior of Street Food by Tourists in Mueang District, Surat Thani Province	B	SE	t	Sig.
Constant	16.64	1.18	14.08	0.00*
Product Factors (X_1)	-0.20	0.30	-0.66	0.50
Price Factors (X_2)	-0.06	0.33	-0.19	0.84
Distribution Channel Factors (X_3)	0.41	0.30	1.34	0.17
Marketing Promotion Factors (X_4)	-0.88	0.28	-3.09	0.00*
Personnel Factors (X_5)	0.11	0.33	0.33	0.73
Service Process Factors (X_6)	1.21	0.31	3.84	0.00*
Environmental Conditions of Street Food (X_7)	0.30	0.31	0.97	0.33
R square = 0.08 F = 5.19 Sig = 0.00*				

*Sig. Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Results of Hypothesis Testing 3: Psychological factors influence the tourist behavior of choosing street food

From the relational analysis, it is inferred that the psychological factors related to the behavior of tourists selecting street food in Mueang District, Surat Thani Province revealed that both the motivation and the learning aspects have a Sig. value less than 0.05. This suggests that psychological factors significantly differentiate the behavior of tourists choosing street food in Mueang District, Surat Thani Province, specifically in the areas of motivation and learning at the 0.05 significance level. This is in alignment with the previously established hypothesis. As shown in Table 5, the regression equation can be formulated as:

$$Y = 17.481 + 1.117(X1) - 0.998(X3)$$

Where:
X1 represents the motivation aspect,
X3 represents the learning aspect,
Y signifies the behavior of choosing street food.

Table 5: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis to study the relationship between psychological factors and the behavior of tourists in selecting street food in Mueang District, Surat Thani Province.

Consumer Behavior in Choosing Street Food by Tourists in Mueang District, Surat Thani Province	B	SE	t	Sig.
Constant	17.48	1.39	12.57	0.00*
Motivational Factors (X_1)	1.11	0.33	3.33	0.00*
Perception Factors (X_2)	0.72	0.39	1.85	0.06
Learning Factors (X_3)	-0.99	0.39	-2.55	0.01*
Personality Traits (X_4)	0.27	0.46	0.58	0.55
Attitudinal Factors (X_5)	-0.45	0.47	-0.97	0.33
R square = 0.06 F = 5.11 Sig = 0.00*				

*Sig. Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Discussions and Conclusions

From the study on "Consumer Behavior towards Street Food: A Case of Mueang District, Surat Thani Province, Thailand" the researcher has discussed the results according to the research objectives as follows:

1. When analyzing the behavior of tourists in purchasing street food in Mueang District, Surat Thani Province, it was discovered that the majority of tourists visited 6-10 times primarily to consume single dishes such as various rice dishes, noodles, Pad Thai, fried shellfish, local desserts, and rice vermicelli. Furthermore, tourists tend to purchase food between 15:01 - 18:00 hrs. and often dine with friends. Most tourists spend between 501 - 1,000 Baht per meal and rely heavily on Google as their primary information gathering tool. This could suggest that tourists like to experiment with different foods during their visits, leading them to consume various types of dishes from different vendors. The preferred time frame of 15:01-18:00 hrs. indicates a tendency for tourists to consume these dishes as early dinners or afternoon snacks. Social dining with friends might be an activity where they can share and explore local cuisines together. The spending range of 501-1,000 Baht per meal suggests that tourists are willing to spend moderately to experience local dining. They might perceive street food as a value-for-money option compared to dining in restaurants. The usage of Google for information searching implies that tourists are looking for convenience and accessibility. They can quickly identify recommended street food vendors, read reviews, and gather information about local dishes in Mueang District, Surat Thani Province. This aligns with the research of Natnicha Limpanawat (2018) which studied the behavior and factors influencing the consumption of street food among tourists in Chiang Mai. The majority of the sample group were aged 26-30, had a bachelor's degree, earned a monthly income of 20,001 - 40,000 Baht, were employed in private companies, and resided in Bangkok. The predominant behavior among these tourists was to consume savory dishes like Pad Thai, fried rice, and chicken rice, primarily from areas like pedestrian streets (e.g., Tha Phae and Wua Lai). Tourists mainly learned about street food vendors through recommendations from relatives or acquaintances. The primary motivation for consuming was curiosity or to gain new experiences. This is also consistent with the findings of Petchin Upensuk (2018) who studied attitudes and behaviors of consumers towards food trucks, specifically in the Hua Mum Night Market in Kasetsart-Nawamin, Bangkok. The majority of consumers visited food trucks in night markets during the evening hours. Most of them dined with friends, and their purchase decisions were influenced by information from online communities. After consuming, these consumers would recommend the experience to close acquaintances.

2. When investigating the relationship between marketing mix factors and psychological factors on the buying behavior of street food by tourists in Mueang district, Surat Thani province, it was found that the marketing mix factors significantly influenced the buying behavior of street food by these tourists, particularly in the areas of promotional activities and service processes at the significance level of 0.05. Likewise, psychological factors also significantly influenced their buying

behaviors, especially in terms of motivation and learning at the same significance level. From a marketing perspective, promotional activities might encompass advertising, discounts, or special offers that appeal to tourists, directing them towards specific street food options. On the other hand, service processes could relate to aspects such as the efficiency of food preparation, cleanliness, and customer service at street food stalls. These marketing factors play a crucial role in influencing the buying behaviors of tourists in the Mueang district. In terms of psychological factors, motivation might be associated with the desire for new culinary experiences, exploring the local culture, or seeking pleasure through food. Learning, in this context, might relate to tourists gaining knowledge about local dishes, ingredients, or cooking techniques. These psychological factors significantly impact the buying behaviors of tourists in the Mueang district. This combination of external marketing stimuli and internal psychological factors illustrates that the decision-making process of tourists in selecting street food is influenced by both external marketing environment and internal psychological factors. While marketing factors emphasize external conditions and sales promotion strategies, psychological factors delve into motivations, desires, and learning experiences of tourists. This aligns with the research by Pongpat Runla (2020), which studied factors influencing Thai consumers' decisions to buy street food at the Ratchada Train Night Market. It was found that most vendors prioritize the product aspect and service process of the marketing mix. Moreover, the findings also correlate with the research by Jutiporn Dumsong (2017) that explored the motivations and marketing mix elements affecting the purchase of food trucks in Bangkok. It was highlighted that product-related motivations, rational motivations, emotional motivations, and store atmosphere motivations were all significant in influencing decisions to buy food from food trucks in Bangkok.

Suggestions

Suggestions Derived from the Study

1. Marketing Enhancement: As marketing factors significantly impact tourists' buying behavior, businesses should focus on improving their marketing strategies. This might include advertising campaigns, attractive promotions or deals, and highlighting the uniqueness of street foods. Effective marketing can attract more tourists and persuade them to choose specific street food options.

2. Service Process Improvement: The study indicates that the service process greatly affects the buying behavior of tourists. Therefore, street food businesses should prioritize providing efficient and quality service. This encompasses maintaining cleanliness, preparing food quickly, and offering exemplary customer service. By delivering an excellent and satisfying experience, vendors can increase the chances of tourists choosing their street food.

3. Understanding Tourists' Motivations: Since motivation plays a crucial role in tourists' food choices, businesses should strive to comprehend the motivations that drive tourists to choose street food. This could involve presenting a variety of foods, emphasizing local

specialties, and promoting a unique culinary experience. Vendors can attract more customers and meet their needs by addressing the desires of the tourists.

4. Leveraging Digital Platforms: Given that tourists heavily rely on search tools like Google for information, various street food businesses can benefit from digital platforms to promote their offerings. Maintaining an online presence, having a user-friendly website or social media presence, and encouraging positive reviews can help attract tourists and provide them with the necessary information to make informed decisions.

Suggestions for Future Research

Given that this study may not have encompassed every issue comprehensively, the researcher offers the following recommendations for future research:

1. Delving Deeper into Decision-making Factors of Tourists: Future research should further explore the factors influencing tourists' decisions. This includes a deeper examination of market-related and psychological factors that significantly impact tourists' buying behaviors. Investigating the effectiveness of marketing promotions, various service processes, as well as probing into the motivations and experiential learning of tourists can provide a more holistic understanding of the drivers behind tourists' street food choices.

2. Perception of Quality and Safety of Street Food: It is recommended to study tourists' perceptions and concerns about the quality and safety of street food. This would involve examining factors like hygiene practices, food management processes, and sourcing of ingredients that contribute to tourists' sense of food safety. Understanding these perceptions can guide street food vendors in implementing measures to assure food quality and address potential concerns.

3. Economic Impact of Street Food Tourism: Future studies should assess the economic impact of street food tourism on the Surat Thani city district. This analysis can shed light on the financial benefits arising from tourists' consumption of street food, including revenues for vendors, job creation, and overall economic growth. Such research can offer valuable insights into the economic significance of street food tourism and inform policies and strategies to maximize its positive impact.

Compliance with ethical standards
Acknowledgments

Disclosure of conflict of interest
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancies have been completely observed by the authors.

References
1. Aonsumle P. Adaption of Entrepreneurs during Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Journal of Management Science Review. 2021; 23(1):195-206.
2. Bogueva D, Marinova D, Raphaely T. Reducing meat consumption: The case for social marketing. Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics. 2017; 12(1):71-94.
3. Cochran WG. Sampling Techniques. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1953.
4. Deesuksaeng P. Adaptation of Street Food COVID-19 situation period in Pak Nam Pho Subdistrict, Mueang Nakhon Sawan District, Nakhon Sawan Province. (Independent Study). Naresuan University, 2021.
5. Divyendu SR, Yadav V. Online or Offline Shopping: Factors that Determine Customer Behavior. International Research Journal of Engineering and Technology (IRJET). 2019; 11(06):1150-1110.
6. Dumsong J. Motivation and Marketing Mix Affecting to consumption Food Trucks in Bangkok. (Independent Study, Rajamangala University of Technology Phra Nakhon), 2017.
7. Kaewkrom S, *et al*. Souvenirs Purchasing Behaviour of Chinese Tourists in Phuket. (Master's thesis, Phuket Rajabhat University), 2018.
8. Kotler P. Kotler on marketing. Prentice Hall, 2012.
9. Kotler P, Armstrong G. Principles of Marketing (15th ed.). Pearson Publishing, 2014.
10. Langsoh A. Behavior of Frozen Foods Consumption of Staffs and Students of Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya. (Master's thesis, Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya), 2018.
11. Limpanawat N. Study Of Behavior And Factor For Street Food Consumption Of Thai's Tourists In Chang Mai. (Master's thesis, Mahidol University), 2018.
12. Naksrisuk P. Effects of Marketing Mix Factors Affecting On Consumer Behavior from Food Delivery Users in Bangkok Area. (Master's thesis, Ramkhamhaeng University), 2021.
13. National News Bureau of Thailand. Guidelines for the development of tourism in Surat Thani Province, 2022. Retrieved from https://suratthani.prd.go.th/th/page/item/index/id/12.
14. Numee S. Foreign tourists' behavior towards creative tourism: a case study of Koh Samui District, Suratthani Province. (Master's thesis, National Institute of Development Administration), 2019.
15. Office of Suratthani Culture. Outstanding culture and traditions of Surat Thani Province, 2022. Retrieved from https://www.m-culture.go.th/suratthani/
16. Office of Tourism and Sports. Tourist attraction in Surat Thani Province, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/Mots.suratthani/
17. Runla P. Factors Influencing Consumers Decision To Buy Street Food Thailand in Ratchada Train Market. Dusit Thani College Journal. 2020; 14(3):355-368.
18. Saduakkarn K. Decision Purchasing Behavior for Frozen Foods in CP Fresh Mart of Consumers in Thonburi. (Master's thesis, Siam University), 2020.
19. Tachochalalai S. Street Food Consumption Behavior Of Tourists. (Master's thesis, Srinakharinwirot University), 2018.
20. The Government Public Relations Department Suratthani. Support and Development Of The Tourism Industry, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.mots.go.th/more_news_new.php?cid=411.
21. Tourism Authority of Thailand: TAT REVIEW MAGAZINE. Summary of tourism situation in, 2023.

Retrieved   from https://tatreviewmagazine.com/article/inter-q2-2023/.

22. Upensuk P. The Attributes And Consumer Behavior Towards Food Truck Case Study: Huamum Market Kaset-Nawamin. Journal of International and Thai Tourism. 2018; 14(1):1-24.

23. Wongnai. Most Favorite Street Food in Suratthani in 2022. Retrieved from https://www.wongnai.com/restaurants?regions=7275&c ategories=12&page.number=1&page.size=10&rerank=f alse&domain=1&ref=ct.

24. Yacharoen M, *et al*. Tourists Attitudes and Behaviors Towards Street Food Consumption At Night Markets in The Old City Area, Chiang Mai Province. (Master's thesis, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University), 2021.