

THE DETERMINANTS OF SOUVENIR SHOPPING SATISFACTION OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS

ปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อความพึงพอใจในการซื้อของที่ระลึกของนักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติ

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to identify the factors affecting the souvenir shopping satisfaction of international tourists in Thailand. Thailand has attracted visitors from around the world and with the greater demand for souvenirs that the tourists can select and purchase for their own consumptions or for others. Data were collected by survey questionnaires for international tourists in Thailand. The results showed that perceived quality, cultural attribute, price fairness, store perception and shopping enjoyment had the positive influence on souvenir shopping satisfaction, respectively. Practical implications and directions for future research were also provided.

Keywords: Souvenir Shopping Satisfaction, International Tourists, Thailand

บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของการวิจัยนี้คือ เพื่อให้สามารถระบุถึงปัจจัยที่มีผลกระทบต่อความพึงพอใจในการเลือกซื้อของที่ระลึกของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติในประเทศไทย ประเทศไทยได้ดึงดูดนักท่องเที่ยวจากทั่วโลกและเมื่อความต้องการในการซื้อของที่ระลึกของนักท่องเที่ยวมีมากขึ้น ซึ่งนักท่องเที่ยวสามารถเลือกซื้อเพื่อนำไปใช้เองหรือเพื่อเป็นของฝาก ข้อมูลในการศึกษานี้มาจากการสอบถามตามสำรวจจากนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติในประเทศไทย ผลจากการศึกษาพบว่า ปัจจัยดังนี้คือ การรับรู้คุณภาพของสินค้า องค์ประกอบทางด้านวัฒนธรรม ความเป็นธรรมของราคา ความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับร้านค้า และความสนุกจากการเลือกซื้อมีผลเชิงบวกต่อความพึงพอใจในการเลือกซื้อของที่ระลึกเรียงลำดับจากมากไปหาน้อย รายงานวิจัยนี้ยังได้แสดงถึงแนวทางในการนำผลการศึกษาไปใช้เพื่อการปฏิบัติในทางธุรกิจและได้มีการเสนอแนวทางการทำงานวิจัยในอนาคตด้วย

คำสำคัญ: ความพึงพอใจในการเลือกซื้อของที่ระลึก นักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติ ประเทศไทย

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Introduction

Tourism has great impacts on economic developments in many aspects. Tourists use several services before arriving at the destination and they purchase many different products along their trips, ranging from food, beverage, and clothes to souvenir. In all the activities of tourists, shopping is one of the important parts of tourism experiences (Yu & Littrell, 2005). As Thailand is known as one of the leading destinations in Asia, there are more than 29 million visitors, traveling to Thailand in 2015. Obviously, the tourism expenditures contributed directly to Thai economy. With several campaigns supporting greater numbers of international tourists to increase their spending, including value-added tax (VAT) refund for tourists together with many other promotions at the major department stores and shops, participating in shopping promotion. The goal is clear and simple, that is to increase the spending of the international tourists on products and services.

Turner & Reisinger (2001) suggested that shopping is an important leisure and tourist activity and contributes around two-third of visitor expenditure in a certain destination.

Souvenir is one of the main products aiming to attract the tourists to purchase and there are many places for the tourists, from arrival to departure, to explore and to decide buying some products of their choice. This study attempts to investigate the factors affecting souvenir shopping satisfaction to understand the roles of important factors and the results of the study are expected to help providing

guidelines for tourism businesses and other related organizations to improve their practices to better match the satisfaction of the tourists, which are their major customers.

Souvenir shopping can be useful in enhancing tourist experience for any tourism destination. Kong & Chang (2012) found that souvenir shopping is an essential part to enrich the tourist overall experience when the tourists visited Macau for casino tourism. In addition, limited attention was paid into exploring the importance of souvenir shopping in the marketing literature (Oviedo-García et al., 2014; Kong & Chang, 2012).

Research Objective

The aim of the current study is to identify the factors affecting souvenir shopping satisfaction and therefore practical contributions can be provided to support the tourism businesses.

Literature Review

In this section, key terms are explained and hypotheses are provided for further data analysis.

Souvenir Shopping Satisfaction

When purchasing the souvenir, tourists evaluated their choice and reflected the level of satisfaction. Satisfaction is an indicator for overall results of how the customers realized their decision of purchasing or consuming the products or services. In addition, satisfaction can lead to customer loyalty and long-term customer relationship management. In the area of shopping research, shopping satisfaction is one of the most investigated factors and is

used as the ultimate measure of customer's perception about the products and services.

LeHew & Wesley (2007) and Eroglu, Machleit & Barr (2005) studied tourist's shopping satisfaction in the shopping malls and found that there are many levels of satisfaction among different tourists.

Turner & Reisinger (2001) shopping satisfaction of tourists can show the overall shopping experience at the destination. Shopping satisfaction is appropriate to measure the overall evaluation of the tourists towards their shopping experience. According to Oviedo-García et al. (2014), souvenir shopping satisfaction was composed of four components, including internal attraction, service differentiation, service provision and external attraction. In this current study, shopping satisfaction is the dependent variable.

Price Fairness

Price is a basic factor on the decision making of customers to buy the product. In addition, the consumers can use price to evaluate the product in terms of value for money (Collins et al., 2014). As a customer looks for the right product, price fairness is critical to their decision to purchase. In the context of souvenirs, tourists who may not be familiar with the products or general prices of the local product can have a concern regarding the fairness of price of souvenir, targeting tourists.

According to Xia, Monroe & Cox (2004), price fairness is referred to an evaluation of customer regarding whether the price of product or service is set reasonably, acceptably and

justifiably or not. In addition, consumers can identify the fairness of price on comparative assessment. Hence in the process of price fairness, it implies that the consumers will have to consider overall price aspects of the product and at the same time comparing such products with other similar products (e.g. Bolton, Warlop & Alba, 2003). Price fairness has been one of the conditions to evaluate the customer satisfaction on the products (Bei & Chiao, 2001). In addition, the perception of price fairness determined the satisfaction level of the customer on how they evaluate the products. (Herrmann et al., 2007).

Hypothesis 1: Price fairness has positive influence on shopping satisfaction.

Perceived Product Quality

Product quality is crucial for customer decision to buy. In the aspect of souvenir shopping, the tourists may have short period of time to explore the products and then have to make the decision based on some conditions. However, tourists have to their best judgements in the store to evaluate the product quality.

Tourists explore the materials and certification symbols to help them buy the souvenirs, as well as durability of the products. Fornell et al. (1996) noted that perceived quality is an important determinant of overall customer satisfaction in marketing literature research.

Beneke et al. (2013) identified that perceived product quality has an important impact on consumer decision process of willingness to buy

the product. Turner & Reisinger (2001) noted that product attributes and quality played important roles on the shopping satisfaction. Jang & Namkung (2009) perceived quality is vital for overall customer evaluation of the products. From the empirical research, Bei & Chiao (2001) and Tsotsou (2006) showed that perceived quality had a direct effect on overall satisfaction and on purchase intentions.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived quality has positive influence on shopping satisfaction

Cultural Attribute

According to Seva & Helander (2009) and Fang & Rau (2003), culture has an impact on product assessment in customer decision process. In the buying process of consumers, cultural recognition and cultural elements can be used a part of product development. In the context of souvenir, culture usually is included in the products, such as symbols of the destination and a drawing representing the way of life of the local people. Furthermore, Dekimpe, Parker & Sarvary (2000) explained that cultural elements can be found in many products, including digital telecommunication, T-shirts, and souvenirs.

Moon & Song (2015) stated that cultural elements are attractive for international retailing to attract foreign tourists to purchase the local products, including souvenir.

Moalosi, Popovic & Hicklink-Hudson (2010) proposed that culture is considered one of the main elements of product development and is used to attract the customers to buy

the products. Moreover, Gagliardi (2001) found that cultural element has a direct impact on customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: Cultural Attribute has positive influence on shopping satisfaction

Store Perception

Store perception can be defined as the layout, design, schemes and image of the store that the customers can perceive. The concept of store perception can be referred to in many contexts, including physical store and online store. In addition, store perception can provide the overall image of the store and reflect the store environment in both tangible and intangible aspects. Based on Jacoby (2002), store perception represents a combination of interacting components of all characteristics related to the store.

Donovan & Rossiter (1982) found that consumers' approach behaviors such as returning to the store, spending money, time spent browsing, and exploration of the store were influenced by their perceptions of the retail store environment.

Collins-Dodd & Lindley (2003) noted that many dimensions of store perception have to reflect the several conditions, including variety of products and pleasant atmosphere.

According to the work of Schlosser (1998), for hedonic products, such as gifts and jewelry, store atmosphere had an effect on the way that customer perceived the product quality of the store. In addition, attractive and appealing stores

have greater impact on customer perception and their decision (Pantano & Servidio, 2012; Dennis et al., 2010; Kim, Fiore & Lee, 2007). The way that the customers perceive the store may result in the change in perceptions and behaviors of customers (Dijksterhuis et al., 2005). Therefore, store perception acted as the stimulus for customer shopping attitude and actions. LeHew & Wesley (2007) identified that store environments had influence on the satisfaction level of the tourists.

Hypothesis 4: Store perception has positive influence on shopping satisfaction

Shopping Enjoyment

Most customers will agree that one of the reasons why they love shopping because it is fun. A number of empirical research has confirmed this dimension of shopping (Kim, Fiore & Lee, 2007). However, Wong et al. (2012) noted that few research investigations have been done to improve the understandings about shopping enjoyment in greater perspectives. Wong et al. (2012) implied also that shopping enjoyment can be explained as a personality trait of a customer who assesses shopping trip with greater pleasure and enjoyable qualities.

Shephard, Kinley & Josiam (2014) stressed the importance of shopping enjoyment in the retailing environment and suggested that

shopping enjoyment can be defined as the experience of customers regarding amusement, fun, entertainment, and other stimulants occurring due to shopping activities.

Heitz-Spahn (2013) implied that shopping enjoyment may come from many related activities, such as cross-channel shopping, such as online shopping and shopping at the store.

Hypothesis 5: Shopping enjoyment has positive influence on souvenir shopping satisfaction

Research Method

The data were collected via questionnaires. Samples of this study were international tourists visiting metropolitan areas in Bangkok and Bangkok International Airport. The international tourists were asked to respond to self-administered questionnaires. Screening question about the experience of buying souvenir was applied to ensure that the all respondents had bought souvenir for their trip.

The questionnaires were developed with the scale from 1 (strongly disagreed) to 7 (strongly agreed). From the reliability test, all factors showed adequate Cronbach's alpha, which is greater than 0.8, indicating that the factors used in this research were highly reliable.

Table 1 Reliability Analysis

Key terms	Questions	Cronbach's alpha
Souvenir Shopping satisfaction	1. I am pleased with the outcome of my shopping. 2. I am happy with the outcome of my shopping. 3. I am contented with the outcome of my shopping. 4. Overall, I am satisfied with the outcome of my shopping.	0.89
Price fairness	1. The price of souvenir is reasonable. 2. The price of souvenir is acceptable. 3. The price that I pay for this souvenir is appropriate, comparing with similar products. 4. The price of the souvenir is justifiable.	0.89
Perceived Quality	1. The materials of the souvenir are reliable. 2. The souvenir is durable. 3. The souvenir has a quality certification.	0.81
Cultural Attribute	1. The souvenir represented local arts. 2. The souvenir showed the identity of the destination. 3. The souvenir has symbol or signs to indicate local history. 4. The souvenir represented the shared value of local people. 5. The souvenir reminds me of historical or cultural dimensions of the destinations.	0.85
Store perception	1. The souvenir store was accessible. 2. The store is attractive. 3. The store is appealing. 4. The staff of the souvenir store are helpful. 5. The store has a variety of souvenir. 6. The souvenir store arranges souvenirs in appropriate categories.	0.82
Shopping enjoyment	1. Shopping is fun. 2. Shopping is enjoyable. 3. Shopping is a leisure activity.	0.83

Results

From a targeted 400 samples, a total of 305 respondents were completed and usable for further data analysis. Most respondents were Asian (60%), while 30 percent were European and the rest were others. The majority of respondents earned Bachelor's degree (80%), 11% completing Master's degree or higher. Sixty-five percent of respondents had yearly

income more than USD 1,500 per month. The remaining respondents reported income less than USD 1,500 per month. For the souvenir, about 60 percent of the respondents bought products for others and 40 percent purchased souvenir for themselves. There were many types of souvenir purchased by the international tourists and the main products were key chains, clothes, local products, snacks and others.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Table Descriptive Statistics				
Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Ranks
Souvenir Shopping Satisfaction	4.65	1.155	305	5
Price Fairness	5.56	1.163	305	1
Perceived Quality	5.20	1.045	305	2
Cultural Attribute	5.05	.976	305	3
Store Perception	4.45	1.138	305	6
Shopping Enjoyment	4.93	1.038	305	4

From Table 2 of descriptive statistics, price fairness had the highest mean score (mean = 5.56) from the 7-point Likert scale, followed by perceived quality (mean = 5.20) and cultural attribute with mean score of 5.50, respectively. The lowest mean score was store perception (mean = 4.45). Based on the results, it was obvious that the international tourists found that price fairness for shopping for souvenir products in Thailand was highly important. In

addition, as perceived quality came as the second most important factor, therefore clearly the tourists not only expected that souvenirs to be fairly priced, but they also concerned about the perceived quality of the product. On the contrary, store perception had the lowest mean score, representing that when the tourists shopped for the souvenir, they did not look at the importance in terms of store accessibility or the friendliness of the store staff.

Table 3 Results of Multiple Regression

Model Factors	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-	-.409	.683
Perceived Quality	.629	14.087	.000
Price Fairness	.198	4.872	.000
Cultural Attribute	.221	5.331	.000
Shopping Enjoyment	.132	3.372	.001
Store Perception	.145	3.360	.001

Note: DV = souvenir shopping satisfaction

The output from regression analysis also demonstrated ANOVA with F-value of 81.533 and the p-value of the model was significant (Sig. = 0.00), showing that the model is appropriate for further data analysis (table 4).

The R-square was 0.577, meaning that almost 60 percent of variation in souvenir shopping satisfaction can be explained by five independent variables. In terms of autocorrelation test, Durbin-Watson was 2.064, indicating no autocorrelation problem. Additionally, the highest VIF was 1.410, which is much less than the cutoff point of 10, showing that there is no multicollinearity among the variables.

The multiple regression model was developed relating souvenir shopping satisfaction with five independent variables shown in the table 3. Based on the results, all five independent variables had the positive influence on souvenir shopping satisfaction. Perceived quality showed the highest influence on the dependent variable,

followed by cultural attribute, price fairness, status consumption and shopping enjoyment, respectively. The results of the regression model were provided in Table5, showing the following regression model.

Souvenir shopping satisfaction = .629 Perceived Quality + .198 Price Fairness + .221 Cultural Attribute + .132 Shopping Enjoyment + .145 Store Perception

Discussions

According to the results from multiple regression analysis, the section discussed the results from empirical study with the past literature.

Firstly, perceived quality indicated the highest influence on souvenir shopping satisfaction. The result was supported by Turner & Reisinger (2001) and Jang & Namkung (2009). During shopping activities, tourists spent their time

browsing and selecting the souvenir, from regression analysis, store perception is statistically influential to souvenir shopping satisfaction. LeHew & Wesley (2007) and Pantano & Servidio (2012) also suggested similar results.

A great number of souvenir contains cultural attribute, including national symbol, local animal and local handicraft. The results provided that the cultural attribute contributed to greater satisfaction of tourists. Gagliardi (2001) and Moon & Song (2015) noted that cultural element has a direct impact on customer satisfaction. In the current study, it is found that cultural attribute of souvenir had a positive influence

towards souvenir shopping satisfaction.

In many shopping literature one of the main characteristics of shopping is that it is fun and enjoyable. Shopping enjoyment is shown to have statistically and positively influential on souvenir shopping satisfaction. Further, the test results were supported by Shephard, Kinley & Josiam (2014) and Heitz-Spahn (2013). Similarly, shopping enjoyment is positively influential to shopping satisfaction (Wong et al., 2012).

The table 4 below summarized the proposed hypotheses and the test results.

Table 4 Results of Hypothesis Testing

Proposed Hypothesis	Results
<i>Hypothesis 1: Price fairness has positive influence on shopping satisfaction.</i>	Supported.
<i>Hypothesis 2: Perceived quality has positive influence on shopping satisfaction</i>	Supported.
<i>Hypothesis 3: Cultural Attribute has positive influence on shopping satisfaction</i>	Supported.
<i>Hypothesis 4: Store perception has positive influence on shopping satisfaction</i>	Supported.
<i>Hypothesis 5: Shopping enjoyment has positive influence on souvenir shopping satisfaction</i>	Supported.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Souvenir shopping is uniquely different from other types of shopping. Tourists and travellers are the target customers of souvenir stores around the world. This clearly provides great opportunity for souvenir stores to increase their revenues from the tourist segment.

In terms of the implications from these findings, souvenir store managers should pay

more attention in developing strategies to meet the needs of the tourist segment. This research was built on factors affecting souvenir shopping satisfaction. The research makes critical points for souvenir sellers to improve on the approach to the products. Since perceived quality showed the highest influence on shopping satisfaction, souvenir sellers should highlight on the quality standard of

their products. Presenting certifications of quality standard or accreditation can also provide useful information about the product quality for the consideration of the buyers. For local products, shop owners may provide the history of the products to inform the tourists about the development and uniqueness of the products.

Regarding the effect of cultural attribute on souvenir shopping satisfaction, this characteristic of souvenir is highly well-known to tourists for buying as a memento for their visits. For this reason, souvenir shops may consider offering souvenirs that represent local culture so that the tourists can browse for different local products suitable for their needs. In addition, one of the most critical factors is price fairness. Tourists might spend time searching for the right souvenir and at the same time they compare prices of the same products across different shops. The shops should display information about prices clearly or ensure that the prices are suitable for each type of souvenir. The last two influential factors are store perception and shopping enjoyments. About store perception, shop owners should pay attention to store atmosphere, including lighting, shelving and product displays. Additionally, shopping enjoyment may be increased by providing some sale promotion or having friendly staff to support

the customers. Store perception had a direct influence on satisfaction of the tourists. LeHew & Wesley (2007) confirmed that store managers, expecting to attract tourists should decorate the stores differently from the store type to attract the resident shoppers, because tourists need to be attracted by interesting store environments. The store managers should pay attention about the types of store characteristics that international tourists are interested in. In addition, the store managers should try to improve the store environments to enhance the satisfaction of the tourists, such as playing Thai traditional songs in the store and decorating the stores with Thai traditional style.

Lastly, regarding directions for future research, what remains to be tested in the realm of souvenir study is categorized into many variables. First, the researchers may explore the long-term relationship among the factors in the study or further investigate the impacts of influential factors on tourist loyalty intention, because it is important for the tourists to provide the word-of-mouth evidence for their friends and family or to comment in the social media so that other potential tourists can also support the stores and purchase the souvenir in the future.

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