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Factors Influencing Foreign Tourists' Consumption of Street Foods: A Case Study of Phuket

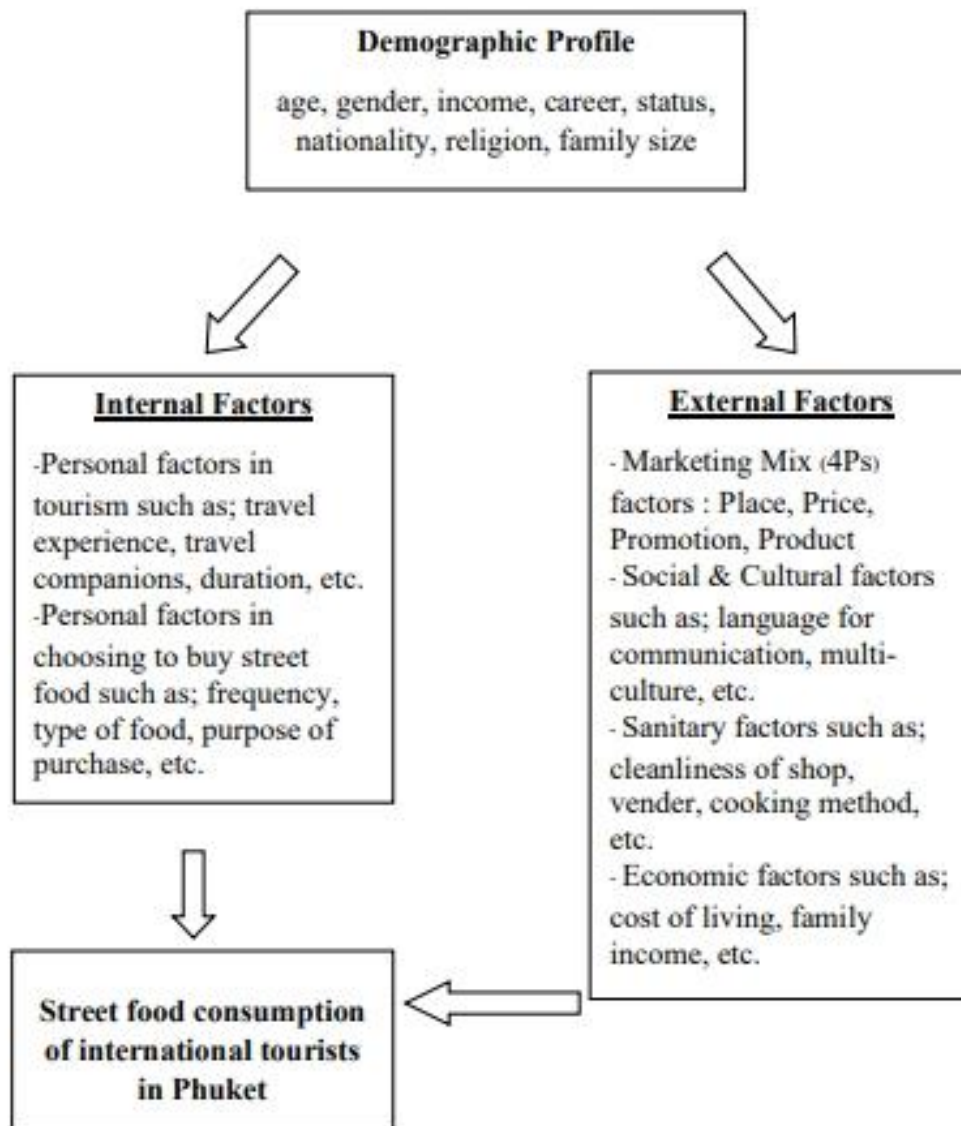
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Thailand is known as a foodie's dream destination of the world with several street foods. It is among the popular purposes of tourists when visiting Thailand. This study investigates street food consumption by focusing on factors influencing consumption, sources of information encouraging street food purchases, and the desirability of street food among foreign tourists in Phuket. Thailand's tourism industry is essential to the country's GDP (Department of Tourism, 2016), and Phuket is a popular destination for both international and domestic tourists. Food and beverages are a significant category of tourist spending, and street food has become a national industry in Thailand (Shenoy, 2005; Sim, 2009; Richards, 2002; Telfer and Wall, 2000). Thai cuisine has gained popularity among tourists, and Phuket's street food is among the tastiest and cheapest ways to experience authentic Thai cuisine. The purpose of this study was 1). To investigate the factors influencing the consumption of street food in Phuket by foreign tourists. 2). To examine the main sources of information that motivate international tourists to purchase street food in Phuket. and 3). To identify the attractiveness of street food in Phuket in the minds of international tourists. The study employed a quantitative approach. A questionnaire was developed from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954) and The Black Box model or consumer behavior models (Kotler, 1994), and the marketing mix (4Ps) (E. Jerome McCarthy, 1960) to explain tourist consumption and used as the primary research tool in collecting data from 400 foreign tourists. Frequency, Percentage, T-Test, and ANOVA were used to analyze the obtained data.

Figure 1 The conceptual framework of this study

Adapted from: Athena H.N.Mak; Margaret Lumbers; Anita Eves; Richard C.Y. Chang (2012), Siratanon. N., (2013), Yoophothong. B. & Karnjanakit. S., (2014), Ratnitipong. T., (2012), Kotler, P. (1997)

The results presented that the primary target segment for the market of street foods is male rather than female, between 21 to 30 years old, single, and coming from Asia with an average monthly income of around 501 to 1500 USD. Many of the respondents were homemakers/unpaid family workers who have married and graduated with higher than a master's degree. The results also found that Product in Marketing Mix (4Ps) factors affected the foreign tourist's consumption of street food the most, followed by price and place. Similarly, Janpleng and Tianpradap, (2012) and Ouonn and Pattanajirarut (2004) stated that the 4Ps were the most important aspect for decision-making regarding consumption—including product: taste and freshness, place: atmosphere, shop brightness, and location, price: cheaper than other shops with a clear sign, and promotion: a large advertisement sign and discounts with free distribution campaigns. For social and cultural factors,

Arce and Marsden (1993) suggested that "the social and cultural significance of food" could be applied to a black box model. So that the majority of respondents indicated that communication and greeting and exchange of culture influenced the foreign tourists' consumption of street food at a high level. Most foreign tourists expect to buy street food from vendors who sell clean food by using clean cooking methods. The cost of living also affected foreign tourists' consumption of street foods at a high level. Moreover, the results of regression indicated that there was no significant relationship between factors that influence consumption and the intent to repurchase street food by Phuket's foreign tourists in the future.

According to a study by Dann (1981), social media and other advertising factors are the main motivations that stimulate tourists to travel to unusual places. Similarly, Dodds, et al (2013) mentioned that the sources of information were seen as reliable and convenient for tourists. The results in Table 12 found that 17 percent of foreign tourists received their information about street foods by incident, followed by the internet (16.9 percent). In addition, under the influence of media and advertisements, street foods in Phuket attract tourists' attention through incidents and the internet rather than other sources due to most of the respondents believing that street foods can be found along the beaches, in communities, and beside the roads in Thailand. This is especially true in Phuket which is a world-famous tourist destination.

In terms of the attractiveness of street foods, tourists know Thailand as one of the world's unique food centers. Hence, trying local street foods in Thailand is one of the new experiences that tourists will get while traveling in Phuket. The results of this study in Table 14 showed that the attractions of street foods in Phuket included the varieties of street foods (17.5 percent), freshness and cleanliness (17.4 percent), and local street foods (15.8 percent). Previous studies strongly support the results of this research. Pattanapokinsakul and Pukdee-Aksorn (2015), Punpeng (2010), Wangmuanklang (2008) found that local food and the uniqueness of the products were the main motivators for foreign tourists to visit Thailand, especially Phuket. Moreover, Pattanapokinsakul and Pukdee-Aksorn (2015) stated that most tourists preferred to revisit Phuket due to the uniqueness of the local food and street food. Therefore, selling street food has become important for tourism revenue. Most variables have a powerful ability to stimulate tourists to buy and develop street foods. According to the results of this study, there are numerous opportunities for the development and support of local street foods in Phuket as a highlight of Phuket in the future.

In addition, Phuket should provide and support the local vendors to sell street foods at a reasonable price, with high quality, clean, and in keeping with the original style to develop Phuket to be a major street foods destination in the future.

Practical Implication

The research results can be used as a guideline for street food vending business operators in Phuket who want to start a street food vending business. In addition, the research results from this research will be beneficial to government agencies, private companies, tourists, and local people in using the research results to develop street food in Phuket Province to meet standards and create collaboration with several sectors in Phuket such as; public sector, governance sector, community sector, and NGOs sector into practically. Moreover, it also can develop services and products that respond to the needs to create an impression of gastronomic experiences of foreign tourists visiting Phuket in the future.

Theoretical implication

This study contributes to the literature on Factors Influencing Foreign Tourists' Consumption of Street Foods: A Case Study of Phuket and hypothesis testing between the demographic variables (age, gender, income, career, status, nationality, religion, family size) and foreign tourists' consumption of street food (Marketing mix factors (4Ps)) in Phuket. The findings of this study may be used to promote street food in Phuket and make Phuket more well-known to foreign tourists as a City of Gastronomy, which is one of the primary pillars that Phuket Province attaches emphasis to in continuing development towards a sustainable foundation and is by the Phuket Province Development Plan.

Research limitation

The research has two limitations: it focuses only on foreign tourists' consumption of street food in Phuket and is based solely on quantitative data collection. To obtain a more complete result, qualitative research methods should have been used to collect data from entrepreneurs in all sectors in Phuket.

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