

## **Factors Influencing Chinese Tourists' Decision to Use Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket**

by

**Li Siyu<sup>1</sup> and Sirawit Sirirak**

Faculty of Management Science,  
Phuket Rajabhat University, Phuket, Thailand  
E-mail: S6680141101@pkru.ac.th<sup>1</sup>,  
sirawit.s@pkru.ac.th, topsirawit@hotmail.com

**IJMBE** International Journal of *Special Issue*  
**Management, Business, and Economics**



## **Factors Influencing Chinese Tourists' Decision to Use Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket**

by

**Li Siyu<sup>1</sup> and Sirawit Sirirak**

Faculty of Management Science,  
Phuket Rajabhat University, Phuket, Thailand  
E-mail: S6680141101@pkru.ac.th<sup>1</sup>,  
sirawit.s@pkru.ac.th, topsirawit@hotmail.com

### **Abstract**

This study examines the influence of service quality and marketing mix factors on the decision-making behavior of Chinese tourists using the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket, Thailand. The research was conducted in the context of Thailand's 2023 visa exemption policy aimed at boosting tourism, particularly among Chinese travelers. Given the evolving dynamics of the tourism industry and the increasing shift from group tours to Free and Independent Travelers (FIT), it has become essential for tourism businesses to understand how service and marketing strategies affect tourists' choices. A quantitative research approach was employed, with data collected from 400 Chinese tourists who had previously used the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour. The study used structured questionnaires to gather data, which were then analyzed using statistical methods to determine the relationship between service quality, marketing mix elements, and tourists' decisions. The findings revealed that both service quality and marketing mix factors significantly influenced tourists' purchasing decisions at the 0.05 level of statistical significance. Among the marketing mix components, the product factor had the most significant impact. In terms of service quality, the dimensions of responsiveness, reliability, and empathy emerged as the strongest predictors of consumer decision-making. These results are consistent with previous studies emphasizing the critical role of well-structured service delivery and targeted marketing efforts in attracting and retaining tourists. The study suggests that tour operators should prioritize improvements in service responsiveness and reliability, while also fostering personalized and empathetic customer engagement to meet the expectations of modern FIT travelers. Furthermore, enhancements in other marketing mix elements, such as pricing strategies, promotional campaigns, distribution channels, and physical evidence, are necessary to maintain competitiveness in a highly dynamic market. The research concludes by recommending future studies that incorporate qualitative methods to gain deeper insights into tourists' motivations and perceptions. It also encourages further exploration of external factors such as digital influence, travel safety, and cultural familiarity. The findings provide practical guidance for Sawasdee Thai Tour and other tourism operators seeking to improve service quality and optimize marketing strategies to support sustainable growth and customer satisfaction in Thailand's tourism industry.

**Keywords:** Chinese Tourists, Service Quality, Marketing Mix, Tour Operator Decision-Making, Phuket Tourism

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Importance of the Problem

The Thai government officially implemented a visa exemption policy for Chinese tourists on September 25, 2023, with the goal of stimulating the tourism sector and bolstering the national economy (Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand, 2023). This policy allows tourists from China and Kazakhstan to enter Thailand without a visa for up to 30 days, aiming to attract more visitors from China (Department of Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023). The Thai government anticipates that the visa exemption will revitalize the Chinese tourist market, contributing to the achievement of national tourism revenue targets (Public Relations Department, 2024). However, the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to financial instability and noticeable shifts in travel behavior. Specifically, Chinese tourists are increasingly favoring independent travel over traditional group tours, which were once the norm. Independent travelers, often referred to as Free and Independent Travelers (FIT), now rely heavily on Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) for travel decision-making (SiteMinder, 2024).

Phuket, as a major tourist destination in Thailand, has experienced steady growth in its tourism sector, with 744 certified tour operators registered as of 2024 (Office of the Southern Region 2 Branch, Business Registration for Tour Operators and Tour Guides, 2024). One notable player in the region is Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd., a tour operator with over 15 years of experience offering a variety of tour programs, including educational tours, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tours, and wellness tourism. Sawasdee Thai Tour's primary client base includes Ctrip, China's largest online travel agency (Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd., 2024). In the aftermath of COVID-19, Chinese tourist behavior has undergone significant changes. While group tours were previously dominant, many Chinese travelers now prefer independent travel, driven by strong purchasing power and a desire for more flexible and personalized travel options (Krungthep Turakij, 2019). Nonetheless, package tours and the services of travel companies remain important in meeting the diverse expectations and needs of tourists (Tannongdu, 2023). Therefore, understanding the factors influencing Chinese tourists' decisions to use tour operators is essential for companies like Sawasdee Thai Tour to remain competitive in the evolving tourism market.

Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. operates as a full-service tour operator and engages in a variety of tourism-related businesses. Located in Phuket, the company was officially registered on April 26, 2011, with a registered capital of 6,000,000 baht and an estimated company value of 5,311,631 baht as of 2024 (Department of Business Development, 2024). This study analyzes the marketing mix elements and tourist decision-making behavior, with a particular focus on Chinese tourists in Phuket. The goal is to help Sawasdee Thai Tour optimize its marketing strategies and improve service delivery to better align with the evolving needs of Chinese tourists. Furthermore, the study's findings could serve as a practical guide for enhancing the service standards of Thai tour operators, promoting sustainable growth in the tourism industry, and contributing to the national economy.

### 1.2 Research Question

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1) What are the levels of opinions on service quality, service marketing mix factors, and the decision-making process in selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists traveling in Phuket?

2) What is the relationship between service quality, service marketing mix factors, and the decision-making process in selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists traveling in Phuket?

### 1.3 Research Objective

The primary objectives of this research are:

1) To evaluate the levels of Chinese tourists' opinions on service quality, service marketing mix factors, and the decision-making process when selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket.

2) To investigate the relationship between service quality, service marketing mix factors, and the decision-making process in selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists traveling in Phuket.

3) To provide recommendations for improving the marketing strategies and service delivery of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. based on the research findings, with the ultimate aim of enhancing customer satisfaction and business performance.

4) To offer insights that can help other Thai tour operators adapt their service offerings to meet the evolving needs of Chinese tourists, thereby supporting the long-term growth of the Thai tourism industry.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Related Concepts and Theories

#### 2.1.1 Service Marketing Mix

The service marketing mix is a framework that defines the key elements influencing the delivery of a service to customers. It is central to managing marketing in service-oriented industries. According to Sukhapornsintam and Suntayathon (2019), the service marketing mix consists of seven crucial elements:

- **Product:** The offerings designed to meet the needs and expectations of consumers.
- **Price:** The value or cost that customers must pay to acquire the product or service.
- **Place:** The distribution channels and logistics used to deliver the service to consumers.
- **Promotion:** The communication tools and techniques used to inform, persuade, and stimulate customer interest and purchase intention.
- **People:** The personnel or employees involved in delivering the service, playing a crucial role in customer satisfaction.
- **Physical Evidence:** Tangible elements, such as physical environments and materials, that support the service delivery and impact customer perception.
- **Process:** The systems, procedures, and workflows that ensure efficient, consistent, and satisfactory service delivery.

In this study, the service marketing mix will be utilized as a strategic tool to examine how businesses can best meet the needs of target customers. All seven elements will be analyzed to understand their impact on Chinese tourists' decisions to purchase outbound tour packages in Phuket.

### *2.1.2 Service Quality*

Service quality is defined as the customer's perception of how well a service meets their expectations. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) identified five key dimensions of service quality:

- **Reliability:** The ability to consistently deliver promised services accurately and dependably.
- **Assurance:** The knowledge and courtesy of employees, and their ability to instill trust and confidence, including the perceived safety and security of the service.
- **Tangibles:** The physical elements involved in service delivery, such as facilities, equipment, personnel appearance, and communication materials.
- **Empathy:** The degree of caring and individualized attention the service provider offers.
- **Responsiveness:** The willingness to help customers and provide prompt, attentive service.

In this study, service quality refers to how well Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. can meet the expectations of Chinese tourists in the five dimensions mentioned above. The aim is to differentiate the company by its service quality and improve its competitive edge in the tourism industry.

### *2.1.3 Purchase Decision-Making*

The consumer purchase decision process consists of five stages, which guide consumers in their decision-making journey (Kotler & Keller, 2012):

- **Need Recognition (Problem Recognition):** The consumer recognizes a need, which could be triggered internally (e.g., hunger, discomfort) or externally.
- **Information Search:** Once the need is recognized, the consumer searches for information about products or services that could satisfy that need.
- **Evaluation of Alternatives:** The consumer evaluates various alternatives based on specific criteria such as quality, price, brand reputation, and features.
- **Purchase Decision:** After evaluating the alternatives, the consumer chooses the option that best fits their needs and makes a purchase decision.
- **Post-Purchase Behavior:** After the purchase, the consumer assesses their satisfaction, which influences their future decisions and brand loyalty.

Understanding this process is critical for marketers who want to influence consumers at each stage of their decision-making journey.

## **2.2 Literature Surveys**

This section will focus on previous studies, literature, and findings related to the service marketing mix, service quality, and purchase decision-making, specifically in the context of tourism, with a focus on Chinese tourists and their behavior post-COVID-19. It will also highlight trends in the Phuket tourism market, identifying gaps and opportunities for Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. to improve their offerings and marketing strategies.

## 2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is depicted in Figure 1 (which would be included visually in the document). It illustrates the relationships between the independent variables (service marketing mix and service quality) and the dependent variable (purchase decision). The framework guides the study by showing how the marketing mix and service quality influence Chinese tourists' decision-making process in selecting services from Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket.

1) Independent Variables: Service Marketing Mix, Service Quality

2) Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision

This framework will serve as the foundation for analyzing the factors that shape Chinese tourists' choices and behaviors regarding tourism services in Phuket.

## 2.4 Research Hypothesis

Based on the conceptual framework, the research hypotheses are formulated as follows:

H1: Service marketing mix is significantly related to the purchase decision of Chinese tourists in selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. for tourism in Phuket.

H2: Service quality is significantly related to the purchase decision of Chinese tourists in selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. for tourism in Phuket.

These hypotheses guide the study's investigation into how different aspects of service marketing and quality affect the decision-making process of Chinese tourists in choosing tour services.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This research follows a quantitative design, utilizing a questionnaire as the primary research instrument. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher after conducting a review of relevant literature and previous research. The process of validating and ensuring the reliability of the research instrument was as follows:

1) Initial Draft Validation: The first draft of the questionnaire was submitted to the thesis advisor to verify content accuracy and language clarity. Revisions were made based on the advisor's suggestions to ensure that the questions aligned with the research objectives and were clear for respondents.

2) Content Validity: The revised questionnaire was then evaluated by experts in the field for content validity. This was done using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). An acceptable IOC value is greater than 0.5, and the evaluations from three experts resulted in IOC values ranging from 0.66 to 1.00, which indicated that all items were valid.

3) Pilot Testing: The questionnaire was pilot-tested with 30 individuals to assess its clarity and reliability. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was used to test reliability. Items with low congruence were revised to ensure consistency with the research variables. A Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.7 was considered acceptable. The results showed reliability scores ranging from 0.760 to 0.889, indicating satisfactory reliability for the instrument. The questionnaire was then finalized for actual data collection.

### 3.2 Population and Sample

The target population for this study consists of individuals from Mainland China who have previously used the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. for tourism purposes in Phuket. Since the total population is unspecified and potentially large, the sample size was calculated using Cochran's formula (1977) for an unknown population, assuming a normal distribution. The calculation was done with the following parameters: confidence level: 95%, margin of error: 5% (0.05), maximum variance (p): 0.5 (assuming maximum variability). According to the formula, the required sample size was calculated to be 385 respondents. To account for incomplete responses and ensure statistical reliability, a total of 400 questionnaires were distributed. Descriptive analysis of sample basic information is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Basic Information of the Questionnaire (N=400)

Basic Information	Item	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	162	40.50
	Female	238	59.50
Age	20-30 Year	51	12.75
	31-40 Year	241	60.25
	41-50 Year	68	17.00
	51-60 Year	40	10.00
Occupation	Student	10	2.50
	Government	8	2.00
	Employee	281	70.25
	Business Owner	101	25.25
Status	Single	110	27.50
	Married	290	72.50
Monthly income	20,001-30,000 Baht	2	0.50
	30,001-40,000 Baht	24	6.00
	40,001-50,000 Baht	80	20.00
	More than 50,000 Baht	294	73.50

### 3.3 Data Collection

The data collection process was conducted between September and November 2024. The questionnaire was translated into Chinese to accommodate the target audience, and it was converted into an online survey format using the WeChat application. The survey link was then distributed through WeChat to Chinese tourists who had previously visited Phuket and used the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd.



### 3.4 Statistics Used for Data Analysis

In this study, two types of statistics were employed for data analysis: descriptive data analysis and inferential data analysis.

#### 1) Descriptive Data Analysis

This analysis focused on demographic characteristics and the behaviors of Chinese tourists visiting Phuket, as well as other relevant variables. The statistics used included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

The interpretation was conducted using Interpretation Criteria, which were defined as follows:

- Score 4.21 – 5.00: Highest level
- Score 3.41 – 4.20: High level
- Score 2.61 – 3.40: Moderate level
- Score 1.81 – 2.60: Low level
- Score 1.00 – 1.80: Lowest level

These criteria helped interpret the responses on a 5-point scale.

#### 2) Inferential Data Analysis

For hypothesis testing, multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the independent variables (service marketing mix and service quality) and the dependent variable (purchase decision). This analysis will provide insights into how the factors influence the decision-making process of Chinese tourists in selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd.

## 4. Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of data analysis conducted to address the research objectives and answer the research questions concerning the factors influencing Chinese tourists' decisions to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket. The quantitative data were collected from a sample of 400 Chinese tourists through a structured questionnaire. The analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics to examine the levels of service quality, service marketing mix factors, and the decision-making process, as well as the relationships among these variables. The analysis is divided into two main sections. The first section explores the levels of opinions on service quality, marketing mix factors, and the decision-making process. This includes calculating means and standard deviations for each dimension and interpreting the levels based on standardized criteria. The second section presents the results of multiple regression analyses conducted to test the relationships between (1) service marketing mix factors and purchase decision, and (2) service quality and purchase decision. The aim is to determine whether and to what extent these variables influence Chinese tourists' decisions to select the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. The findings provide critical insights into tourist perceptions and behaviors, especially in the context of post-pandemic changes in Chinese outbound tourism. The results are expected to inform marketing strategies, service development, and business planning for tour operators targeting the Chinese market. The statistical significance and explanatory power of each factor are highlighted to

offer practical implications for improving service quality and marketing effectiveness within the tourism industry in Phuket.

## 4.2 Data Analysis of the Quantitative Data

### 4.2.1 Levels of the Service Quality, Service Marketing Mix Factors, and the Decision-Making Process

Levels of opinions on service quality, service marketing mix factors, and the decision-making process in selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists traveling in Phuket were shown in Table 2.

**Table 2** Levels of Service Quality, Service Marketing Mix Factors, and the Decision-Making Process

Factors	Mean	S.D.	Level
<b>Service Marketing Mix</b>	<b>4.79</b>	<b>0.45</b>	Highest
Product	4.79	0.42	Highest
Price	4.80	0.45	Highest
Place	4.76	0.5	Highest
Promotion	4.79	0.42	Highest
Personnel	4.77	0.45	Highest
Physical Environment	4.89	0.45	Highest
Process	4.75	0.44	Highest
<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>4.80</b>	<b>0.45</b>	Highest
Reliability	4.80	0.41	Highest
Assurance	4.81	0.42	Highest
Tangibles	4.79	0.49	Highest
Empathy	4.82	0.39	Highest
Responsiveness	4.78	0.40	Highest
<b>Purchasing Decision</b>	<b>4.81</b>	<b>0.38</b>	Highest

From Table 2, the overall level of opinions regarding the marketing mix factors influencing the decision to use tour services among Chinese tourists visiting Phuket was rated at the highest level, with a mean score of 4.79. When considering each dimension individually, all were also rated at the highest level. The dimension with the highest mean was *physical evidence*, with a mean score of 4.89, followed by *price* (4.80), *product* and *promotion* (both 4.79), *people* (4.77), *place/distribution* (4.76), and *process* (4.75), respectively. Moreover, the overall perceived service quality by Chinese tourists visiting Phuket Province was also at the highest level, with a mean score of 4.80. Among the dimensions assessed, *empathy* received the highest mean score of 4.82, followed by *assurance* (4.81), *reliability* (4.80), *tangibles* (4.79), and *responsiveness* (4.78), respectively. The overall perception regarding the decision-making factors among Chinese tourists traveling to Phuket was also at the highest level, with a mean score of 4.81.

### 4.2.2 Relationship between Service Quality, Service Marketing Mix Factors, and the Decision-Making Process

The relationship between service marketing mix and purchase decision of Chinese tourists in selecting the services of Sawadee Thai Tour Company Limited for tourism in Phuket is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3** Relationship between Service Quality, Service Marketing Mix Factors, and the Decision-Making Process

Model	Purchase Decision				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.075	.241		12.766	.000
Product	.163	.037	.177	.4.357	.000**
Price	.040	.022	.074	1.831	.068
Place	.049	.026	.078	1.844	.066
Promotion	.039	.025	.064	1.541	.124
Personnel	.008	.027	.012	.296	.768
Physical Environment	.028	.028	.042	1.007	.315
Process	.038	.025	.061	1.504	.133
R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjust R <sup>2</sup>	SE(est.)	F	Sig.
.293	.086	.075	.16945	8.091	0.000**

From Table 3, the analysis revealed that marketing mix factors were positively correlated with the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists visiting Phuket ( $R = 0.293$ ). The coefficient of determination (R Square), which indicates the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable, was 0.086. This suggests that 8.60% of the variance in the decision to use the service can be explained by marketing mix factors, while the remaining 91.40% is attributable to other factors. Based on the significance value (Sig.), it can be concluded that marketing mix factors are positively correlated with the decision to use services from Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. at a statistically significant level of 0.05. Among these, the *product* factor was found to significantly influence the decision-making process. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is accepted, and it can be concluded that marketing mix factors are positively correlated with the decision to use services provided by Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists visiting Phuket.

The relationship between service quality and purchase decision of Chinese tourists in selecting the services of Sawadee Thai Tour Company Limited for tourism in Phuket is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4** Relationship between Service Quality and Purchase Decision of Chinese Tourists in Selecting the Service

Model	Purchase Decision				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.410	.224		10.748	.000
Reliability	.148	.038	.158	3.865	.000**
Assurance	.006	.032	.007	.174	.761
Tangibles	.031	.024	.049	1.287	.199
Empathy	.088	.035	.104	2.521	.012*
Responsiveness	.229	.035	.274	6.536	.000**
R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjust R <sup>2</sup>	SE(est.)	F	Sig.
.430	.185	.178	.159	8.091	0.000**

From Table 4, the findings also indicated a positive relationship between service quality and the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists visiting Phuket ( $R = 0.430$ ). The coefficient of determination (R Square) was 0.185, indicating that service quality explained 18.50% of the variance in the decision to use the service, with the remaining 81.50% influenced by other factors. It can be concluded that service quality significantly influenced the decision to use services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. at a significance level of 0.05. Three dimensions were found to significantly affect decision-making: *reliability*, *empathy*, and *responsiveness*. Among these, *responsiveness* had the highest standardized coefficient (Beta), followed by *reliability* and *empathy*, respectively. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is accepted, and it is concluded that service quality is positively correlated with the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists visiting Phuket at a statistically significant level.

#### 4.4 Summary of the Results

The findings from this study highlight that both service quality and marketing mix factors play a critical role in influencing the decision-making process of Chinese tourists who choose the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket. Chinese tourists reported very high levels of satisfaction and positive perceptions across all dimensions of service quality and marketing mix elements. This indicates a strong alignment between customer expectations and the service delivery provided by the company. Regarding the marketing mix, tourists expressed particularly favorable opinions on aspects such as product offerings, pricing strategies, and the overall physical environment of the service experience. These elements were perceived as effective in enhancing the value and attractiveness of the tour services offered. In terms of service quality, tourists placed the greatest importance on responsiveness, reliability, and empathy. These dimensions reflect the ability of the tour operator to meet customer needs promptly, deliver consistent service, and provide personalized attention—factors that were shown to strongly influence tourists' decisions to engage with the company.

The overall decision-making process of Chinese tourists was found to be shaped by a combination of both the tangible and intangible aspects of the service experience. Tourists appreciated not only the core travel products but also the professionalism, communication, and care exhibited by the service staff. This comprehensive approach to service quality and marketing strategy has contributed to the company's ability to retain and attract Chinese tourists in a competitive and rapidly evolving tourism landscape. In summary, the study confirms that enhancing both the quality of service and the strategic application of marketing mix elements is essential for improving tourist satisfaction and encouraging continued use of tour operator services. These insights provide valuable guidance for Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. and similar businesses aiming to thrive in the post-pandemic tourism recovery.

## **5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendation**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between service quality and marketing mix factors and their influence on the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. The study employed questionnaires as the primary data collection instrument, with a sample of 400 Chinese tourists who had previously used the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket. The study found that the overall levels of opinions regarding marketing mix factors, service quality factors, and purchasing decision-making factors among Chinese tourists traveling in Phuket were at the highest level across all dimensions. The marketing mix factors in the service context were positively correlated with the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd., with statistical significance at the 0.05 level. Among these factors, the product component had a significant influence on the decision to use the company's services. Furthermore, overall service quality significantly influenced the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd., also at the 0.05 level of statistical significance. Three dimensions of service quality, reliability, empathy, and responsiveness, were found to be statistically significant. Among these, responsiveness had the strongest influence on the decision-making process, followed by reliability and empathy, respectively.

### **5.2 Discussion**

Service quality demonstrated a positive correlation with the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists traveling in Phuket. This finding aligns with the study conducted by Wiphawi (2019), who examined the factors influencing customers' decisions to use city tour services in Phuket by True Design Holiday Co., Ltd. The research aimed to investigate levels of opinion on service decisions, service quality, and the effect of personal and behavioral factors on service decisions. The results indicated that service quality, particularly in terms of service capability, responsiveness to needs, safety and security, tangible service, and reliability, was a key determinant in customer decision-making, ranked in order of importance. Marketing mix factors were also found to be positively associated with the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd., which is consistent with the findings of Na (2022), who investigated factors influencing the decision-making of Chinese tourists traveling abroad, specifically those visiting Thailand. The study revealed that external factors and all seven elements of the marketing mix, product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence and presentation, and process, significantly influenced travel decisions. The hypothesis testing indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between each marketing mix component and Chinese tourists' travel decisions at the 0.01 level of significance. These findings emphasize the critical role that comprehensive

marketing strategies and high-quality services play in attracting and retaining international tourists, particularly from the Chinese market.

### 5.3 Recommendation

#### 5.3.1 Suggestions for Applying the Research Results

1. For entrepreneurs aiming to enhance service quality through the application of marketing mix factors, it is recommended that they prioritize the development and presentation of physical evidence, pricing strategies, product offerings, promotional activities, personnel, distribution channels, and service processes. These six dimensions were found to have a statistically significant positive relationship with consumers' service usage decisions.

2. For entrepreneurs seeking to increase customer decision-making in selecting services through the use of marketing mix factors, emphasis should be placed particularly on the product dimension, as it demonstrated a statistically significant positive correlation with customers' decisions to use the service.

3. For entrepreneurs intending to improve service quality that influences customer decision-making, it is essential to focus on reliability, empathy, and responsiveness. These three aspects were found to have a statistically significant positive relationship with service usage decisions.

#### 5.3.2 Suggestions for Further Research

1) Future studies should incorporate qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews, to gain more detailed and specific insights. This would be beneficial for refining service delivery to better meet the needs of service users.

2) Subsequent research should also explore other potential factors influencing tour purchasing decisions. Doing so would enable tour operators to utilize the findings in the formulation of more effective strategic planning.

### References

- Cochran, W. G. (1977). *Sampling techniques* (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Department of Business Development. (2024). *Company information: Sawadee Thai Tour Company Limited*. Ministry of Commerce, Thailand. <https://datawarehouse.dbd.go.th>
- Department of Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2023). *Visa exemption policy for Chinese and Kazakhstani tourists*.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2012). *Marketing management* (14th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Krungthep Turakij. (2019). *Changing trends in Chinese tourism behavior*.
- Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand. (2023). *Tourism stimulus policies*.

- Na, R. (2022). *Factors influencing Chinese tourists' decision to travel in Thailand* (Master's thesis, Dhurakij Pundit University, Innovation and Accounting Business Administration Program).
- Office of the Southern Region 2 Branch, Business Registration for Tour Operators and Tour Guides. (2024). *Registered tourism businesses in Phuket*.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 12–40.
- Public Relations Department. (2024). *Thailand's tourism revenue targets and strategies*.
- Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. (2024). *Company profile and tour programs*.
- SiteMinder. (2024). *Trends in online travel planning among Chinese tourists*.
- Sukhapornsintam, I., & Suntayathon, S. (2019). *Marketing management for the service industry* (pp. 112–115). SE-ED Publishing.
- Tannongdu, R. (2023). *Tourists' perspectives on tour company services in Thailand*.
- Wiphawi, P. (2019). *Factors influencing customers' decisions to use city tour services in Phuket by True Design Holiday Co., Ltd.* (Independent study, Ramkhamhaeng University, Department of Management).