

## ส่วนประสมทางการตลาดที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้ออาหารไทยของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีน

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### บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาส่วนประสมทางการตลาดที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้ออาหารไทยของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีน เป็นการวิจัยเชิงปริมาณโดยเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลจากนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีนที่เดินทางมาท่องเที่ยวประเทศไทยในปีพ.ศ. 2562 จำนวน 400 คนด้วยแบบสอบถามออนไลน์และใช้วิธีการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบสุ่มตัวอย่าง สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล คือ สถิติเชิงพรรณนา ได้แก่ ความถี่และร้อยละเพื่อวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้านปัจจัยส่วนบุคคล ค่าเฉลี่ยและส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐานเพื่อวิเคราะห์ความคิดเห็นของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีนต่อส่วนประสมทางการตลาดที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้ออาหารไทย และใช้สถิติเชิงอนุमานด้วยวิธีวิเคราะห์การถดถอยเชิงพหุคุณ (Multiple Regression Analysis) เพื่อทดสอบสมมติฐานเกี่ยวกับส่วนประสมทางการตลาดที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้ออาหารไทยของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีน

ผลการวิจัย พบว่า ส่วนประสมทางการตลาดด้านราคา การจัดจำหน่ายและการส่งเสริมการตลาดมีผลต่อค่าใช้จ่ายโดยเฉลี่ยในการซื้ออาหารไทยของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีนอย่างมีนัยยะสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ 0.05 ส่วนราคาเมื่อผลต่อสัดส่วนของการใช้จ่ายในการซื้ออาหารไทยของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีนอย่างมีนัยยะสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ 0.05 และผลิตภัณฑ์มีผลต่อสัดส่วนของการทานมื้ออาหารไทยของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีนอย่างมีนัยยะสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ 0.05

**คำสำคัญ:** ส่วนประสมทางการตลาด, การตัดสินใจซื้ออาหารไทย, นักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีน



## The Impact of Marketing Mix Factors on Thai Foods' Buying Behavior of Chinese Tourists

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### Abstract

The objective of this research is to study marketing mix factors affecting Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists. This study used a quantitative research approach using online questionnaires to collect data from 400 samples of Chinese tourists, who travelled to Thailand in 2019, by convenience sampling methods. Descriptive statistics: frequency and percentage were used to analyze the demographic characteristics of respondents. Mean and standard deviations were used to analyze opinions of Chinese tourists on marketing mix factors affecting Thai foods' buying behavior. Inferential statistics using multiple regression was used to test the hypotheses of marketing mix factors affecting Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists. This study revealed that price, place, and promotion factors had an impact on the average spending of Chinese tourists on Thai foods at a statistical significance level of 0.05. Price factor affected the proportion of spending by Chinese tourists on Thai foods at a statistical significance level of 0.05. Product factor also affected the proportion of Thai food meals purchased by Chinese tourists at a statistical significance level of 0.05.

**Keywords:** Marketing Mix Factors, Thai Foods' Buying Behavior, Chinese Tourists



## Introduction

The tourism industry plays a significant role in economic development in Thailand, which can be considered as a major source of foreign exchange, job creation, wages, and government revenue. In 2019, Chinese tourists were the largest number of tourists visiting Thailand and generated 543,707.33 million baht for Thailand inbound tourism (Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand, 2020). However, their expenditures on foods and beverages were not significant in their total spending. Chinese tourists spend only 4% of their travel budget on foods (Tungsirisup & Athigapanich, 2017). Therefore, studying marketing mix factors affecting Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists on Thai foods in terms of average spend on Thai food meals, and the proportion of spending on Thai foods, and proportion of Thai food meals would assist Thai food entrepreneurs to better understand the buying behavior of Chinese tourists. This can be used to improve their marketing strategies, which can generate an increase in spending on foods as well as bring more revenue to Thailand, which can liven up the Thai economy.

## Objective of the Study

To study marketing mix factors affecting Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists.

## Definitions of Terms

Marketing mix refers to an effective tool used to mediate in the market, including the four main elements of product, price, place and promotion (Horovitz, 2003).

Product refers to Thai foods covering taste, appearance, hygiene, packaging, and variety.

Price refers to the total cost for Chinese tourists to acquire Thai foods. Price includes reasonable price, payment method, and price range.

Place refers to direct or indirect channels that Chinese tourists used to buy Thai foods covering convenience and availability.

Promotion refers to a set of activities to inform, persuade and influence Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists covering advertisement, discount, and sales promotion.

Buying behavior refers to average spending on Thai foods, the proportion of spending on Thai foods, and the proportion of Thai food meals by Chinese tourists travelling to Thailand in 2019.

## Scope of the Study

This research aimed to study the marketing mix factors affecting Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists. Marketing mix factors covered product (taste, appearance, hygiene, packaging, and variety), price (reasonable price, payment method, and price range), place (convenience, availability), and promotion (advertisement, discount, sales promotion). The buying behavior of Chinese tourists on Thai foods covering average spending on Thai foods, and the proportion of spending on Thai foods, and the proportion of Thai food meals.



## Research Methodology

### 1. Research Instruments

The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part is related to the demographics of respondents (gender, age, marital status, education level, employment status, average monthly income). The second part is related to the opinion of Chinese tourists on the marketing mix factors affecting Thai foods' buying behavior using Likert's scale ranging from strongly disagree (1.00-1.80), disagree (1.81-2.60), Neutral (2.61-3.40), agree (3.40-4.20), to strongly agree (4.21-5.00). The questions covered product (taste, appearance, hygiene, packaging, and variety), price (reasonable price, payment method, and price range), place (convenience, availability), and promotion (advertisement, discount, sales promotion). The third part is related to Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists, including average spending on Thai foods, the proportion of spending on Thai foods, and the proportion of Thai food meals. Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) result from three experts is equal to 0.87, which means that the content validity was acceptable. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was used to measure the reliability of 30 pre-test samples from Chinese tourists who travelled to Thailand in 2019. The coefficient was equivalent to 0.75, which means that the questionnaires were highly reliable and able to be distributed to the respondents.

### 2. Population and Sampling Selection

The number of Chinese tourists in Thailand reached 10.99 million people in 2019 (Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand, 2020). The sample group was 400 Chinese tourists, who travelled to Thailand in 2019.

### 3. Data Collection Methods

Online questionnaires were translated and distributed by using convenience sampling methods to 400 Chinese tourists, who travelled to Thailand in 2019. The questionnaires were distributed by ten tour guides from various Chinese travel agencies, using WeChat as the main platform.

### 4. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics: frequency and percentage were used to analyze the demographic characteristics of respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the opinion of Chinese tourists on marketing mix factors affecting Thai foods' buying behavior. Inferential statistic using multiple regression was used to test the hypotheses if marketing mix factors affected Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists.

## Results

### 1. Data Analysis for Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents



As shown in Table 1, most respondents were female with a number equal to 238 respondents (59.5%), age in the range between 18-30 years old, equal to 206 respondents (51.5%), mostly single, equal to 160 respondents (40%), with an education level at Bachelor degree, equal to 191 respondents (47.75%), works for private companies, equal to 147(36.75%), with average monthly income at less than 10,000 RMB, equal to 207 respondents (51.75%),

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	162	40.50
Female	238	59.50
<b>Age</b>		
18-30 years old	206	51.5
31-40 years old	125	31.25
41-50 years old	46	11.50
51-60 years old	16	4.00
60 years old over	7	1.75
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	160	40.00
Others	145	36.25
Married	95	23.75
<b>Education Level</b>		
Bachelor's degree	191	47.75
> Bachelor's degree	148	37.00
< Bachelor's degree	61	15.25
<b>Employment Status</b>		
Private company employees	147	36.75
Students	135	33.75
Self-employed	37	9.25
Others	31	7.75
Retired	27	6.75
Government employees	23	5.75
<b>Average Monthly Income</b>		
$\leq$ 10,000 RMB	207	51.75
10,001-30,000 RMB	125	31.25
30,001-50,000 RMB	57	14.25
$\geq$ 50,000 RMB	11	2.75



## 2. Data Analysis of Opinions on Marketing Mix Factors Affecting Thai Foods' Buying Behavior of Chinese Tourists

As shown in Table 2, the result of respondents' opinions on products showed that the respondents agreed with the statement "I buy Thai food for its taste." at a neutral level (Mean = 2.97, S.D = 1.295), followed by "I buy Thai foods because of the variety in food selection." (Mean = 2.83, S.D = 1.254), and "I buy Thai food because of the appearance" (Mean = 2.70, S.D = 1.142). The respondents disagreed with the statement "I buy Thai foods because they are hygienic." (Mean = 2.58, S.D = 1.130) and "I buy Thai foods because of food packaging." (Mean = 2.60, S.D = 1.083). Regarding price, it showed that the respondents agreed on all statements at a neutral level. The highest mean was "I have flexible payment methods to buy Thai foods." (Mean = 2.89, S.D = 1.243). The lowest was "I buy Thai foods that are value for money in terms of quality." (Mean = 2.81, S.D = 1.219). Concerning place, it showed that the respondents agreed on all statement at a neutral level. The highest mean was "It is easy to buy Thai foods near popular tourist attractions." (Mean = 3.02, S.D = 1.375). The lowest was "I buy Thai foods because it is convenient for me." (Mean = 2.82, S.D = 1.259). Regarding promotion, the result of respondents' opinions on products showed that the respondents agreed with the statement "I buy Thai foods because of attractive advertisements." (Mean = 2.78, S.D = 1.303), "I buy Thai foods because of attractive promotions." (Mean = 2.75, S.D = 1.168) and "I buy Thai foods that offer discounts." (Mean = 2.72, S.D = 1.175) at a neutral level. The respondents disagreed with the statement "I buy Thai foods because I got a discount voucher." (Mean = 2.55, S.D = 1.100).

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Opinions on Marketing Mix Factors Affecting Thai Foods' Buying Behavior of Chinese Tourists

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
<b>Product</b>			
a1. I buy Thai foods for its taste.	2.97	1.295	Neutral
a2. I buy Thai food because of the appearance.	2.70	1.142	Neutral
a3. I buy Thai foods because they are hygienic.	2.58	1.130	Disagree
a4. I buy Thai foods because of food packaging.	2.60	1.083	Disagree
a5. I buy Thai foods because of the variety in food selection.	2.83	1.254	Neutral
<b>Price</b>			
b1. I buy Thai foods that are valued for	2.81	1.219	Neutral



money in terms of quality. b2. I buy Thai foods that are valued for money in terms of quantity. b3. I have flexible payment methods to buy Thai foods. (Wechat Pay, Alipay) b4. I buy Thai foods because of various price ranges.	2.86 2.89 2.82	1.197 1.243 1.246	Neutral Neutral Neutral
<b>Place</b> c1. I buy Thai foods because it is convenient for me. c2. I buy Thai foods because I can buy from many channels (i.e. outlets, online, call center). c3. It is easy to buy Thai foods near popular tourist attractions.	2.82 2.83 3.02	1.259 1.266 1.375	Neutral Neutral Neutral
<b>Promotion</b> d1. I buy Thai foods because of attractive advertisements. d2. I buy Thai foods because I got discount voucher. d3. I buy Thai foods because of attractive promotions. d4. I buy Thai foods that offer discounts.	2.78 2.55 2.75 2.72	1.303 1.100 1.168 1.175	Neutral Disagree Neutral Neutral

### 3. Data Analysis of Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists

As shown in Table 3, the average spending on Thai food meals by Chinese tourists was 1367.30 RMB. The proportion of spending on Thai foods was 31.7% and the proportion of Thai food meals was 41.5%.

Table 3: Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists

Thai Foods' Buying Behavior	Average/Percentage
Average spending on Thai food meals	1367.30 RMB
Proportion of spending on Thai foods	31.7%
Proportion of Thai food meals	41.5%



#### 4. Data Analysis of Hypotheses Testing

##### H1: Marketing mix factors affect average spending of Chinese tourists on Thai foods

As shown in Table 4,  $R^2$  was .348, which means the regression explained 34.8% of the variance in the data. There were place ( $P = .000$ ), price ( $P = .016$ ), and promotion ( $P = .038$ ) affected the average spending on Thai food meals at a statistical significance level of 0.05. An increase in opinion levels on place, price, and promotion factors would lead to an increase in the average spending of Chinese tourists on Thai foods. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was accepted.

Table 4: Model Summary Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.590	.348	.343	930.902

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3367.314	152.312		22.108	.000
place	-367.891	75.635	-.334	-4.864	.000
price	-203.647	84.181	-.177	-2.419	.016
promotion	-160.040	77.006	-.130	-2.078	.038

##### H2: Marketing mix factors affect the proportion of spending of Chinese tourists on Thai foods.

As shown in Table 5,  $R^2$  was .155, which means the regression explained 15.5% of the variance in the data. Only price ( $P = .000$ ) affected the proportion of spending on Thai food by Chinese tourists at a statistical significance level of 0.05. An increase in opinion levels on price would lead to an increase in the proportion of spending of Chinese tourists on Thai foods. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was accepted.

Table 5: Model Summary Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.394	.155	.153	14.288



Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	13.362	2.135		6.260	.000
price	6.130	.716	.394	8.556	.000

### H3: Marketing mix factors affect the proportion of Thai food meals of Chinese tourists.

As shown in Table 6,  $R^2$  was .029, which means the regression explained 2.9% of the variance in the data. Only product ( $P = .001$ ) affected the proportion of having Thai food meals of Chinese tourists at a statistical significance level of 0.05. An increase in opinion level on product would lead to an increase in the proportion of Chinese tourists eating Thai food meals in Thailand. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was accepted.

Table 6: Model Summary Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.171	.029	.027	19.924

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	32.393	3.273		9.897	.000
product	3.976	1.145	.171	3.471	.001

### Discussion

Based on the findings above, it can be discussed as follows:

1. Regarding product factor, it was revealed that taste affected Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists the most. Likewise, the survey carried out by International Taste Institute (2021) confirmed that 88% agreed taste is a primary reason for customers to buy a product. Therefore, taste should be considered as a key focus for product development as well as a key decision to launch the product commercially.



2. Regarding price factor, it was revealed that flexible payment method i.e. WeChat pay, Alipay affected Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists the most. This reflects the study on "Analysis of the Influence of Mobile Payment on Consumer Behavior" by Xue and Lin (2019), which confirmed that mobile payment stimulates consumers' consumption quantity. This was supported by the survey in 2018 showing that 92% of people in China's largest cities use Wechat Pay or Alipay as their main means of payment and over the past few years, paying with mobile phone has become a daily norm in China (Daxue Consulting, 2021). Therefore, a flexible payment method affected Chinese tourists' buying behavior.

3. Regarding place factor, it was revealed that respondents preferred to buy Thai food near popular tourist attractions the most, followed by a convenience place, and various buying channels. Similarly, a study "The Impact of Marketing Mix Elements on Food Buying Behavior: A Study of Supermarket Consumers in Vietnam" by Phan, Vu and Nguyen (2015) confirmed that shopping convenience influences consumer buying decisions. Moreover, most researchers agreed that a convenient location increased store patronage via reduced transaction costs (Jabir& Janakiraman, 2010).

4. Regarding promotion factor, it was revealed that attractive advertisements factors highly influences Thai foods' buying behavior. Similarly, Kotler and Armstrong (2011), mentioned that promotional tools are vital as it communicates the merits of the products and services through influencing the response, belief, and attitude of the consumer. Thai creative advertisements have been widely influenced on social media in China. It has a great effect on persuading and convincing target customers.

5. From the findings, it was found that marketing mix factors, namely place, price, and promotion affected average spending of Chinese tourists on Thai foods. Similar to Xu (2019) whose study revealed that price and place were significant factors affecting consumers' purchase decisions of street food in Bangkok. The reason why product did not affect average spending is probably due to the fact that most Chinese tourists travelled to Thailand were repeat travellers, general products therefore no longer stimulate their excessive consumption.

6. It was found that only price affected the proportion of spending on Thai foods by Chinese tourists. Accordingly, Kevin (2015) found that there was a correlation between the consumers' buying expenses and their positive attitudes towards the price of goods. Therefore, price affected the proportion of spending of Chinese tourists on Thai foods.

7. It was found that only product affected the proportion of having Thai food meals by Chinese tourists. It can be also explained that food quality has a positive influence on customer perception. Consumers today are conscious of the quality of food available before they buy for



consumption (Bidyut, 2020). Product therefore affected the proportion of eating Thai food meals by Chinese tourists.

#### **Recommendations for Managerial Implications**

1. As it was found that marketing mix factors, namely price, place, and promotions affected Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists in terms of average spending. Therefore, Thai food entrepreneurs need to elevate their spending by improving marketing strategies and focus on these three factors. For example, work in collaboration with Chinese online payment application companies to offer convenience in payment channels, the government can increase food outlets in popular tourist attractions, and enterprises can launch a variety of promotional methods, such as buy one get one free, and free tourist vouchers.

2. It was revealed that marketing mix factors in terms of price affected the proportion of spending by Chinese tourists on Thai foods. Therefore, Thai food entrepreneurs need to improve their price strategies. For example, create combo/set meals, offer complimentary items i.e., add free side dishes, try to create group purchase prices for Chinese tourists. This would offer more choices and increase the attraction of Chinese tourists to buy Thai foods.

3. It was revealed that marketing mix factors in terms of product affected the proportion of buying Thai food meals of Chinese tourists. Therefore, Thai food entrepreneurs should pay more attention to the production of Thai foods, especially on taste, appearance, and variety to attract Chinese tourists to buy more Thai food meals. By improving the products, Thai food entrepreneurs will also be able to earn more revenue.

4. In recent years, both the Thai government and Tourism Authority of Thailand have introduced relevant policies to support the development of Thai food tourism. Chinese tourists are the most important target group for the Thai tourism industry. The result of the study will help government sectors to gain some insight on Chinese tourists' buying behavior of Thai foods and provide some guidelines to the private sector to help improve their marketing strategies and gain more revenue for the Thai food tourism industry.

#### **Recommendations for Future Research**

There are some recommendations for further researches as follows:

1. This study mainly focused on the impact of marketing mix factors on Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists. Other factors that influence buying behavior, such as culture, lifestyle through reference groups are recommended to be studied to gain more insight to Thai foods' buying behavior of Chinese tourists.

2. Future research can also be done in term of qualitative analysis by interviewing Chinese tourists who experienced Thai foods when travelling in Thailand to gain their in-depth opinions.



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