Enhancing Urban Tourism in Bangkok: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract—: This research aims to investigate the interplay between urban development and urban tourism in Bangkok by identifying challenges, potentials, and opportunities for enhancing the city's appeal. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study incorporates foreign tourist questionnaires, stakeholder interviews, and online open data analysis from prominent travel platforms. The findings reveal that, despite numerous clusters of tourist attractions and facilities, mobility infrastructure emerges as the most significant challenge for urban tourism and development in Bangkok. The study recommends concentrating on the development of primary attractions, secondary support facilities, and additional elements for convenient mobility to address these challenges. By acknowledging the strengths of Bangkok's diverse tourist attraction clusters and their proximity to primary and secondary elements, the research underscores the need for improved mobility facilities for tourists. This study contributes valuable insights into the challenges cities face in promoting urban tourism and emphasizes the critical role of mobility infrastructure for Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA).

Keywords : Urban Tourism, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), Primary Elements, Secondary Elements, Additional Elements

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Introduction

In Thailand, the tourism industry is pivotal to economic growth by providing revenue opportunities for cities. The Mastercard Global Destination Cities Index (GDCI) placed Bangkok first in 2019. Bangkok topped the GDCI for international overnight visitors for the fourth consecutive year (GCDI, 2019). This was the sixth time in the past decade that Thailand has outdone other cities. Urban tourism is intertwined with the concepts of "tourism" and "city" (Ashworth and Page, 2011). They address that cities possess attributes that both contribute to tourism and leisure activities, leading to city tours and resulting in urban development that accommodates tourism. This demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between urbanization and tourism. Despite the proliferation of studies on urban tourism in Thailand, there has been a lack of examination into the relationship between urban elements and tourism, particularly in Bangkok, which is a renowned tourist destination.' Urban tourism has received a disproportionately small amount of attention from scholars of either tourism or the cities (ibid., p.1).

Foreign tourists are mainly attracted to Bangkok for its location as an important air travel hub in Asia (Manakitsomboon, 2021), low cost of living in comparison to other major cities (Aung, Nge, & Hichitake, 2015), and diversity of available activities and tourist attractions (The Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand, 2017). Despite Bangkok's dominance in urban tourism, its competitiveness is hindered by challenges in urban development and living conditions (Webster and Muller, 2000). Bangkok was ranked 98th out of 140 cities in the Global Liveability Index by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) in 2019, with a score of 66 out of 100 (EIU, 2019). Additionally, Bangkok faces challenges such as traffic congestion and air pollution (Yuda, 2020), even though it was judged as the first-rated tourism city in the Global Destination City Index by the Mastercard rankings of world tourism cities as well as Numbeo, a crowd-sourced cost of living database, and Mercer (Morrison and Maxim, 2021; p.179). These challenges pose weaknesses for Bangkok's urban development and

tourism, despite being the most visited city in the world.

This paper investigates the challenges of urban development for urban tourism in Bangkok, with a focus on studying the relationship between urban development and tourism, and investigating the problems, potentials, and challenges of promoting urban tourism in three zones: the old town, the business, and airport zones. The study uses mixed methods, including questionnaires for foreign tourists, stakeholder interviews, and analysis of online data from travel websites. The findings have important implications for policymakers in urban development and urban tourism in Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), providing insights that can inform decision-making and development of strategies to improve the city's competitiveness as a tourist destination while promoting sustainable urban development.[2]

Urban tourism background in developing countries, and Bangkok, Thailand

Urban Tourism

Urban tourism includes a wide range of activities that take place in urban areas and involve various stakeholders (Pearce, 2001). The World Tourism Organization defines urban tourism as a type of tourism that occurs in urban spaces with non-agricultural economies, offering diverse experiences and products for leisure and business (World Tourism Organization, 2019). Fainstein and Judd (1999) identified three key players in urban tourism: tourists, the tourism industry, and the city, which are all interconnected and create a complex ecosystem. However, there are still gaps in the understanding of the relationship between tourism and urban studies (Ashworth, 2003). Urban tourism consists of primary elements, such as tourist attractions, and secondary elements, such as transportation (Jansen-Verbeke, 1986). To promote successful

urban tourism, collaboration is needed among these stakeholders, including city planners and policymakers, to address issues such as transportation, infrastructure, and accessibility (Mckercher & Du Cros, 2002).

Urban tourism in developing countries

Most tourism research are from the United Kingdom, Western European countries, and North America (Ismail & Baum, 2006). Opperman and Chon argued that in developing countries, 'compared to seaside resorts, city tourism and urban studies have attracted less attention (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). They also asserted that capital cities play a dominant role as 'pre-touristic structures' for international mass tourism as the 'gateway' and their international airports are developed as hubs(ibid.). In the Southeast Asia, Mullins (1999) argued that urban tourism and urbanization are strongly interrelated to the city networks as seen in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. These countries became the main gateways and the hubs for international tourists in Southeast Asia through transportation systems. These cities are also involved in the competition to create the images and infrastructures for urban tourism through the mega malls, theme parks, and to enhance event tourism.

Urban Tourism in Bangkok, Thailand

This study focuses on the challenges of urban development for tourism in Bangkok. The city is a popular destination, ranking high in Euromonitor International's list of "Top City Destinations" in 2016 and 2019. However, there are several obstacles to sustainable tourism development, including environmental sustainability and safety and security issues. The BMA has identified several risk factors and challenges for tourism, including a lack of creative tourism, poor mobility facilities, air quality issues, and inadequate management of tourist attractions (BMA, 2013;

Euromonitor Report, 2019; WEF, 2015). This research aims to address the challenges of urban tourism in Bangkok, specifically by investigating the problems, potentials, and policy implications for urban development. By employing mixed methods including questionnaires, stakeholder interviews, and analysis of online data, the study seeks to bridge the gap between academic research on urban studies and tourism in Thailand, generating insights that can inform policy decisions and organizational practices within the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). The resulting recommendations will enable the BMA to develop and implement strategies for promoting urban tourism that balance the needs of both visitors and residents.

Urban tourism elements, Places, Paths, and Plans

Urban tourism elements

This research employs the ideas of 3 elements of urban tourism from Christopher Law, including primary elements, secondary elements, and additional elements. The primary elements are the tourist attractions. The secondary elements support and complement the tourist experience, including accommodations, shopping, and restaurants. The additional elements are the related facilities of the accessibility to primary and secondary elements through mobility-e.g., arranging parking places, the existence of tourist information offices, and so on (Law, 2002). To unpack the relationship between urban tourism and urban development in Bangkok, this research explored three main issues: places, paths, and plans.

Places

Humans are tied to their environment and feel a sense of belonging there. The interaction between people and groups, institutionalized land uses, political and economic decisions, and

the language of representation all have a role in how the place is built and operated. This definition implies that place should be considered through interdisciplinary perspectives (Massay, D., 1994). Places are divided into different-sized sections of the earth's surface, each with its own name and territory. This notion was used in this paper to understand the circumstances of each district in Bangkok.

Paths

Path definition is a route between one place and another, or the direction in which something is moving (Cambridge dictionary, 2020). Paths are the main lines of objects' movement and people's movement. People rely on paths to travel across the city (Hillier and Iida, 2005, cited from Filomena, G. et al., 2019, p.15). Kevin Lynch stated that paths are the channels along which the observer customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves. People observe the city while moving through it, and along these paths, the other environmental elements are arranged and related (Lynch, 1960, p.47). This paper investigated paths and mobility between places to understand the planning of Bangkok urban tourism.

Plans

Planning is the process of thinking regarding the activities required to achieve the desired goal based on foresight. Planning is a proposal of actions that need to be made by an organization to achieve its objectives (Certo, S., 2000). The reason for the planning process was outlined as follows; 1.) to identify the problem 2.) to select the problem and prioritize the problem 3.) To determine alternative solutions to achieve success 4.) to forecast each alternative 5.) To compare each alternative 6.) to choose the most suitable alternative to solve the problem (Conyers and Hills, 1984, pp.67-8). Thus, this paper aims at investigating the strengths, potentials, and challenges of BMA through urban

tourism elements for planning suggestions.

Methods

This study used mixed methods to collect primary and secondary data through online surveys, in-depth interviews, observations, and open data sources such as TripAdvisor and Airbnb. TripAdvisor is a website that allows travelers to plan their trips based on other travelers' reviews (Miguéns, Baggio, & Costa, 2008), while Airbnb is a platform for online short-term rental accommodations (Cebeillac & Vaguat, 2021). The study analyzed data from January 5 to March 15, 2020, to investigate the number of accommodation services, tourist attractions, and secondary elements of urban tourism in 10 tourist districts in Bangkok. The use of GIS and mapping analysis provided insights into the distribution and concentration of primary and secondary elements of urban tourism in Bangkok. This mixed-methods approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and potential for urban development and urban tourism in Bangkok. According to the number of participants, this research employed the sizing samples by using Taro Ya-mane's formula (Taro Yamane 1967) at a 95% confidence level using a 5% randomization error as follows:

n = 1/N 1 + Ne 2

where n = sample size

N = population size

e = sampling error, defined as .05

In this research, the number of respondents was 400 people.

Sampling and randomization schemes

This study used purposive sampling to administer questionnaires to online sources due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both English-speaking and Chinese tourists were surveyed through Google Forms and wjx.cn, respectively. Data was collected through online surveys, observations, and in-depth interviews with stakeholders. The study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis to examine urban tourism issues in the framework of Places, Paths, and Plans, and verified data accuracy through triangulation. A sample size of 198 foreign tourists aged 15 years or older completed the same questionnaire as 202 Chinese tourists using wjx.cn in Chinese Mandarin, while 198 English-speaking tourists completed the questionnaire in English via Google Forms.

5. Results

There are 400 respondents. The mean age of tourists is 49.5 years old, with 50.5% being English-speaking and 49.5% being Chinese speaking. Most tourists fall within the 25-39 age group, with 56.6% of Chinese-speaking tourists and 43.4% of English-speaking tourists. In comparison, only a small percentage of tourists are aged 49.5 years old. Notably, there are no tourists aged more than 65 years old. These findings suggest that Bangkok's urban tourism appeals primarily to young and middle-aged tourists.

Table 1 Demographic Comparison between Chinese and English-speaking Tourists

Ages	Chinese Speaking Tourists	English Speaking Tourists	Total	Mean	% Chinese	% English
18-24	79	75	154	77	51.3	48.7
25-39	111	85	196	98	56.6	43.4
40-44	2	10	12	6	16.7	83.3
45-49	2	10	12	6	16.7	83.3
50-59	2	8	10	5	20.0	80.0
60-64	0	8	8	4	0	100
More than 65	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Total	198	202	400	200	49.50%	50.50%

Table 2 Tourist Occupation Demographics Data Top of Form

Occupation	Chinese speaking tourists	English speaking tourists	Total	Percentage (Chinese speaking tourists)	Percentage (English speaking tourists)
Full-time employees	110	94	204	54%	46%
Students	53	58	111	48%	52%
Business activities	18	14	32	56%	44%
Others	17	36	53	32%	68%
Total	198	202	400	50%	50%

Comparing the two largest tourist groups, full-time employees in their countries and students, it illustrates that both have a

significant impact on the tourist population. Full-time employees make up the majority with 51%, indicating that many tourists travel for work-related reasons. On the other hand, students account for 27.75% of the total, which highlights their significant motivation for travel. The percentage of tourists participating in business activities and those falling under the "Others" category is significantly smaller, at 8% and 13.25% respectively. This suggests that these groups may have different motivations for both leisure and remote work.

5.1 Overall

Information on urban tourism in Bangkok

The study reveals that a significantly higher percentage of English-speaking tourists (86%) prefer to access information about Bangkok through the Internet, in comparison to Chinese tourists (72.73%). In contrast, a greater proportion of Chinese tourists (52.58%) obtain travel information from friends and relatives, while a comparable percentage of English-speaking tourists (45%) rely on this source. Concerning the use of travel agents, the results indicate that a lower percentage of Chinese tourists avail themselves of their services as compared to English-speaking tourists, as 27% is higher than 17%. Regarding accommodation booking, the majority of English-speaking tourists (85%) prefer self-booking, with 14% using travel agents, and 12.5% booking directly, indicating that some tourists use multiple method. Conversely, Chinese tourists favor booking accommodation themselves (75.76%), with 20.2% using online self-booking, and 15.5% booking directly, highlighting the use of multiple methods by individual tourists. The findings suggest that English-speaking tourists tend to access information and make travel arrangements independently via the Internet, while Chinese tourists prefer personal connections and travel agents to plan their trips.

Goals of visiting (more than 2 answers)

Both Chinese tourists and English-speaking tourists visit Bangkok primarily for leisure and recreation (55.7% and 57%, respectively), but a higher proportion of English-speaking tourists also visit for business purposes (32%) compared to Chinese tourists (28%). Both groups of tourists also visit Bangkok to see relatives and friends (29% and 28%, respectively), and attend meetings (28% for both groups).

Fig. 1 Tourist Goals of visiting Comparison Chart
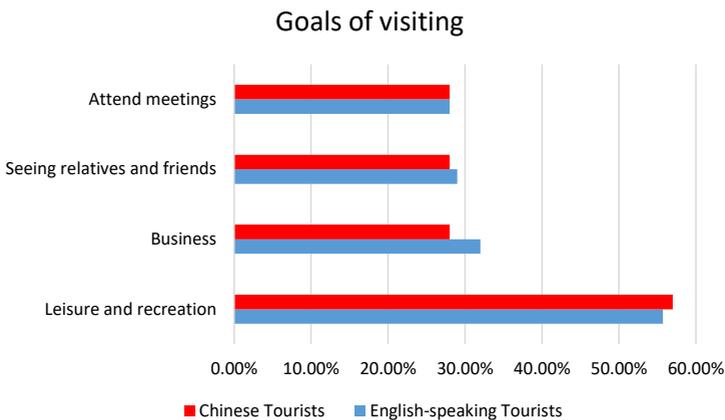
Overall satisfaction

Both English-speaking tourists (43% satisfied, 37.5% very satisfied) and Chinese tourists (47% satisfied, 39.39% very satisfied) reported high levels of satisfaction in Bangkok. The study underscores the significance of considering diverse tourist groups in the development of tourism-related activities and services, as both groups found the city's tourist districts and attractions, such

as Rattanakosin, Khaosan, Bang Lamphu, and others, attractive.

5.2 Urban tourism elements of Bangkok

Bangkok's urban tourism offers diverse tourist destinations and a concentration of primary and secondary elements, attracting many tourists to areas such as the old town, Chao Phraya River, and business and shopping zones. These areas provide various tourist attractions, accommodation, and supportive services for tourism.

Accommodation

The researchers have divided the accommodation types into 5 categories for analysis - hotels, hostels, Air BnB, apartments, and short-term rental accommodation. In terms of accommodation preferences, 71% of Chinese tourists prefer hotels while 68% of English-speaking tourists chose hotels. For alternative options, 48% of Chinese tourists and 46% of English-speaking tourists preferred Air BnB and apartments, while 26% of Chinese tourists and 34% of English-speaking tourists opted for hostels.

Fig. 2 Tourist Accommodation Comparison Chart
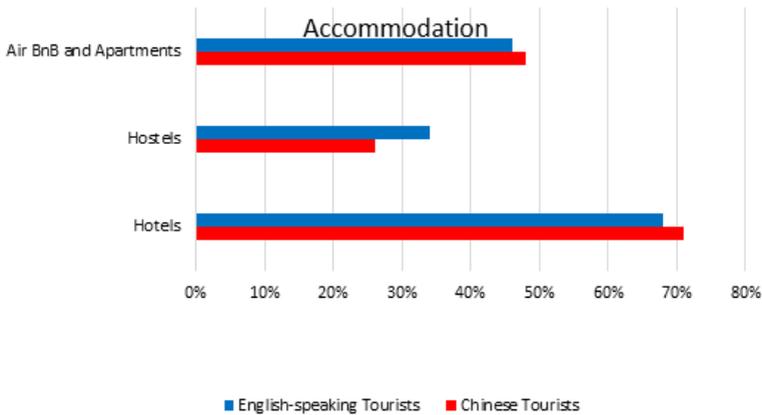
Activities

According to the survey, 59% of Chinese tourists are most interested in street foods, followed by 52% dining experiences in restaurants, and 49 % traveling market tours. For foreign tourists who speak English, 46% were most intrigued by major tourist attractions, followed by 40% of street food surveys, and 38% were interested in shopping centers.

Favorite things in Bangkok

The study revealed tourists' favorite aspects of Bangkok, ranging from active hobbies like sports and sightseeing to enjoying the vibrant nightlife and convenient shopping. While safety topped the list for Chinese tourists 83%, English-speaking visitors were more drawn to the city's lively atmosphere 61% and reliable service 57%. Notably, exploring the urban landscape and comfortable accommodation tied for third place 54% among English-speaking tourists, highlighting the importance of both

sightseeing and amenities (Pechpakdee et al. 2022).[3]

Fig. 3 Primary and Secondary Elements Satisfaction Chart
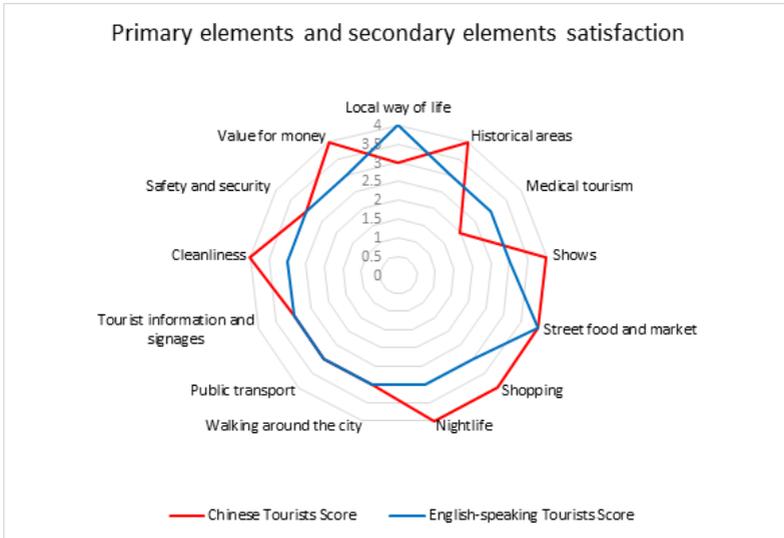
Primary elements and secondary elements satisfaction

The satisfaction of the primary and secondary elements of urban tourism experiences in Bangkok were analyzed. These elements include quality, local way of life, historical areas, medical tourism, shows, street food and markets, shopping, nightlife, city walk, public transport, tourist information, cleanliness, safety and security, and value for money.

The study's data reveals that most Chinese and English-speaking tourists (both at 81%) had a satisfaction score of 3 or

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3 See more details in Pechpakdee, P., Muangyai, N., Turnbull, N., Nghiep, L. K.,& Tudpor, K. (2022). The challenges of urban tourism, Liveable city, and urban environment in Bangkok.International Journal of Health Sciences,6(6).

above, indicating that they were "quite satisfied" or higher. Chinese tourists had a slightly higher satisfaction level, with 47% reporting that they were satisfied, while 39.39% reported that they were "very satisfied". In contrast, 43% of English-speaking tourists reported being satisfied, while 37.5% were "very satisfied".

Regarding different aspects of their travel experience, the data shows that both groups had similar levels of satisfaction in various categories, such as street food and markets, shopping, nightlife, and cleanliness, with scores ranging from 3 to 4. For instance, 45% of Chinese tourists and 47% of English-speaking tourists were satisfied with the street food and markets. Similarly, 45% of Chinese tourists and 46% of English-speaking tourists were satisfied with shopping. In terms of nightlife, 39% of Chinese tourists and 37% of English-speaking tourists were satisfied, while 37% of Chinese tourists and 34% of English-speaking tourists were satisfied with cleanliness.

However, there were some variations in their level of satisfaction regarding different elements of their trip. For example, a larger number of Chinese tourists were highly satisfied with historical areas (36% scored 4), while a higher proportion of English-speaking tourists were very satisfied with the value they got for their money (39% scored 3). In some categories, such as public transport and tourist information and signages, both groups had lower satisfaction levels. For instance, 40% of Chinese tourists and 38% of English-speaking tourists were satisfied with public transport. Likewise, 35% of Chinese tourists and 37% of English-speaking tourists were satisfied with tourist information and signages.

Fig. 4 Tourists Transportation mode comparison Chart
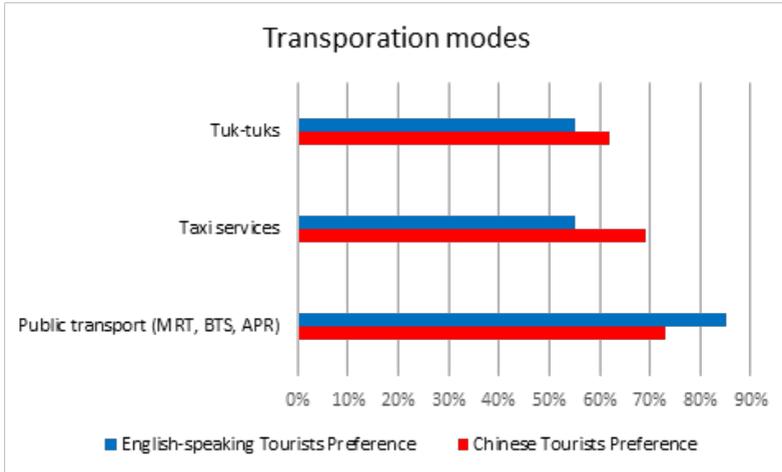
*Transportation and additional elements satisfactions*

Transportation is one of the additional elements. Both Chinese and English-speaking tourists prefer to travel using public transport such as Mass Rapid Transit (MRT), The Bangkok Mass Transit System (BTS), and The Airport Rail link (APR), with 73% and 85% respectively. 69% of Chinese tourists and 55% of English-speaking tourists use taxi services, followed by 62% of Chinese tourists and 55% of English-speaking tourists who use Tuk-tuks.

Trip satisfaction in BKK and additional elements

The study analyzed tourist satisfaction in five areas: quality of the trip, information and signage, pathways, ticket services, and security. The data showed that both Chinese and English-speaking tourists were dissatisfied with the quality of the trip, with 30% and 28% expressing dissatisfaction. However, both

groups were satisfied with the information and signage, with 44% and 33% expressing satisfaction, respectively. Regarding the pathways and ticket services, both groups had similar levels of satisfaction, with 32% and 36% of Chinese tourists, and 37% and 36% of English-speaking tourists, expressing satisfaction with the pathways and ticket services, respectively. Additionally, most of both groups reported satisfaction with security and safety, with 38% of Chinese tourists and 44% of English-speaking tourists expressing satisfaction.

Fig. 5 The satisfaction level of public transportation Chart
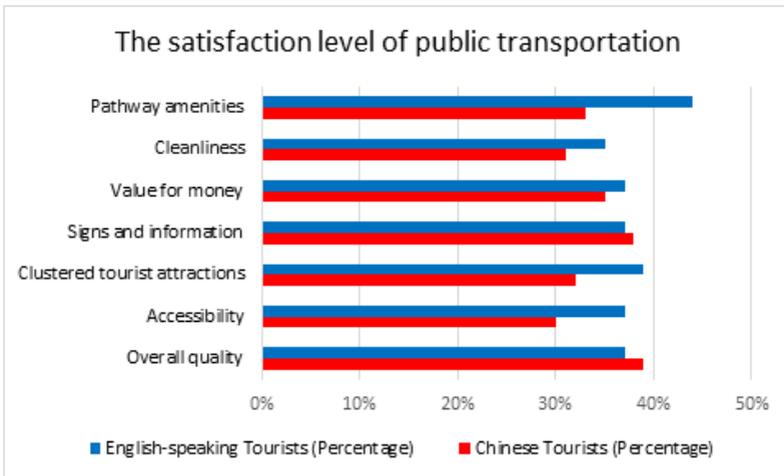
The data showed that both groups had a low level of satisfaction with public transportation, with most respondents expressing only moderate levels of satisfaction. Regarding overall quality, 39% of Chinese tourists and 37% of English-speaking tourists expressed satisfaction. In contrast, accessibility to tourist attractions was more satisfactory for English-speaking tourists, with 37% expressing satisfaction, compared to 30% of Chinese tourists. Similarly, street amenities, such as benches and shade,

were more satisfactory for English-speaking tourists, with 44% expressing satisfaction, compared to 33% of Chinese tourists.

However, Chinese tourists expressed a higher level of satisfaction with regards to signs and information, with 38% expressing satisfaction, compared to 37% of English-speaking tourists. The value for money received a satisfaction rate of 35% for Chinese tourists and 37% for English-speaking tourists. The cleanliness of public transportation had a satisfaction rate of 31% for Chinese tourists and 35% for English-speaking tourists. Clustered tourist attractions received a satisfaction rate of 32% for Chinese tourists and 39% for English-speaking tourists. Both groups were generally dissatisfied with public transportation. The data indicates that English-speaking tourists placed a greater emphasis on accessibility and street amenities, while Chinese tourists placed a higher value on signs and information.

Satisfaction with activities and tourism experiences

The study assessed tourists' satisfaction with various aspects of travel experiences, including sports activities, urban landscape and nature, quality of service, accommodation, location, nightlife, theme parks, lively atmosphere, climate, tranquility, personal safety, and shopping prices. Both Chinese and English-speaking tourists showed similar levels of satisfaction with sports activities, scoring a 2 at 43% and 42%, respectively. Chinese tourists were more satisfied with the urban landscape and nature, scoring a 2 at 42%, while most English-speaking tourists rated a 3 with 52%. Chinese tourists also showed a higher level of satisfaction with the quality of service, with 60% scoring a 4, while 55% of English-speaking tourists rated a 3. In terms of accommodation location, most Chinese tourists rated it a 4 at 59%, while most English-speaking tourists rated a 3 at 55%.

Fig. 6 An Evaluation of Different Aspects of Travel Experiences Chart

The level of satisfaction in different aspects of travel experiences
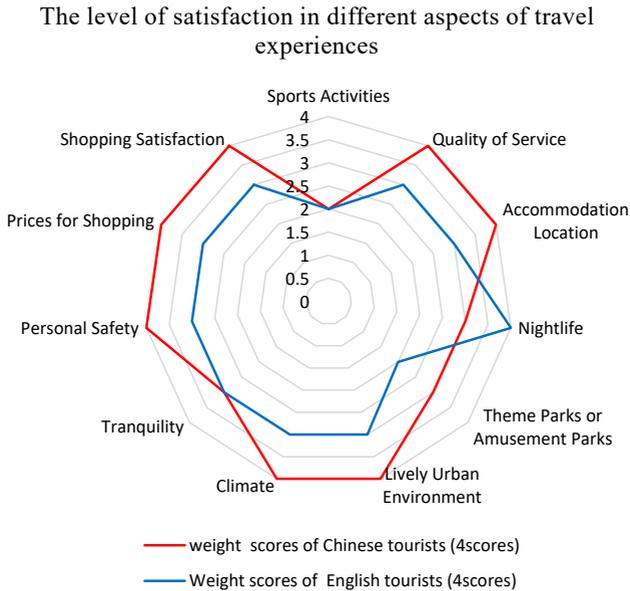
The study's results show differences in satisfaction levels between Chinese and English-speaking tourists. Most Chinese tourists rated service quality and accommodation location with 4 points (60% and 59%), while a majority of English-speaking tourists gave these aspects 3 points (55% and 55%). Additionally, Chinese tourists rated personal safety higher with 4 points (78%) compared to English-speaking tourists who gave a score of 3 points (46%).

Urban tourism elements and areas

There are 10 tourist districts including Rattanakosin, Khaosan, Bang Lamphu, around the Chao Phraya River, Sukhumvit, Silom, Siam, Phaya Thai, Ari, and airport areas. These districts
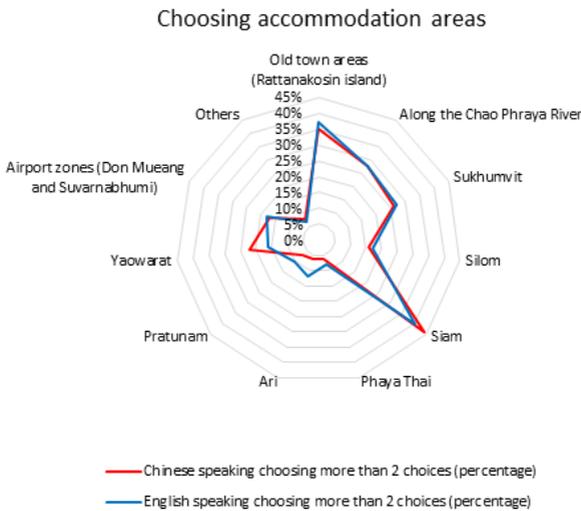
encompass a diverse range of Bangkok's tourism experiences, from the historic core and bustling nightlife to modern business hubs and emerging neighborhoods. This allows for a comprehensive understanding of the city's urban tourism landscape. The selection covers three distinct spatial zones: the historic old city (Rattanakosin, Khaosan, Bang Lamphu), the central business district (Sukhumvit, Silom), and the gateway area (airport zone). This facilitates comparison and analysis across different urban functions and their interaction with tourism.

Table 3 Tourist accommodation choosing by Chinese and English speaking (answering more than two choices)

Districts	Chinese speaking choosing more than 2 choices (percentage)	English speaking choosing more than 2 choices (percentage)
Old town areas (Rattanakosin island)	35%	37%
Along the Chao Phraya River	28%	28%
Sukhumvit	26%	27%
Silom	16%	17%
Siam	44%	40%
Phaya Thai	6%	8%
Ari	6%	12%
Pratunam	7%	10%

Yaowarat	22%	16%
Airport zones (Don Mueang and Suvarnabhumi)	17%	18%
Others	8%	7%

Fig. 7 Accommodation Areas Selection Chart

Choosing accommodation areas

—— Chinese speaking choosing more than 2 choices (percentage)
—— English speaking choosing more than 2 choices (percentage)

The study found that both Chinese-speaking and English-speaking tourists share similar interests in visiting specific districts in Bangkok, such as the Old Town areas, along the Chao Phraya River, and Sukhumvit. However, there were some differences in interest between the two groups regarding other districts, with a higher interest among Chinese-speaking tourists for the Siam area.

In terms of accommodation, both groups preferred to stay in the Siam area, followed by the Rattanakosin, Khaosan, and Bang Lamphu areas. The Siam, Sukhumvit, and Chao Phraya River areas were also popular among both groups, with 35% of Chinese tourists and 37% of English-speaking tourists choosing to stay in these areas due to their proximity to tourist attractions and convenient shopping areas. However, the Airport zones (Don Mueang and Suvarnabhumi) were not popular among tourists, with only 17% of Chinese-speaking and 18% of English-speaking tourists choosing to stay in these districts.

Fig. 8 Tourist accommodation map in 3 zones from open-source data, Tripadvisor, visualized by author
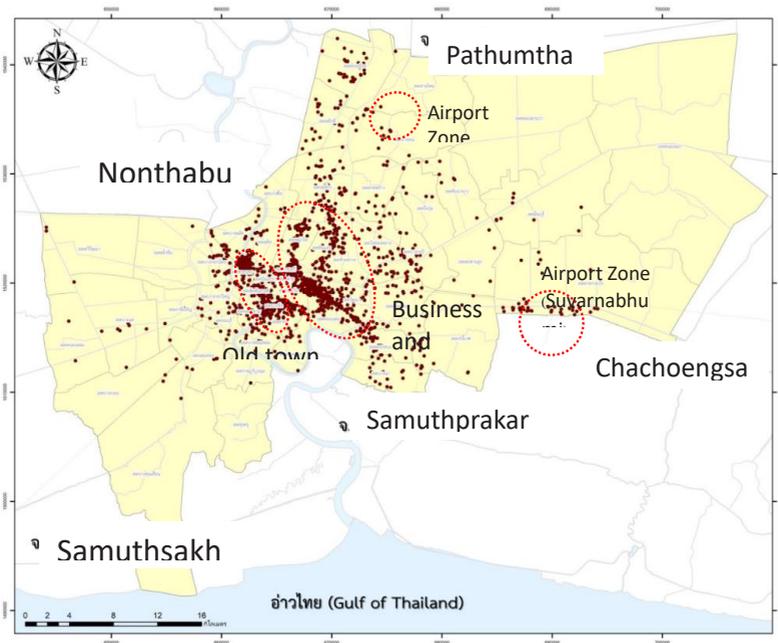
Fig. 9 A map of hotel satisfaction rating by tourists in Bangkok from opensource data, Tripadvisor, visualized by author
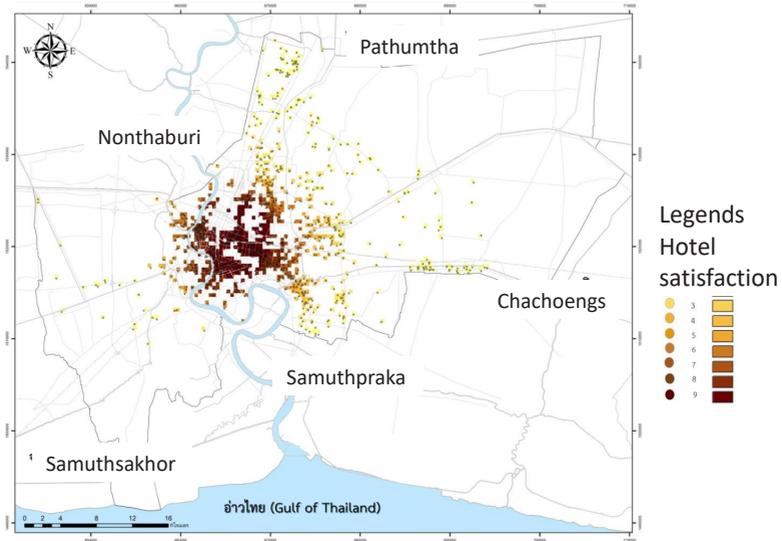

Fig. 8 illustrates a map of tourist accommodation across the three key zones, the historic old city, the central business district, and the airport zones. It provides a visual representation of the distribution and concentration of tourist accommodation density and spatial planning. According to opensource data, Tripadvisor in 2020, the most popular areas are agglomerated around the old town and business areas.

Fig. 9 depicts a map of hotel satisfaction ratings in Bangkok provided by tourists on Tripadvisor in 2020. This offers insights into visitor experiences and preferences across different areas of the city. Comparing this data with your accommodation map can reveal potential correlations between accommodation location and tourist satisfaction. This can be valuable for understanding why certain areas attract more tourists and receive higher ratings clustered around old town and business areas, informing strategies for improving tourism experiences in less satisfied areas around

airport zones. Based on the opensource data of Tripadvisor website in 2020 with the questionnaire, this could be considered as follows:

1.) Old town in the core zone

Chinese-speaking and English-speaking tourists share similar interests in visiting Bangkok's old town area, particularly the Rattanakosin Island, with 35% of Chinese-speaking and 37% of English-speaking tourists choosing this district. Tourist attractions in Phra Nakhon have high ratings, with a satisfaction score of 4 to 5 on Tripadvisor, indicating that both groups have a positive view of Bangkok's attractions. According to Tripadvisor, foreign tourists have a positive view of Bangkok's attractions, including architectural and cultural attractions, natural scenery along the Chao Phraya, villages, shopping markets, and food options near Khao San Road and Bang Lamphu. However, the accessibility and comfort of tourist attractions, such as public transport and parking, need improvement. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) is working to address these issues by improving the subway systems, walkways, and landscapes to create a more welcoming and safer atmosphere for tourists in the old city.

2.) Businesses and shopping Zone:

The data reveals differences in the popularity of different Bangkok districts among Chinese-speaking and English-speaking tourists. Chinese-speaking tourists are more drawn to the Siam district, with 44% choosing to visit the area, while both groups show similar interest in Sukhumvit and along the Chao Phraya River. Pathumwan and Bangrak have high satisfaction ratings for accommodation and secondary elements, while Din Daeng and Khlong Toei face challenges with limited tourist attractions and inconvenient hotel locations.

3.) Airport area in the outer zone

Chatuchak district is well-known for its famous Chatuchak weekend market, spread over 35 acres and consisting of 15,000 stalls selling a diverse range of goods. Its close proximity to Don

Mueang Airport presents an exciting opportunity for investment and development. However, the district also faces challenges with traffic congestion and limited accessibility to public transportation. In contrast, Lat Krabang, near Suvarnabhumi Airport, currently has limited facilities for travelers and relatively low popularity and satisfaction ratings. This can be attributed to problems such as the lack of public transportation and a shortage of supportive facilities. Nonetheless, with several major projects in the pipeline, including airport expansion and high-speed rail connections, the area has the potential to become a thriving destination for travelers seeking a convenient location near the airport. The completion of these projects is expected to result in an increased availability of secondary elements, such as accommodation, restaurants, and supportive facilities, making Lat Krabang an increasingly attractive choice for travelers.

According to the results and two research objectives, the current state of urban tourism elements and the future of urban development, this could be concluded that Tourist preferences and satisfaction reveal key opportunities and challenges for future urban development in Bangkok. Both Chinese-speaking and English-speaking tourists highly value Bangkok's historical and cultural attractions, particularly in the Rattanakosin Island area. Tripadvisor ratings confirm positive experiences with this attraction. Interestingly, tourist hotspots vary by language group. Chinese tourists favor Siam, while both groups enjoy Sukhumvit and areas along the Chao Phraya River. Din Daeng and Khlong Toei lack attractions and desirable hotel locations, contributing to lower satisfaction. For the future urban development, there are 2 areas could be concerned for airport zones, Chatuchak and Lat Krabang. Chatuchak market district, near Don Mueang Airport, presents an exciting opportunity for development and investment due to its unique offerings and proximity to the airport. Challenges like traffic congestion and limited public transport need to be addressed. Lat Krabang, near Suvarnabhumi Airport, holds potential with planned major projects like airport expansion and high-speed rail connections. Currently, limited facilities and accessibility hinder its development. Improved infrastructure and

additional amenities can transform Lat Krabang into a thriving travel destination.

Overall, focusing on tourist preferences, addressing accessibility issues, and developing underutilized areas like airport zones can shape a future Bangkok that caters to diverse visitor needs and fosters sustainable urban development for both tourists and residents.

6. Discussion

This part will focus on two research objectives for the current state of urban tourism elements in Bangkok, as well as opportunities for urban development in the future. This part presents findings from a study on the characteristics of Free Individual Traveler (FIT) tourists in Bangkok, which involved interviews, questionnaires, and open data databases. The tourists generally spend 3 to 14 days in Bangkok. The study identified two research objectives: the current state of urban tourism elements in Bangkok, and opportunities for urban development in the future.

The study found that leisure and recreation were the primary interests of both English-speaking and Chinese tourists visiting Bangkok, with 55.7% and 57% respectively. Furthermore, 29% of English-speaking tourists and 28% of Chinese tourists reported visiting relatives and friends, while 28% of both groups attended meetings. Accommodation preference was high in the Siam area, with 40% of both groups choosing to stay there. Additionally, Chinese tourists preferred hotels (71%) while English-speaking tourists chose hotels and alternative options such as Airbnb and apartments (68% and 46%, respectively). Satisfaction levels were slightly higher for English-speaking tourists (43% most satisfied, 37.5% very satisfied) compared to Chinese tourists (47% most satisfied, 39.39% very satisfied). It is noteworthy that the study provides valuable insights into the preferences of tourists visiting Bangkok, which can aid in the development of more targeted tourism strategies.

This study recommends improvements of urban tourism for the BMA, with an emphasis on convenient mobility for tourists. The presence of various tourist attractions and supportive facilities, as well as the walkability of many tourist areas in mixed-use districts, are identified as strengths. The study suggests the development of rail route lines in the city to enhance the potential for urban tourism. Other recommendations include checking tourist feedback through open data platforms, providing tourist information in new places and districts, improving carrying capacity at crowded tourist attractions, and enhancing signage and information for English and Chinese-speaking tourists to better meet their needs and create good experiences for urban tourism. These recommendations aim to create a more competitive and sustainable urban tourism landscape in Bangkok.

For the second research objective, this research divided Bangkok into three tourism zones based on the presence of primary, secondary, and additional elements. The old town (Phra Nakhon) is a popular tourist destination with several tourist attractions and secondary elements, but accessibility and comfort remain problematic. The business and shopping areas along the Chao Phraya River and Sukhumvit attract equal numbers of both Chinese and English-speaking tourists, but walkability is a challenge in some areas. The airport area in the outer zone includes Chatuchak, popular due to its weekend market and investment opportunities, and Lat Krabang, which has limited facilities for travelers but has potential for growth with upcoming expansion and investment projects.

The study identified that the old town and business and shopping districts are popular among tourists for different reasons, while the airport zone has growth potential but requires further development. To enhance urban tourism, five issues need improvement: 1) mass transit from the airport to the city center, 2) public bus conditions, 3) walkability and street amenities, 4) public transportation information platform for tourists, and 5) integration of the mass transit system for tourists and residents. Successful urban development and promotion of tourism in Bang-

kok requires collaboration among city planners and policymakers.

7. Conclusions

The conclusion of this article highlights the importance of urban tourism and urban development for BMA, and sheds light on the necessary improvements to make the city more appealing to tourists. The paper focused on two research objectives.

The findings of the study reveal that tourists are primarily interested in leisure and recreation activities and that they are satisfied with the cultural attractions, arts, and accommodation options in the city. However, the study also identifies the importance of additional elements such as convenient mobility in determining the choice of location for staying. Based on the analysis, the study suggests that future urban development in Bangkok should focus on providing tourists with three key elements: primary attractions, secondary support facilities, and additional elements for convenient mobility. The study also divided Bangkok into three tourism zones, each with its unique strengths and challenges. The old town, for example, is a popular tourist destination due to its historic architecture, local way of life, and proximity to the Chao Phraya River. However, the study suggests that there is a need for improving secondary attractions in this zone to meet the needs of tourists. Similarly, the business and shopping districts, shopping centers and restaurants, while the airport zone needs to be improved to provide enough primary, secondary, and additional elements to attract tourists.

To address these issues, the study highlights the importance of collaboration between city planners and policymakers in their efforts to enhance the potential of urban tourism in Bangkok. The following areas are identified as requiring improvement: improving mass transit from the airport to the city center, upgrading public bus conditions, enhancing walkability and street amenities to be more accessible, providing a public transportation information platform for tourists, and integrating the mass transit system for

tourists and residents.

The study has some limitations, including the use of open data databases and a small sample size of tourists. Future research should aim to provide more in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the relationship between urban tourism and urban development in Bangkok. Nevertheless, this study provides a valuable contribution to the field of urban tourism and urban development and lays the groundwork for further research in this area.

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