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Gastronomy Tourism in Ayutthaya World Heritage from Tourist's Perspective

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Abstract

Gastronomy tourism is typically characterized as the pursuit of a unique experience of eating and drinking in the originality of a dish and is indigenous to a place, region, or country, covers the basic themes of local dishes. The gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya, Thailand has high potential especially in the many activities that link to World Heritage site, therefore it requires a study of the tourist 'perception and motivation for travel. The aim of this study consist of the following: (1) study tourist's motivation for gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya World Heritage and (2) Conduct a factor analysis of the tourist's motivation for gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya World Heritage. A quantitative research approach was conducted by collecting data from 385 questionnaires. The results found that (1) tourist's motivation to visit Ayutthaya was to make merit and pay respect to the Buddha followed by gastronomy tourism and their search for food information from food review pages. The gastronomy activities that tourists are interested in consisted of eating by the rivers site and visiting historical sites. Factors affecting the decision to travel to Ayutthaya for gastronomy tourism is a restaurant with good atmosphere and average food cost per meal of 1,000-1,500 baht. (2) The factor affecting motivation in gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya World Heritage consisted of 1 latent variable and 7 observable variables. The relationship was in the range [0.223, 0.490] and the CFA affecting gastronomy tourism motivation showed that the gastronomy tourism product aspect was the factor affecting motivation has a maximum component weight followed by physical appearance and price, 77.30%, 75.40% and 61.70%, respectively.

Introduction

Tourism is becoming a significant industry, which is a crucial component of the social and economic driving forces in countries globally, as it generates job opening and business opportunity worldwide (Suanpang, Netwong & Chunhapataragul, 2021). This leads to the tourism industry contributing to the high economic growth and has been pragmatic in several countries,

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especially in Thailand (Jermsittiparsert & Chankoson, 2019; Suanpang & Jamjuntr, 2021). Thailand is one of the top tourist countries in the world having historical and high-value hospitality services (Suanpang & Jamjuntr, 2021; Suanpang, Sopha, Jakjarus, Leethong-in, Tahanklae, Panyavacharawongse, Phopun, & Prasertsut, 2021a; Suanpang, Songma, Chunhaparagul, Niamsorn, Netwong, & Panyavachara-wongse, 2021b). The tourism industry is successful and one of the major economic contributors in Thailand, estimated to directly contribute 5.56 percent of GDP before the crisis of the COVID-19 epidemic (Suanpang & Jamjuntr, 2021; Suanpang, Sopha, Jakjarus, Leethong-in, Tahanklae, Panyavacharawongse, Phopun, & Prasertsut, 2021a; Suanpang, Songma, Chunhaparagul, Niamsorn, Netwong, & Panyavacharawongse, 2021b). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand, the tourism industry has been in a downturn. The Thai government has prohibited international arrivals and implemented a lockdown where people had to stay at home (Suanpang & Jamjuntr, 2021; Suanpang, Sopha, Jakjarus, Leethong-in, Tahanklae, Panyavacharawongse, Phopun, & Prasertsut, 2021a; Suanpang, Songma, Chunhaparagul, Niamsorn, Netwong, & Panyavachara-wongse, 2021b). This circumstance has a direct effect on the tourism industry and business sector who want to develop safety, trust and build confidence among tourists. The tourists are concerned about their health and safety, thus creating a new normal way (Suanpang & Jamjuntr, 2021; Suanpang, Sopha, Jakjarus, Leethong-in, Tahanklae, Panyavacharawongse, Phopun, & Prasertsut, 2021a; Suanpang, Songma, Chunhaparagul, Niamsorn, Netwong, & Panyavachara-wongse, 2021b). In addition, the Tourism Authority of Thailand has indicated that from the COVID-19 situation to promote 'Gastronomy Tourism' to stimulate the tourism industry (Suanpang, Sopha, Jaiann, Thanyakit, Chuamsompong, Dongjit, Rotprasoet, Webb, Netwrong, Niamsorn, Chunhaparagul, & Arnmanee, 2021c)

Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province or Ayutthaya is outstanding in terms of its asset for cultural tourism due to the presence of a historical park that has been registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Ayutthaya Historical Park is a place full of various ancient sites built since the Ayutthaya period (Chairatana & Supanyo, 2021). Ayutthaya Kingdom has a long history and has created a valuable civilization. Ayutthaya Historical Park is known to be one of the world's most famous tourist destinations and is popular in the world, this has allowed

the tourism industry of Ayutthaya Historical Park to expand significantly and gain the highest growth rate within the country, as well as within the region (Thanvisithpon, 2016).

"Gastronomy" is defined as the art of eating and drinking and the gastronomy paradigm is an interdisciplinary branch of art and science that is directly related to chemistry, literature, biology, geology, history, music, philosophy, psychology, sociology, medicine, nutrition, and agriculture (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Gastronomy includes the science of nutrition such as the sense of taste and physiology, the production of wine, nutritional functions in the human body, food selection properties, development of production processes according to hygiene standards (Shenoy, 2005). However, gastronomy purpose is to preserve human health with the best possible nutrition and to ensure the enjoyment of life and food (Pavlidis & Markantonatou, 2020).

Gastronomy Tourism is defined in principled term and used in the literature such as 'culinary tourism', 'gastro-tourism', 'wine tourism', 'food tourism' and 'gourmet tourism', the widely used term 'gastronomic tourism' is typically defined as the pursuit of a unique experience of eating and drinking. Gastronomic tourism, refers to the originality of a dish and is indigenous to a place, region, or country, covers the basic themes of local dishes and wines (Green & Dougherty, 2008; Groves, 2001; Hall & Mitchell, 2007; Pavlidis & Markantonatou, 2020). Sharples & Hall (2004) define gastronomic tourism as a travel experience in an area with distinct gastronomy, with recreational purposes that include visits to primary or secondary food producers, gastronomic events, rural markets, culinary events, and quality tastings, and generally any kind of food-related activity. Moreover, prior literature defines that gastronomy tourism is related to cultural tourism, viewing food as a manifestation of the cultural of a destination (Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000; Van Westering, 1999). Gastronomy tourism activities include visits to food producers, participation in gastronomy festivals, visits to restaurants and special places related to special local food, tasting special dishes, observing production and preparation processes, tasting special dishes by famous chefs, as well as exploring how a particular dish is prepared (Hall & Mitchell, 2007; Mitchel Hall, Sharples, Mitchel, Macionis, & Cambourne, 2003). In addition, gastronomy tourism also includes tourist trips in seek of personal experience in local food and drink,

in addition to the classic visit to restaurants. The gastronomy tourism industry, which is not only comprised of food guides, covers all types of culinary experiences, including cooking schools, cookbooks, culinary travel agencies and guides, related TV programs, magazines and activities, wineries, vineyards, breweries, distilleries, and agricultural producers.

The literature search found that gastronomy tourist experience is influenced by many aspects related to more trivial eating practices, such as those offered by cafes and other types of graphic or charming cafes and restaurants. However, gastronomy journey experience of tasting local and authentic food, attending events, festivals, and food festivals, and tasting local and international cuisine (Sharples & Hall, 2004, Pavlidis & Markantonatou, 2020). Gastronomy tourists are classified into different groups according to the importance of food in their journey, from those who do not care about local food to those who travel exclusively to try local and unique cuisines (Andersson & Mossberg, 2017; Boyne, Williams & Hall, 2002; McKercher, Okumus & Okumus, 2008). Studies have found that most travelers recognize local cuisine as a major factor influencing destination choice, travel experience and decision to re-visit the same destination (Karim & Chi, 2010; Silkes, Cai & Lehto, 2013). Moreover, the factors influencing the intention to travel that includes local food has social, psychological, cultural, and experiential meanings (Bell & Valentine, 1997; Caplan, 1997). According to Frochot (2003), by eating local food, tourists can satisfy their needs related to relaxation, excitement, escape, social status, education, and lifestyle. While the reasons for eating local and international food may vary such as satisfying hunger, tasting local culture, social interaction, the availability of local and international food can affect the visitor's travel experiences and their intention to return (Henderson, 2009). The experience of local food can be a cultural experience and a form of entertainment (Fields, 2002; Quan & Wang, 2004; Ryu & Jang, 2006; Sparks, Bowen & Klag, 2003). Place-specific food and nutrition can attract more tourists when integrated into a strategic promotion plan that includes periodic events, festivals, or social media platforms (Viljoen, Kruger & Saayman, 2017). While some food lovers may not believe that they have the qualities of a taster, they may find local food an important factor in their decision to visit and re-visit the destination. Therefore, the sector of gastronomic tourism should aim at a much broader target than a limited elite (Boniface, 2017; McKercher, Okumus & Okumus, 2008). Gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya is state-ofthe-art and is at the very early stage of the research study because most of the tourist travel for cultural tourism. However, the gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya has high potential especially in many activities that link to World Heritage Site, therefore it requires a study on the tourist perception and motivation for gastronomy travel.

Objectives

The research objectives consist of the following:

- 1. Study tourist's perspective and motivation for gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya World Heritage.
- 2. Conduct a factor analysis of tourist's motivation for gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya World Heritage.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1, which comprise of variables of 7P's marketing mix including gastronomy product, price, place, promotion, people, process and physical appearance.

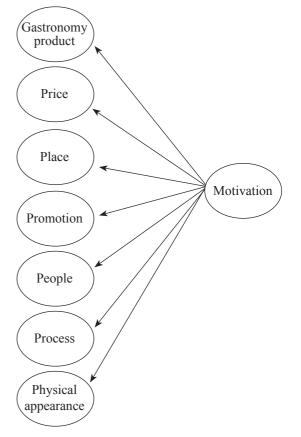


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Research methodology

1. Population and samples

The population of the study was tourist that travel to Ayutthaya World Heritage consisting of 3,272,237 people in year 2019. The non-probability sampling technique like convenience was used. The sample size was more than 385 sample based on based on Cochran (1977) with a confidence level of 95% (α = 0.05).

2. Research instrument

Based on the research conceptual framework and the literature review, 5 closed questions that related to the demographic of the sample were used. The second section of the questionnaire referenced tourist behavior and had 6 closed questions. The third section focused on factors that influenced gastronomy tourism and had 31 closed questions. The answer options used the Likert 5 scale, ranging from 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = moderate, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree. The reliability of the measures was tested using Cronbach's alpha = 0.95.

3. Collection of data

The data was collected using a convenience sampling method by using online assessment form. The questionnaire was available online between April - July 2021. A total of 385 respondents completed the questionnaire.

4. Data analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS for descriptive statistics. The Confirmatory Factory Analysis (CFA) were run by using LISREL 9.0. The questionnaires were collected using an online assessment and 385 sample size was selected and was enough to analyze the impact of variables.

Result

The demographic results from the questionnaire are presented in Table 1 below. Table 1 shows the number and percentage of demographic data of 385 tourists who had traveled to Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province. It was found that 339 tourists were female, representing 88.05%, 46 were male, representing 11.95%. Most respondents were aged 35 – 44 years, representing 37.92%, working as employees of companies/state enterprises, representing 28.83%, having a bachelor's degree, representing 48.57%. The average monthly income was low with the highest percentage of 26.49% earning 15,000 baht.

Table 1 Demographic of the respondent

	Dedemographic	Frequency	Percent
1.	Gender		
	Male	46	11.95
	Female	339	88.05
	Total	385	100.00
2.	Age		
	> 15 year	0	0.00
	15-24 year	73	18.96
	25-34 year	84	21.82
	35-44 year	146	37.92
	45-59 year	69	17.92
	60 year	13	3.38
	Total	385	100.00
3.	Occupation		
	Student	45	11.69
	Employee	111	28.83
	Business owner	58	15.06
	Government officer	77	20.00
	Hourse keeper	42	10.91
	Other	52	13.51
	Total	385	100.00
4.	Education		
	Under bachelor degress	82	21.30
	Bachelor degree	187	48.57
	Master degress/Ph.D.	116	30.13
	Total	385	100.00
5.	Income		
	> 15,000 Baht	102	26.49
	15,001-20,000 Baht	78	20.26
	20,001-25,000 Baht	23	5.97
	25,001-30,000 Baht	34	8.83
	30,001-35,000 Baht	20	5.19
	35,001-40,000 Baht	35	9.09
	< 40,000 Baht	85	22.08
	Other	8	2.08
_	Total	385	100.00

Table 2 shows the number and percentage of travel behavior of 385 tourists. It was found that most of the respondents purpose of traveling to Ayutthaya was to make merit and pay respect to the Buddha image accounted for 28.74%, followed by food tourism. In regards to searching information, 30.39% preferred to search for food information to plan a trip from food review pages and 29.35% preferred general websites. Ayutthaya gastronomy tourism activities that tourists were interested in include; eating by the riverside, see historical sites accounting for 37.91%, followed by historical boat rides and meals on board for 29.19%. Factors affecting the decision to travel to Ayutthaya

gastronomy tourism was a restaurant with good atmosphere accounting for 26.23%, followed by inexpensive restaurants for 15.67% The average spending per meal of tourists is 1,000 – 1,500 baht, representing 42.86%, followed by less than 1,000 baht, accounting for 31.95%. It was found that tourists when traveling to the same city. Tourists choose to eat both old and new restaurants for 84.42 percent, respectively.

Table 2 Tourist behavior

Tourist behavior	Frequency	Percent
Objective of travel		
Make merit	332	28.74
Study	23	1.99
Historical & cultural	162	14.03
Unseen experience	88	7.62
Family activity	172	14.89
Community based tourism	74	6.41
Food tourism	217	18.79
Photographic food	77	6.67
Other	10	0.87
Total	1,155	100.00
Information searching for travel planni	ng	
Friends' recommendation	79	20.52
From people in local community	13	3.38
Page review	117	30.39
Website	113	29.35
YouTube	63	16.36
Total	385	100.00
Gastronomy activity		
Dinner cruise	221	29.19
Dinner at river and seeing world herit	age 287	37.91
Pick up raw material for cooking	47	6.21
Shopping raw material for cooking at	55	7.27
the local market		
Cooking Thai desert	147	19.42
Total	757	100.00
Factor influencing restaurant		
Good atmosphere	298	26.23
Local food	128	11.27
Not expensive	178	15.67
Easy to access	153	13.47
Promotion	56	4.93
Locate near river	177	15.58
Locate in the community	146	12.85
Total	1136	100.00
Average food spending/ day		
> 1,000 Baths	123	31.95
1,000 – 1,500 Baths	165	42.86
1,501 – 2,000 Baths	59	15.32
2,001 – 2,500 Baths	21	5.45
< 2,501 Baths	17	4.42
Total	385	100.00
Intention of restaurant Revisiting		
Same restaurant	21	5.45
Seeking new restaurant	39	10.13
Both	325	84.42
Total	385	100.00

Table 3 Factors influencing gastronomy tourism

Issue	Mean	S.D.	
Product			
Thailand has the potential to be a global gastronomy	4.54	0.60	
tourism city			
Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province is suitable for the	4.52	0.67	
development of gastronomy tourism programs			
Gastronomy tourism in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province	4.53	0.63	
encourage tourists to visit Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya			
The attractiveness of trying the Royal Thai Cuisine	4.52	0.68	
The attractiveness of trying Ayutthaya wisdom food	4.59	0.64	
Attractiveness of tourist attractions that produce food and	4.38	0.81	
raw materials for food			
The interest of learning historical stories of the past	4.73	0.56	
The attractiveness of community tourism	4.48	0.71	
The attractiveness of the tourism program in a novel style	4.57	0.67	
The attractiveness of food cultural tourism activities that	4.52	0.66	
present a tourism model that creates value and new			
experiences			
Average	4.54	0.66	
Price			
Food prices/tour programs are appropriate for the type	4.46	0.66	
of activities			
Food prices/tour programs are appropriate for the service	4.46	0.72	
Tourists can set food prices/tour programs	4.32	0.76	
Average	4.41	0.71	
Place			
Emphasis on promotion of tourism programs through online	4.58	0.62	
media such as Line and Facebook			
Emphasis on promotion of tourism programs through	4.12	0.93	
famous people			
Emphasis on promotion of tourism programs through	4.61	0.65	
review pages or Youtube			
Average	4.44	0.74	
Promotion			
Able to adjust the travel program according to the needs	4.45	0.77	
of customers			
Souvenirs are distributed for tourists to take home.	4.28	0.85	
There is a discount for old customers	4.25	0.93	
Average	4.33	0.85	
People			
Service providers pay attention to details of customers	4.66	0.55	
The service provider has expertise in food/history	4.56	0.65	
The service provider can respond quickly to the needs	4.58	0.67	
of customers	1.60		
Average	4.60	0.62	
Process		4 00	
Service providers pay attention to details of customers	3.89	1.09	
The service provider has expertise in food/history	4.43	0.83	
The service provider can respond quickly to the needs	4.52	0.71	
of customers			
Average	4.28	0.88	
Physical appearance			
The dining atmosphere is in retro Thai style, such as eating	4.14	0.91	
by hand, a deck placed on top of a toke			
Contemporary Thai dining atmosphere, such as sitting at	4.41	0.77	
international tables decorated in Thai style			

Table 3 (continue)

Issue	Mean	S.D.
Local eating atmosphere, seeing rice fields, using local	4.44	0.71
vegetables		
The dining atmosphere is arranged in a royal style	4.27	0.83
Visit the floating market there is a boat selling food and	4.49	0.76
shops on the raft		
Visit a flea market and sell specialty items or clearly	4.48	0.74
divided into zones		
Cooking activities with an ancient kitchen, using a wood	4.32	0.92
stove to defeat the earthenware		
Cooking activities with a contemporary Thai kitchen	4.39	0.82
Modern equipment but decorated in antique style		
Average	4.37	0.81

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation of factors affecting motivation in gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya. Tourists find it interesting to learn historical stories from the past. It was at the highest level (Mean = 4.73, S.D. = 0.56). In terms of price, food prices/tourism programs were appropriate for activities. At the highest level (Mean = 4.46, S.D. = 0.66). Distribution channel for promotional emphasis tourism program via review page or Youtube was at the highest level (Mean = 4.61, S.D. = 0.65). The travel program can be adjusted according to the needs of customers was at the highest level (Mean = 4.45, S.D. = 0.77). In terms of personnel, service providers pay attention to details of customers, was at the highest level (Mean = 4.66, S.D. = 0.55) on the process side. The satisfaction of tourists after using the service was at the highest level (Mean = 4.52, S.D. = 0.71) in terms of physical characteristics. Visit the floating market where a boat selling food and shops are on the raft was at the highest level (Mean = 4.49, S.D. = 0.76), respectively.

The confirmation component analysis of factors affecting motivation in gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya World Heritage (7 Ps) consisted of 1 latent variable and 7 observable variables. The relationship was in the range [0.223, 0.490] details are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Matrix of correlation

Variable	P1	p2	р3	p4	р5	р6	р7
P1	1						
p2	.375**	1					
p3	.328**	.452**	1				
p4	.349**	.386**	.278**	1			
p5	.329**	.365**	.424**	.338**	1		
p6	.353**	.281**	.223**	.340**	.374**	1	
p7	.326**	.435**	.332**	.412**	.405**	.490**	1

^{**} p-value<.01

The results of the confirmation component analysis of factors affecting food gastronomy motivation in Ayutthaya World Heritage showed that the gastronomy tourism product aspect was the factor affecting decision-making and motivation in gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya, the World Heritage has a maximum component weight followed by physical characteristics and price, respectively. All three aspects could explain the variation of factors affecting motivation in gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya World Heritage by 77.30%, 75.40% and 61.70%, respectively.

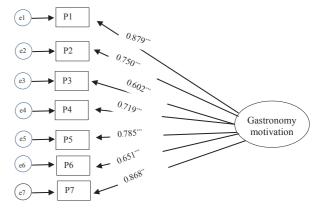


Figure 2 Confirmation factor analysis P1 Product, P2 Price, P3 Place, P4 Promotion, P5 People, P5 People, P6 Process, P7 Physical appearance

Table 5 Conformity Index (Model Fit)

	b	SE	t	R^2
P1	0.879	-	-	0.7730
P2	0.750	0.060	15.601***	0.6170
P3	0.602	0.068	12.068***	0.3620
P4	0.719	0.067	15.127***	0.5170
P5	0.785	0.072	14.933***	0.5260
P6	0.651	0.083	12.677***	0.4240
P7	0.868	0.061	17.492***	0.7540

Statistical χ^2 = 12.500 , df = 7, p_value = 0.085, GFI = 0.990, AGFI = 0.962 CFI = 0.997, NNFI = 0.990, NFI = 0.993, RMSEA = 0.045, RMR = 0.007

Model Conformity Index Validation Results pointed out that /df = 1.786 (less than 2) p-value = 0.085, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.990, Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.962, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.997, Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) = 0.990, Normed Fit Index (NFI) = 0.993 (greater than 0.95) and Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) = 0.007, Root Mean Square Error Approximations (RMSEA) = 0.045 (less than 0.05). The index is appropriate (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).

^{***} p-value<.001

Table 6 Goodness of fit index

Goodness of fit test	Criteria	Value	Result
χ^2/df	> 2.00	1.786	Pass
p-value	< .05	0.085	Pass
GFI	< .95	0.990	Pass
AGFI	< .95	0.962	Pass
CFI	< .95	0.997	Pass
NNFI	< .95	0.990	Pass
NFI	< .95	0.993	Pass
RMR	> .05	0.007	Pass
RMSEA	> .05	0.045	Pass

Discussion

The results from the study concluded that the majority of the tourists had the purpose of traveling to Ayutthaya to make merit and pay respect to the Buddha followed by gastronomy tourism and the search for food information to plan a trip was obtained from food review pages. The gastronomy activities that tourists were interested in was eating by the water and visiting historical sites. Factors affecting the decision to travel to Ayutthaya food cultural tourism was a restaurant with good atmosphere and average food cost per meal at 1,000-1,500 baht. This related to the study of Kim, Park, & Lamb (2019) who found that gastronomy tourism motivation have a significant influence on consumption because, in spite of not being the only variable which influences behavior, it also related to the gastronomic experience which understands to be the result of trying food, considering aspects such as the price, the establishment's atmosphere, the professionalism of the service received, etc. and motivates the tourist to travel to seek gastronomic practices in a specific place (Berbel-Pineda, Palacios-Florencio, Ramírez-Hurtado, & Santos-Roldán, 2019).

Moreover, the confirmation component analysis of factors affecting motivation in gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya World Heritage (7 Ps) consisted of 1 latent variable and 7 observable variables. The relationship was in the range [0.223, 0.490] and the CFA affecting gastronomy tourism motivation to travel to Ayutthaya World Heritage showed that the gastronomy tourism product aspect was the factor affecting motivation in gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya World Heritage has a maximum component weight followed by physical appearance and price, respectively. All three aspects could explain the variation of factors affecting motivation in gastronomy tourism in Ayutthaya World Heritage by 77.30%, 75.40% and 61.70%, respectively. This related to the study of Kim, Park, & Lamb (2019) who found that gastronomy itself being a motivation, there is a series

of motives, subjective according to each tourist, which lead to wanting to experience a specific destination's gastronomy. Dann (1981) classifies the tourist's motivation in the choice of a destination into two major strengths: the need to escape and the need to seek. The visitors either travel because they are pushed by motives or internal variables or else due to being attracted by the attributes of the places (Berbel-Pineda, Palacios-Florencio, Ramírez-Hurtado, & Santos-Roldán, 2019).

Suggestion

This research has limitations. The study only focuses on one location, Ayutthaya World Heritage and caution is therefore advised when generalizing the results to other settings. The particular antecedents and outcomes in this model constitutes a limitation to the generalization of the results to other models. This study offers useful findings for the professionals of the hospitality industry.

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