

A Study on Motivating Factors Influencing International Tourist Shoppers to Bangkok as a Shopping Destination

¹TICHSUN TANG

¹Hospitality of Tourism Management, Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand

Email: techsun168@yahoo.com

Abstract: Shopping in Bangkok is fun and enjoyable at the same time because there are more than 60 shopping malls in the city, which makes Bangkok become a heaven for international shoppers. The study aims to understand the perspectives of the stakeholders of the shopping malls and international tourists about tourists' shopping behaviors in Bangkok and its supporting factors by using a qualitative method with a semi-structured interview. The result revealed that both stakeholders of the shopping malls and the international tourists have almost the same opinion about the influential factors that drive tourists to come to Bangkok for shopping. The key findings of this research is related to the shopping behaviors of tourists in Bangkok, the researcher has categorized these tourists into three categories, such as products or services purchasing tourists due to the love for their family that inspired them to buy gifts for family or friends when they go back, and also the quality and value of the products that can be trusted and guaranteed as the original brands, foods and drinks consumption tourists because of its nice ambience, smell and decoration of the shopping malls, and window shopping tourists that wandering around the shopping malls without buying; however, due to the price sensitivity of the promotion and discount on products and services, which led them to consider and purchase the products.

Keywords: Attitude, Motivate, Quality, Shopping Mall, Servicescape.

1. INTRODUCTION

Shopping is an important part that tourism industry cannot miss out because, besides cultural activities and historical attraction, shopping mall and the market can be a place where tourists can relieve the stresses and tiredness of the trip, which also generate a huge amount of money to the country. As with only "Thailand Shopping and Dining Paradise" campaign which normally held between 1 June and 31 August in Bangkok and secondary cities, which has been very successful with more than 1,000 participation of local vendors and generated around 1.8 billion Thai Baht for Thai economy, TAT News (2018). Shopping in Bangkok is also fun and enjoyable, and at the same time with the products that are on sale and discount, tourists stuck for hours to choose a variety of items within the stores.

Besides, the quality of the products that display within the shopping malls is so much better compared to the local markets even the price is expensive but offered and guaranteed with the original quality as some products also come with a warranty to build the trust within the customers.

However, not all the visitors are buyers, some of them just come to wander around, enjoy the cool air, use the toilet, and enjoy window shopping, which is not the right target customers for the shopping malls. Another problem is that tourists start to spend money at the local markets more than shopping malls because of the cheaper products, even though some of the products are fake with lower quality. This affects the value and sale volume of international branding and Thai branding products selling in the shopping malls.

Definition

Shopping involves the purchase of goods and services activity while traveling to diverse places, which can be occurred due to the price of products, uniqueness of products, quality of services, reliability of the product that creates purchasing desires. Timothy and Butler (1995) defined shopping tourism as a traveler to purchase goods. Further study by Heung and Qu (1998), defined Shopping Tourism as “the expenditure on goods purchased in a country, by international visitors, either for consumption in the place where it is bought or for export but not including expenditure on food, drink of grocery items.” With the increasing number of traveling, purchasing does also increase. Tourists are willing to spend more money when traveling abroad.

Influencing Factors

Some factors influence tourists’ decision to shop while traveling to various destinations. Significantly, a study to investigate the factors related to shopping space from operations perspective by Jansen-Verbeke (1991), who found that the availability of shopping spaces should be converted into retail activities that could attract many tourist shoppers to visit it would help enhance the performance of sales and services that including; 1) unique shopping environment with a variety of products, suppliers, entertainments or events, leisure activities, and attractions; 2) available parking space for accessibility, 3) diverse of transportation options. All of these factors create positive images of shopping malls that make a great leisure environment during holidays or weekends for tourist shoppers who look for something new with quality services and products; therefore, servicescape is significantly needed to create an atmosphere that influences human behaviors (Jansen-Verbeke, 1991). Besides the servicescape of the shopping mall, many other factors also influence tourist shoppers to shop at a selected destination as well. A research conducted to evaluate customers shopping experience by Bearden (1977) come up with the 7 features which cause the customers’ perception to visit shopping malls; such as, on the sale price, quality of products, variety of items, environment of the mall, location, accessibility, and service attitude. After investigation and survey analysis, the study showed that the environment, location, accessibility, and staff service attitude are more significant than the other features, in which shopping malls should have focused on it more to achieve more customers’ visits.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

RO 1: To identify the selected factors (price, location, variety, accessibility options) that drive international tourist shoppers to visit the shopping mall in Bangkok.

RO 2: To investigate the quality of products and services that influence international tourist shoppers’ decision to visit the shopping mall in Bangkok.

RO 3: To explore the servicescape dimensions influencing international tourist shoppers’ decision to visit shopping malls in Bangkok.

RO 4: To understand the staff attitude and behavior influencing international tourist shoppers’ decision to visit shopping malls in Bangkok.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Batra, A. (2014), *The Role of Airport Servicescape: The Transient Community Perspective*.

The study was conducted using qualitative method to investigate the servicescape and ambiance at Suvarnabhumi International Airport’s lounge by using a semi-structured interview to collect primary data with eleven international passengers, who departed from Bangkok. The findings of the research showed that servicescape does has a significant influence on most of the travelers to keep them busy, while waiting at Suvarnabhumi airport; such as, places to eat and drink, sit and relax, read a book and last-minute shopping that passengers could find in a single location. Moreover, the passengers were impressed by the cleanliness and service quality of the airport, except for the airport design by using enormous steels, the monitor display, and the Wi-Fi connection, which the airport needs to concern about to improve the attractiveness of Suvarnabhumi Airport.

Moscardo, G. (2004), *Shopping as a Destination Attraction: An Empirical Examination of the Role of Shopping in Tourists' Destination Choice and Experience.*

The purpose of the study is to understand the role of shopping in the total destination experience, which based on destination choice, shopping activities, souvenir purchase, and service quality by using a quantitative method for conducting the research. The author used survey questionnaires to collect the data from 1,630 of both domestic and international tourists, which were those who away from the usual environment for at least one night for any purposes other than the business at the far north of Queensland region of Australia. The result found that traveler shoppers can be categorized into a group according to the shopping behaviors that engaging; such as destination choice and service quality can attract serious shoppers, shopping activities can attract non-shoppers, and souvenir purchase can attract art-and-craft shoppers.

Yeung, S., Wong, J., & Ko, E. (2004), *Preferred Shopping Destination: Hong Kong versus Singapore.*

Research conducted by Yeung, S., Wong, J., & Ko, E. (2004) identified the tourists shopping preference of destination using a quantitative method with a survey of 309 international shoppers about the perceptions and expectations of Hong Kong and Singapore shopping regarding 15 questions. According to the result of the t-test, Singapore is much better than Hong Kong in terms of the language skill of workers, an attitude of workers, display of products, cleanliness of the store, physical decoration of store, choices of payment, product quality, and efficiency of the worker. However, if talking about the cheaper price, accessibility of store, the value of money, variety selection of products, operating hours of the shop, and availability of items, Hong Kong are more preferable for tourists to travel than Singapore as a shopping destination.

Heung, V. C. S., & Cheng, E. (2000). *Assessing Tourists' Satisfaction with Shopping in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China.*

A study by Heung and Cheng (2000) investigated the satisfaction level of tourists while shopping in Hong Kong. The researcher used quantitative approach with a structured questionnaire, which was completed by a total of 200 tourist shoppers by using a systematic sampling method, with every 10th of travels who departed from the immigration of the Hong Kong International Airport was picked in the study as the sample. The questionnaires consisted of the four shopping dimensions developed by the author; such as, product quality, staff service quality, product value, and product reliability, in order to identify the relationship between the four dimensions of shopping and satisfaction of tourists. The results showed that staff service quality has the most significant influence on tourist shoppers' satisfaction, followed by product value, product reliability, and product quality.

Reisinger, Y., & Turner, L. W. (2002). *The Determination of Shopping Satisfaction of Japanese Tourists Visiting Hawaii and The Gold Coast Compared.*

Research conducted by Reisinger and Turner (2002) studied the connection between various dimensions of categories of products, product attribution, and product satisfaction of Japanese tourists visiting Hawaii and the Gold Coast of Australia by using a quantitative method. The surveys are conducted into two parts, Japanese arrival at the Gold Coast Airport with the number of 362 respondents and Japanese arrival at Hawaii Airport with 300 respondents. The results illustrated that the most significant dimension of satisfaction for both the Gold Coast and Hawaii is servicescape of the shop; such as, accessibility, the appearance of sales staff, cleanliness, and convenience, the second is the attractiveness of shop; such as, decoration, lighting, and business hours for Hawaii, and product value for the Gold Coast; the third is price and product, which is about the value of money and variety of products to choose; and the fourth is service quality of the staff, which is about the attitude and ability to communicate.

Xu, Y., & McGehee, N. G. (2012). *Shopping Behavior of Chinese Tourists Visiting the United States: Letting the Shoppers Do The Talking.*

The study of Xu and McGehee (2012) investigated the shopping behaviors and shopping experiences of Chinese shoppers visiting the U.S. by using a Qualitative approach to get a deep understanding of the Chinese tourists' behaviors and perceptions of the shopping experiences. The author interviewed a tour guide who works at the travel agency on the East Coast of the U.S. and then completed phone interviews with ten Chinese shoppers of five males and five females who used to join the group tour of East Coast travel agent. The results show that Chinese tourists have more interest in a variety of goods from handicraft products and jewelry to health products, not because of the brand, and also male tourists

are more satisfied and interested in shopping than female tourists. However, the problem that raised by Chinese shoppers were the lack of Chinese-speaking sales workers to help to assist with the products as most of Chinese cannot communicate in English and want to know more details about the products as the tour guide cannot be reliable all the time, and also the payment issues due to some Chinese credit cards can be accepted in the U.S. stores, which the author would recommend banks of both countries to figure out the way to cooperate with purchasing methods to make international tourist shoppers' experience more conveniences and reliable.

3. METHODOLOGY

The qualitative method was used in this research for gathering primary data. The semi-structured interview was selected by the researchers to collect information from the stakeholders of the shopping mall and international tourist shoppers who had been shopping around selected shopping malls area in Bangkok. Twenty-five open-ended questions were divided into two parts – For stakeholders of the shopping mall (fifteen questions) and international tourist shoppers (ten questions). For the sample plan of this study, the researchers chose to interview three shopping malls executive managers and seventeen international tourists, following purposive sampling approach, which took place in Bangkok between 15th of October to 01st of November 2019. The shopping malls chosen for the interview were based on the prime location, brand names, and popularity, where majority of tourists will be found carrying shopping bags around or looking for something to purchase.

Considering the topic on motivating factors that influence tourist shoppers to come to Bangkok as a shopping destination, seventeen international tourists have been selected for the interview in four high-end shopping malls from Gaysorn Village, Siam Paragon, Central World, and The Market for this study, which were interviewed respectively by using the face-to-face semi-structured interview to ask for their perceptions and experiences toward the shopping malls, that meet the needs of the objectives since qualitative research focus more on quality of the data then numeral data. Additionally, the constant comparison analysis method is used to analyze the necessary data collected from the interviews.

4. RESULTS

The study aims to understand the perspectives of the stakeholders of the shopping malls and international tourists about tourists' shopping behaviors that motivating their decision to come to Bangkok as a shopping destination. The key findings of the research objectives will be illustrated through the discussion about the similarities and differences of both perspectives about the selected factors (price, location, variety, accessibility options), the quality of products and services, the servicescape dimensions, and the staff attitude and behavior.

The Selected Factors (price, location, variety, accessibility options)

After comparing both perspectives of the stakeholders of shopping malls and international tourist shoppers, the result reveals that both of them had almost the same understanding of the factors that influencing tourists to come for shopping, which are the location, the accessibility options, the price sensitivity, and the worthiness of the products that assist them to come in the first place and purchase the products which value for money. As for stakeholders, they believed and added more on the creativity and colorful decoration, the brand of the shopping malls, the events and concerts in the shopping malls, the variety of products and its uniqueness, the promotions and incentives that offer to the customers, and the safety and security within the shopping malls.

The Quality of Products and Services

By comparing both perspectives, the finding showed the similarities of their perspectives on quality of products and service influence their purchasing decision in shopping malls, including the service standard that staffs able to communicate multilingual, the worthiness and variety of the products that are the key elements that affecting their buying behavior and revisit in the future.

The Servicescape Dimensions

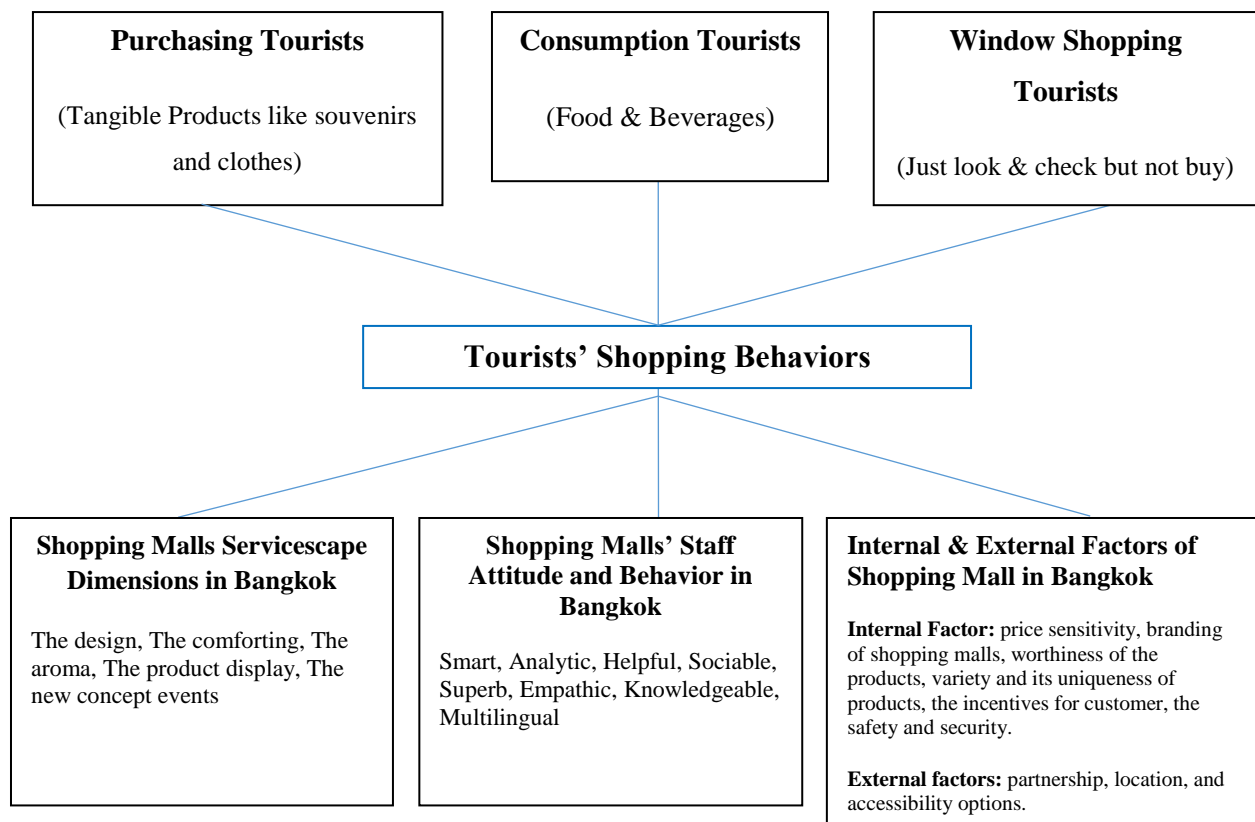
In addition to this, there are only a few things in common about the perspective of servicescape dimensions between stakeholders and tourists, which are the design, the comforting and aroma, the product display, and the new concept of events that attract many tourists' attention to come and experience. However, the stakeholders pay more attention to the above dimensions too much which made them leave out the small things that most tourists are likely concerned about, such as less of bins disposal, the direction sign, and the overflow of the people.

The Staff Attitude and Behavior

Staffs are very important for every organization's performance because they are the people who deliver services and make contact directly to the customers. both stakeholders' and tourists' perspectives and understanding toward the staff attitude that influence the decision are quite similar, such as smart, analytic, helpful, sociable, superb, empathy, knowledgeable and multilingual employees. So, they can satisfy and understand customers' purchasing behavior and then approach them to purchase.

5. CONCLUSION

The result revealed that both stakeholders of the shopping malls and the international tourists have almost the same opinion that drives tourists to come to Bangkok for shopping. The key findings of this research are related to the shopping behaviors of tourists in Bangkok, the researcher has categorized these tourists into three categories, such as products or services purchasing tourists due to the love for their family that inspired them to buy gifts for family or friends when they go back, and also the quality and value of the products that can be trusted and guaranteed as the original brands, foods and drinks consumption tourists because of its nice ambiance, smell and decoration of the shopping malls, and window shopping tourists that wandering around the shopping malls without buying; however, due to the price sensitivity of the promotion and discount, which led them to consider and purchase the products. The finding also showed that the servicescape dimensions are also crucial for most international tourists' decision making, such as the design, the comfort and cleanliness of the shops, the aroma, the product display, and the new concepts of events. Lastly, the staffs' attitude is vital for the purchasing decision of the visitors due to the extraordinary qualifications of the shopping malls' employees, such as the smart, analytic, helpful, sociable, empathic, knowledgeable, and multilingual ability. So, they can satisfy and understand the customers' purchasing behavior clearly which ease for them to approach their customers to purchase.

Key Findings from the Perspectives of both Stakeholders of Shopping Mall and International Tourist Shoppers

6. IMPLICATION

The research is conducted to investigate the motivating factors that attract tourist shoppers to come to Bangkok as a shopping destination, which is significant for all shopping malls to understand the trend and demand of tourist shoppers' perspective toward the differences among each mall. That the result of this study will reflect tourist shoppers buying behaviours according to their need and want that can be used as a feedback for improving and changing to meet the satisfaction in order to increase of the sale and performance.

7. LIMITATIONS

- Access limitation – Hard to access certain people of the organizations to interview by requesting through emails and phone calls, as some are denied and some would consider.
- Time limitation – Limited time to gather all the information that allow completing within four months, and require to travel a lot to shopping destinations for interviewing and observation.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

As the customer is a king, the three shopping malls have to change some of their strategies to match the need and satisfaction to make them purchase; therefore, these recommendations can be used by the shopping malls in Bangkok for improving their quality services:

- Creating more rubbish bins for deposal that also categorized into different wastes; such as general waste, recycle waste, toxic waste and etc.
- Creating mapping signs, and digital mapping board and mapping applications that delivered a clear direction of the stores and toilets which is now trending that some shopping malls start to use it.
- Creating more seats and lounges for customers to relax after the tiredness of shopping.
- Creating an alternative option for those customers who do not want staffs to approach them by using two different colors on the shopping baskets that labeled 'no help' on the red basket and 'need help' on the green basket.
- Creating more promotion boards and signs to attract the customers rather than announcing out loud that disturbing the tourists' atmosphere.

REFERENCES

- [1] Batra, A. (July, 2014). The Role of Airport Servicescape: The Transient Community Perspective. *Tourism Dimensions*. 1(1), pp 27-38.
- [2] Bearden, WO. 1977. Determinant attributes of store patronage: downtown versus outlying shopping centers. *Journal of Retailing*. 53(2), pp 15-23.
- [3] Heung, V. C. S., & Cheng, E. (2000). Assessing tourists' satisfaction with shopping in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China. *Journal of Travel Research*. 38, pp 396-404.
- [4] Heung, V.C.S., and Qu, H. (1998) 'Tourism shopping and its contributions to Hong Kong'. *Tourism Management*. 19(4), pp 383-386.
- [5] Jansen-Verbeke, M. (1991). Leisure shopping: A magic concept for the tourism industry? *Tourism Management*. 12(1), pp 9-14.
- [6] Moscardo, G. (2004). Shopping as a destination attraction: An empirical examination of the role of shopping in tourists' destination choice and experience. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 10(4), pp 294-307.
- [7] Reisinger, Y., & Turner, L. W. (2002). The Determination of Shopping Satisfaction of Japanese Tourists Visiting Hawaii and The Gold Coast Compared. *Journal of Travel Research*. 41, pp 167-176.

- [8] TAT News. (June 11, 2018). TAT launches “Thailand Shopping and Dining Paradise 2018”. Retrieved (October 17, 2019) from <https://www.tatnews.org/2018/06/tat-launches-thailand-shopping-and-dining-paradise-2018/>
- [9] Timothy, D. J., & Butler, R. W. (1995). Cross border shopping: A North American Perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 22(1), pp 16-34.
- [10] Xu, Y., & McGehee, N. G. (2012). Shopping Behavior of Chinese Tourists Visiting The United States: Letting The Shoppers Do The Talking. *Tourism Management*. 33, pp 427–430.
- [11] Yeung, S., Wong, J., & Ko, E. (2004). Preferred Shopping Destination: Hong Kong versus Singapore. *International Journal of Tourism Research*. 6, pp 85-96.