

# ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS OF TOURISTS TOWARDS GASTRONOMY TOURISM IN CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to investigate: (1) Tourist attitude towards gastronomic tourism behavior. 2) Behavior of gastronomic tourism and food purchases (3) Factors influencing tourists' attitudes toward gastronomic tourism in Chiang Mai province; and (4) The marketing mix is used to obtain the appropriate local food marketing strategies. The sample size was 629 tourists from the Chiang Mai Province. The statistical tools used for data analysis were percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, and one-way analysis of variance. The results of the research found that: (1) Tourists have a positive attitude towards gastronomic tourism. (2) The majority of tourists purchase food in the range of 501 to 1,000 baht per meal. (3) With an average marketing mix of 5.492, the total marketing mix is critical in order to make local food available to tourists. And (4) general characteristics such as age, status, income, travel experiences in Chiang Mai, local dining experiences, and marketing elements all influence tourists' attitudes towards gastronomic tourism ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

**Keywords:** Gastronomy Tourism, Tourist Attitude, Tourist Behavior, Marketing Mix, Thailand

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## INTRODUCTION

Gastronomic tourism is expanding quickly and becoming a popular trend. By The latest report of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), "Second Global Report on Gastronomy Tourism," released in 2017, explores the phenomenon of "Tourism for Gastronomy. " It was discovered that more than 6 million tourists worldwide choose to travel each year, mainly for gastronomic experiences, and it is expected that this number will rise (UNWTO, 2017). Consistent with the findings of the Sánchez-Cañizares and López-Guzmán (2012) supply-side study, it was claimed that production visits and tastings of local cuisine had become a tourist attraction. And it is a significant factor in generating interest in the current world of travel. Additionally, cuisine enhances a city's reputation or develops into an increasingly popular tourist destination (Chang and Yuan, 2011).

Gastronomic tourism is a practical way for tourist destinations to make money. According to research by McKerecher, Okumus, and Okumus (2008) and Meller and Cevovic (2003), individual tourists' dining expenses might make up as much as 25 % of overall spending. Furthermore, the revenue distribution to other connected businesses is both directly and indirectly correlated with gastronomic tourism. Especially in the agriculture, cattle, and fisheries industries, and may also be expanded to add value to other enterprises, such as the manufacturing of food and drinks for sale as souvenirs. This economic relevance is motivating several Asian nations, particularly Malaysia, Singapore, China, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand, to actively promote local food in order to compete for as much of the tourist market as possible.

Chiang Mai is one of the major tourist destinations in the northern region of Thailand. By have the natural setting, picturesque views, and stunning mountaintop are the selling points. On the other hand, because Chiang Mai is a city with abundant and diversified bioresources, it has a significant potential for the growth of gastronomic tourism. A special local food that combines the culinary traditions of several ethnic groups, including the Tai Yai, Chinese Ho, Tai Lue, and indigenous people, is also available. Which is referred to as "Lanna food" and features a number of well-known local dishes, including Khao Soi, Nam Ngiao, Nam Prik Ong, Nam Prik Num, Northern Sausage, Hang Lay Curry, Larb Mu Kua, and a variety of local desserts, including Kanom Jok, Khao Tom Hua Germin, Kanom Lima, and KhanomKluai (Phrompichai, 1999). From the aforementioned dishes, it is a highlight dish that tourists are very interested in due to its long history and history. Additionally, Chiang Mai has a large number of restaurants, luxury hotels, and staff members with culinary knowledge and professional services available to assist tourists.

Hence, to entice travelers to eat or purchase Lanna cuisine, Vendors and eateries must comprehend both the purchasing habits of tourists and the marketing tenets of the 4Ps marketing mix: product, pricing, place of sale, and promotion. In order to fully comprehend visitors and effectively address their wants, it is important to comprehend demands from the perspective of consumers (Siriwan, 2007).

For this reason, this research emphasizes the attitude towards food tourism behavior in order to know the general characteristics of consumers towards local food, food purchasing behavior and attitude toward food tourism behavior. This is to be used as a guideline for planning, marketing strategies and marketing communications to stimulate the market to increase the demand for local food products.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are 5 main theories for the concepts and theories used in the study, which are as follows: 1. Theories of demographic characteristics. 2. The theory of attitudes 3. Theoretical Consumer Behavior 4. Marketing mix theory, and 5. The measurement concept.

### Theories of demographic characteristics

According to Satawatin (2003), people with various demographic features have distinct psychological qualities. The analysis was based on the following variables: gender, age, education, and socioeconomic status.

### The theory of attitudes

According to Phanthumnawin (1981), attitude is a psychological variable that influences behavior more than other psychological traits like personality, motivation, and perception, resulting in a person acting adversely or favorably. As a result, a person is more inclined to respond in a specific manner to that person or scenario.

### Theoretical Consumer Behavior

Solomon (1996) describes consumer behavior as "any activity of a purchaser that is directly connected to the selection, purchase, and usage of products and services." This includes the purchase decision process that directs or prescribes such action to satisfy the demand and needs of consumers.

### Marketing mix theory

The Marketing Mix is a crucial component of marketing operations. It is a factor that the company can influence. Businesses must develop a marketing mix that may be used to design marketing initiatives (Neamhom, 2017). The marketing mix comprises of items (Product), distribution (Place), and pricing determination (Price). Advertising and marketing (Promotion) The marketing mix is also known as the 4Ps. These four components are all interconnected. Each of the Ps is equally essential. However, each marketing executive is responsible for developing a plan. By concentrating on which P is more important to satisfy the demands of the marketing goal, which is the purchaser.

### The measurement concepts.

The concept of the Likert Scale (Likert, 1932) was used to analyze and measure attitudes and marketing mix. The following are the scoring criteria:

**Table 1** The description of the seven-point Likert scale.

Description	Scale	Scores (Mean)
Extremely important / Strongly Agree	7	6.50-7.00
Important / Agree	6	5.50-6.49
Slightly important / More or less agree	5	4.50-5.49
Neutral / Undecided	4	3.50-4.49
Slightly not important / More or less disagree	3	2.50-3.49
Not Important / Disagree	2	1.50-2.49
Not important at all / Strongly Disagree	1	0.50-1.49

Source (Aziz et al, 2018)

### Related research

Wangsathian and Sriwichailamphan (2021) conducted research titled "Attitudes toward environmentally friendly pesticide products of the Safe Rice Producers in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand" to investigate the marketing mix elements influencing environmentally friendly pesticide products farmers' purchase decisions. The research approach relied on the collection of data by questionnaire. The results of the research found that: (1) Farmers have a positive attitude towards environmentally friendly pesticide products. (2) The majority of farmers purchase pesticides at an average cost of around 554.71 baht per rai. The frequency with which items are purchased is determined by the annual production cycle, which is mostly rice production. one cycle each year; (3) with an average marketing mix of 4.35, the total marketing mix is critical in order to make environmentally friendly pesticide products available to farmers; and (4) general characteristics such as age, experience, agricultural income,

purchase behaviors, and marketing elements all influence farmers' attitudes towards environmentally friendly pesticide products ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

Satarak (2015) conducted research titled "Marketing mix and consumers' buying decisions of organic food" to investigate the marketing mix elements influencing organic food consumers' purchase decisions. The qualitative research approach relied on in-depth interviews. The research found that the factors influencing consumers' purchasing decisions the most were the product factor, because of its good quality and variety, followed by the price factor, which may be more expensive than general food prices due to modern technology. In terms of marketing promotion, it is the component that has the least influence on purchase decisions since the marketing communication strategy has not reached the customers.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Survey research was used for this study, which was then statistically assessed and reported in a descriptive manner. The following describes the demographic and sample groups, research instruments, and data analysis.

### Population and sample

The population employed in this study was a group of 3,703,008 visitors that visited Chiang Mai provinces in 2020 (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2021). As a result, the researchers employed the Taro Yamane approach (Yamane, 1973) to construct a representative sample size of the population with a 95 percent confidence level. We collected a total of 400 computed samples. However, to confirm the accuracy of the calculations, we employed a total of 629 samples, and queries were made between September and November 2022.

### Collection of data

The questionnaire, which was divided into two parts and created in accordance with the definitions of the variables under study, included: 1) general information about the respondents; and 2) information about attitudes toward local food. Parts 2 address each sub-issue on seven levels (Likert scale) (Likert, 1932) by picking just one answer. Therefore, it was necessary to develop a research tool by searching for content validity using the Item Consistency Index (IOC) of three experts. The evaluation's findings indicated that the value was not less than 0.50 but rather ranged from 0.67 to 1.00, so the questionnaire was found to be appropriate for usage (Turner and Carlson, 2003). And A sample of 30 individuals was used to examine the reliability of the questionnaire (reliability test). By setting the acceptance criteria for Cronbach's alpha coefficient at 0.70 or higher (Cronbach, 1951), the reliability test results were in the range of 0.749-0.958.

### Data analysis

The following statistics were used to analyze the information collected in this study: 1. Statistics that are descriptive 2. Using frequency and percentage to provide generic information about the food tourist behavior. 3. Using mean and standard deviation, describe the marketing mix and attitude toward local food. 4. Using the mean and standard deviation, examine Chiang Mai's perception of food tourism. And 5. Inferential statistics based on a comparative examination of the mean differences in attitudes toward food tourism, categorized by general knowledge and marketing mix that affect local food. Classified by general information and marketing mix influencing gastronomy tourism by t-test in the case of two independent variables, the level of statistical significance was set at the 0.05 level, and the analytical method was used. One-way variance in cases where independent variables are more than two groups. When a statistically significant difference is found at the 0.05 level, the mean difference is tested individually using the LSD (least significant difference) method.

## RESULTS

### The sample's general personal, economic, and social data.

The majority of the sample's tourists were female, making up 59.62 percent, and up to 52.94 percent of them were single. It was discovered that they were between the ages of 21 and 50. It finds possessing a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education, 39.27 percent. Students, government employees or state enterprise employees, and private company employees are the top three most common occupations, accounting for 21.94 percent, 23.05 percent, and 24.17 percent, respectively. Their annual income ranges from 20,001 to 30,000 Baht per Month, with the highest percentage representing 37.04 percent (Table 2).

### Behavior of gastronomic tourism and food purchases.

The largest expenditure was shown to be in the range of 5,001 to 10,000 baht per trip, or 41.60 percent. The information on tourist meal consumption costs per meal shows that they are in the range of 501 to 1,000 baht, or 41.97 percent. When tourists' domiciles were surveyed, it was discovered that tourists from Thailand's central area chose to travel in Chiang Mai the most, accounting for 43.56 percent. Taking traveler experiences in Chiang Mai into account, it was discovered that although 608 individuals, or 96.66 percent, had been to Chiang Mai, only 574 of them had sampled the local cuisine, or 91.26 percent (Table 2).

**Table 2** Demographic characteristics of respondents.

Demographic characteristics	Number	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	254	40.38
Female	375	59.62
Total	629	100.00
<b>Status</b>		
Single	333	52.94
Married	215	34.18
Widowed	81	12.88
Total	629	100.00
<b>AGE</b>		
< 21	60	9.54
21-30	234	37.20
31-40	150	23.85
41-50	128	20.35
> 50	57	9.06
Total	629	100.00
<b>Education</b>		
Below elementary school	12	1.91
Elementary school	58	9.22
Junior high school or vocational certificate.	102	16.22
Upper Secondary School or High Vocational Certificate.	176	27.98
Bachelor's degree	247	39.27
Higher than bachelor's degree	34	5.40
Total	629	100.00
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	138	21.94
Government employee or State enterprises	145	23.05
Private company employees	152	24.17
Personal business	92	14.63
General employee	88	13.99

<b>Demographic characteristics</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Retirement	14	2.22
Total	629	100.00
<b>Income (Baht per month)</b>		
< 10,000	72	11.45
10,001-20,000	215	34.18
20,001-30,000	233	37.04
30,001-40,000	89	14.15
40,001-50,000	17	2.70
> 50,000	3	0.48
Total	629	100.00
<b>Travel Expenses (Baht per trip)</b>		
< 5,001	207	32.91
5,001-10,000	262	41.65
10,001-15,000	90	14.31
15,001-20,000	155	24.64
> 20,000	5	0.79
Total	629	100.00
<b>Dining expenses (Baht per meal)</b>		
< 501	139	22.10
501-1,000	264	41.97
1,001-1,500	78	12.40
1,501-2,000	85	13.51
2,001- 2,500	21	3.34
2,501- 3,000	25	3.98
3,001- 3,500	16	2.54
> 3,500	1	0.16
Total	629	100.00
<b>Region of residence</b>		
Northern	63	10.02
Central	274	43.56
Northeast	31	4.93
Eastern	91	14.47
Western	91	14.47
Southern	89	14.15
Total	629	100.00
<b>Travel experience in Chiang Mai Province</b>		
Ever	608	96.66
Never	21	3.34
Total	629	100.00
<b>The experience of eating local food</b>		
Ever	574	91.26
Never	55	8.74
Total	629	100.00

#### **The marketing mix that influences local food.**

The research on the marketing mix of local food in Chiang Mai was separated into four factors using the 4 Ps marketing mix approach: product, price, location, and promotion. Chiang Mai's total market mix for local food is robust. with a mean of 5.492 (S.D. = 0.436). When this part was separated by aspect, the pricing side had the greatest average of 6.079 (S.D. = 1.041),

followed by the selling location with an average of 5.367 (S.D. = 0.662), and the product side with the lowest average of 5.264 (S.D. = 0.858). Tourists were found to be positive about the marketing mix that influences local food in Chiang Mai as a whole (Table 3).

#### **Tourist attitude towards gastronomic tourism behavior in Chiang Mai.**

According to the statistics, travelers' attitudes toward gastronomic tourism in Chiang Mai had an average score of 4.357 (S.D.=0.708), suggesting that tourists loved local food and were eager to communicate about their experiences with food tourism on a medium or passive level (Table 3).

**Table 3** Attitude information

Attitude	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
Marketing Mix Attitudes Overview	5.492	0.436	Slightly important
Marketing Mix Attitudes (Product)	5.264	0.858	Slightly important
Marketing Mix Attitudes (Price)	6.079	1.041	Important
Marketing Mix Attitudes (Place)	5.367	0.662	Slightly important
Marketing Mix Attitudes (Promotion)	5.264	0.857	Slightly important
Attitudes toward gastronomic tourism	4.357	0.708	Neutral

#### **Hypothesis testing**

A study of the factors that can influence tourists' attitudes toward gastronomic tourism. The statistic was used to compare two sets of independent variables. The t-test was employed when the independent variable was more than two groups by utilizing one-way ANOVA to evaluate the difference between the means of the independent variables with three or more variables when a statistically significant difference was discovered at the p-value of 0.05. The Fisher's least significant difference (LSD) technique was used to evaluate the mean difference in pairs at the 0.05 level (Table 4).

**Table 4** summarizes the findings of hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis	P-value	Hypothesis testing	
		Do not reject	Reject
Hypothesis 1: Tourist with various levels of general information have varying attitudes toward gastronomic tourism.			
Hypothesis 1.1 Different genders of tourists have different attitudes gastronomic tourism.	0.25		/
Hypothesis 1.2 Different status of tourists have different attitudes toward gastronomic tourism.	0.03*	/	
Hypothesis 1.3 Different ages of tourists have different attitudes toward gastronomic tourism.	0.01*	/	
Hypothesis 1.4 Different degrees of education of tourists have different attitudes toward gastronomic tourism.	0.36		/
Hypothesis 1.5 Different occupations of tourists have different attitudes towards gastronomic tourism.	0.13		/
Hypothesis 1.6 Different levels of each income range of tourists have different attitudes toward gastronomic tourism.	0.04*	/	
Hypothesis 2: Tourists with different food purchase behaviors exhibited different attitudes about gastronomic tourism in Chiang Mai.			

Hypothesis	P-value	Hypothesis testing	
		Do not reject	Reject
Hypothesis 2.1 Expenditures used by tourists per trip are different, affecting different attitudes towards gastronomic tourism.	0.40		/
Hypothesis 2.2 Different tourist expenditures per meal affects different attitudes toward gastronomic tourism.	0.22		/
Hypothesis 2.3 Different tourist experiences in Chiang Mai affect different attitudes towards gastronomic tourism.	0.03*	/	
Hypothesis 2.4 Different tourists' local food experiences in Chiang Mai affects different attitudes towards gastronomic tourism.	0.04*	/	
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Hypothesis 3: Different marketing mixes have different attitudes toward gastronomic tourism.			
Hypothesis 3.1 Different overall marketing mixes have different attitudes toward gastronomic tourism.	0.00*	/	
Hypothesis 3.2 Different marketing mixes (price) have different attitudes toward gastronomic tourism.	0.00*	/	
Hypothesis 3.3 Different marketing mixes (places) have different attitudes toward gastronomic tourism.	0.03*	/	
Hypothesis 3.4 Different marketing mixes (products) have different attitudes toward gastronomic tourism.	0.00*	/	
Hypothesis 3.5 Different marketing mixes (promotions) have different attitudes toward gastronomic tourism.	0.01*	/	

Notes: \* indicate significant at the  $P \leq 0.05$ .

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Tourists who had personal factors such as status, age, and income at differences had different attitudes toward gastronomic tourism behavior at the statistical significance level of 0.05. However, gender, education, and occupation had no influence on tourist attitudes. The research also found that different gastronomic tourism behaviors resulted in different attitudes toward food tourism, which is found in the topics of travel experiences in Chiang Mai and local dining experiences. As for the variables, different market components had different attitudes toward gastronomic tourism in both the overall picture and all 4 components ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). The findings and discussion of the primary findings in this research are grouped into three major categories. First, consider facts on socioeconomic position, age, and income, all of which influence attitudes toward gastronomic tourism behavior. It demonstrates that the sample group of travelers likes culinary tourism. As a result, consuming local cuisine should be encouraged. The second point, based on statistics on food tourist behavior and food purchases, shows that the marketing mix, particularly the selling and purchasing places and pricing, should be studied. This will allow local food to reach tourists and suit their demands. The third point to think about is setting reasonable prices for local food. As a result, government agencies should encourage and aid entrepreneurs in the manufacturing of such food more. By lowering the price to a level where tourists can afford this sort of cuisine, as well as locating more sources of distribution through multiple channels.



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**Data Availability Statement:** The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

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