

# INFLUENCING JIANGSU CHINESE TOURISTS OF MOTIVATION AND DESTINATION IMAGE ON TOURIST SATISFACTION IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

Tingting ZHU<sup>1</sup> and Savong SAWETWATANA<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Business Administration, Pathumthani University, Thailand;  
340618248@qq.com (T. Z.); savong.s@ptu.ac.th (S. S.)

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## ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were: 1) to study influencing Jiangsu Chinese tourists of motivation on tourist satisfaction, and 2) to study influencing Jiangsu Chinese tourists of destination image on tourist satisfaction. This study was quantitative research. The population in the total population in Jiangsu was 80.4 million people. The sample size was 400 employees determined by Taro Yamane formula. The research instrument was a 5-rating scale questionnaire through their electronic device. Statistics frequency, percentage, mean and multiplied. The research results revealed that: 1) Travel motivation consists of two factors, which are the causes of push and pull. There is a total of 20 items. Except for the item of the tourism promotion is very attractive was at the strongly agreed level, and the others were at the agreed level, and 2) The destination image (Mean = 3.95, SD = 0.687), which was considered as agree level. It contains four factors, such as natural environment, infrastructure, social environment, and entertainment. It was distributed to 12 items; they were all ranked in agree level. The natural environment (Mean = 3.88, SD = 0.689), the infrastructures (Mean = 3.99, SD = 0.634), the social environment (Mean = 3.95, SD = 0.726) and the entertainment (Mean = 3.91, SD = 0.7). **Keywords:** Tourism Motivation, Tourism Satisfaction, Tourism Loyalty, Jiangsu Chinese Tourists

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## INTRODUCTION

Thailand's tourism industry is indeed a vital component of the country's economy, contributing significantly to its GDP and overall economic growth. With its diverse natural landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and vibrant attractions, Thailand attracts millions of tourists from around the world each year (Huadong, 2015).

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on Thailand's tourism industry, leading to a decrease in its contribution to the country's GDP in 2021. Despite being one of the most popular tourist destinations globally, Thailand experienced a decline in tourism revenue due to strict travel restrictions and reduced international arrivals. In 2021, the tourism industry directly contributed around 356 billion Thai baht to Thailand's GDP, representing only 0.84 percent of the total GDP. This decrease can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely impacted international travel and tourism activities. However, with the gradual reopening of international borders and the resumption of international arrivals, the Tourism Authority of Thailand has been actively promoting tourism to revive the industry. This includes encouraging both international and domestic travelers to explore various destinations within Thailand. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, domestic tourism has played a crucial role in sustaining the tourism industry in Thailand. Bangkok and the central region generated the highest revenue from local visitors, followed by the northern region. This highlights the importance of domestic travel in mitigating the adverse effects of the pandemic on the tourism sector (Caihong, 2021).

The news of Thailand's plan to eliminate visa restrictions for Chinese citizens starting March 1 has sparked significant interest, with the Thai government aiming to attract 8 million Jiangsu Chinese tourists this year. Thai government spokeswoman Chai Wacharonke announced the initiative, highlighting the potential impact on tourism and the economy. The visa waiver announcement has already led to a substantial increase in searches for Thailand on a prominent Chinese travel platform, indicating a strong interest among Chinese travelers in visiting the country. This increased interest is expected to result in more flights between Thailand and China, potentially reducing airfares and facilitating the achievement of the year-end tourism target for Jiangsu Chinese tourists. Thailand has previously provided temporary visa exemptions to tourists from China, with the current exemptions set to expire on February 29, 2024. By extending the visa waiver and making it permanent, Thailand aims to attract more Jiangsu Chinese tourists and further strengthen bilateral tourism ties. In recent years, China has been one of the largest sources of tourists for Thailand, alongside Malaysia. In 2023, foreign tourists generated significant income for Thailand, contributing 1.2 trillion baht (approximately 34.52 billion U.S. dollars) to the economy. Tourism plays a vital role in Thailand's economy, contributing around 12 percent to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Jiangsu Chinese tourists accounted for approximately 28 percent of the total number of foreign tourists visiting Thailand, which exceeded 40 million in 2019. By welcoming more Jiangsu Chinese tourists and promoting tourism initiatives, Thailand aims to boost its economy and further solidify its position as a premier tourist destination in Southeast Asia (Thainew, 2023). Bangkok's status as a premier destination for Jiangsu Chinese tourists is undeniable, given its multifaceted appeal and prominent position on the global tourism stage. As Thailand's largest city and capital, Bangkok serves as the epicenter of politics, economics, trade, culture, technology, and education in the country. Its role as a hub for international organizations and conferences further enhances its global significance. The city's allure is bolstered by its stunning scenery, abundant historical sites, efficient transportation network, vibrant commercial activities, modern tourism infrastructure, unique national identity, and rich Buddhist culture and art. These factors collectively contribute to Bangkok's reputation as a must-visit tourist destination, as evidenced by its top ranking in the MasterCard Index of Global Destination Cities in 2016, surpassing renowned cities like London, Paris, and Dubai.

However, challenges such as Thailand's crackdown on cheap tour packages for Jiangsu Chinese tourists have impacted tourism arrivals, particularly during China's peak "Golden Week" holiday. The crackdown led to a significant drop in Chinese tourist arrivals to Thailand in the last quarter of 2016, highlighting the vulnerability of the tourism sector in the face of policy changes. To mitigate the impact and continue attracting Jiangsu Chinese tourists to Thailand, the Thai government has implemented short-term measures, such as temporarily reducing visa fees and eliminating travel visa fees for Jiangsu Chinese tourists during specific periods. While these measures provide temporary relief, they are not sustainable solutions in the long run (Lin, 2014). A marketer to effectively recruit Chinese visitors to Thailand in a sustainable manner, it is crucial to get a comprehensive understanding of their motives, levels of satisfaction, and variables that contribute to their loyalty. Thailand can improve the experience for Chinese visitors and build their loyalty by understanding their preferences, wants, and habits and then developing specific methods to meet these factors. Researching the motivation, contentment, and loyalty of Chinese visitors visiting Thailand is crucial. This study will provide valuable insights for making strategic decisions and assuring the ongoing expansion and success of the tourism sector.

## LITERATURE REVIEWS

The impact of motivation and destination image on tourist satisfaction among Jiangsu Chinese visitors visiting Bangkok, Thailand may be systematically categorized according to the parts you have delineated. This is a summary of pertinent ideas and concepts that may inform each segment of your investigation.

### **Section 1: Theoretical Framework and Conceptualization of Travel Motivation**

Travel motivation denotes the elements that compel visitors to choose certain places or activities. Essential hypotheses that may inform this segment of your research encompass:

The Push-Pull Theory posits that visitors are motivated by internal wants, such as the urge for escape or adventure, while simultaneously being attracted by external variables, like destination characteristics and cultural elements.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: In the context of tourism, travelers' motives may be categorized from fundamental requirements (physiological, safety) to higher-order wants (self-actualization via travel experiences).

Travel Career Ladder (TCL): Pearce's framework asserts that tourists possess varying goals at several life phases, ranging from leisure to more profound cultural or self-actualizing experiences.

### **Section 2: Theory and Concept of Satisfaction**

Tourist satisfaction is the extent to which a tourist's anticipations for a trip correspond with their actual experience. The relevant theories and models comprise:

Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory posits that satisfaction is achieved when a tourist's expectations are fulfilled or surpassed, whereas unhappiness ensues when expectations are unmet.

Equity Theory posits that satisfaction is affected by the perceived justice or value for money experienced by visitors.

Cognitive-Affective Model: Satisfaction encompasses both cognitive appraisal of the event and affective emotional reaction to it.

### **Section 3: Theoretical Framework and Conceptualization of Destination Image**

The destination image pertains to the opinion that visitors have about a location, which affects their decision-making and overall pleasure. The theories encompass:

The Cognitive-Affective-Conative Model posits that destination image is constructed by cognitive beliefs (knowledge about a destination), affective evaluations (emotional reactions), and conative responses (behavioral intents such as returning or endorsing the place).

Place Attachment Theory posits that visitors develop emotional bonds with locations, which affect their enjoyment and loyalty.

#### **Section 4: Theory and Concept of Decision-Making**

Decision-making in tourism encompasses the process undertaken by travelers while selecting a location. The theories encompass: Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB): This theory examines the impact of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on visitors' decision-making processes. The Consumer Choice-Making Process Model generally comprises five stages: issue detection, information search, appraisal of options, purchase choice, and post-purchase behavior. Risk Perception Theory: Tourists evaluate possible risks (e.g., safety, expense) against prospective advantages while making travel choices.

#### **Section 5: Concerning Jiangsu Chinese Tourists**

Comprehending the cultural, economic, and social environment of Jiangsu Chinese visitors is essential for your research. Jiangsu is among China's economically developed provinces, and travelers from this area may exhibit distinct travel patterns and reasons. The socio-cultural context of Jiangsu, characterized by its rich cultural history and urban development, may shape visitors' inclinations towards sites that provide cultural or historical importance with contemporary conveniences. Tourism Preferences: Tourists from Jiangsu may exhibit distinct travel patterns relative to other Chinese areas, maybe prioritizing educational, cultural, or leisure-focused tourism. Motivational things: Prior study indicates that Chinese visitors are driven by things such as sightseeing, shopping, culinary experiences, and cultural interaction, which may also apply to tourists from Jiangsu.

This section provides an overview of several related research studies focused on the motivations, satisfaction, and loyalty of Chinese tourists, particularly those from Jiangsu province, in the context of tourism in Thailand. These studies form the foundation of understanding the behavior, preferences, and experiences of Jiangsu Chinese tourists, helping to shape the current research.

Li Biyuan (2012): This study explores the motivations and loyalty of Jiangsu Chinese tourists in Thailand. It highlights the influence of government policies, visa regulations, bilateral agreements, and diplomatic relations between China and Thailand on tourists' travel behavior. It suggests that external factors, such as ease of entry and political ties, significantly impact travel motivations, satisfaction levels, and loyalty to Bangkok as a destination.

Zhou Huiling and Xu Chunxiao (2011): Focusing on Chinese outbound tourists' perceptions and satisfaction with tourism destinations, this study, although not specific to Jiangsu tourists, provides insights into broader trends in Chinese tourist behavior. It examines factors influencing satisfaction and loyalty, including how perceptions of the destination shape the overall travel experience.

Journal of Marketing Research (1965): Although an older study, this seminal work remains relevant in understanding consumer behavior and satisfaction. It provides a foundational understanding of how satisfaction is formed through the comparison of expectations and actual experiences, which is applicable to modern tourist satisfaction models.

Xiaorong, Meng Chuanxi, and Luo Wenbin (2013): This research develops measurement models for tourist satisfaction at World Heritage sites, which has implications for broader tourism management. It helps in identifying factors that influence tourist satisfaction and offers strategies for enhancing the visitor experience, applicable to Jiangsu tourists visiting iconic sites in Bangkok.

Jaruwan Udomsab (2013): Investigating visitor satisfaction at Phuket Fantasy Park in Thailand, this study provides insights into how tourist satisfaction impacts their willingness to revisit. It highlights the importance of specific experiences and attractions in shaping visitor loyalty, which is relevant to understanding how Jiangsu tourists perceive and experience Bangkok's attractions.

Luo Wenbin, Xu Feixiong, and Zhang Tong (2013): This study examines factors influencing urban tourist satisfaction using a probit model. The findings are significant for urban tourism destinations like Bangkok, showing how various service and infrastructure elements influence tourist satisfaction and contribute to repeat visits.

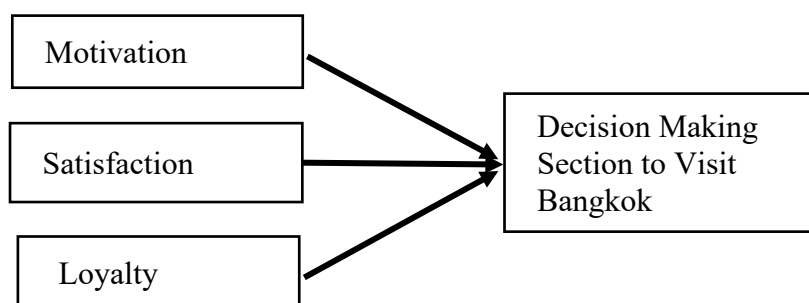
Insights from the Literature Review:

**Motivations and Loyalty:** Several studies underscore the importance of understanding travel motivations in shaping satisfaction and loyalty. For Jiangsu Chinese tourists, factors such as ease of travel, cultural appeal, and destination image are key in fostering loyalty to Bangkok.

**Satisfaction Models:** The literature frequently discusses the expectation-performance gap, where satisfaction arises from meeting or exceeding expectations. Tourist satisfaction models are often tied to service quality, infrastructure, and cultural experiences, all of which are relevant for managing tourism in Bangkok.

**Cultural and Social Factors:** Social norms, cultural values, and external influences, like government policies, play a crucial role in shaping tourist motivations and satisfaction levels. Recognizing these factors helps in designing targeted tourism strategies for Jiangsu tourists.

These studies collectively support the current research's focus on understanding the influence of motivation and destination image on Jiangsu Chinese tourists' satisfaction in Bangkok. By integrating the insights from related research, the current study aims to further investigate how these factors contribute to the tourists' overall experience and loyalty to the destination.



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Population and sample Group

The total population in Jiangsu was 80.4 million people and this research adopts convenient method which is non-probability as sampling method. The sample size was 400 based on Yamane's (1973) formula with a confidence level of 95% and the margin of error of  $\pm 5$  for the purpose of this study.

### Research Instruments

Study, the researchers developed the questionnaire to be two parts. Part one is general information and demographic data. Part two is Measuring Variables, which researcher applied 5 Likert scale for the question.

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly agree

The research will use 5-point Likert scale.

The statistics were shown in the following tables in each topic, with the mean of every item. A sample is defined as the subset of the given population. Also, the sample size is denoted by  $n$ . The weighted average ( $\bar{x}$ ) is an average in which each observation in the data set is assigned or multiplied by a weight before summing to a single average value. ( $\bar{x} = \text{weight} \times \text{score}$ ) .

## Data Collection

This research takes Jiangsu Chinese tourists in Bangkok as the investigation object, invites tourists to take the questionnaire by using the random interception method. At the same time, in order to facilitate the communication with the interviewees, I asked Chinese friends to be my research assistants, and we sent out these questionnaires in three main tourist attractions of Jiangsu Chinese tourists. The questionnaires were distributed between September and December 2023. The period covered a time when holiday was scheduled. A total of 400 questionnaires were sent out and 194 valid questionnaires were completed (Some of the respondents did not fill out the basic information). The response rate of this questionnaire is 97%, which is quite reasonable for this type of survey. The profile of respondents is detailed in the results section.

## Data Analysis and Statistics

- 1) Frequency distribution
- 2) Percentage value
- 3) Average (X)
- 4) Standard Deviation (S.D)
- 5) Multiple Regression

## RESEARCH RESULTS

The second portion of the questionnaire has a total of 32 tourist motivation questions, consisting of 10 push items and 10 pull ones. Subsequent to four inquiries on tourist satisfaction, there are two items pertaining to tourism loyalty. All questions in the questionnaire were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree). The data were presented in the below tables for each subject, including the mean of each item. A sample is defined as a subset of the specified population. The sample size is represented by n. The weighted average (x) is an average where each observation in the dataset is allocated a weight before being summed to get a single average value.

**Table 1** Tourism Motivation (Push Factors)

Factor	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Score (M)
1. Interest in international travel	66	68	179	84	60	3.17
2. Explore a website that is highly recommended	59	61	65	94	28	3.67
3. Worship of a religious deity	72	98	116	68	71	2.89
4. Engage in festivals and festivities	96	69	128	95	57	3.18
5. Explore renowned cultural and historical landmarks	84	55	104	121	85	3.62
6. Acquire knowledge regarding the customs of the local populace	42	49	87	132	117	4.07
7. Visit acquaintances or family members	98	119	83	72	59	2.39
8. Visit the location with family or companions	51	52	81	125	100	3.91
9. Reduce learning or working stress	49	62	78	138	94	3.96
10. Take a pause and unwind	61	46	66	139	102	4.04

Table 1, in this study, a total of 10 motivation indicators were selected to describe the respondents' internal motivation. As shown in table 2, the average size of the 10 items was slightly different for each respondent's tourism motivation.

Indicating a preference for immersive experiences and leisure during travel, the statements "Acquire knowledge regarding the customs of the local populace" ( $M = 4.07$ ) and "Take a pause and unwind" ( $M = 4.04$ ) demonstrate a strong motivation for cultural engagement and relaxation.

The intention to visit the location with family or companions ( $M = 3.91$ ) indicates a preference for shared experiences, underscoring the social component of travel.

Exploring a website that is highly recommended ( $M = 3.67$ ) and visiting renowned cultural and historical monuments ( $M = 3.62$ ) suggest a moderate level of interest in both online research and visiting significant locations.

Although there is interest in international travel ( $M = 3.17$ ) and Engage in festivals and festivities ( $M = 3.18$ ), these motivations are moderate, indicating that they may not be as compelling as other factors.

Scores that are lower:

Similar to previous data, respondents' lowest ranking is visiting acquaintances or family members ( $M = 2.39$ ), suggesting that this is not their primary motivation. The demographic's overall travel motivations may be reflected in the fact that respondents also place less importance on the worship of a religious divinity ( $M = 2.89$ )

**Table 2** Tourism Motivation (Pull Factors)

Factor	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Score (M)
1. Enticing media coverage	11	73	119	97	62	3.19
2. Minimal travel expenses	47	55	118	113	67	3.61
3. Amiable local residents	43	53	90	130	84	3.91
4. Accessible and economical dining establishments	44	53	111	117	71	3.57
5. Affordable and accessible hotel	44	60	121	114	68	3.43
6. Shopping	46	60	140	96	48	3.38
7. Entertainment	45	58	143	100	43	3.41
8. Night life	50	59	114	114	61	3.49
9. Unique	43	47	110	124	79	3.97
10. Buddhism	45	57	95	108	89	3.65

In this study, 10 related pull motivational items were selected, involving the characteristics of Bangkok's attributes. As shown in the table 3, the overall average of pull motivational items was not significantly different, ranging from 3.16 to 3.85. Among them, the highest averages are "Delicious food" ( $M = 3.85$ ), "Friendly local people" ( $M = 3.83$ ), and "Buddhism" ( $M = 3.79$ ). This was followed by "Famous historical and cultural relics" ( $M = 3.77$ ) and "Unique customs" ( $M = 3.73$ ). Obviously, famous historical and cultural relics, delicious local food, and unique local customs in Bangkok are the most attractive for Jiangsu Chinese tourists. Thai food is famous for being spicy and sour using unique and diverse spices, which deeply attracts the heart of Jiangsu Chinese tourists. Jiangsu Chinese tourists are also deeply impressed by the civilized and friendly Thai people. Almost all Jiangsu Chinese tourists have learned to say

“sawadika” (hello) and “kob khun ka” (thank you) during their Thailand trip. Also, the local attractive tourism performance items are preferred by Jiangsu Chinese tourists, such as Thai boxing, Lady Boy Show, Thai massage and so on. Interestingly, “religious adoration” ( $M = 2.73$ ) is a low in motivation push factors. Jiangsu Chinese tourists do not come to Bangkok for religious worship, instead they are attracted by the prevailing Buddhism ( $M = 3.79$ ) in Thailand and enjoy the atmosphere of the country of Buddhism.

The lowest score is the “Developed metropolis” ( $M = 3.16$ ). Jiangsu Chinese tourists do not regard Bangkok as a developed metropolis, because of the untidy streets and inconvenient bus service. The Thai government should pay more attention to these shortcomings. Tourism publicity in Bangkok is not enough to attract Jiangsu Chinese tourists, which only got 3.21 among these items. Bangkok tourism advertising is not distinctive enough and do not notice by Jiangsu Chinese tourists in China’s domestic media.

**Table 3** Tourism Satisfaction

Tourism Satisfaction	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree	Score (M)
Do you think Bangkok is better than any other places you have visited	10	68	115	140	67	4.32
Do you think this trip to Bangkok is	0	56	130	137	65	3.56

Table 3 lists the statistics and mean value of respondents' tourism satisfaction. Overall, the average of the respondents' tourism satisfaction is 3.67, which has reached a relatively high level. Among them, the one with the highest degree of satisfaction was “Do you think this trip is worthwhile” with an average value of 3.94. “Are you satisfied with this trip to Bangkok” got 3.86. These indicate that Jiangsu Chinese tourists' motivation has been satisfied, whether in leisure and entertainment, life experience, food, and other aspects. For the other two items “Do you think this trip to Bangkok is beyond your expectations” and “Do you think Bangkok is better than any other places you have visited,” the mean values are 3.56 and 3.32 respectively. The results show that Jiangsu Chinese tourists have a higher level of satisfaction in these aspects. Bangkok needs to maintain and improve the satisfaction of tourists.

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The results of this study offer insightful perspectives into the motivations, destination image, satisfaction, and loyalty of Jiangsu Chinese tourists visiting Bangkok, Thailand. The data collection was conducted during a peak travel period, ensuring that the findings reflect common travel behaviors and attitudes of Chinese tourists from Jiangsu.

1) Motivation and Travel Behavior, The push and pull factors driving tourism were evident in the responses. Many tourists expressed push motivations such as the desire to escape routine life, explore new cultures, and seek relaxation. Pull motivations included the appeal of Bangkok's rich cultural heritage, vibrant markets, and favorable climate.

The results align with Iso-Ahola's theory of personal and interpersonal motivators. Jiangsu tourists were largely driven by personal aspirations (e.g., relaxation and cultural exploration), while interpersonal factors, like family or friends' influence, also played a role.

2) Destination Image, Tourists' perceptions of Bangkok played a significant role in their decision to travel. The majority of respondents had positive impressions of Bangkok, appreciating its cultural landmarks, food, and hospitality. This aligns with the dual-process theory, where tourists make quick decisions based on emotional responses (System 1) and more



considered, analytical decisions (System 2) based on practical factors like safety and affordability. However, a minority of tourists expressed concerns over aspects like congestion and pollution, which slightly affected their perception of Bangkok's overall destination image. These concerns may influence repeat visits.

3) Satisfaction, Most respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with their visit, particularly praising the hospitality of local people, quality of services, and diversity of attractions. These findings align with the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Model, which suggests that satisfaction is achieved when actual experiences meet or exceed expectations.

However, some tourists reported dissatisfaction with transportation and overcrowding at major attractions, indicating areas where improvements can be made to further enhance tourist satisfaction.

4) Loyalty, The data suggests that satisfied tourists showed strong behavioral loyalty, expressing interest in revisiting Bangkok in the future. Furthermore, many respondents indicated their willingness to recommend Bangkok to friends and family, reflecting high levels of attitudinal loyalty. As per Oliver's Four-Phase Loyalty Model, Jiangsu tourists displayed loyalty that went beyond simple repeat visits, extending to active promotion of the destination through positive word-of-mouth.

### Conclusion

This study examined the influence of motivation and destination image on tourist satisfaction and loyalty among Jiangsu Chinese tourists in Bangkok, Thailand. The findings highlight several key areas:

Motivations for travel: Jiangsu tourists are driven by a mix of push factors (such as a need for relaxation and cultural exploration) and pull factors (Bangkok's unique attractions and rich culture).

Destination image: A generally positive image of Bangkok greatly influenced tourists' decisions to visit. However, issues like congestion and pollution were minor concerns, suggesting the need for improved infrastructure to enhance the city's attractiveness.

Satisfaction: High levels of satisfaction were reported, particularly regarding the hospitality and quality of services in Bangkok. Improvements in transportation and crowd management could further boost satisfaction levels.

Loyalty: The study found strong evidence of both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty, with tourists expressing interest in revisiting and recommending Bangkok.

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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.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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