

FOREIGN TOURISTS' ATTRIBUTE SATISFACTION AND OVERALL SATISFACTION: A CASE STUDY OF THAI RESTAURANTS IN KRABI, THAILAND

Pajika Voravittayathorn¹, Suthawan Chirapanda²

^{1,2}International College, School of Business, University of the Thai Chamber of
Commerce. 126/1 Vibhavadee-Rangsit Rd., Dindang, Bangkok 10400, Thailand

¹suthawan_chi@utcc.ac.th, ²apdpajika@icloud.com

Article info

Article history: -

Keywords:

Restaurant attributes,
Attribute satisfaction,
Overall satisfaction,
Thai restaurants

Abstract

With the growth of restaurant establishments and increasing number of foreign tourists in Thailand, understanding the targeted tourist needs and satisfaction is therefore critical for successful management for all restaurants. Thus, the purposes of this research are twofold. First, the author examines the relative importance of restaurant attribute satisfaction in influencing overall satisfaction of foreign tourists with Thai restaurants in Krabi, Thailand. Secondly, using the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) framework, the author further assesses the specific attributes of Thai restaurants in Krabi, Thailand that are perceived by foreign tourists to be important to their satisfaction.

Research results revealed a positive relationship between attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction of foreign tourists in five dimensions including 'price and value', 'food', 'personnel', 'beverage', and 'setting'. The IPA results also illustrated that Thai restaurants in the area are generally successful in satisfying foreign tourists. The findings from this study should indeed provide greater insight into foreign tourists' attribute and overall satisfaction with Thai restaurants in Krabi, Thailand and enable restaurant organizations to better develop resource allocations, marketing strategies, and management plans to attract and retain a larger share of foreign tourists to their restaurants.

Introduction

Although there is a tendency to focus on the tourist's overall vacation experience when discussing about tourism, vacation experience is actually comprised of a series of different experiences such as sightseeing, encounters with the locals, and dining experience (Blichfeldt, Chor, and Ballegaard, 2010). In terms of dining experience, restaurant is perhaps the next visible element after accommodation affecting the attractiveness of a tourist destination, especially in international tourism (Adam, Adongo, and Dayour, 2015). As individual consumers, each tourist would have his or her own preferences in choosing what to do or purchase and once the decision is made, the overall experience may be judged based on such preferences.

Existing literature reveals that eating occasion certainly involves a multitude of actions, and that, consumer preferences and satisfaction depend on a myriad of factors including food, service, restaurant's environment, etc. As Soriano (2003) notes, restaurant enterprises concerned with quality must therefore combine, balance, and manage their tangible and intangible elements. This is because a restaurant's particular synergy of its tangible/intangible product determines its degree and manner of differentiation from competitors and its ultimate value. With that in mind, it is therefore essential for researchers and practitioners in the food service to continue to explore attributes that have the most impact on consumers'

satisfaction. In addition, given the fact that "tourists' expectations and providers' service performance are always changing" (Song, Kong, and Chen, 2008) and that "Thailand is considered an underrepresented country in the cross-cultural research literature" (Polyorat and Sophonsiri, 2010); more efforts are still very much needed in examining tourists' important dining attributes in influencing their attribute satisfaction as well as overall satisfaction with restaurants in Thailand.

Thus, the purposes of this research are twofold. First, the author examines the relative importance of restaurant attribute satisfaction in influencing overall satisfaction of foreign tourists with Thai restaurants in Krabi, Thailand. Secondly, using the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) framework, the author further assesses the specific attributes of Thai restaurants in Krabi, Thailand that are perceived by foreign tourists to be important to their satisfaction. The findings from this research not only contribute to the less explored area in hospitality studies regarding the significance of attribute satisfaction on overall customer satisfaction with restaurants, but also provide useful information for restaurant practitioners concerning factors that influence foreign tourists' overall satisfaction. In addition, restaurateurs will also have a better insight into the specific restaurant attributes in which foreign tourists perceive to be important to them and are satisfied or dissatisfied with.

Literature review

Identification of restaurant attributes

Restaurant experience can be considered as a unique bundle of tangible and intangible products and services provided to the consumer (Harrington, Ottenbacher, and Kendall, 2011). Polyorat and Sophonsiri (2010) examined how each dimension of service quality including reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy may exhibit different impacts on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the chain restaurant from Thai consumers in Thailand. The study found that Thai customers rely on tangible cues such as restaurant décor and staff appearance when evaluating restaurants' service quality. Relatedly, studies by Kim, Hertzman, and Hwang (2010) and Ryu and Han (2010) also found elements such as food quality, quality of service, price, location, etc. to be important to consumers. Hwang and Zhao (2010) studied factors that influence customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the restaurant business. The study results indicated that good value, tasty food, and restaurant cleanness most affected satisfied customers. In terms of the individual attributes, Harrington, Ottenbacher, and Way (2013) also supported earlier studies indicating important attributes for consumers making dining decisions at quick service restaurants as follows: (1) food safety, (2) restaurant cleanliness, (3) food quality, (4) speed of service, (5) perceived value of the food and drink

items, (6) quality of service, (7) staff friendliness, (8) price, (9) variety of menu, and (10) close travel distance.

Recent literature also revealed similar results. As Mason *et al.* (2016) point out, "When consumers perceive that a restaurant provides higher quality food (flavor, freshness, etc.), they tend to be more highly satisfied with their dining experience. Additionally, restaurants that offer higher service quality (speedy service, accuracy of order received, professionalism of staff, etc.) are more likely to have satisfied consumers." Lee, Lee, and Dewald (2016) investigated the relative importance of tangible service attributes toward diners' satisfaction within the upscale dining segment. The findings revealed that table aesthetics, hygiene purity, and vehicle convenience positively affect dining satisfaction. Later study by Sezgin and Göde (2017) found that there are direct and positive relationships between service quality, food quality, perceived value and satisfaction of fast food restaurants' consumers in Turkey. Stefanini, Alves, and Marques (2018) analyzed the effect of hospitality, service quality, and experience marketing on the perception of satisfaction among lunchtime restaurant guests in São Paulo and found service quality (i.e. friendly staff, prompt service, etc.) to have a strong impact on customer satisfaction. In conjunction with service, restaurants' atmosphere such as decorations, quietness, space and comfort was also found to have a moderate impact on customer satisfaction.

Importance-performance of restaurant attributes

Since its introduction in 1977, the IPA framework has been widely employed by researchers of many fields, particularly in tourism and hospitality, in identifying important product and/or service attributes as to enhance customer satisfaction or business performance. In IPA, as Kim and Oh (2002) stated, “importance and performance of products and services are measured on a set of selected attributes.” The importance and performance scores are then classified and directly compared in a two-dimensional IPA grid using arithmetic means (Kim and Oh, 2002; Su, 2013). The two-dimensional grid consists of four quadrants, formed by the horizontal and vertical axes. The vertical axis of the grid shows the perceived importance of attributes to customers, where the horizontal axis illustrates the product or service’s performance in relation to those attributes.

In terms of tourists’ dining attributes, a few studies have applied the IPA framework to explore tourists’ preferences and satisfaction with each specific attribute. Jin, Qi, and Chiang (2008) used IPA to evaluate tourists’ perceptions of hotel, restaurant, and retail sectors in Hong Kong. The study found that Hong Kong’s restaurants achieved good performance in the following areas: proper attitude of staff, provision of clear descriptions of dishes and prices on menus, convenient payment methods, prompt service upon request, and good selection and quality of food/dishes in the

restaurants. However, urgent improvement was required in the area of hygiene and cleanliness of restaurants, which fell into the “concentrate here” category. Hong Kong restaurants also demonstrated poor service performance in the areas of pleasant dining environment, good language and communication skills of staff, adequate staff knowledge about ingredients and methods, and promptness and professionalism in handling complaints. However, visitors considered these service areas less important to them. Lastly, three service attributes including appearance, cleanliness, and tidiness of staff; dishes arrived in optimal time; and convenient operating hours were considered “possible overkill.”

Song, Kong, and Chen (2008) also later employed the IPA framework to study tourists’ satisfaction, perceived value, and repurchase intentions with the airline, hotel, and restaurant services in Hong Kong. The authors found that five restaurant service attributes were captured in the “keep up the good work” quadrant including: quality and variety of food, menu provision, prompt service, convenient payment methods, and staff attitude. Three out of eight highly important attributes were captured in the “concentrate here” quadrant including: restaurant hygiene, staff language and communication skills, and handling complaints. In addition, attributes of low importance that were rated as having a high level of performance included convenient business hours, appearance and tidiness of staff, and arrival time of dishes. Finally, an area that should be

given low priority included dining environment and staff's food and beverage knowledge. Su (2013) conducted an IPA of dining attributes between individual and packaged tourists in Taiwan. The research found that food hygiene and cleanliness of the restaurant fell into the "concentrate here" quadrant in both of the individual and packaged travelers. Two factors including quietness of the restaurant and facilities of the restaurant were identified as "low priority" for the two groups.

Customer's attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction

In the highly competitive hospitality and tourism industry, customer satisfaction has thus become one of the most critical marketing priorities. This is because customer satisfaction is generally assumed to be a strong indicator of intention to revisit (Barber, Goodman, and Goh, 2011; Joaquin and Magdalena, 2009), positive word-of-mouth (Pantelidis, 2010; Zhang *et al.*, 2010), customer loyalty (Kim and Brown, 2012; Suh and Yi, 2006), and company profitability in general (Cockalo, Djordjevic, and Sajfert, 2011; Ryu and Han, 2010). In the past, customer satisfaction has been measured from two perspectives namely overall satisfaction and attribute satisfaction (Oliver, 2010). Although, overall customer satisfaction and attribute-specific satisfaction are distinct, they are related constructs. According to Tian-Cole and Crompton (2003), overall satisfaction is concerned

with the overall assessment of the services received by the consumer while attribute satisfaction deals with particular aspects of the services received. Overall satisfaction, therefore, can be seen as a function of attribute-level evaluations or performance of various attributes (Chi and Qu, 2009).

With that in mind, a few researchers have examined the relationship between attribute satisfaction and overall customer satisfaction in restaurant settings and suggested that attribute satisfaction is an antecedent of overall satisfaction. Heung, Wong, and Qu (2002) studied tourists' satisfaction with airport restaurant services in Hong Kong and found employee attributes to be the most important factor contributing to tourists' overall satisfaction, which then resulted in repeat visitation and recommendation intentions of guests. A more recent study by Tontini, Söilen, and Silveira (2013) analyzed how different service attributes affect customer satisfaction in pizzeria restaurants and concluded that perceived cleanness of restaurants was found to be the most important attribute in influencing customer's overall satisfaction. Finally, Zhang, Zhang, and Law (2014) conducted an analysis of thousands of online customer reviews covering restaurants in the Dongcheng District of Beijing, China to examine the direct and combined effects of three important attributes on overall customer satisfaction with restaurants. Their study revealed that food taste, followed by employee service, and physical environment all significantly contribute to diners' overall satisfaction.

Previous research has indeed suggested the importance of several determinant attributes, both tangible and intangible, in influencing customer's attribute and overall satisfaction for restaurants. Given empirical evidence indicated in the literature, in this study, the author has thereupon proposed eight hypotheses as follows:

H1: Food satisfaction positively influences overall customer satisfaction.

H2: Beverage satisfaction positively influences overall customer satisfaction.

H3: Personnel satisfaction positively influences overall customer satisfaction.

H4: Setting satisfaction positively influences overall customer satisfaction.

H5: Price satisfaction positively influences overall customer satisfaction.

H6: Value satisfaction positively influences overall customer satisfaction.

H7: Ancillary services negatively influences overall customer satisfaction.

H8: Image negatively influences overall customer satisfaction.

The negative direction given to H7 and H8 is based on the literature review on the importance of restaurant attributes, which reveal the two factors to be less or not important to consumers compared to other factors.

Methodology

During the review of the literature, all of the attributes used in the previous studies were recorded and grouped into different

factors by the author. As a result, eight factors containing 38 attributes were selected based on the frequency of their appearance in previous restaurant studies and then used to develop the questionnaire for this research. The overall customer satisfaction measurement used in this study was a multi-item measure (5 items), in which several individual items were pooled into a single composite measure.

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire consists of three sections. The first section of the questionnaire solicited data on foreign tourists' level of importance and satisfaction with specific attributes of a Thai restaurant. The second section of the questionnaire was designed to collect foreign tourists' level of overall satisfaction with a Thai restaurant. The first two sections of the questionnaire were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *not important* to 5 = *very important* and 1 = *very dissatisfied* to 5 = *very satisfied*). The last section of the questionnaire was designed to collect foreign tourists' demographic, traveling, and dining-out preferences profiles, where foreign tourists were asked to select the category that corresponded with them.

This research uses convenience sampling method, where the targeted sample mainly consists of foreign tourists who dine at different Thai restaurants located in Klongmuang Beach, Krabi, Thailand. Six restaurants were identified and selected for the research based on their similarities including restaurant type, menu items, size, price range, and seating

capacity. However, due to the closure of two restaurants at the time of data collection, the author could only conduct the survey at four instead of six restaurants.

The author conducted both the pilot and actual studies between the end of March and mid April 2017. Although the survey period was approaching the end of high season (i.e. November - April) for international tourist visitation, the number of foreign visitors during a three-week survey period still made it possible for the author to obtain enough samples close to the planned sample size of 400 respondents. A pilot test was conducted with 50 foreign tourists who dine at the four restaurants a few days prior to the main study. Of the 50 tourists approached, four refused to participate in the survey. As a result, 46 questionnaires were distributed and 35 usable questionnaires were obtained representing an effective overall response rate of 70%.

A pilot test was conducted to test the internal consistency of the questionnaire and to make sure that the survey is understandable. A reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha was performed. The results of the reliability analysis indicated that the scale was internally

reliable with alpha values of 0.967 for attribute satisfaction (38 items) and 0.855 for overall satisfaction (5 items). The alpha values were well exceeded the minimum standard suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), who considered an alpha of 0.7 or above as a good indication of reliability (cited in Chi and Qu, 2009). Subsequently, all items were retained with several revisions made to Section 3 of the questionnaire to improve on clarity. As for the actual study, a total of 368 questionnaires were distributed and 349 usable questionnaires were obtained representing an effective overall response rate of 87%.

Results

Demographic, traveling, and dining-out profiles of respondents

Frequency distribution of foreign tourists' demographic information, traveling profile, and dining-out preferences was analyzed. Table 1 and 2 show the demographic and traveling characteristics as well as dining-out preferences and profiles of the respondents, respectively.

Table 1 Demographic and traveling profiles of respondents

	N	%		N	%
Gender			Education level		
Male	162	46.4	Primary	6	1.7
Female	187	53.6	Middle school	28	8.0
Total	349	100.0	High school	99	28.4
			Vocational	18	5.2
			University/college	155	44.4
			Postgraduate	36	10.3
			Other	7	2.0
			Total	349	100.0
Age	11	3.2	Employment status	217	62.2
20 or below	74	21.2	Full-time	42	12.0
21-30	76	21.8	Part-time	38	10.9
31-40	89	25.5	Self-employment	16	4.6
41-50	61	17.5	Unemployed	36	10.3
51-60	38	10.9	Retired	349	100.0
61 or above	349	100.0	Total	217	62.2
Total	11	3.2			
Marital status			Annual household income		
Single	104	29.8	≤ US\$5,000	31	8.9
Married	231	66.2	US\$5,001-40,000	106	30.4
Widowed	4	1.1	US\$40,001-90,000	118	33.8
Separated	2	0.6	≥ US\$90,001	94	26.9
Divorced	8	2.3	Total	349	100.0
Total	349	100.0			
Nationality			Purpose of visit		
Americas	5	1.4	Holiday/vacation	320	91.7
Europe	301	86.2	Business	10	2.9
Middle East	7	2.0	Visiting relatives/ friends	9	2.6
Asia	32	9.2	Other	10	2.9
Australia/New Zealand	4	1.1	Total	349	100.0
Total	349	100.0			
Traveling with			Mode of Accommodation		
Alone	11	3.2	Hotel	296	84.8
Husband/wife	168	48.1	Hostel	6	1.7
Boyfriend/girlfriend	65	18.6	Rented apartment	12	3.4
Family members	83	23.8	Relative/friend's house	16	4.6
Other relatives	2	0.6	Other		
Friends	14	4.0	Total	19	5.4
Business associates	4	1.1			
Other	2	0.6			
Total	349	100.0			
First time to Krabi			Travel info. source		
Yes	247	70.8	Tourist info center	18	5.2
No	102	29.2	Tourist agency	67	19.2
Total	349	100.0	Online guide	143	41.0
No. of nights in Krabi			Personal reccom.	59	16.9
≤ 3 nights	23	6.6	Hotel/hostel staff	11	3.2
4-6 nights	81	23.2	Other	51	14.6
6-10 nights	98	28.1	Total	349	100.0
≥10 nights	147	42.1			
Total	349	100.0			

Table 2 Dining-out preferences and profiles of respondents

	N	%		N	%
Preferred company			Preferred restaurant type		
Family members	254	72.8	Street food stall	32	9.2
Friends/colleagues	86	24.6	Casual dining	247	70.8
Alone	9	2.6	Fine dining	53	15.2
Total	349	100.0	Other	17	4.9
			Total	349	100.0
Preferred food type			First time to the restaurant		
Vegan	1	0.3	Yes	228	65.3
Vegetarian	18	5.2	No	121	34.7
Non-vegetarian	330	94.6	Total	349	100.0
Total	349	100.0			
Preferred services			Restaurant info. source		
Waiter service	340	97.4	Website	1	0.3
Self service	9	2.6	Online guide	78	22.3
Total	349	100.0	Social media	4	1.1
Preferred cuisine			Advertisements	30	8.6
American	5	1.4	Recommended by friends/relatives	66	18.9
European	89	25.5	Recommended by hotel/hostel staff	17	4.9
Indian	9	2.6	Other	153	43.8
Thai	213	61.0	Total	349	100.0
Other	33	9.5			
Total	349	100.0			

Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA), specifically the Principal Component Analysis with varimax rotation, was used to determine if the 38 attributes could be conceptualized meaningfully to a smaller number of components and to verify the pre-specified underlying dimensions of attribute satisfaction. The rotated solution of the principal component analysis is shown in Table 3. From this solution, seven factors emerged that

provided interpretable variables. All of the variables within the seven factors had factor loadings well above the lower limit of ± 0.35 , ranging from 0.50 to 0.84. Thus, all of the 38 variables (restaurant attributes) were considered as statistically significant. Moreover, the Cronbach's Alpha values for the seven factors were also robust, ranging from 0.81 to 0.92, indicating high internal consistency among the variables within each factor.

Table 3 Principle Component Analysis of Attribute Satisfaction

Attributes	SSAT	FSAT	PSAT	BSAT	PVSAT	ISAT	ASSAT
Interior décor	.837						
Exterior décor	.836						
Lighting	.770						
Atmosphere of restaurant	.739						
Privacy	.698						
Noise level	.673						
Comfortable furnishings	.656						
Cleanliness of restaurant	.508						
Food quality		.827					
Food taste		.822					
Food presentation		.685					
Cleanliness of food		.673					
Food quantity		.657					
Variety of food		.539					
Service quality			.754				
Friendliness of staff			.727				
Appearance of staff			.721				
Speed of service			.720				
Staff's language & communication skills			.714				
Staff's knowledge of F&B			.505				
Beverage presentation				.772			
Amount of beverage				.757			
Variety of beverage				.751			
Beverage quality				.683			
Cleanliness of beverage				.593			
Price of beverage					.781		
Price of food					.742		
Value of beverage					.683		
Value of food					.660		
Value of experience					.598		
Rating in food guides						.797	
Reviews from others						.783	
Reputation of restaurant						.765	
Advertisements						.716	
Payment options							.730
Parking facilities							.673
Close distance							.659
Convenient hours							.616
Total Variance Explained							
69.25%							
Cronbach's α	0.921	0.893	0.861	0.895	0.915	0.889	0.813
Eigenvalue	5.331	4.203	4.086	3.775	3.463	3.178	2.423
Variance Explained (%)	14.028	11.060	10.753	9.933	9.113	8.362	6.376

7 components extracted. SSAT = Setting Satisfaction, FSAT = Food Satisfaction, PSAT = Personnel Satisfaction, BSAT = Beverage Satisfaction, PVSAT = Price and Value Satisfaction, ISAT = Image Satisfaction, ASSAT = Ancillary Services Satisfaction.

Multiple linear regression analysis

To achieve the first objective of this research, multiple linear regression analysis (MLRA) was employed to: (1) predict foreign tourists' overall satisfaction based upon eight 'attribute satisfaction' dimensions developed from literature review and EFA; and (2) explain the relative importance of each dimension in contributing to foreign tourists' overall satisfaction with Thai restaurants in Klongmuang Beach, Krabi, Thailand. Table 4 shows the results of regression analysis. The significant F-ratio ($F = 105.884$, $\text{sig.} = 0.000$) suggested that the regression of the dependent variable (foreign tourists' overall satisfaction) on the independent variables taken together was statistically significant. In addition, all of the predictors had tolerance values ranging from 0.41 to 0.56 and VIFs lower than 4, indicating no signs of serious multicollinearity effect.

The multiple correlation coefficient (R), coefficient of determination (R^2) and adjusted R^2 were also examined to

predict the goodness-of-fit of the regression model. The correlation coefficient ($R=0.828$) reflected the degree of association between independent variables and dependent variable. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.685 and the adjusted R^2 was 0.678, which indicated that approximately 68% of the variation of the overall satisfaction could be explained by the seven factors altogether. Overall, the goodness-of-fit of the model is satisfactory.

The significance tests were used to examine the relative impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Variables that have p -value lower than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) would be considered in the model. According to the data, five variables emerged as significant and were thus retained in the regression model. The dimension with the heaviest weight in predicting overall satisfaction was 'price and value satisfaction' ($\beta=0.405$), followed by 'food satisfaction' ($\beta=0.239$), 'personnel satisfaction' ($\beta=0.168$), 'beverage satisfaction' ($\beta=0.128$), and 'setting satisfaction' ($\beta=0.104$).

Table 4 Multiple linear regression analysis results

Model Summary							
R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate		Durbin-Watson		
.828	.685	.678	.29779		2.032		
ANOVA							
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		
Regression	65.729	7	9.390	105.884	.000		
Residual	30.240	341	.089				
Total	95.970	348					
Coefficients							
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.380	.166		2.287	.023		
PVSAT	.349	.041	.405	8.545	.000	.411	2.431
FSAT	.248	.046	.239	5.370	.000	.466	2.145
PSAT	.176	.043	.168	4.104	.000	.553	1.808
BSAT	.116	.040	.128	2.873	.004	.466	2.146
SSAT	.096	.039	.104	2.458	.014	.516	1.938
ASSAT	-.031	.034	-.038	-.917	.360	.526	1.901
ISAT	-.019	.029	-.026	-.641	.522	.561	1.782

Predictors: (Constant), PVSAT, FSAT, PSAT, BSAT, SSAT, ASSAT, ISAT

Dependent Variable: OVERSAT

Importance-performance analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to determine the mean and standard deviation scores of restaurant attribute importance and satisfaction in order to accomplish the second objective of this research. The mean scores of the perceived importance and performance of each attribute were calculated, so that the author could determine its ranking and separate the derived attributes into four quadrants in consonance with the IPA framework.

Quadrant I—‘concentrate here’—contains restaurant attributes to which foreign tourists attach high importance but have poor performance ratings. Two out of 38 attributes were captured in this quadrant including comfortable

furnishings and value of beverage. Quadrant II—‘keep up the good work’—represents a successful area in which the restaurants are perceived to be performing well in the attributes to which are highly important to foreign tourists. A total of 15 out of 38 attributes landed in this quadrant such as food taste, service quality, cleanliness of beverage, cleanliness of the restaurant, value of food, etc. Quadrant III—‘lower priority’—contains low-importance and low-performance attributes in which business practitioners should not be overly concerned about. The results revealed that 17 out of 38 attributes fell into this quadrant including parking facilities, advertisements, beverage presentation, noise level, price of food, price of beverage, and so on. Quadrant IV—‘possible overkill’—contains

attributes that were rated as having low importance, but performance as relatively high. Business practitioners

should treat attributes in this quadrant as unessential. Close distance and food quantity are illustrated in this quadrant.

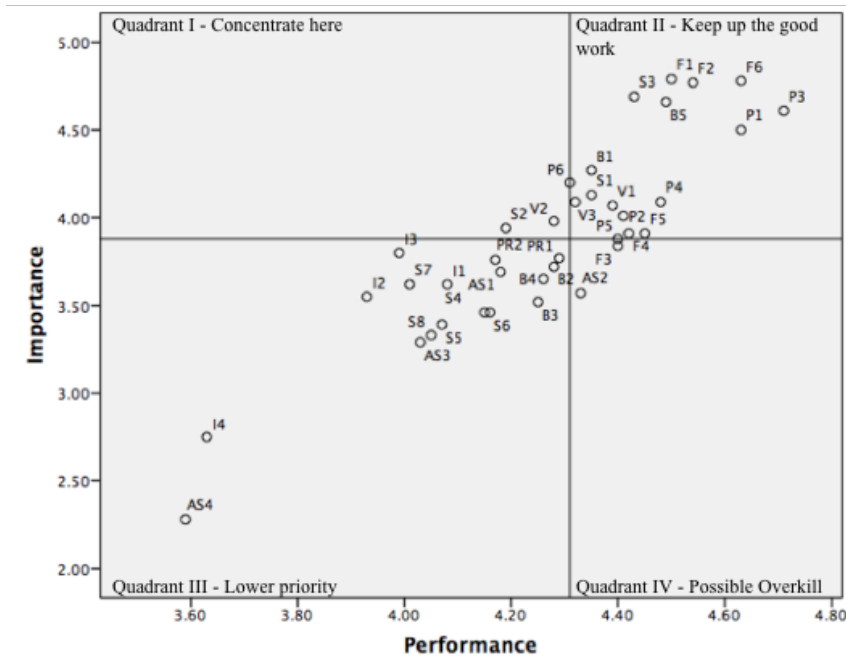


Figure 1 Importance-performance analysis results

F1 = Food taste, F2 = Food quality, F3 = Food quantity, F4 = Food presentation, F5 = Variety of food, F6 = Cleanliness of food; B1 = Beverage quality, B2 = Amount of beverage, B3 = Beverage presentation, B4 = Variety of beverage, B5 = Cleanliness of beverage; P1 = Service quality, P2 = Speed of service, P3 = Friendliness of staff, P4 = Appearance of staff, P5 = Staff's language and communication skills, P6 = Staff's knowledge of food and beverage; S1 = Atmosphere of the restaurant, S2 = Comfortable furnishings, S3 =

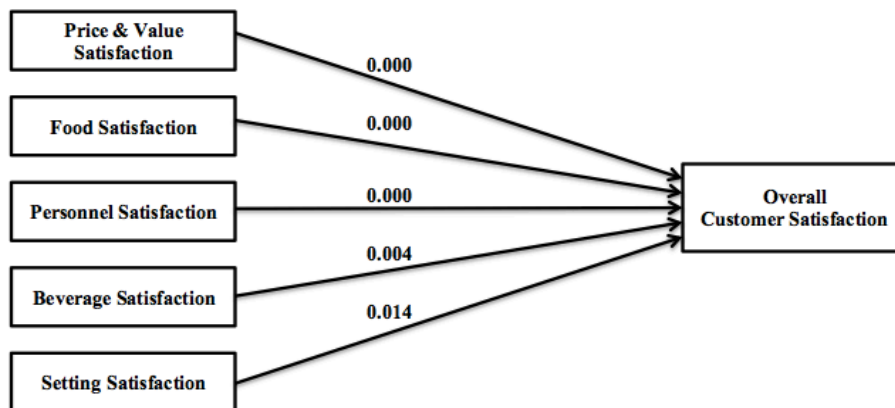
Cleanliness of the restaurant, S4 = Interior décor, S5 = Exterior décor, S6 = Lighting, S7 = Noise level, S8 = Privacy; PR1 = Price of food, PR2 = Price of beverage; V1 = Value of food, V2 = Value of beverage, V3 = Value of experience; AS1 = Convenient operating hours, AS2 = Close distance, AS3 = Payment options, AS4 = Parking facilities; I1 = Reputation of the restaurant, I2 = Rating in food guides, I3 = Reviews/recommendations from others, I4 = Advertisements

Conclusion and discussion

Conclusion

This study has empirically investigated the relative importance of attribute satisfaction on overall satisfaction and identified several attributes that are important to foreign tourists with respect to restaurants. All of the hypotheses of this research are statistically supported by the results of regression analysis, which found five attribute satisfaction factors to be significant at $p < 0.05$. No direct relationships were found between overall satisfaction and ‘ancillary services satisfaction’ as well as ‘image satisfaction’. In the context of this study, foreign tourists’ satisfaction with ‘price

and value’ contributed the most to the prediction of their overall satisfaction, followed by ‘food’, ‘personnel’, ‘beverage’, and ‘setting’ (see Figure 2). This suggests that the happier foreign tourists were with these five dimensions, the more satisfied they would be with their overall dining experience. In order to provide a deeper insight into the topic, an importance-performance analysis was also attempted to discover the specific attributes that are perceived to be important to foreign tourists’ satisfaction in this research. The overall IPA results revealed that Thai restaurants in fact succeeded in making good use of their resources to satisfy foreign tourists as 32 out of 38 attributes fell into the ‘keep up the good work’ and ‘lower priority’ quadrants.



Significant at $p < 0.05$

Figure 2 Final conceptual framework of the study

Discussion

The results from this research confirmed previous research findings in the hospitality industry literature (Chi and Qu, 2009; Zhang, Jiang, and Li, 2013; Zhang, Zhang, and Law, 2014) that a positive relationship exists between attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction. With regard to the relative importance of attribute satisfaction, the results revealed price and value satisfaction to be the most important contributor of overall satisfaction, followed by food satisfaction, personnel satisfaction, beverage satisfaction, and setting satisfaction (in that order). Such findings are consistent with previous similar studies by Maravić (2016); Pantelidis (2010); and Zhang, Zhang, and Law (2014).

This research has also illustrated the significance of several attribute factors that are coherent with existing restaurant studies. First, the results from this research revealed the importance of price and value in influencing consumers' perceptions toward restaurants. Previous studies by Harrington, Ottenbacher, and Way, 2013; Kim, Hertzman, and Hwang, 2010; and Ryu and Han, 2010 also indicated the general importance of price in influencing consumer experience in restaurants. Harrington, Ottenbacher, and Way (2013) also reported perceived value of food and drink and perceived value of experience as highly and moderately important to restaurant customers, respectively.

This research also supported earlier studies that found food-related elements as significant contributors to consumers'

satisfaction. As Andersson and Mossberg (2004) argued, a lot of focus is still put on food as a competitive advantage within the restaurant sector. Researchers such as Edwards and Gustafsson (2008), Reimer and Kuehn (2005), and Wall and Berry (2007) all found elements such as food quality, food range, etc. were the most determinant of consumer's eating out experience. Apart from food, intangible element such as service is almost as important to customer satisfaction. This is because customers not only evaluate the quality of food, but also the service they encounter during their dining experience (Zhang, Zhang, and Law, 2014). Several earlier studies also supported this notion. Harrington, Ottenbacher, and Way (2013) found speed of service, service quality, and staff friendliness as top attributes that were important to consumers. The communication skills and language abilities of the staff are fairly important for most foreign travelers to enjoy a high quality of service, which could decisively affect the overall satisfaction of travelers (Jin, Qi, and Chiang, 2008).

Beverage is another important aspect of tangible element that is important to restaurant consumers. In conjunction with food, beverage taste and quality were among the most important attributes for consumers in buffet, casual, and fine dining restaurants (Kim, Raab, and Bergman, 2010). Other existing literature also cited beverage presentation (Blichfeldt, Chor, and Ballegaard, 2010; Su, 2013) and cleanliness of beverage (Harrington, Ottenbacher, and Way, 2013; Kim, Raab,

and Bergman, 2010) as significant contributors to customers' overall dining experience. Finally, although food, beverage, and service have been identified as significant variables in restaurant satisfaction, restaurant's atmosphere can be as important. Alonso and O'Neill (2010) listed restaurant's designs, cleanliness of restaurant, etc. as crucial factors for customer satisfaction. Several other studies also indicated that the physical environment created by the restaurant is one such factor positively affecting customer perceptions of restaurant performance (Sulek and Hensley, 2004; Weiss, Feinstein, and Dalbor, 2004).

While some existing literature (Ha and Jang, 2012; Hwang and Zhao, 2010; Soriano, 2003; Wu, 2013) may have found correlations between ancillary services (i.e. parking facilities, location), image (i.e. reputation, ratings in food guides) and customer satisfaction, the statistical results from this study indicated otherwise. This is consistent with the findings on the connection between ancillary services and customer satisfaction from several existing research (Lee, Lee, and Dewald, 2016; Maravić, 2016). Image also did not factor much into the consideration and satisfaction of foreign tourists in this research – the finding in which is coherent with Jin and Lee's (2016) and Andreani, Taniaji, and Puspitasari's (2012) works.

In addition, this study shares similar findings previous literature that used IPA to evaluate foreign tourists' overall satisfaction with the quality of services provided by restaurant sectors. Foreign

tourists in this study, Jin, Qi, and Chiang (2008), and Song, Kong, and Chen (2008) all considered service quality, speed of service, variety of food, quality of food, and cleanliness of the restaurant to be important to them and convenient hours as less important. Similar to Su's study (2013), this research reported food quality, value of food, cleanliness of food, service quality, speed of service, and cleanliness of the restaurant as important attributes for tourists. Moreover, noise level and close distance fell into the 'lower priority' and 'possible overkill' quadrants, respectively, in both studies.

Managerial implications

This study suggested that five out of seven dimensions of attribute satisfaction including price and value, food, personnel, beverage, and setting were significant predictors of foreign tourists' overall satisfaction with Thai restaurants in Klongmuang Beach, Krabi, Thailand. However, not all dimensions have the same predictive power on overall customer satisfaction. Since all businesses have scarce resources, restaurant leaders and managers in the area should not pursuit all attributes but rather allocate resources to improve attributes that are most important to overall guest satisfaction including price and value, food, and personnel (service). The IPA results from this study further provided restaurant practitioners of Thai restaurants in Klongmuang Beach area with a fuller picture of the specific dining

attributes that are in need of further improvement. Two attributes including 'value of beverage' and 'comfortable furnishings' fell into the 'concentrate here' quadrant (Quadrant I). As Murphy and Narkiewicz (2012) stated, the components of consumer value could be understood as consisting of the benefits of product, service, relationship, and brand that the customer must perceive. Such benefits include "the quality of the actual product purchased, the service that goes along with it, the relationship with the people in the organization or the reputation of the brand being purchased." Accordingly, restaurant leaders and managers may improve the value of beverage by increasing the quality of the beverage.

Furthermore, it is important to note that value is also related to cost that includes the money and time it takes for the consumer to make the purchase, which suggests that Thai restaurants in the area may need to consider the total cost to the consumer when setting a price for their menu items. However, price of food and beverage actually fell into the 'lower priority' quadrant (Quadrant III) in this study. This could mean that although price and value satisfaction was found to be the most important predictor of tourists' overall satisfaction, values may actually play a more significant role than price in influencing overall customer satisfaction and that perhaps practitioners should rather focus its investment on improving consumer values.

Despite the fact that physical environment was found to be the least important predictor of tourists' overall satisfaction, variables that make up

setting including cleanliness of the restaurant, atmosphere of the restaurant, and comfortable furnishings are still considered as important to foreign tourists. Therefore, in order to increase customer satisfaction in this area, an effort can be made in providing more comfortable furnishings for consumers.

Research recommendations

This research attempted to contribute to the hospitality literature in the less explored area of the relationship between attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction. A positive relationship was established between attribute satisfaction and overall customer satisfaction. This confirmed previous research findings in the hospitality literature (Chi and Qu, 2009; Zhang, Jiang, and Li, 2013; Zhang, Zhang, and Law, 2014) in which attribute satisfaction was found to be an antecedent to overall satisfaction. With respect to the relative importance of attribute satisfaction on overall satisfaction, this research also concurs with previous views that food taste, employee service, and physical environment all significantly contribute to diners' overall satisfaction in that order (Zhang, Jiang, and Li, 2013; Zhang, Zhang, and Law, 2014). However, this research extends the existing literature by suggesting price and value as well as beverage as another factors to consider in addition to those previously identified by other researchers.

Concordant with most of the reviewed

literature (e.g. Adam, Adongo, and Dayour, 2015; Andersson and Mossberg, 2004; Harrington, Ottenbacher, and Kendall; 2011; Kim, Hertzman, and Hwang, 2010; Su, 2013; Zhang, Zhang, and Law, 2014), the current study corroborates the claim that a combination of attributes other than food and beverage are also critical for the creation of a rich dining experience. Moreover, since Thailand was considered an underrepresented country in the cross-cultural research literature (Polyorat and Sophonsiri, 2010), the present study also contributes to the cross-cultural studies by examining the customer satisfaction constructs in Thailand.

Finally, this research is the first study to employ quite a comprehensive list of key restaurant attributes as well as the IPA framework to examine the effects of attribute performance on overall satisfaction and the importance-performance of restaurant attributes, respectively, in the Thai context. Therefore, the framework and the attributes examined in this research could be applied to other studies wishing to examine tourists' satisfaction with restaurant services in other tourist destinations in Thailand or even other regions of Asia where local cuisine is the top attraction to tourists.

Limitations and further research

Despite several theoretical and managerial implications, this study was not free from limitations. First, the study was conducted at the end of high season,

and thus findings were only limited to high season travelers. Tourists who travel in different seasons may actually form different opinions about Thai restaurant services in the Klongmuang Beach area. Future researchers could therefore conduct similar surveys in different seasons in order to identify the similarities and differences between the two groups. Secondly, the population of this study was limited to foreign tourists who stayed in Klongmuang Beach, Krabi, Thailand. Hence, the results from the current study may not be generalized beyond this population. Future studies could be conducted in other tourist destinations in Thailand in order to increase the generalizability of these findings. In addition, it is also important to note that 86.2% of the sample surveyed in this study was from Europe. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from the study regarding the population of interest should be used within the context of these limitations.

Thirdly, this study only examined foreign tourists' satisfaction with Thai restaurants. However, the perception of service quality can vary across different types of food service establishments. Consequently, it might be of interest to test the constructs presented in this study in other types of restaurants such as Indian restaurants, hotel restaurants, coffee shops or bars in the area. Fourth, it could be interesting for future research to extend the constructs in this study to examine the effects of tourists' overall satisfaction on repurchase and recommendation intentions for restaurants in the area as customer satisfaction is generally suggested by

numerous existing researchers to be a strong indicator of intention to revisit and positive word-of-mouth. Finally, future studies could extend to examine the moderating effects of restaurant attributes presented in this study. As Zhang, Jiang, and Li (2013) and Zhang, Zhang, and Law (2014) mentioned, not only that attribute satisfaction has a significant influence on overall satisfaction, but the relationship between

the two is also significantly moderated by the performance levels of other attributes. The study of the moderating effects of attributes could thus provide information on the compensation of different attributes to restaurateur in the area who may be limited in resources, and as a result, may not be able to improve certain service dimensions to satisfy their customers.

References

- Adam, I., Adongo, C., & Dayour, F. (2015). International Tourists' Satisfaction with Ghanaian Upscale Restaurant Services and Revisit Intentions. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 16, 181-201.
- Alonso, A., & O'Neill, M. (2010). Consumers' Ideal Eating Out Experience as It Refers to Restaurant Style: A Case Study. *Journal of Retail & Leisure Property*, 9(4), 263-276.
- Andersson, T., & Mossberg, L. (2004). The Dining Experience: Do Restaurants Satisfy Customer Needs? *Food Service Technology*, 4, 171-177.
- Andreani, F., Taniaji, T., & Puspitasari, R. (2012). The Impact of Brand Image Towards Loyalty with Satisfaction as A Mediator in McDonald's. *Jurnal Manajemen dan Kewirausahaan*, 14(1), 63-70. doi: <https://doi.org/10.9744/jmk.14.1.64-71>.
- Barber, N., Goodman, R., & Goh, B. (2011). Restaurant Consumers Repeat Patronage: A Service Quality Concern. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(2), 329-336.
- Blichfeldt, B., Chor, J., & Ballegaard, N. (2010). The Dining Experience: A Qualitative Study of Top Restaurant Visits in a Danish Context. *Journal of Tourism*, 11(1), 43-69.
- Chi, C., & Qu, H. (2009). Examining the Relationship Between Tourists' Attribute Satisfaction and Overall Satisfaction. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 18, 4-25.
- Cockalo, D., Djordjevic, D., & Sajfert, Z. (2011). Elements of the Model for Customer Satisfaction: Serbian Economy Research. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 22(8), 807-832.
- Edwards, J., & Gustafsson, I. (2008). The Room and Atmosphere as Aspects of the Meal: A Review. *Journal of Foodservice*, 19, 22-34.



- Ha, J., & Jang, S. (2012). Consumer Dining Value: Does It Vary Across Different Restaurant Segments? *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 15, 123-142.
- Harrington, R., Ottenbacher, M., & Kendall, K. (2011). Fine-Dining Restaurant Selection: Direct and Moderating Effects of Customer Attributes. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 14, 272-289.
- Harrington, R., Ottenbacher, M., & Way, K. (2013). QSR Choice: Key Restaurant Attributes and the Roles of Gender, Age and Dining Frequency. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 14, 81-100.
- Heung, V. C., Wong, M. Y., & Qu, H. (2002). A Study of Tourists' Satisfaction and Post-Experience Behavioral Intentions in Relation to Airport Restaurant Services in the Hong Kong SAR. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 12, 111-135.
- Hwang, J., & Zhao, J. (2010). Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction in the Restaurant Business Using AnswerTree Methodology. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 11, 93-110.
- Jin, N., & Lee, S. (2016). The Impact of Restaurant Experiences on Mature and Nonmature Customers: Exploring Similarities and Differences. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 17(1), 1-26.
- Jin, X., Qi, S., & Chiang, C. (2008). A Cross-Sector Evaluation of Service Quality in the Tourism Industry of Hong Kong: Importance vs. Performance. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 4, 319-355.
- Joaquin, A., & Magdalena, C. (2009). Analyzing the Effect of Satisfaction and Previous Visits on Tourist Intentions to Return. *European Journal of Marketing*, 43(5), 670-685.
- Kim, A., & Brown, G. (2012). Understanding the Relationships Between Perceived Travel Experiences, Overall Satisfaction, and Destination Loyalty. *Anatolia – An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 23(3), 328-347.
- Kim, Y., Hertzman, J., & Hwang, J. (2010). College Students and Quick-Service Restaurants: How Students Perceive Restaurant Food and Services. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 13(4), 346-359.
- Kim, B., & Oh, H. (2002). An Extended Application of Importance-Performance Analysis. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing*, 9(3), 107-125.
- Kim, Y., Raab, C., & Bergman, C. (2010). Restaurant Selection Preferences of Mature Tourists in Las Vegas: A Pilot Study. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 11, 157-170.

- Lee, L., Lee, M., & Dewald, B. (2016). Measuring the Customers' Perception of Tangible Service Quality in the Restaurant Industry: An Emphasis on the Upscale Dining Segment. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 19(1), 21-38.
- Maravić, M. (2016). Restaurant Quality: The Case of Central Slovenian Region. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 22(1), 87-104.
- Mason, K., et al. (2016). Building Consumer Relationships in the Quick Service Restaurant Industry. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 19(4), 368-381.
- Murphy, R., & Narkiewicz, V. (2012). Are Price, Quality, and Value Mutually Exclusive? *The Journal of Global Business Management*, 8(2), 40-48.
- Oliver, R. L. (2010). *Satisfaction: A Behavioral Perspective on the Consumer* (2nd ed.). Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Pantelidis, I. S. (2010). Electronic Meal Experience: A Content Analysis of Online Restaurant Comments. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 51(4), 483-491.
- Polyorat, K., & Sophonsiri, S. (2010). The Influence of Service Quality Dimensions on Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty in the Chain Restaurant Context: A Thai Case. *Journal of Global Business and Technology*, 6(2), 64-76.
- Reimer, A., & Kuehn, R. (2005). The Impact of Servicescape on Quality Perception. *European Journal of Marketing*, 39, 785-808.
- Ryu, K., & Han, H. (2010). Influence of the Quality of Food, Service, and Physical Environment on Customer Satisfaction and Behavioral Intention in Quick-Casual Restaurants: Moderating Role of Perceived Price. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 34(3), 310-329.
- Sezgin, E., & Göde, M. (2017). Local Survivor vs. Global Brand: Behavioral Intention and Brand Loyalty Tales of Fast Food Restaurants. *Tourism*, 65(4), 406-421.
- Song, Z., Kong, H., & Chen, Y. (2008). Tourist Satisfaction, Perceived Service Value, and Repurchase Intentions: The Case of Hong Kong's Airline, Hotel, and Restaurant Services. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 4, 336-364.
- Soriano, D. (2003). The Spanish Restaurant Sector: Evaluating the Perceptions of Quality. *The Service Industries Journal*, 23(2), 183-194.
- Stefanini, C., Alves, C., & Marques, R. (2018). Let's Have Lunch! A Study on the Relation between Hospitality, Service Quality and Experience Marketing and Guest Satisfaction in Restaurants. *Revista Brasileira de Pesquisa em Turismo*, 12(1), 57-79.
- Su, C. (2013). An Importance-Performance Analysis of Dining Attributes: A Comparison of Individual and Packaged Tourists in Taiwan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 18(6), 573-597.

- Suh, J. C., & Yi, Y. (2006). When Brand Attitudes Affect the Customer Satisfaction-Loyalty Relation: The Moderating Role of Product Involvement. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 16(2), 145-155.
- Sulek, J., & Hensley, R. (2004). The Relative Importance of Food, Atmosphere, and Fairness of Wait: The Case of a Full-Service Restaurant. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 45(3), 235-247.
- Tian-Cole, S., & Crompton, J. (2003). A Conceptualization of Relationships Between Service Quality and Visitor Satisfaction, and Their Links to Destination Selection. *Leisure Studies*, 22(1), 65-80.
- Tontini, G., Søylen, K., & Silveira, A. (2013). How Do Interactions of Kano Model Attributes Affect Customer Satisfaction? An Analysis Based on Psychological Foundations. *Total Quality Management*, 24(11), 1253-1271.
- Wall, E., & Berry, L. (2007). The Combined Effects of the Physical Environment and Employee Behavior on Customer Perception of Restaurant Service Quality. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant and Administration Quarterly*, 48, 59-69.
- Weiss, R., Feinstein, A., & Dalbor, M. (2004). Customer Satisfaction of Theme Restaurant Attributes and Their Influence on Return Intent. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 7(1), 23-41.
- Wu, H. (2013). An Empirical Study of the Effects of Service Quality, Perceived Value, Corporate Image, and Customer Satisfaction on Behavioral Intentions in the Taiwan Quick Service Restaurant Industry. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 14, 364-390.
- Zhang, Z., et al. (2010). The Impact of E-Word-of-Mouth on the Online Popularity of Restaurants: A Comparison of Consumer Reviews and Editor Reviews. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 29(4), 694-700.
- Zhang, Z., Jiang, M., & Li, X. (2013). Refining the Relationship Between Attribute Performance and Customer Satisfaction in the Chinese Hospitality Industry. *Total Quality Management*, 24(12), 1364-1375.
- Zhang, Z., Zhang, Z., & Law, R. (2014). Relative Importance and Combined Effects of Attributes on Customer Satisfaction. *The Service Industries Journal*, 34(6), 550-566.