

Attitude Factors Predicting Moon Festival Practice among Chinese Thai Youth in Hat Yai

ปัจจัยด้านทัศนคติที่พยากรณ์การปฏิบัติเทศกาลไหว้พระจันทร์ท่ามกลางเยาวชนไทย
เชื้อสายจีนในหาดใหญ่

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Abstract

The Moon Festival originated in mainland China during the Song dynasty. It is currently inherited in Hat Yai by Overseas Chinese immigrants. However, due to social and cultural change, the Moon Festival was increasingly recognized as cultural commodity instead of social and cultural values. Therefore, this research aimed to identify attitude factors predicting the practice of the Moon Festival among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai and develop a prediction equation for participation. The subjects comprised 160 Chinese Thai youths selected through purposive sampling. Data collection involved questionnaires, which were analyzed using the R program to calculate Pearson's product-moment and multiple linear correlation coefficients. The study revealed three significant predictors (favorable tourism conditions [X8], family unity [X4], and a stable economy [X7]) for the subjects' Moon Festival practice ($p < .001$). Notably, the attitude factor of improving tourism (X8) exhibited the strongest correlation, while improving economy (X7) showed the weakest correlation. The derived prediction equation is as follows: $\hat{Y}_y = -0.59 + 0.35X_4 + 0.19X_7$. The study provided insight into the attitudes that need to be fostered in young people to maintain and promote the success of cultures like the Moon Festival in Hat Yai.

Keywords: attitude, Moon Festival, Chinese Thai, youth, Hat Yai

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บทคัดย่อ

วันไหว้พระจันทร์ได้ถือกำเนิดขึ้นในประเทศจีนตั้งแต่สมัยราชวงศ์ซ่ง ในปัจจุบันวันไหว้พระจันทร์ได้มีการสืบทอดในอำเภอหาดใหญ่ จังหวัดสงขลาโดยกลุ่มชาวจีนอพยพ อย่างไรก็ตาม การเปลี่ยนแปลงทางสังคมและวัฒนธรรมส่งผลให้เกิดการเปลี่ยนแปลงของคุณค่าทางครอบครัวและวัฒนธรรมสู่การทำให้วัฒนธรรมเป็นสินค้า การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัจจัยด้านทัศนคติที่พยากรณ์การปฏิบัติเทศกาลไหว้พระจันทร์ท่ามกลางเยาวชนไทยเชื้อสายจีนในหาดใหญ่และพัฒนาสมการพยากรณ์ กลุ่มเป้าหมายคือเยาวชนไทยเชื้อสายจีนจำนวน 160 คนผ่านการเลือกแบบเจาะจง ใช้การเก็บข้อมูลด้วยแบบสอบถามและนำมาวิเคราะห์ด้วยโปรแกรมอาร์เพื่อหาค่าสัมประสิทธิ์เพียร์สันและสหสัมพันธ์พหุคูณเชิงเส้น ผลการวิจัยพบปัจจัยพยากรณ์ทั้ง 3 ได้แก่ สภาพเศรษฐกิจที่ดีขึ้น (X8) ความสามัคคีในครอบครัว (X4) และสภาพทางเศรษฐกิจที่มั่นคง (X7) สำหรับการปฏิบัติเทศกาลไหว้พระจันทร์ของกลุ่มเป้าหมาย ($p < .001$) โดยตัวแปรสภาพเศรษฐกิจที่ดีขึ้น (X8) เป็นตัวแปรที่สามารถพยากรณ์ได้สูงที่สุด ในขณะที่ตัวแปรสภาพทางเศรษฐกิจที่มั่นคง (X7) เป็นตัวแปรที่พยากรณ์ได้ต่ำที่สุด สมการพยากรณ์ของการวิจัยในครั้งนี้ คือ $\hat{Y}_y = -0.59 + 0.35X_4 + 0.19X_7 + 0.42X_8$ การศึกษานี้ชี้ให้เห็นถึงทัศนคติที่ควรได้รับการส่งเสริมในหมู่เยาวชนเพื่อให้มั่นใจว่าการอนุรักษ์และส่งเสริมวัฒนธรรม เช่น เทศกาลไหว้พระจันทร์ในหาดใหญ่จะประสบความสำเร็จได้อย่างต่อเนื่อง

คำสำคัญ ทัศนคติ เทศกาลไหว้พระจันทร์ ชาวไทยเชื้อสายจีน เยาวชน หาดใหญ่

Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

The Moon Festival originated in the Song dynasty in mainland China and has been inherited in Chinese communities around the world. Hat Yai, the commercial center of southern Thailand, is one of the destinations that Overseas Chinese migrated to. Siripaisan et al (2006) discovered that the main reason of their immigration was applying as labor for the railway construction in the period of King Rama V. Furthermore, Siripaisan (2007) added that the Moon Festival was changed due to social, political, and cultural factors. Firstly, Chinese people in Hat Yai were forced to inherit Thai culture instead of Chinese culture. This situation happened in the period of Plaek Phibunsongkhram (1914–1957), and is called assimilation policy (Skinner, 1957).

Secondly, the Moon Festival was adapted to Thai culture. It happened after Chinese descendants in Hat Yai were becoming familiar with Thai culture. Therefore, Thai and Chinese cultures were combined for harmonious inheritance (Morita, 2003). Thirdly, globalization and capitalism have affected the commodity of the Moon Festival, thereby influencing the value of the Moon Festival among new generations of Chinese Thais in Hat Yai.

The Moon Festival in present-day Hat Yai has undergone changes influenced by the evolving lifestyle of its people. Chinese Thais are recognized as a large group of immigrants living and engaging in trade and business in the city. Consequently, the economic fluctuations experienced

by Hat Yai have impacted the scale of offerings and ritual equipment, such as perfumes, women's clothing, cosmetics, rice, and vegetables. Additionally, the timing of the ritual has been adjusted for convenience, considering the early morning obligations of children and working individuals, resulting in a shortened duration of the ritual. Certain aspects of the traditional ritual have been omitted. Furthermore, fewer Chinese Thai individuals in Hat Yai actively participate in family reunion meals and the consumption of mooncakes. However, in the past offerings to the moon goddess would consist of three to five mooncakes, present-day offerings have reduced to one or two mooncakes due to cost considerations (Buakaew, 2017).

This festival holds substantial value in terms of tourism, culture, and the local economy. The Moon Festival serves as a powerful expression of the Chinese Thai identity in Hat Yai, making it highly advantageous for cultural tourism purposes (Panuwattanakul, 2010). Moreover, the festival has been incorporated into the tourism development campaigns of the Hat Yai Municipality, which aims to promote Hat Yai as a city suitable for investment, travel, and residence. Notably, in response to the economic challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hat Yai Municipality has identified the Moon Festival as a means to address the resulting crisis (Krueaphat & Laeheem, 2022).

The youth population, particularly the Chinese Thai youth, holds immense importance as the future torchbearers of the Moon Festival tradition. They serve as the focal point of this study since their active engagement and preservation of cultural practices are vital for the successful conservation of this cultural activity. It is suggested that efforts be made to instill a sense of appreciation and knowledge about the festival through education, teaching, and reinforcement strategies. Such endeavors are considered crucial for ensuring the continuity of cultural traditions (Krueaphat, Laeheem, & Dhammasaccakarn, 2021). Hence, conserving the traditional festival amidst the ongoing social and cultural changes poses a significant challenge for the Hat Yai municipality.

To understand the future continuation of the Moon Festival practice and the preservation of its values, previous research identified eight attitude factors that contribute to stimulating Moon Festival participation. These factors include perceiving good benefits for oneself (X1), recognizing the festival as a learning opportunity (X2), associating the festival with a improving quality of life (X3), promoting family unity (X4), supporting ethical values (X5), fostering social unity (X6), recognizing the festival's positive impact on the economy (X7), and acknowledging its potential for enhancing tourism (X8) (Krueaphat & Laeheem, 2023). These attitude factors play a significant role in motivating individuals to actively engage in the Moon Festival and contribute to its continuity.

Among the eight attitude factors identified, tourism has been presented as the most significant factor influencing Moon Festival practice. The hypothesis that tourism is the most influential attitude factor on Moon Festival practice is worth investigating (Alivizatou, 2016; Keawborisut, 2012; Wasee, 1931). It has been observed that cultural elements that can be utilized for cultural tourism purposes tend to be actively preserved by local governments (Prompayuk & Chairattananon, 2016).

Drawing upon attitude theory, which suggests that motivation plays a crucial role in shaping behavior (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018), this study aims to examine the attitude factors that predict Moon Festival practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai. Additionally, the study seeks to develop a prediction equation for Moon Festival practice, considering the various attitude factors identified. By exploring these factors, the research aims to shed light on the motivations and predictors that drive the participation in the Moon Festival among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai.

This study would be beneficial for governmental and private organizations in formulating policies for cultural conservation, given the prominence of Hat Yai as a destination for cultural tourism and commerce (Siripaisan et al., 2006). Despite being recognized as a major center of commerce in southern Thailand, Hat Yai Municipality aims to leverage its multicultural society to promote both tourism and industry (Hat Yai Municipality, 2023). Currently, there have been few studies on the Moon Festival in Hat Yai, which poses a challenge in terms of its recognition among researchers and youth seeking guidelines for conservation and deriving benefits from its cultural value. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap and provide valuable insights for the conservation and promotion of the Moon Festival in the city.

Hypothesis

The attitude factor of improving tourism has the highest level of influence in predicting the practice of the Moon Festival among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai.

Objective

This study aimed to identify attitude factors predicting the practice of the Moon Festival among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai and develop a prediction equation for participation.

Definition of Key Terms

1. Attitude factors encompass certain perspectives that influence the Moon Festival practice. These factors include Moon Festival practice (Y), personal benefits (X1), learning opportunities (X2), improved quality of life (X3), family unity (X4), adherence to ethics (X5), promotion of social unity (X6), economic advancement (X7), and enhanced tourism (X8).

2. Moon Festival practice is defined as participation in a cultural event in Hat Yai that revolves around the worship of the moon goddess. It encompasses activities such as the moon worship ritual, family reunion meals, partaking in mooncakes, observing the moon, and paying respects at communal altars.

3. Chinese Thai youth refers to a specific group of individuals who identify as Chinese Thai and serve as the subject of this study. These individuals were interviewed to gather data for the purposes of this study.

Literature Review

1. Attitude

The concept of attitude encompasses various aspects of human behavior and decision-making. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2018), attitude is an emotion that influences different behaviors. It can be shaped through stimuli, perception, and personal experiences (Nuchanart et al., 2019). When attitudes change, behavior tends to change as well (Newcomb et al., 1965).

Attitudes consist of four main components. Firstly, adjustment reflects how individuals use their attitudes as a tool to make decisions that lead to the greatest personal benefit. Attitudes serve as a guiding force in shaping behaviors aligned with personal goals. Secondly, attitudes are value-expressive, representing an integral part of an individual's value system and reflecting specific values held by individuals. Thirdly, knowledge plays a role in shaping attitudes as they are influenced by an individual's comprehension and learning experiences. Attitudes serve as a standard for evaluating and understanding the environment. Lastly, feelings and interests significantly impact attitudes and can lead individuals to accept or reject certain aspects, thereby influencing their subsequent behaviors. Ultimately, behavior is an outward expression of one's attitudes (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1994).

Understanding the components and mechanisms of attitudes is crucial for comprehending human behavior and decision-making processes. In the context of the Moon Festival and its practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai, examining the various attitude factors can provide insights into the motivations and drivers behind their engagement with the festival.

2. Cultural Practice

According to Schwartz (1999), cultural practice refers to the shared perceptions of people's behavior within a society. It encompasses the patterns and routines that are collectively followed and recognized by individuals in a particular cultural context. Shteynberg, Gelfand, and Kim (2009) suggest that the concept of norms is closely related to cultural practice. Norms are the accepted standards of thinking and behavior within a society, and they play a role in regulating and influencing people's behaviors. As discussed by Chiu, Gelfand, Yamagishi, Shteynberg, and Wan (2010), norms can be both input and output variables of cultural practice, shaping and reflecting the behavior of individuals within a cultural framework.

Furthermore, Havighurst (1948) adds that cultural practice involves the development of routines and behaviors that result from learning and engagement with cultural values. These cultural practices are acquired and transmitted through socialization processes, and they become ingrained in individuals as they navigate their cultural environments.

Understanding the relationship between cultural practice, norms, and cultural values is important for comprehending how individuals within a society engage with and adhere to specific behaviors and traditions. In the context of the Moon Festival and its practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai, exploring the cultural practices and norms associated with the festival can provide valuable insights into the underlying motivations and dynamics of their participation.

3. Cultural Festival

Festivals are dynamic expressions of the cultural and creative industries (Johansson, 2016), and their popularity and number have been on the rise (Baez-Montenegro & Devesa-Fernandez, 2017). Cultural festivals play a significant role in economic development, as seen in the annual revenue generated by music and film festivals in Europe. Additionally, cultural festivals serve as key markers of community identity, attracting visitors to the host locations. The economic benefits of cultural festivals are multifaceted. Firstly, they support tourism development, as exemplified by France's lucrative summer festivals in Provence. Moreover, cultural festivals provide small cities with opportunities to showcase their unique identities (Salvador, Castro-Martinez, & Benghozi, 2022). Secondly, festivals contribute to local and regional development through marketing impacts and image building, as proposed by Frey (1994). Lastly, the music industry exemplifies how festivals foster new economic models that combine the dematerialization of content with the power of live events.

4. History of Moon Festival

According to existing literature, the history of the Moon Festival encompasses two narratives: a historical account and a mythical tale. Firstly, Peng (2012) asserts that the Moon Festival originated during the Song dynasty, with the 15th day of the eighth lunar month being officially designated as the festival day under Emperor Tai of the Northern Song dynasty. The festival's ritualistic practices can be traced back to the tradition of moon worship (Castrillón, 2021). In connection to its historical origins, the festival is linked to a significant event during the Yuan dynasty (1206-1341 CE) when the Mongols held power over the Chinese people. Enduring oppression under the Mongol administration, the Chinese populace faced hardship. However, a man named Zhu Yuanzhang initiated a rebellion by covertly disseminating a secret message concealed within a mooncake. This message contained vital information regarding the planned rebellion against the Yuan dynasty, ultimately leading to victory over the Mongols. Thus, one purpose of the Moon Festival celebration is to commemorate this historical uprising (Lu, 2010).

Secondly, the Moon Festival is associated with a mythical tale centered around Chang'e, a celestial figure who ascended to the moon. Legend has it that Chang'e was the wife of Houyi, a deity responsible for safeguarding the earth from ten scorching suns, whose excessive heat threatened numerous species. Upon receiving a heavenly directive, the skilled archer Houyi was tasked with shooting down nine suns to preserve life on earth. As a reward for his feat, he was granted an immortal pill. Tragically, Chang'e had to consume the pill to prevent it from falling into the hands of thieves, causing her to ascend to the moon and become the goddess of the moon. Consequently, the moon ritual is performed as a mark of respect and homage to Chang'e for her valiant act of protecting the pill (Peng, 2012).

These narratives, encompassing historical and mythical dimensions, significantly contribute to the significance and cultural observances associated with the Moon Festival.

5. Original Moon Festival Practice

The traditional practice of the Moon Festival is observed on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month. During the Song dynasty, Chinese culture held the belief that paying homage to the moon goddess, Chang'e, would bring happiness. It was also believed that women who paid respect to the goddess would enhance their beauty. However, men were not invited to participate in the moon ritual, as it was believed to be exclusively for women. This distinction was based on the symbolism of darkness (Yin) representing women and brightness (Yang) symbolizing men. Thus, the festival of darkness was meant to be devoid of brightness. In ancient China, due to the financial circumstances, families would gather to pay respect to the moon at a communal altar. The festival would commence when the moon became clearly visible in the sky and would extend past midnight, involving significant time dedicated to the moon ritual (Shiya & Onkam, 2020).

The Moon Festival practice serves three primary purposes. Firstly, it aims to foster family unity through the shared experience of a family meal. Chinese culture associates the round shape of the moon with family harmony, reflecting the symbolism of the round dining table in Chinese customs. Hence, it is customary for every family member to gather for the festival celebration. Secondly, the festival serves as a commemoration of a historical event related to the resistance against the Yuan dynasty (Hulsbosch, Bedford, & Chaiklin, 2009). Lastly, it involves the worship of the moon goddess. Chinese belief holds that the moon goddess is exceptionally beautiful, and thus cosmetics, traditional attire, and perfume hold significance as offerings. The worshippers seek the blessings of the goddess for good health and fortune. The worship ritual takes place during the nighttime (Cui, 2020).

6. Moon Festival in Hat Yai

Buakaew (2017) stated that the Moon Festival practice among Chinese Thai in Hat Yai bears resemblance to the traditional observance, albeit with certain adaptations influenced by the globalized era. The initial phase of the Moon Festival involves preparation, wherein Hat Yai's Chinese Thai community engages in shopping activities to acquire offerings for the moon goddess, mooncakes, and ingredients for the family reunion meal. The shopping list typically includes items such as candles, joss sticks, cosmetics, women's clothing, perfume, fruits, tea, flowers, vegetables, mooncakes, and rice. The worship ceremony for the Moon Festival traditionally takes place at night, with the timing determined by each family's convenience. Notably, there has been a shift in the inclusion of men in the festival, contrary to previous practices.

Worship rituals are commonly performed in front of or on the deck of the house, depending on the architectural design that offers a clear view of the moon. The conclusion of the ritual coincides with the burning of joss sticks. In the contemporary context, the timing of the ritual initiation is flexible, accommodating the preferences and schedules of individual families. Typically, the worship ceremony takes place in front of the house, while some families opt for the deck area to ensure an unobstructed view of the moon. The altar dedicated to the goddess is meticulously arranged, as Chinese beliefs associate a more aesthetically pleasing altar with the potential for greater fortune.

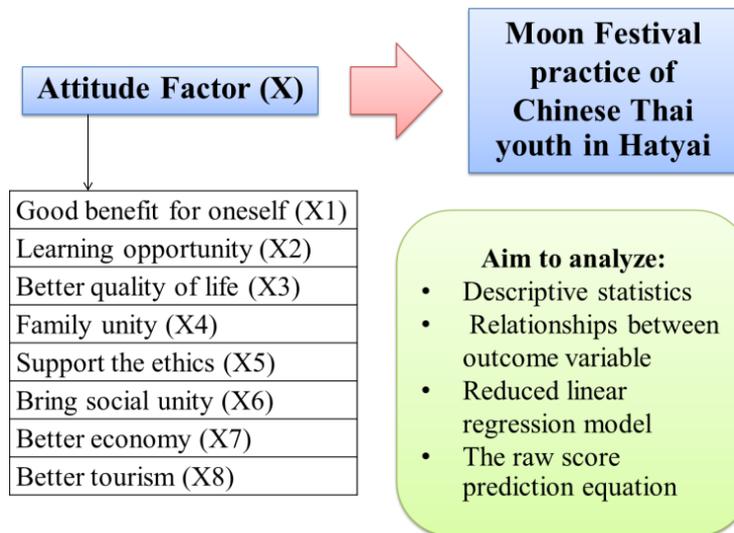
Offerings consist of fruits, cosmetics, clothing, tea, flowers, joss sticks, candles, joss paper, desserts, and mooncakes. The conclusion of the ritual occurs when the joss sticks have completely burned.

7. Related Research

Previous research has identified six aspects of Moon Festival practice. Firstly, it is presented that inheriting the culture can make good use of peoples' free time. People feel precious to spend free time to participate in cultural activities. Therefore, it is recognized as a benefit to oneself (Gilmore, 2014). Secondly, those cultural activities provide the knowledge about local history and local identity which can make them understand and influence the sense of belonging to their culture (Kawdee, 2016). Thirdly, improving the inheritance of culture would positively affect quality of life because people are gaining benefit from cultural inheritance, an example being the safety guidelines for people to follow Songkran Festival announced by the government (McCarty et al, 2004; Ministry of Culture, 2023; Murihead & de Leeuw, 2012). Fourthly, cultural inheritance is a bridge connecting people between generations. Many teenagers inherit the culture because of the relationship between younger and older generations (Shiya & Onkam, 2020; Vatviroj, 2016). Fifthly, there are etiquettes for cultural activities, so those who inherit the culture would understand and follow those etiquettes which are beneficial to the social orderliness. People understand that culture is not just a heritage of society, but it is a lesson that provides value, ethics and way of life (Sunthonkitcharak & Yuenyong, 2022; Topanurakkun & Paiwithayasiritham, 2016). Sixthly, the economy and tourism are participated in by those who inherit the local culture because local culture is used for tourism and economic development purposes (Canadian Media Production Association, 2011; Krueaphat & Laeheem, 2023).

Conceptual Framework

To comprehensively understand the factors influencing the Moon Festival practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai, it is essential to examine the attitudes that shape their behavior. As attitudes have been established to impact behavior (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018), identifying the motives underlying these attitudes becomes crucial. This study specifically focuses on investigating the attitudes influencing the Moon Festival practice to gain insights into the reasons behind its observance among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai. The conceptual framework presented below highlights the independent factors, or attitude factors, that contribute to this phenomenon:



Research Methodology

1. Population and Subjects

The selection of subjects was carried out using judgmental sampling, which involved asking the following preliminary questions to potential participants: 1) Are you between the ages of 15 and 24? 2) Do you have at least one Chinese ancestor? And 3) Does your family continue to observe the Moon Festival?

These questions were used to determine the eligibility of individuals for participation in the study, ensuring that the sample comprised individuals within the specified age range, with Chinese ancestry, and whose families actively practiced the Moon Festival. The use of judgmental sampling allowed for the selection of participants who met the specific criteria relevant to the research objectives.

2. Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was developed by the researchers based on relevant literature. It received certification of approval from the Center for Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, Prince of Songkla University, under the reference number 2022-St-Libarts-026.

The research instrument utilized a five-point rating scale for participants' responses. The scale ranged from 5, representing the highest rating, to 1, representing the lowest rating. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the provided statements or questions using this rating scale. The use of a standardized rating scale allows for consistent measurement and interpretation of participants' responses.

3. Data Collection

The data collection for this study spanned a period of one year, specifically from December 2021 to December 2022. The process involved three distinct steps.

In the first step, the questionnaire was developed in the Thai language and underwent evaluation by three experts in the relevant field. This evaluation process aimed to assess the content and quality of the questionnaire. One of the measures used was the Item-Objective Congruence Index (IOC), which helped determine the level of agreement among the experts regarding the questionnaire's suitability and effectiveness.

The second step involved conducting a pilot test with a sample of 200 respondents who were Chinese Thai youth residing in Songkhla City. The primary purpose of this pilot test was to assess the clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire. It also aimed to identify any potential issues or areas for improvement that could enhance the questionnaire's reliability and validity.

After making necessary adjustments based on the pilot test results, the main data collection phase was initiated. Some questions were eliminated from the questionnaire to ensure greater reliability. Prior to participating in the study, the respondents were requested to provide their informed consent. They were informed that their participation was voluntary and that their personal information would be treated with the utmost confidentiality. This meant that their data would be anonymized and not disclosed to any unauthorized parties.

4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the R program to calculate frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation. Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to examine the relationships between the attitude factors and Moon Festival practice. A backward multiple regression analysis was conducted to create a predictive equation for Moon Festival practice.

5. Interpretation Criteria for Mean Values

The interpretation criteria of Cronbach (1990) were selected to interpret the mean values of predictors and variables where 1.00-1.49 = Very Low; 1.50-2.49 = Low; 2.50-3.49 = Moderate; 3.50-4.49 = High; and 4.50-5.00 = Very High.

Findings

1. Profiles of the Subjects

Most of the 160 subjects who were Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai were 22 years of age (23.25%), followed by 21 years (21%), 23 years (13%), 24 years (10%), 20 years (7%), 19 years (6.25%), 18 years (5.75%), 17 years (5.5%), 16 years (4.75%), and 15 years (3.5%) respectively. The majority of the 160 subjects were female (73.75%), followed by male (26.25%).

2. Descriptive Statistics of Outcome Variable (Moon Festival practice) and Predictors

The outcome variable for this study consisted of Moon Festival practice (Y), and the analysis showed that Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai had a moderate level of Moon Festival

practice (mean = 3.24). The analysis of predictor variables related that most of Chinese Thai youth chose improving tourism (X8) at the very high level (mean = 4.60), followed by family unity (X4) (mean = 3.60), learning opportunity (X2) (mean = 3.40), improving economy (X7) (mean = 3.05), improving quality of life (X3) (mean = 2.60), good benefit for oneself (X1) (mean = 2.45), support the ethics (X5) (mean = 2.20), and bring social unity (X6) (mean = 1.50), respectively (see Table 1).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Outcome Variable (Moon Festival practice) and Predictor Variables

Variable	Mean score	S.D.	Interpretation
Moon Festival practice (Y)	3.24	0.82	Moderate
Good benefit for oneself (X1)	2.45	1.05	Low
Learning opportunity (X2)	3.40	0.94	Moderate
Improving quality of life (X3)	2.60	0.99	Moderate
Family unity (X4)	3.60	0.99	High
Support the ethics (X5)	2.20	1.32	Low
Bring social unity (X6)	1.50	0.60	Low
Improving economy (X7)	3.05	1.05	Moderate
Improving tourism (X8)	4.60	0.82	Very High

3. Relationships Between Outcome Variable: Moon Festival Practice and Predictor Variables

From the analysis of the relationships between the eight predictors and Moon Festival practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai, by calculating Pearson's product moment correlation coefficients, it was found that there were six predictors that had very high significant, positive relationships with Moon Festival practice. Family unity (X4) had the highest relationship with Moon Festival practice ($r = .04$, $p < .001$), followed by good benefit for oneself (X1) ($r = .89$, $p < .001$), learning opportunity (X2) ($r = .87$, $p < .001$), improving quality of life (X3) ($r = .85$, $p < .001$), improving economy (X7) and improving tourism (X8) shared the same value ($r = .84$, $p < .001$), support the ethics (X5) ($r = .76$, $p < .001$), and bring social unity ($r = .74$, $p < .001$).

Table 2

Relationships between Outcome Variable: Moon Festival Practice and Predictor Variables

Predictor variable	r	p	Interpretation
Good benefit for oneself (X1)	0.89	0.00	Very High
Learning opportunity (X2)	0.87	0.00	Very High

Predictor variable	r	p	Interpretation
Improving quality of life (X3)	0.85	0.00	Very High
Family unity (X4)	0.94	0.00	Very High
Support the ethics (X5)	0.76	0.00	High
Bring social unity (X6)	0.74	0.00	High
Improving economy (X7)	0.84	0.00	Very High
Improving tourism (X8)	0.84	0.00	Very High

4. Factors Predicting Moon Festival Practice

Using multiple linear regressions and incorporating the equation with backward elimination, three predictors of Moon Festival practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai were identified. The prediction ability was at the significance level of .001 with the prediction efficiency of 97.2 percent ($R^2 = 0.972$, $p < .001$). These three predictors were: family unity (X4), improving economy (X7), and improving tourism (X8). The predictor with the highest relationship with Moon Festival practice was improving tourism (X8), ($B = 0.42$, $p < .001$) while the predictor with the lowest relationship with Moon Festival practice was improving economy (X7) ($B = 0.19$, $p < .001$) (see Table 3). The raw score prediction equation for Moon Festival practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai could be written as: $\hat{Y}_y = -0.59 + 0.35X_4 + 0.19X_7 + 0.42X_8$

Table 3

Reduced Linear Regression Model of Attitude Factors Predicting Moon Festival Practice in the Final Model.

Predictor Variable	B	S.E.	t value	p value
Constant	-0.59	0.19	-3.01	0.01
Family unity (X4)	0.35	0.09	3.92	0.00
Improving economy (X7)	0.19	0.07	2.77	0.01
Improving tourism (X8)	0.42	0.06	6.99	0.00
Note: Multiple R-squared: 0.972, Adjusted R-squared: 0.9668, Residual standard error: 0.1507, on 16 degrees of freedom; F-statistic: 185.2 on 3 and 16 DF, p-value: 0.000				

Discussion

Cultural festivals in Hat Yai have made significant socio-economic contributions. Firstly, they have boosted the income of merchants and local service providers. Secondly, they have played a crucial role in promoting the tourism industry, benefiting hotels and restaurants. These festivals attract a considerable number of Thai, Malaysian, and Singaporean tourists to visit the tourist attractions in Hat Yai. Lastly, these cultural festivals have played a pivotal role

in preserving the identity of the Chinese Thai community in Hat Yai (Chitwiboon & Tepsing, 2017).

Considering the aforementioned reasons, it can be concluded that the Moon Festival in Hat Yai provides economic benefits, boosts tourism, and carries cultural significance (Chootochana, 2022). Therefore, it was considered important to study the attitudes of Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai towards Moon Festival practices to ensure its continuation. This study can serve as a guideline for both governmental and private organizations in developing policies related to the inheritance and promotion of Chinese culture.

The findings of the study revealed that the strongest attitude factor predicting the Moon Festival practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai was the belief in improving tourism (X8). This finding aligns with the hypothesis of the study and is consistent with previous research that suggests people continue cultural practices for tourism purposes (Canadian Media Production Association, 2011; Castro-Martinez & Benghozi, 2022; Frey, 1994; Johansson, 2016; McCarty et al., 2004; Murihead and de Leeuw, 2012; Salvador).

To analyze attitudes, it is important to consider the motivation for cultural inheritance. Previous research suggests that stimuli can influence changes in attitude and behavior (Nuchanart et al., 2019), and attitudes can lead to different behaviors (Katz, 1960; Kotler and Armstrong, 2018). In the case of Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai, their continued practice of the Moon Festival is driven by the recognition of its significance for tourism.

The cultural practice theory posits that cultural practices are a result of social norms. When individuals share similar beliefs, these beliefs are expressed through cultural activities. Keawborisut (2012) discussed in her master's degree thesis that not only the Vegetarian Festival in Hat Yai, but also other Chinese festivals in the area are specifically designed for tourism purposes. The festival venues, activities, recipes, and atmosphere are tailored to attract tourists. Additionally, new activities are introduced to further enhance the appeal of the festivals to tourists.

Therefore, the practice of the Moon Festival supports the tourism industry and plays a role in overcoming Hat Yai's economic challenges. As Chootochana (2023) emphasized, the Hat Yai Moon Festival is a cultural event managed by both governmental and private organizations to stimulate economic development. Various entities, including Hat Yai Municipality, the Songkhla City Government, and 24 Chinese Thai associations, collaborate to ensure the success of the festival. Thus, the practice of the Moon Festival is a collective effort by the people of Hat Yai.

The second highest beta coefficient in this study was associated with the attitude of family unity (X4). This finding is consistent with the research of Krueaphat and Laeheem (2022), which highlights the value that youth place on spending time with their family members. Analyzing this finding through the lens of Schiffman and Kanuk's (1994) concept theory, the practice of the Moon Festival reflects an attitude that emphasizes the importance of family.

The attitude of family unity aligns with the research of Krueaphat et al. (2021), which identifies family as one of the key factors supporting the inheritance of Chinese culture. Horton and Hunt (1980) also emphasize the role of the family in transmitting cultural traditions to children. As suggested by Pattranupravat (2015), youth who are familiar with family traditions are more likely to participate in Chinese festivals.

From a psychological perspective, the attitude of family unity stems from the emotional need for love and validation from family members. Children receive compliments and rewards from their family when they engage in activities that align with Chinese traditions. This can be observed in the cultural practice of the Chinese New Year festival, where children receive red envelopes (Ang Pao) after offering well wishes to their elders for good luck, health, and wealth (Peng, 2012). This activity aligns with the adjustment component of attitude, as described by Newcomb et al. (1965), as children learn to adapt and embrace Chinese traditions when they recognize their significance.

The smallest beta coefficient in this study was associated with the belief in improving economy (X7). This finding is consistent with the research of Mahasinpaisal (2012), which suggests that many Thai people prioritize activities that can improve their financial situation and contribute to the local economy. This finding aligns with the concept theory of attitude proposed by Kotler and Armstrong (2018), indicating that the stimulus of improving financial prospects motivates people to engage in cultural activities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Moon Festival holds significant value for Hat Yai society in terms of social, cultural, and economic aspects, particularly within the hospitality and tourism industry. To ensure the preservation of these values, it is crucial to study the attitude factors of Chinese Thai youth, the subject of this study. The study's findings indicate that the strongest predictor of Moon Festival practice is the belief in its positive impact on tourism, followed by the attitude of family unity and the desire for improving economic conditions.

Chinese Thai youth recognize the importance of tourism as a key driver of Hat Yai development, given its multicultural nature. Cultural tourism, especially related to Chinese culture, is seen as a positive contributor to the tourism industry. Additionally, the attitude of family unity holds significance as the Moon Festival provides a valuable opportunity for family reunions, which are increasingly rare in the era of globalization.

Furthermore, the attitude of improving the economy reflects the hopes and aspirations of the local Hat Yai community for economic development, particularly in the light of past economic crises. The festival plays a role in supporting local trade and investment, providing tangible benefits to local merchants.

Overall, the Moon Festival contributes precious values to Hat Yai society, encompassing social, cultural, and economic dimensions. By studying the attitudes of Chinese

Thai youth, we can gain insights into their motivations and aspirations, ensuring the continued success and significance of the Moon Festival in Hat Yai.

Suggestions

Future studies should investigate the potential of community tourism for strengthening the role of the Moon Festival. In addition, local Chinese Thai residents should be involved in the development of creative tourism campaigns.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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