Unraveling the Mysteries of Thai Culinary Culture: A Cross-Cultural Exploration of Roadside Dining Experience

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the impact of Thai street food on the sense of adventure and cultural immersion among first-time visitors to Thailand. Using a cross-sectional design in authentic public street settings, participants were surveyed with a semi-structured questionnaire to gather their perspectives. Thematic analysis revealed five main themes: distinctiveness, economic value, service, regulation, and locality, which were categorized into two overarching constructs: Thai street food as a unique experiential journey and its social significance. The findings provide valuable insights into the dining experiences of Chinese tourists visiting Thailand for the first time, enriching the fields of gastronomy tourism and food sociology. The study offers practical recommendations for businesses, industries, and public authorities based on its outcomes. It focuses on the unique character of Thai street food and its impact on first-time visitors, showcasing how it fosters adventure and cultural immersion in authentic street settings.

Keywords: Thai food, culinary tourism, street food, tourist experiences, cross-cultural communication.

Introduction

The promotion of Thailand's diverse culinary culture has been a key focus for the Thailand Tourism Authority. Their efforts have not only aimed to increase awareness and enthusiasm for culinary tourism (Jerram, 2016) but also foster stronger ties with the agricultural sector, which is the country's largest employer and a significant contributor to the economy. The Tourism Authority of Thailand set an ambitious goal of raising gastronomy tourism revenue from 20 percent in 2017 to 25 percent in 2018, with an expected contribution of 750 billion baht from gastronomy tourists out of the overall 3 trillion-baht tourism revenue in 2018. In 2017 alone, over one hundred thousand street food sellers across the nation generated a staggering 270 billion baht in revenue.

Thailand's culinary industry made a significant contribution of 20% to the country's tourism sector in 2016, placing it fourth after the accommodation (29%), transportation (27%), and retail (24%) sectors, respectively (Hutasingh, 2020). In the same year, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) reported that Chinese tourists spent the most on food, with an impressive 83.3 billion baht, followed by Russian tourists with 20.8 billion baht, British tourists with 18.4 billion baht, Malaysian tourists with 16.1 billion baht, and American tourists with 13.9 billion baht.

Thailand has earned a reputation as having one of Asia's liveliest street food...
cultures (Chuenpagdee, 2014; Rampai et al., 2024). Thus, a thriving culture of street food has developed, with vendors lining the streets and providing food and drink to passing automobiles and pedestrians (Cohen, 2012). Thai street food is popular among visitors because it gives them a taste of the country’s rich culinary heritage (Shaw, 2019). Food is sold on almost every corner of the city, from traditional baskets to motorbikes outfitted with outdoor ovens. While 8.4 million people call Bangkok home, the greater metropolitan area is home to approximately 15 million people (Rampai et al., 2024). Thai cuisine plays a key role in drawing visitors from all over the globe to visit Thailand, thereby strengthening the connection between food and tourism industry. A destination’s food becomes a key player in bringing tourists to the location and fostering diverse experiences (Zhu et al., 2022).

The rich history and geographical variety of Thailand's cuisine go back many generations (Hall & Sharples, 2003; Jerram, 2016). Regional ingredients, cooking methods, and cultural norms all contribute to a unique repertoire of dishes throughout the country. Thai cuisine is integral to Thailand's tradition and cultural identity. Thai cuisine has garnered international praise for its distinctive flavors and indigenous ingredients (Rampai et al., 2024). In both restaurants and street-side stalls, one may sample a variety of popular Thai foods. Thai street cuisine is well-known for its affordability, originality, and genuineness (Chuenpagdee, 2014; Rampai et al., 2024).

Discovering the distinct street culture of Thailand is just part of the fun of venturing through the country’s many pulsating street food stalls (Putra et al., 2023; Shoukat et al., 2023). Taking cooking courses, going on culinary tours, and visiting local markets and organic farms are all examples of the growing trend of "culinary tourism" in Thailand in recent years. Participating in these events will give you a deeper appreciation for Thai culture while also enhancing one’s knowledge of Thai cooking techniques and ingredients.

The Thai government and tourist organizations recognize the value of promoting culinary tourism and do so aggressively. Thai food is celebrated all year long with festivals and events that draw visitors from all over the world. Cooking contests, tastings, and demonstrations are all a part of the festivities honoring the nation's culinary heritage (Lertputtarak, 2012). The presence of Michelin-starred restaurants in Thailand has also helped establish the country’s status as a culinary mecca. Bangkok's burgeoning restaurant business, which serves both traditional Thai cuisine and modern fusion meals created by trained chefs, has made the city a top destination for foodies throughout the world (Jerram, 2016). Thai culture and food offer visitors a distinctive and exciting vacation experience.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Food in Tourism**

Food plays an essential part in tourism, with culinary tourism serving as a catalyst for local employment, company development, and economic growth (Rishad, 2018). Due to the allure of experiencing regional food, several countries use their native cuisine as their principal tourist attraction (Chang et al., 2020). Tourists may get a taste of a place's history, culture, and symbolism via its food (Ellis et al., 2018). It not only attracts and improves travelers' experiences, but it also serves as a window into local culture, traditions, and lifestyles (Long, 2005; Jerram, 2016).

Within the realm of gastronomic tourism, the notion of food-based tourism has emerged. This category comprises visits to main and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurant investigations, and specialized sites, with the primary purpose of tasting and experiencing the peculiar characteristics of a particular food-producing area (Hall & Sharples, 2003; Everett & Aitchison, 2008). Ellis et al. (2018) identified five key
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aspects of culinary tourism: motivation, authenticity, culture, destination orientation, and management and marketing (Anggara et al., 2023).

The impact of street cuisine in molding visitor experiences is equally crucial. Long's (2015) research on street food in Taiwan stresses the sensory parts of the experience, such as the alluring fragrances, noises, and tastes that enable travelers to immerse themselves in the specific culinary palette of a location while interacting with its people and customs. Street food offers the opportunity to immerse oneself in the culture and history of a location via its gastronomic offerings, therefore becoming a vital part of the tourist experience. In addition, street food disrupts the formal and hierarchical structure of the restaurant sector, allowing a more egalitarian and democratic approach to gastronomic experiences (Jerram, 2016). The communal and shared aspect of eating street food fosters a feeling of community and a shared dining experience among diners. Food has evolved from a secondary part of tourism to a key motivation for certain tourists (Tendani et al., 2023).

Numerous studies have examined the variables that compel food tourists to visit certain areas (Fusté-Forné, 2023; García-Carrión et al., 2023). As tourist attractions, developing nations often promote the variety, affordability, convenience, and availability of street food (Seo & Lee, 2021). Thus, food tourists constitute a separate consumer category (Kivela & Crotts, 2006), motivated by the desire to try a broad range of distinctive delicacies. As an intrinsic element of the tourist experience, partaking in the local cuisine while traveling abroad is of great importance (Hjalager & Richards, 2002). It serves as both a cultural activity and a type of entertainment, letting visitors immerse themselves in the distinctive tastes and culinary traditions of the area (Fields, 2002; Ryu & Jang, 2006; Sparks, 2007). Consuming local food may become a significant tradition for people, emblematic of their genuine travel experiences (Lin et al., 2019). Economic advantages also accrue to both vendors and visitors (Lee et al., 2019).

The study of local food and beverage consumption in the hospitality and tourist industry has shed light on a number of facets of this experience. Researchers have examined the economic benefits and local development resulting from promoting local food as a tourist attraction (Tellstrom et al., 2005), identified key success factors in marketing culinary tourism destinations (Okumus et al., 2007), and investigated the appeal and challenges of local food experiences (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Moreover, the influence of gastronomy on the destination experience has been studied (Quan & Wang, 2004), as has the connection between food consumption and the overall tourist experience (Kivela & Crotts, 2006).

Recent studies have provided four theoretical components for elucidating the factors that drive food and drink purchases by vacationers (Fields, 2002; Ryu & Jang, 2006; Sparks, 2007). The need for recreation, leisure, and rest may be sated by trying out new and interesting experiences, which is a physical motivator in and of itself. Physical pleasure from eating is enhanced by the senses of sight, taste, and smell provided by the meal. Secondly, a cultural motivation is the want to learn about and participate in the customs of other societies (Tendani et al., 2023). Trying local food is a way to immerse oneself in the destination's cultural fabric, gaining insight into its traditions and history. Thirdly, interpersonal motivators focus on the need to connect with others, whether it is by meeting new people, spending quality time with family and friends, or enhancing current connections. Sharing a meal on a holiday allows for social bonding and the creation of shared memories. Finally, status and prestige motivators are related to self-respect, recognition, and the need to stand out. Dining at exclusive restaurants and relishing wonderful cuisine becomes a means of elevating one's social standing and attracting the attention of others.

The research gap leading to the following research questions stems from the intersection of several key areas: the promotion of Thailand's diverse culinary culture by
the Thailand Tourism Authority, the significant contribution of the culinary industry to the country's tourism sector, the unique role of street food in Thai culture, and the specifics of food tourism as a concept and practice.

While the Thailand Tourism Authority has been focusing on promoting the country's culinary culture to boost tourism and strengthen ties with the agricultural sector, there appears to be a lack of detailed understanding of how these efforts specifically affect the perceptions and experiences of tourists, particularly first-time visitors. This gap suggests a need to explore how the promotion of Thai cuisine influences tourists' expectations and experiences.

Despite recognizing Thai street food as a key attraction for tourists, previous research primarily provides a general overview of its economic impact and its role in the tourism industry. However, there is a lack of in-depth exploration into how street food facilitates cultural immersion and adventure for tourists, especially in comparison to their own culinary traditions. This gap is particularly significant in understanding the unique cultural and gastronomic experiences of first-time visitors from different backgrounds, like those from China.

While there is recognition of the popularity of Thai street food among tourists, there is less exploration of how these tourists, particularly those from countries with rich street food cultures like China, perceive and experience Thai street food in comparison to their own. This gap necessitates a comparative study to understand the similarities and differences between Thai and Chinese street food cultures from the perspective of Chinese tourists.

The existing theoretical frameworks on food in tourism provide insights into the role of food as a catalyst for tourism, encompassing aspects like local employment, economic growth, and the sensory experience of food. However, these frameworks may not fully capture the nuanced perceptions and experiences of specific tourist groups, such as first-time visitors from China. This gap points towards the need for a more targeted approach in understanding how these tourists interact with and perceive the street food culture in Thailand.

In light of the above-mentioned research gap and suggestions made by previous studies, we sought to investigate the following questions:

Central question: To what extent does the unique character of Thai street food foster a sense of adventure and cultural immersion for first-time visitors?

Subordinate questions:
1. How do the perceptions and expectations of urban street food among initial tourists manifest in their experience of Thai street food?
2. In what ways do the unique cultural characteristics and regional variations of Thai street food differ from or resemble those of Chinese street food?

Method
This study utilized a cross-sectional design to collect data from multiple participants within a single period, with the aim of addressing our research questions (Spector, 2019). Employing a qualitative research approach (Creswell & Clark, 2004), our objective was to gain an understanding of the contextual factors surrounding urban street food consumption as experienced by the participants. The investigation was conducted in authentic non-contrived settings, specifically public street environments, where participants actively engaged in natural food consumption events throughout the study.
Qualitative research procedures are recognized for their less structured nature compared to quantitative studies, often involving intersecting or parallel processes (Miles et al., 2019). In this particular study, our focus was specifically on the phenomenon of street food consumption, which served as the primary subject of investigation. No variables were manipulated or altered as part of our research design, enabling us to examine the phenomenon in its natural occurrence within real-life settings (Farrelly, 2013; Spector, 2019).

Participants

Relevance to Chinese Visitors

Thailand's tourism industry relies heavily on Chinese visitors, who account for both the majority of tourists and the fastest-growing segment of the market. According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2020), 8.8 million Chinese travelers visited Thailand in 2016, accounting for approximately 27% of all arrivals. No other single country came close. Indeed, entire regions fell short of China, with ASEAN visitors totaling 8.7 million and Europeans 6.2 million. The total Chinese visitor counts increased from 750,000 in 2000 to slightly around 9 million in 2016. The rate of growth has moderated but remains high, with visitor numbers increasing 10.3% in 2016. In 2019 alone, Thailand welcomed over 10.99 million visitors from China, making up 28.4% of the total number of international visitors to the country.

Considering exponential growth, China is well ahead of any other country as the world's greatest source of tourists, with over 100 million Chinese traveling abroad annually, and this number expanding by over 16% annually (Lee et al., 2011). However, this is not just a matter of arrivals and departures, as the volume of people passing through has a major financial impact. An estimated $261 billion was spent by Chinese tourists in 2016, an increase of 12% from 2015 (Kwek & Lee, 2010). Spending by Chinese tourists has increased significantly since 2004; the average amount of money they spend during their travels has increased by more than 100%. In fact, perhaps their decision to visit Thailand was positively influenced by their intention to consume local food (Dedeoğlu et al., 2022).

Sampling

The study employed a purposeful sampling strategy of typical sampling (Miles et al., 2019) to identify individuals and sites that were information-rich (Patton, 2015). We selected those individuals who exhibited the essential characteristics of first-time visitors from the People's Republic of China. These participants statistically typified the major portion of foreign tourists visiting Thailand over the last decade. These purposefully sampled individuals were targeted because first-time visitors to a foreign land were believed to be eager to partake in a wide range of diverse events offered by the destination country, including food experience (Lau & McKercher, 2004).

The survey conducted for this study involved a total of 19 participants ranging in age from 19 to 40 years old (M = 26.74, SD = 6.70). The participants had at least a high school education. Their duration of stay in Thailand ranged from a few days to long-term residency (M = 8.16, SD = 3.33), with the majority of participants in Thailand for schooling purposes and the remaining participants for business or vacation. A summary of the participant's demographic information can be found in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Purpose of Visit</th>
<th>Length of Stay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>college</td>
<td>vacation</td>
<td>6 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>college</td>
<td>vacation</td>
<td>8 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>vacation</td>
<td>10 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This study employed semi-structured interviews to learn about Chinese visitors’ impressions of street cuisine in central Bangkok. A semi-structured questionnaire was developed for this study. It was decided to develop an integrated interview methodology consisting of open-ended questions designed to extract participants’ views and experiences with urban street food. These questions investigated subjects such as the originality of the meal, the sense of adventure associated with tasting new cuisines, and the cultural immersion experienced while eating street food. Night markets, pedestrian plazas, and popular tourist spots were specifically targeted because of their high visitor density in the research. These locations were chosen so that we could get a good representation of the people who eat from street vendors in these busy urban areas, and so that we could guarantee their participation. Prior to conducting the interviews, the research disclosed its objectives and guaranteed the confidentiality of the participants’ information. It was highlighted that data-gathering participation was optional and unpaid. With the participants’ permission, interviews with Chinese visitors were recorded, transcribed, and then translated into English. The collection of subjective narrative data occurred between August and September of 2022. Approximately 1.15 hours was the average length of the interviews done for this investigation. A data analysis team progressively cleansed and de-identified the acquired data to guarantee the confidentiality and safety of the study participants. This precaution was taken to protect the participant’s privacy and confidentiality throughout the study procedure. In the last phase of the research, the interviews were transcribed and summarized to provide a thorough analysis and interpretation of the acquired data. This method guaranteed that the conclusions were based on a comprehensive evaluation of the participants’ experiences while preserving their anonymity.

Analysis

Data-analytic Strategy

Data in qualitative research is analyzed in an iterative and continuously comparative manner, involving the reduction and retrieval of large volumes of textual
information. Interviewing was chosen as the method for collecting qualitative information. We used coding to help make sense of data through categorization and thematic analysis (Bengtsson, 2016). Strauss and Corbin (2015) defined coding as the analytic process of fragmenting, conceptualizing, and integrating data into theory. Codes are metadata that give datasets meaning. Coding a sentence or paragraph captures its main idea in as few words as possible. During the process, we attempted to convey concisely the main point of the sentence or paragraph. Qualitative coding can be descriptive or interpretative and iteratively refined.

We used in vivo coding to emphasize participants’ real spoken words. This sort of coding can be beneficial when researchers interact with individuals from a particular culture or microculture to show how they utilize specific words or phrases in their interactions (Manning & Kunkel, 2014; Saldaña, 2016). In vivo coding is recognized for showcasing participants’ voices and relying on them to interpret data (Manning, 2017). After all, a thematic analysis was performed on the transcripts.

The analytic process started with open coding, which involved breaking interview transcripts down into a set of meaningful units so that these units were examined for comparisons and contrasts. Similar units were classified into the same categories. Second, we applied focused coding in which we determined which of the categories were most meaningful for the research questions. In the next axial coding stage, the categories were grouped into key categories, which comprised several earlier established categories. Next, selective coding was applied so that core themes were generated based on integrating categories previously developed.

**Methodological Integrity**

While quantitative studies aim to attain internal and external validity, internal consistency, reliability, objectivity, and validity, qualitative research aims to establish trustworthiness by creating stringent criteria involving credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To evaluate and ensure the validity of the study, we meticulously designed and conducted a series of semi-structured interviews according to these four criteria. A basic concern for qualitative research is the degree of confidence researchers can have in what they have observed or heard or the assurance that they are not being misled (Miles et al., 2019).

The credibility of an investigation is determined by whether the findings of the investigation are true, credible, and believable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure the trustworthiness of our investigation, we employed several methods. First, we engaged in prolonged interaction with the environment, spending two weeks at each site to acquire a deeper understanding of the context. We also conducted two pilot interviews to test the interview protocol and trained our research assistants in research methodology. In addition, peer debriefing was conducted twice each week to provide an objective evaluation of our transcribing, categorizing, and theming. We also went through the process of member checking by asking some participants to review and provide feedback on a draft of our report to ensure accuracy and address any concerns.

Transferability refers to a study’s generalizability. However, only case-to-case transmission is used in qualitative research (Tobin & Begley, 2004). We provided detailed descriptions of the participants and setting so that others interested in transferring the results to their own site may assess transferability. Furthermore, we employed two techniques to ensure data saturation was reached. One was the operational method, whereby we quantified the number of new codes per interview over time. Most codes were identified in the first interviews, and subsequent interviews showed a reduced number of new codes. The other was the theoretical method, whereby we held regular meetings to report and discuss the progress of coding and identification of variations in each of the key concepts. In addition, we practiced iterative sampling by moving back and forth between selecting cases and data analysis to determine if there were no new
information, code, or themes emerging from the dataset and if all the variations had been identified.

To ensure reliability, we ensured that the study procedure was rational, traceable, and well-documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004). To ensure that the findings of this qualitative study can be repeated utilizing the same participants, coders, and setting. To address dependability, we provided full descriptions of the study protocols and protocol throughout the investigation, made a detailed record of the data collection process to build an audit trail, assessed coding correctness, and ensured intercoder reliability by constructing a codebook. By standardizing the interview method, we attained a high degree of inter-rater agreement among our interviewers.

During each interview, we posed an identical set of questions in the same order and instructed coders on the implications of each interview response. This allows for accurate and consistent data interpretation and coding. All data were immediately coded at the conclusion of the data-collecting session to eliminate the possibility of bias. We aimed for a high level of agreement by setting a cutoff of 0.80 for Krippendorff’s alpha, a commonly employed measure of inter-rater reliability. This criterion was chosen since it exceeds the generally accepted thresholds suggested by Banerjee et al. (1999), Popping (1988), and Landis & Koch (1977). As a consequence of our consistent procedure and high degree of inter-rater agreement, we were able to classify the data into the same categories and guarantee that its substance was agreed upon, so establishing the validity of our findings. By offering a clear and complete description of our research methods, readers may independently evaluate the validity of our findings.

We choose to document our actions, ideas, and feelings in a reflective notebook. In addition, we arranged weekly team meetings to boost confidence that the results would be validated or corroborated by other team members. We anticipated that if confirmability was established, credibility, transferability, and reliability would also be attained (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To establish the credibility of our research, we documented our activities, thoughts, and feelings throughout the research process in a journal. This allowed us to consider our experiences and any possible biases that may have affected our findings. In addition, we organized weekly team meetings to boost our confidence in our outcomes. As Lincoln and Guba illustrate, we understood that establishing confirmability would lead to obtaining other qualities of trustworthiness, such as credibility, transferability, and dependability (1985). We made sure our study could be replicated by keeping meticulous records of our efforts and often asking for feedback from the rest of the team. Consequently, we believe that our results are valid.

Findings

Our study results were more broadly relevant when we organized them into distinct buckets. Our intention was to design a system for assessing the cultural significance and social setting of Thai street cuisine. We wanted to widen the application of our findings beyond the boundaries of our study by taking this method. To show the structural foundation of the categories, Table 2 presents the in vivo codes, derived categories, supporting themes, and overarching theoretical frameworks. We proposed arranging the categories in a hierarchical order to facilitate a clear and logical comprehension of their linkages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical construct</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>In vivo code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Distinctiveness</td>
<td>Fine Flavor</td>
<td>“tastes good” “spicy” “tastes too strong” “characteristic flavor”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Migration Letters
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alluring Looks</td>
<td>“looks delicious”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“looks appetizing”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Value</td>
<td>Reduced Cost</td>
<td>“inexpensive”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“reasonably priced”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased Visibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>“clear signs”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“written in Chinese”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“shows prices”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Offering</td>
<td>Caring Service</td>
<td>“amicable service”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“cut for you”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Supply</td>
<td></td>
<td>“not a whole lot”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“sold out”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich Variety</td>
<td></td>
<td>“wide choice”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“not as varied as in China”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“fried worms”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“marinated raw seafood”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td></td>
<td>“hygiene”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“inadequate”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“properly sealed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“food spoilage”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“bacteria”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“glass coverings”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“roadside is dusty”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td>“not so friendly to people with sensitive stomach”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locality</td>
<td>Physical Location</td>
<td>“densely set up”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“almost everywhere”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climatic Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td>“dining outdoors”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“weather is hot”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The themes that emerged from the central phenomenon were categorized into two overarching theoretical constructs: experience and compliance. These constructs provide a deeper understanding of the cultural and social significance of Thai street food, enabling us to draw generalizable conclusions that are relevant to various contexts. The former construct was composed of three themes: distinctiveness, economical value, and service. The latter comprised two themes: regulation and locality. The first theoretical construct experience was used to address the central research question. It concerned the experience of the participants and their perception of Thai street food. The responses centered on three supporting themes. The first was distinctiveness, the second was economic value, and the last was service.

The theme distinctiveness comprised two categories: fine flavor and alluring looks. The flavor of Thai roadside cuisine was found to appeal to the Chinese palate as well. Humans have a highly developed sense of taste, especially when it comes to food. The participants [P10, P18, P19] overwhelmingly expressed favorable opinions about street food taste using such terms as “inexpensive but elegant” or “cheap but good” (物美价廉 in Chinese) among descriptors like “tasty” (美味), “delicious” (好吃), and “palatable” (可口). These terms implied that taste was foremost in Thai street food. They all agreed that Thai food had a “unique characteristic flavor,” while some described it as “strong” [浓] or “hot” [辣]. Overall, the participants praised its favorable taste.
When the participants came into contact with the street food, the very first thing they experienced was sight. On their first encounter with Thai street food, not only did it taste good, but many participants [P4, P17, P19] cited it as looking “delightful,” “delicious,” “tempting,” and “appetizing.” Apparently, the sight of street food played a role in attracting Chinese visitors to the country.

The theme of economic value comprised two categories: reduced cost and increased visibility. From an economic perspective, the cost of consumption was reportedly lower in Thailand than in China. The visiting participants found Thai street food to be very affordable in most cases. A participant [P9] maintained: “They sell food at an affordable (实惠) price here. I could eat two square meals for less than the price I pay for one back home.” Another participant [P16] confirmed, “Usually you can eat enough for less than 60 baht (about US$ 2).”

In addition, the price of Thai street food was manifested through various signs and signage posted in Thai and Chinese at the stall. The participants found it clear, transparent, and helpful in understanding the pricing before making a purchase decision. A participant [P11] argued:

Though I don’t read Thai, I can understand the price and other conditions by looking at the Chinese-written signage posted above the stall. I don’t think Thai food vendors can be trusted—but at least they were not trying to rip me off.

The theme service encompassed three categories: caring service, limited supply, and wide variety.

The participants agreed that street food vendors provided good service, were courteous, and had good manners when talking with foreign customers. Not only were the food vendors amiable and helpful, but they were also trying to improve the efficiency of communication by using a lingua franca. A participant [P4] noted, “The Thais are pretty friendly to foreign tourists. They are eager to use English to communicate.”

Thai street food vendors were eager to make consumption an effortless process for the customers because a typical transaction was completed outdoors, and so lacked the luxury of indoor dining. To offset that, some vendors make their business more convenient for customers. For example, a participant [P12] was fascinated by the service commonly delivered by a fruit vendor and noted, “The roadside fruit stall sellers in China won’t cut the fruit into small pieces for you. But they do it here.” Additionally, a typical roadside food stall had limited storage space, so they made sure the ingredients went to the best use. A participant [P13] claimed,

The ingredients of Thai roadside stalls are relatively fresh, and the quantity is generally not too large, so if you get there late, most dishes will probably be sold out.

The second theoretical construct, compliance was used to address the first subordinate research question. It concerned the legal regulations and measures in terms of the physical and geographical location of street food stall presence. The responses centered on two supporting themes. The first was regulation, while the second theme was locality.

The theme regulation comprised two categories: sanitation management and health safety. Under these themes, the participants expected improved sanitation and stricter health regulations.

A participant [P3] made a point concerning the ways the vendors go about handling their food preparation on-site by saying: “I believe a certain number of roadside stalls can effectively promote the food culture of the country, but the governing body
really needs to focus more on hygiene.” The issue of sanitation concerned another participant [P1], who remarked:

They would prepare the ingredients and then put them aside for a while before they cooked them. In the meantime, they might not seal or cover it properly. It is only a matter of time before the food gets contaminated.

The participants raised concerns about sanitation management, which was seen as a potential health risk. One participant [P14] even shared a personal experience of having an upset stomach after consuming roadside food by stating: “I had a seafood dish from some roadside stall the other evening and it disturbed my stomach all night. It wasn’t friendly for people with a sensitive stomach like me.”

The theme locality encompassed two categories: physical location and climatic environment. Locality refers to the site of the phenomenon under study that involves a place and its environment. In this study, the locality was specific to urban areas in metropolitan Bangkok.

Some responses painted a vivid picture of Thailand's urban food landscape, highlighting its diverse and enticing culinary scene. The participants expressed their anticipation for a more enhanced and well-organized layout of food stalls, highlighting their frustration with the current situation. Specifically, a pavement densely occupied by food stalls was not safe and actually posed a hazard to pedestrians. A participant [P2] recounted his Chinatown experience by stating:

The stalls were set up back-to-back, so close next to each other. It was so cluttered there, though lively and vibrant that I had difficulty traversing the street. There was no room for people to move around. They might as well consider blocking ongoing traffic and making it a pedestrian zone. You risk getting hit by a moving vehicle while walking.

The convenience and omnipresence of street food in Thailand were recognized by the participants. They all agreed that “Thailand is great for street food. You can get it anywhere around the city—not only in the designated areas but also in residential neighborhoods.” This response revealed that the city was lax on regulating the use of public areas, which differed from in China, as another participant [P15] revealed:

In China, for the most part, they impose urban planning measures which restrict you from setting up your stall in most areas. You can’t just put up a stall anywhere. But here, it seems like anywhere is fine. It is convenient but not highly organized. The city doesn’t seem to care.

The climate was a factor affecting the personality of the street food by foreign visitors to Thailand. The local weather conditions proved to be an obstacle to outdoor dining in Thailand due to the sultry weather. The country’s climate was seemingly unfriendly to foreign visitors, putting international tourism at a disadvantage. A participant [P7] confirmed this point by saying, “It is not fun to have a meal in the sun. The sun is too strong here. It could give you sunburn.” In addition, the weather was found to affect the quality of food. A participant [P6] agreed that the hot weather could cause food to go stale easily by noting: “The only bad thing is the hot weather because it only hastens food spoilage.”

The answer to the second subordinate research question was induced from the codes in such categories as fine flavor, economic value, caring service, wide variety, and physical location, drawn from various themes. The Thai and Chinese street food, though sharing some resemblances, differed in these dimensions.

In general, most Thai foods were not notably different from Chinese food though the former’s selection was believed to be not as wide. The participants did not find it was quite different from their regular diet. Thai street food links the Chinese visitors to their
home country due to its close semblance to their native dishes. A participant [P5] associated it with meals in their home country due to the closeness in taste and asserted:

What I just had here in Chinatown didn’t taste a whole lot different from that in China. Not really different from what I eat every day. So it doesn’t make me crave a home-cooked meal or anything.

The participants seemed to acknowledge that the cost of essential goods was lower in Thailand. Specifically, the street food price was described to be relatively more affordable in Thailand than in China. The participants hardly, if ever, had a problem with defraying the expenses of street dining throughout their stay in the country. In fact, they found it relatively inexpensive to take an extended vacation or even to live in Thailand. Comparatively, China’s average cost of living is 2.47% higher than Thailand’s (Numbeo, 2022), so they unquestionably did not have qualms about venturing into the street food landscape.

It was reported that though a substantial amount of Thai food tasted like its Chinese counterpart, it was an exact replica. For example, the Chinese “spicy” taste was apparently not identical to the traditional Thai hot flavor that was based on bird’s eye chili. The spicy Chinese flavor was associated with numb-spiciness (麻辣 in Chinese) derived from Sichuan peppers, as one participant [P8] asserted, “It tastes spicy, but it isn’t the taste I grew up with.”

Thai street food vendors were eager to make the consumption process easy for the customers, given that a typical transaction was completed in the open air, so it lacked the luxury of indoor dining. They would attempt to please the customers in the open-air transaction. For example, a participant said, “The roadside fruit push-cart sellers in China won’t cut the fruit in small pieces for you, but they make it convenient for us to eat here.” It was said that the food stall vendors in China allegedly did not pay as much attention to such details as those in Thailand.

Surprisingly, some Chinese participants were not appalled by exotic dishes that were not commonly available in China. These included fried worms, marinated raw seafood, mangoes with sticky rice, banana roti prata, and salted grilled fish, to name a few. This food experience left the Chinese visitors with a memorable impression of how colorful Thai food can be. In this regard, a participant [P1] expressed:

What amazes me most about Thai street food is the fried worms. You can hardly get fried worms in China. They might be found only in special places like here.

Thailand is in central Southeast Asia, situated 15 degrees above the Equator. The country has a year-round temperature of 25 to 28 °C (77 to 82 °F) and does not experience a wide range of seasons like most other countries. In particular, it is sunny throughout most of the year. In contrast, a much larger country like China is characterized by an eclectic array of inland climatic variations, contributing to a wider choice of cuisine. One participant [P10] observed:

China’s geographical environment is complex, having a variety of climate changes. So, our street food is also greatly varied. But Thailand’s country-wide climate changes are not as starkly different. The result is that the selection of street food here is not as wide as in China.

Discussion
The findings of the study provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the cultural significance and social setting of Thai street cuisine, particularly from the perspective of Chinese tourists. By organizing the data into two main theoretical constructs — experience and compliance — the study sheds light on several key aspects.
Experience includes themes like distinctiveness, economical value, and service, offering insights into the sensory appeal and affordability of Thai street food. The distinctiveness of Thai street food, characterized by its fine flavor and alluring looks, was a major draw for Chinese visitors. They appreciated the unique taste profile of Thai cuisine, finding it both palatable and visually appealing. The economical aspect was also significant, with participants noting the affordability of street food in Thailand compared to China. This aspect was complemented by transparent pricing strategies, making the experience more user-friendly for tourists. The service aspect highlighted the friendly and accommodating nature of Thai street food vendors, who made efforts to bridge communication gaps and enhance the overall dining experience.

Compliance dealt with legal and environmental aspects influencing street food consumption. Concerns about sanitation and health safety were prominent, indicating a need for stricter regulatory measures to ensure food hygiene and safety. The physical location and climate also played a role in shaping the street food experience. The dense and sometimes chaotic arrangement of food stalls, particularly in urban areas, was a challenge, as was the hot and humid climate, which could affect both the dining experience and food quality.

The study also delved into the comparison between Thai and Chinese street food. While there were similarities in taste and affordability (Kwek & Lee, 2010; Lee, Jeon, & Kim, 2011), there were notable differences in flavors, with Thai cuisine characterized by its distinct spiciness compared to the numbing spiciness of Chinese cuisine. The study revealed an appreciation among Chinese tourists for the uniqueness of Thai street food, including exotic dishes not commonly found in China (Sawmong & Ahadi, 2023).

The study provides valuable insights into how Thai street food is perceived and experienced by Chinese tourists. It highlights the importance of sensory appeal, affordability, and service quality in enhancing the street food experience, while also pointing out areas for improvement in terms of regulation and environmental management. The comparative analysis between Thai and Chinese street food offers a deeper understanding of cross-cultural culinary preferences and experiences.

Consistent with existing literature, the study highlights the sensory appeal of street food as a major attraction for tourists. Previous studies have often emphasized the importance of taste, aroma, and visual appeal in attracting tourists to local cuisines. The findings about the distinctiveness of Thai street cuisine, particularly its flavors and visual appeal, align with this broader understanding. The emphasis on the affordability of street food is a common theme in culinary tourism research. Many studies have noted that street food offers a cost-effective way for tourists to experience local culture and cuisine. The findings about the affordability of Thai street food and its appeal to budget-conscious tourists resonate with these observations.

Similar to previous research, the study underlines the role of street food in providing cultural immersion. Culinary experiences are often seen as a gateway to understanding local traditions and lifestyles, a perspective that the study supports through the lens of Chinese tourists in Thailand. The role of vendors in enhancing the street food experience through friendly service and efforts to overcome language barriers is a theme that has been explored in prior studies. The findings about the positive impact of vendor interaction on the dining experience echo this sentiment.

The study's emphasis on the comparative analysis between Thai and Chinese street food from the viewpoint of Chinese tourists adds a novel dimension. While previous research has often focused on the general appeal of street food to international tourists, the study delves into specific cross-cultural comparisons, highlighting unique aspects of Thai cuisine as perceived by tourists from a country with a rich culinary tradition of its own.
The study's focus on regulatory aspects and the physical setting of street food consumption (i.e., compliance construct) may offer a more detailed exploration compared to previous studies. The specific concerns about sanitation, health safety, and urban planning in relation to street food stalls offer a nuanced understanding that might be less explored in existing literature.

The impact of climate on the street food experience, especially in terms of outdoor dining comfort and food quality, is a distinctive aspect of the study. While some research may touch on environmental factors, the detailed focus on how climate affects the enjoyment and quality of street food is a unique contribution. The study's emphasis on the novelty and exotic nature of certain Thai street food items, as perceived by Chinese tourists, may differ from previous research that often focuses on more mainstream dishes. This perspective offers insights into the adventurous aspect of culinary tourism that might not be as extensively covered in earlier studies.

Implications for Theory

The theoretical implications of this study are significant as they lie in its contribution to the understanding of the distinctive nature of street food culture, its impact on first-time visitors, and its role in fostering cross-cultural communication. The findings enhance existing theoretical frameworks in the fields of gastronomy tourism, food sociology, and cross-cultural communication.

Gastronomy Tourism

The results have various implications for ideas in gastronomic tourism. The study emphasizes the value of qualitative research methodologies in understanding visitor motives and experiences with local food consumption. It implies that quantitative techniques, which often depend on closed-ended questions, may not completely represent people’s complicated motives and subjective experiences (Quan & Wang, 2004; Sánchez-Caizares & López-Guzmán, 2012; Santich, 2004). This necessitates a more comprehensive and in-depth study of the elements affecting local food consumption in tourism using qualitative research approaches.

Furthermore, the research advances our knowledge of the basic reasons that drive local food consumption in tourist areas. It goes beyond evaluating behavioral intents to investigate the underlying motivations that drive travelers' food choices and experiences (Tendani et al., 2023). This adds depth to current ideas in gastronomic tourism by providing significant insights into the intricate interaction between food, culture, and tourism.

Taking into consideration the unique cultural and experiential aspects of local food consumption, this study highlights the necessity for more investigation and development of concepts in gastronomy tourism. It encourages researchers to examine the drivers, outcomes, and social significance of tourism's culinary experiences to get a fuller picture of the industry as a whole.

Cross-Cultural Communication

These findings contribute to our understanding of cross-cultural communication by highlighting the role that street food may play in bringing foreigners closer to the local culture and facilitating genuine interactions with the locals. The study highlights the importance of shared dining experiences in promoting mutual appreciation, communication, and understanding among people of different cultural backgrounds. The findings have significant significance for the field of cross-cultural communication. The findings highlight the role of Thai street cuisine in bringing foreigners and locals together and fostering mutual understanding and appreciation of one another's cultures. Trying the local fare is a great way for visitors to interact with people, get insight into the culture, and broaden their understanding of the host country.
The results add to the literature on cross-cultural communication by illuminating the significance of street food in educating visitors about local traditions and facilitating the development of true bonds with locals. Multiple studies have shown that eating together with someone from a different culture is an excellent way to break the ice, learn about one another, and have a good time. The implications of this study's results for intercultural communication are substantial. The results emphasize the significance of Thai street cuisine in bringing international visitors and locals closer together. It's possible that trying local street cuisine is a great way for tourists to mingle with locals, get insight into the culture, and get a sense for the nation they're visiting.

Insightful insights into the driving reasons for interactions between individuals of various cultures over street food may be gleaned by recognizing commonalities. Understanding these elements in more depth may help researchers and practitioners improve cross-cultural communication and participation. The relevance of creating welcoming spaces that encourage cross-cultural interactions via street food was also highlighted in the research. Places that recognize the importance of street food culture and actively promote it may provide doors for dialogue and understanding between visitors and residents.

Implications for cross-cultural communication theory include a better understanding of the factors that influence communication in street food settings, the promotion of inclusive and authentic experiences that facilitate cross-cultural understanding and appreciation, and the recognition of street food's role as a vehicle for cultural exchange. Based on these results, further research and theoretical models may be developed to better understand intercultural communication.

This research contributes to the literature by highlighting the uniqueness of street food culture and its potential to inspire cultural immersion and a sense of adventure among tourists. It highlights the significance of street food as a strong route for cross-cultural communication, allowing visitors to connect with local traditions, engage with the local residents, and get a deeper understanding of the host culture.

Food Sociology

This research contributes to our understanding of the social and cultural effects of food via its examination of the impact of Thai street food on the experiences of first-time visitors to Thailand. This study highlights the social benefits of street food by demonstrating how eating there may facilitate cultural immersion and foster connections between tourists and locals. People from all walks of life are able to connect with one another and take part in the local culture by sharing a meal together at a street vendor (Marra et al., 2014; Rinaldi, 2017). By seeing common threads, we may learn about the cultural factors that influence our interactions with street vendors. These findings highlight the interconnectedness of individuals, society, and the food environment by providing insight into the ways in which consumption and perception of street food are influenced by socioeconomic and environmental factors.

The research contributes to food sociology because it places a spotlight on the need to know the environments in which food is consumed. It gets that the social and cultural context in which street food is served is just as important as the food itself (Marras et al., 2014; Rinaldi, 2017). The relevance of the food environment in shaping eating experiences and interpersonal connections is further highlighted, expanding our sociological understanding of food as a social activity.

Furthermore, the study's exploration of the unique character of Thai street food culture offers valuable insights for food sociologists in understanding the cultural and social dimensions of street food phenomena. It underscores the importance of considering local food practices and traditions in the study of food sociology, recognizing the diversity and richness of culinary cultures and their sociological implications.
Implications for Practice

Besides theoretical contributions, the study’s findings offer useful guidance to those working in the tourism business who are tasked with creating new products, or marketing campaigns to increase tourist numbers by using street food as an attraction and designing optimal gastronomy tourism strategies that cater to visitors from target countries of origin. Research on food tourism benefits numerous aspects of the destination market, especially its economy (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). In addition, the relevant government entities can introduce environmental regulations based on these findings in terms of urban planning, sanitation management, and inner-city planning (Fusté-Forné, 2023).

The city authorities might need to impose some measures on food hygiene, such as setting standards for sanitary procedures and developing training programs for vendors to improve food handling, food processing, cooking, and personal sanitation (Ma et al., 2019; Tuglo et al., 2021). New policies instituted and implemented with managerial support could boost vendors’ good attitudes and hygienic practices. Vendors should take cognizance of customer satisfaction (Rungklin et al., 2023) and provide high-quality, healthy, properly handled food (Sawmong & Ahadi, 2023) while maintaining reasonable prices. Overall, a strong vendor commitment ensures market sustainability.

Effective regulation and governance are critical for ensuring the safety and sustainability of the street food sector. However, the regulation of street food is often complex and challenging, as it involves multiple stakeholders with varying interests and priorities (Farrell, 2015).

Previous research on the subject supports the conclusion that eating food on the street might put one’s health at risk (Phulkerd et al., 2023; Sawmong & Ahadi, 2023). Grace (2015) points out that despite the social and economic benefits of street food, it is frequently associated with health dangers due to inadequate sanitation, improper food handling, and risky cooking practices (Jutiporn & Kodchasorn, 2024). Steyn and Roos (2019) talk on the challenges that street food vendors have when it comes to adhering to food safety laws, such as a lack of access to running water, refrigeration, and sanitary facilities. There may be significant public health consequences because of the higher risk of foodborne diseases caused by these factors. Disease outbreaks have been related to the poor food safety standards of the street food industry.

Lost tourist income owing to worries about the safety of street food may be a result of foodborne illness (Steyn & Roos, 2019). The public’s health and the long-term viability of the street food sector depend on the vendors’ ability to handle health and safety concerns. Risks of food poisoning may be reduced and the expansion of the street food industry can be ensured safely and sustainably by increasing access to clean water and hygiene facilities and giving training in safe food handling procedures. Findings from the research stress the importance of street food in encouraging cultural diversity and community building among people of diverse socioeconomic statuses (Stevenson, 2014). It's a meeting place where individuals of different backgrounds may talk to one another and learn from one another's experiences.

Street food is an integral aspect of a community's culture and history since it so often reflects the regional characteristics and culinary traditions of its residents (Shaw, 2019). Street food sellers help sustain and grow regional culinary traditions, which in turn may boost local economies (Shoukat et al., 2023). The findings of the research highlight the value of street food as a cultural and social phenomena and argue that it should be recognized and promoted as an important part of local economies and tourist industries (Baker, 2015; Marras et al., 2014). To support and maintain street food traditions, governments and lawmakers should encourage small-scale vendors, increase public awareness of the cultural significance of street food, and adopt legislation to ensure sanitary and safe standards (Phulkerd et al., 2023).

Street food is an essential contributor to the local economy, providing
employment and income for a vast number of people, including vendors, suppliers, and support services. The sector is often a source of income for marginalized groups, such as women, migrants, and low-income households (Baker, 2015). Street food also generates revenue for the tourism industry, as the study maintains that street food is a popular attraction for tourists seeking an authentic local experience (García-Carrión et al., 2023; Shoukat et al., 2023; Tendani et al., 2023).

Overall, the implications for gastronomy tourism revolve around leveraging the unique qualities of street food to create authentic, immersive, and culturally rich experiences for tourists (Anggara et al., 2023; Shoukat et al., 2023). By capitalizing on the insights from this study, destinations can enhance their gastronomic offerings, differentiate themselves in the market, and contribute to sustainable tourism development. The study's exploration of themes related to distinctiveness, service, and regulatory factors can inform culinary education programs and training initiatives for street food vendors (Putra et al., 2023; Sawmong & Ahadi, 2023). By enhancing culinary skills, hygiene standards, and customer service, gastronomy tourism can elevate the overall street food experience and attract a wider range of tourists.

The distinctive nature of Thai street food can be utilized to differentiate a destination and attract gastronomy tourists (Ellis et al., 2018; Everett & Aitchison, 2008). Highlighting the diverse flavors, unique ingredients, and vibrant street food culture can position a destination as a must-visit location for food enthusiasts.

Implications for Future Research

This study focused on first-time visitors from the People’s Republic of China because they have traveled to Thailand in greater numbers than those from other countries in recent years. Thus, the current results are not applicable to visitors from countries other than China. Their lived experience may vary regarding this type of outdoor dining (Anggara et al., 2023; Putra et al., 2023). Future research could include the broader target tourist population that makes up the full customer base for local street food. Street food is not intended exclusively for people from certain origins but for all visitors of any nationality, so we should focus on diverse groups of tourists.

However, street food is meant for all tourists, regardless of country, thus future studies should expand their scope to include the whole demographic that comprises the local street food market. For instance, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2020) reports that Thailand received 39.8 million foreign tourists from all around the globe in 2019. The top five countries of origin were China, Malaysia, India, Japan, and South Korea. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the opinions and experiences of a wide range of travelers while examining street food, to guarantee that the results are representative of the foreign traveler community as a whole.

Our qualitative research yielded interesting findings, but it is important to remember that the sample size was too small to generalize to all Chinese vacationers. It is often argued that qualitative research cannot be generalized from their findings because of their small sample sizes and the subjective nature of data collection (Miles et al., 2019). It is essential that we be honest about the scope of our research and the generalizability of our findings. Due to the nature of qualitative research's small sample sizes and absence of statistical analysis, this is more of a concern than it is in quantitative research, where large samples and analysis can support more certain findings (Saldana, 2011).

In order to better capture the range of thoughts and experiences that tourists have with street food, future research may attempt to address this gap by recruiting larger and more diverse samples of international tourists, as well as tourists from other countries. Our qualitative research yielded interesting findings, but it is important to remember that the sample size was too small to generalize to all Chinese vacationers. This is an often-
stated argument against qualitative research: the findings may not be generalizable to the whole population due to the small sample size and the subjective nature of data collection (Miles et al., 2019).

It is crucial that we be forthright about the limitations of our study and the extent to which our results may be applied to other situations. It is more of a problem in qualitative research due to the inevitability of small sample numbers and a lack of statistical analysis, but less of an issue in quantitative research due to the high sample sizes and statistical analysis that allow for stronger conclusions to be drawn (Saldana, 2011). Future research might try to remedy this shortcoming by enlisting the participation of bigger and more varied samples of Chinese tourists, as well as tourists from other countries, to better capture the diversity of opinions and experiences that foreign tourists have with street food.

Given that the data were obtained from purposefully chosen places in downtown Bangkok and did not reflect all of the sites where street food booths were present. This implies that the results may not be applicable to all street food encounters in Bangkok or elsewhere. It should not be expected that the conclusions of this study may be applied in diverse circumstances without more research. The conclusions of the research were not justified nor claimed to be representative. This implies that the results may not properly represent the experiences of all Bangkok tourists, and they cannot be presumed to generalize to other situations without more study. As a result, we propose that future research broaden the study regions to include people who go outside of Bangkok. This would improve the study’s representativeness and give a better knowledge of Thai street food experiences.

Future study might potentially highlight regional disparities in street food culture and experiences by collecting data from a broader range of locations. The present research is defined as exploratory, which means it is preliminary and aims to acquire preliminary data and ideas. Future research could build on this exploratory study by incorporating a comparative approach, which would allow for the investigation of differences in street food perception and experience between diverse groups of international visitors, such as Asians and Europeans or visitors from China and other Asian countries. Such comparative study might aid academics in developing a more nuanced knowledge of the factors that influence how various visitor groups perceive and enjoy street food. This knowledge might subsequently be used to guide marketing and promotional campaigns aimed at attracting and retaining visitors from diverse locations.

Furthermore, comparative research may show more significant cultural differences in eating habits and attitudes, which may be of interest to academics in the departments of anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies. The research questions Field's (2002) existing framework, claiming that it is logically constrained in the context of contemporary literature and lacks fresh data to justify the framework of four categories for gourmet tourism. This indicates the need for more study and improvement of theoretical frameworks in gastronomic tourism.

References


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