

Satisfaction in Marketing Mix Factors of Chinese Tourists at Tourist Attractions in Guangxi, The People's Republic of China

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ABSTRACT

Previous studies have primarily focused on general satisfaction or individual elements of the tourism experience without comprehensively analyzing how different demographic groups perceive these factors. This study addresses this gap by examining how gender, age, income, education, and occupation influence satisfaction levels, providing a more detailed understanding of tourist behavior in Guangxi. Therefore, the purposes of this research were 1) to study the satisfaction level of Chinese tourists at tourist attractions in Guangxi, the People's Republic of China, and 2) to compare the satisfaction towards tourist attractions classified by gender, age, income, education, and occupation of Chinese tourists. The sample group consisted of 445 Chinese tourists who experienced tourism at tourist attractions in Guangxi province in 2023. The research tool was an online questionnaire. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The researcher analyzed the data using a statistical package software program. The results showed high satisfaction with all marketing mix factors (7Ps), including product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence. People had the highest average value, followed by promotion, physical evidence, product, process, place, and price, respectively. The differences in demography of gender, age, education, and occupation result in different levels of satisfaction among Chinese tourists at tourist attractions in Guangxi, the People's Republic of China. All these factors were statistically significant at 0.05 level in T-test and One-way ANOVA.

Keywords: Chinese Tourists, Satisfaction, Tourist Attractions in Guangxi,
The People's Republic of China

Introduction:

China's tourism industry faces challenges in service quality, market organization, technology adoption, and declining market share. To overcome these issues, the government and industry increasingly agree on promoting high-quality tourism. (Yi Lu, 2024). The tourism industry in China faces several challenges. Some of the key problems of the tourism industry in China include the fact that China is a sought-after tourist spot, boasting several iconic attractions like the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, and the Terracotta Army. However, the surge in popularity has given rise to overcrowding at these sites, which has a negative impact on the overall visitor experience and puts a strain on infrastructure and resources. Despite China's rapid development, some regions may still lack adequate tourism infrastructure and accessibility, making it challenging for tourists to access certain areas. This includes transportation, accommodation, and support services (Li et al., 2021).

1. The Influence of Demographic Factors

Demographic factors have been found to influence tourist satisfaction in various contexts. The study by Al-Dmour et al. found that demographic variables such as age, sex, education, and income moderate the relationship between social media marketing drives and customer satisfaction in travel and tourism offices in Jordan (Al-Dmour et al., 2023). Similarly, Premović's research in Serbia showed that gender, age, and education affect employees' motivation and job satisfaction in tourist organizations, indirectly impacting tourism enterprises' business performance (Premović, 2022). Geetha et al., (2022) examined the satisfaction of tourists visiting Mabul Island and found that demographic variables did not significantly influence their satisfaction with the destination. However, Wongwattanakit et al., (2017) found that demographic variables such as nationality, education, income, and visitor characteristics like being a first-time or repeat visitor and the number of nights spent significantly affected tourist satisfaction with beaches in Phuket, Thailand.

2. The Importance of Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is vital to the tourism industry, and destination management and marketing depend heavily on a thorough grasp of its significance. Chen and Chen (2017) emphasized that visitor satisfaction is critical to determining destination loyalty. Research has demonstrated that contented travelers have a higher propensity to return and even act as brand ambassadors, which enhances the destination's image. Kim and Jogaratnam (2017)

stated that experience personalization is central to their perspective. Providing individualized experiences leads to happier customers and stronger ties to the location. This emphasizes how important it is to make sure guests are delighted when they depart. They contend that providing services customized to each visitor's preferences and needs is the key to increasing visitor satisfaction. Zhang and Kim (2018) have highlighted the strong correlation between visitor satisfaction and destination loyalty. According to their research, visitor satisfaction is critical in determining a destination's loyalty, highlighting its strategic significance for marketing and destination management initiatives.

3. The Elements of the Tourism Marketing Mix

Kotler and Armstrong (2010) consider the four P's as the marketing mix with a significant impact on marketing for tourism services. The services marketing mix (7Ps) plays a significant role in promoting customer satisfaction and loyalty as follows:

3.1 Product: As used in the tourism industry, "product" includes attractions, lodging, transportation, and services that make up a tourist location or experience. As the target market expects, product design should provide unique and varied trip experiences that meet various visitor needs. Discovering the wants and needs of the intended customers is very important when creating a product to ensure it sells well (Pike, 2008). Well-preserved historical landmarks and cultural experiences as product offerings have been proven to greatly enhance customer perceptions of value (Hernández-Rojas et al., 2021).

3.2 Price: A higher price may mean the product or service is of better quality and unique value, but travelers on a budget may care more about price. Customers are more likely to trust a business that has clear prices. Cost, market demand, competition, and the buying power of the target market are some of the other things that must be considered when setting prices (Yu et al., 2023).

3.3 Place (Distribution): A good distribution plan ensures the target market can easily access the product. This could include tour agencies, online booking sites, physical stores, etc. Smartly picking distribution channels increases a product's visibility, enhances accessibility, and draws a larger audience. In this digital age, the importance of online outlets like social media and travel websites is increasingly recognized. However, for some market segments, traditional physical channels are still important (Chow et al., 2019).

3.4 Promotion: In tourism marketing, promotion is the broad term for getting people interested in a location or travel service. Effective advertising not only tells people

about a place or service but also convinces them to choose it. Strategies might include highlighting the most interesting things to see, using influencers to advantage, and using a variety of platforms to reach a wide range of people (Lojo, 2020).

3.5 People: Regarding tourism marketing, the "People" part refers to the people who provide the tourism experience. This includes staff, tour guides, and other service workers. Quality interactions are crucial to the success of a tourist product. Outstanding customer service, informed guides, and friendly staff make a big difference in how visitors feel. Both employees and customers are essential components of the marketing mix. Zeithaml et al. (2018) highlight the vital role of frontline employees in delivering quality service and fostering customer relationships

3.6 Process: Regarding tourism marketing, "Process" refers to the systems and steps that make offering a tourism product or service easier. Effective processes are necessary to ensure customers have a smooth and enjoyable experience. This includes reservations, customer service, and operations management systems. According to Kannan and Srinivasan (2009), the process in Tourism includes 1) trip planning and anticipation, 2) travel to the site/area, 3) recollection, and 4) trip planning packages. Well-designed processes make services convenient for tourists. This enhances the tourist's confidence and satisfaction significantly.

3.7 Physical Evidence: "Physical Evidence" in the tourism marketing mix means the real things visitors can see and do in a location or during a tourism service. This includes the buildings, services, and general atmosphere that affect how tourists feel and how happy they are with their trip. Physical evidence is very important for shaping how people think about a place and is a big part of how potential visitors decide what to do (Li et al., 2020). An attractive landscape, well-kept attractions, and comfortable lodging add to an excellent physical environment (Liu, 2019).

Despite numerous studies on tourist satisfaction, limited research specifically investigates the impact of demographic differences on satisfaction with the marketing mix factors (7Ps) in the context of Guangxi's tourist attractions. Previous studies have primarily focused on general satisfaction or individual elements of the tourism experience without a comprehensive analysis of how different demographic groups perceive these factors.

Research Objectives

1. To study the satisfaction level of Chinese tourists at tourist attractions in Guangxi, the People's Republic of China.
2. To compare the satisfaction towards tourist attractions classified by gender, age, income, education, and occupation of Chinese tourists.

Conceptual Framework

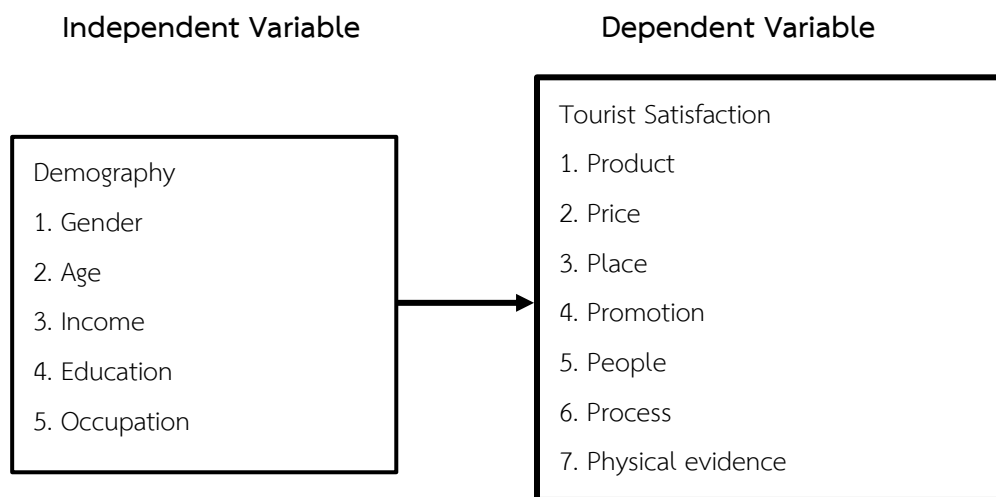


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Population and Sample

The population and sample group used in this research are Chinese tourists who have experienced tourism at cultural attractions in Guangxi Province in 2023. The exact number of the population is unknown. In cases where the population size is unknown, the sample size is calculated using Cochran's (1977) formula, with a 95% confidence level. The result of the sample size of this study is 385. According to Thaweerat (2000), large samples are required to reduce discrepancies in the population when the population is different (heterogeneous) in various aspects. Therefore, studies of tourist populations should consider this diversity and different characteristics to ensure the analysis is accurate and comprehensive. Hence, the researcher used a sample size of 445 people. Moreover, purposive random sampling was applied to collect primary data, so the sample size of respondents was intentionally chosen to complete questionnaires directly on Chinese tourists who have experienced tourism at cultural attractions in Guangxi Province.

Research Instrument

The instrument used in this research was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into Part 1: Demographic Information, Part 2: The Level of Satisfaction, and Part 3: Main Problems and Suggestions of Chinese Tourists. The questionnaire was analyzed using the alpha coefficient formula (α) to find reliability. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient The reliability of the entire questionnaire was 0.986.

Data Analysis

In this research, data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The statistics used in data analysis are as follows:

1. Descriptive statistics analyzed the data from the first part of the questionnaire. The aim was to identify the demographic characteristics of the participants. The data were then interpreted in terms of frequency and percentage.
2. Analyzing respondents' satisfaction level in the marketing mix elements (7Ps), including product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence. Statistics used in data analysis were mean ($\bar{X}$) and standard deviation (S.D.). Interpreting the mean scores was divided into five levels. The criteria for dividing the average scores in each period will be determined by the criteria for interpreting the mean together with the principles of rounding decimals to integers according to Ferguson's method (1976), that was, the width of the class interval of the table, the meaning of the average score in each period.
3. Inferential analysis was used to explain the effect of each independent variable on dependent variables. The T-test and One-way ANOVA with Dunnett's test were applied to test whether tourist satisfaction varies across tourists in different demographic groups, including gender, age, income, education, and occupation.

Results

1. Study of Personal Data of the Respondents

Most Chinese tourists who visited cultural tourist attractions in Guangxi Province were male, primarily between 18 and 25. A significant portion of the income earned is 4,000 yuan or less. Additionally, most hold bachelor's degrees and work as employees for private companies.

2. The satisfaction level in the marketing mix (7Ps) includes product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence.

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation of the Satisfaction Level in Marketing Mix (7Ps)

Marketing mix	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	S.D.	Satisfaction level	Ranking
Product	4.07	0.825	high	4
Price	4.01	0.878	high	7
Place	4.06	0.862	high	6
Promotion	4.08	0.839	high	2
People	4.12	0.850	high	1
Process	4.07	0.867	high	5
Physical evidence	4.08	0.858	high	3
Total	4.07	0.804	high	

Table 1 revealed that, overall, respondents' satisfaction with the marketing mix factors for Chinese tourists at tourist attractions in Guangxi was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.07$, S.D. = 0.804). In terms of specific factors, satisfaction with “people” ranked the highest ($\bar{X} = 4.12$, S.D. = 0.850). The second highest respondent's satisfaction level was “promotion” ($\bar{X} = 4.08$, S.D. = 0.839). The lowest satisfaction level was reported for “price” ($\bar{X} = 4.01$, S.D. = 0.878).

3. The comparison of the satisfaction towards tourist attractions classified by gender, age, income, education, and occupation of Chinese tourists.

Comparison of satisfaction level in marketing mix factors of Chinese tourists at tourist attractions in Guangxi, the People's Republic of China, classified according to personal factors can be summarized as follows:

Table 2 Results of testing for variance of samples classified by gender

Gender	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	4.13	2.216	0.027 *
Female	3.96		

* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 revealed that comparing the differences in demography by gender shows different satisfaction levels of Chinese tourists at tourist attractions in Guangxi, the People's Republic of China. The average satisfaction value of Chinese tourists at tourist attractions in Guangxi for women is lower than that of men.

Table 3 Results of testing for the variance of samples classified by age, income, education, and occupation

Items	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age					
Between Groups	48.074	4	12.018	22.025	.000*
Within Groups	240.101	440	.546		
Income					
Between Groups	1.587	4	.397	.609	.656
Within Groups	286.588	440	.651		
Education					
Between Groups	13.216	2	6.608	10.622	.000*
Within Groups	274.959	442	.622		
Occupation					
Between Groups	55.374	4	13.843	26.164	.000*
Within Groups	232.801	440	.529		

* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 3 indicates that satisfaction levels among Chinese tourists at attractions in Guangxi, People's Republic of China, vary based on demographic factors such as age, education, and occupation. However, no significant difference in satisfaction levels was found when comparing income demographics.

Discussion of the Results

1. Discussion of the Satisfaction Level in the Marketing Mix (7Ps), including Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence

Most respondents were highly satisfied with the marketing mix factors of Chinese tourists at tourist attractions in Guangxi. This is the consequences of: Diverse and High-Quality Attractions (Product), Affordable and Attractive Pricing (Price), Convenient Accessibility and

Infrastructure (Place), Tailored Marketing Strategies (Promotion), High Standards of Service and Hospitality (Process), and Modern visitor centers (Physical Evidence). This finding is related to (Rungklin and Rinthaisong, (2023); Suchao-In et al. (2021); the 7 Ps of the marketing mix offer a comprehensive framework for businesses to develop effective strategies. Companies can create successful marketing campaigns and improve customer satisfaction by understanding and optimizing each element. According to the research result, the highest respondents' satisfaction level related to "people" regarding the helpfulness and friendliness of staff and locals in Guangxi. This creates positive interactions: Friendly and helpful interactions with locals and staff create a welcoming atmosphere for tourists, making them feel valued and appreciated. This positive rapport enhances the overall experience and leaves a lasting impression. Overall, the helpfulness and friendliness of staff and locals in Guangxi play a crucial role in shaping tourists' perceptions and satisfaction, influencing their decision to return to the destination and their willingness to recommend it to others. Therefore, enhancing hospitality and promoting positive interactions can significantly benefit the tourism industry and the local economy. According to Brown and Donovan, (2023), the roles of people and process, including staff interactions and the efficiency of service delivery, are crucial in shaping customer experiences, fostering satisfaction, and encouraging loyalty. Therefore, people, referring to both employees and customers, are considered a crucial part of the marketing mix. Moreover, the role of frontline employees in delivering quality service and building customer relationships is emphasized by (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2018).

2. Discussion of the Comparison Results of the Satisfaction towards Tourist Attractions Classified by Gender, Age, Income, Education, and Occupation of Chinese Tourists

2.1 The difference in gender demography shows different satisfaction levels of Chinese tourists at tourist attractions in Guangxi, the People's Republic of China. This may be because changes in gender rights and several other country-specific factors impact women's and men's life satisfaction. For example, the communist history of a country not only means reduced personal well-being for everyone, but this effect is also stronger for women than for men. Similar results were obtained for education and political freedom. Political freedom enhances the subjective well-being of men more than of women. Therefore, male expressions are more pronounced than female ones. This finding is related to Wang and Wareewanich (2024) who stated that women's family-role orientation has a negative effect on women's

leadership aspirations and leadership self-efficacy, while women's gender self-confidence does not have a positive effect on leadership aspirations and leadership self-efficacy.

2.2 The difference in age demography shows different satisfaction levels of Chinese tourists at tourist attractions in Guangxi, the People's Republic of China. This may be because older generations regularly have more commitments, such as work and family, while younger people generally have more free time to travel, especially during school holidays. Additionally, for younger generations, especially millennials, traveling is a way to meet new people, learn about history and different cultures, and create memorable experiences. While some older people care about such experiences, most prefer visiting their family and friends. This finding is related to Petcharaporn (2015), who studied "The behavior and satisfaction of Thai tourists." The result found that Thai tourists' satisfaction levels visiting Kret Island differed according to their age in terms of location, service and safety, and facilities.

2.3 The difference in the income demography shows no difference in the satisfaction levels of Chinese tourists at tourist attractions in Guangxi, the People's Republic of China. There could be several reasons why income does not affect the satisfaction of Chinese tourists: 1) Cultural differences: Chinese tourists may prioritize different aspects of their travel experience, such as cultural immersion or visiting specific landmarks, over luxury or expensive activities. 2) Value perception: Chinese tourists may place more importance on the value they receive for their money than the absolute amount spent. Thus, they may derive satisfaction from experiences perceived as good value for the price paid, regardless of income level. 3) Expectations: Chinese tourists' satisfaction may be influenced more by their expectations and the fulfillment of those expectations rather than their income level. This finding is related to Kalayanawichai (2018), who studied "Influences of personal factors and marketing mix affect the satisfaction of Thai tourists visiting Talingchan Floating Market." The result found that comparing the average satisfaction of Thai tourists visiting the Taling Chan floating market classified by personal factors showed that the sample group with different monthly incomes had similar satisfaction levels with visiting the Taling Chan floating market. There was no significant difference in the marketing mix (Product, Price, Distribution Channel, and Marketing Promotion).

2.4 Comparison of the difference in the demography of education shows different satisfaction levels of Chinese tourists at tourist attractions in Guangxi, the People's Republic of

China. The satisfaction of Chinese tourists in Guangxi, China, can be influenced by various factors related to education levels: 1) Expectations: Tourists with higher education levels may have more refined expectations or a deeper understanding of cultural and historical significance, leading to higher satisfaction when those expectations are met. 2) Appreciation of nuances: Those with higher education levels might have a better appreciation for the finer details of attractions, such as architecture, artwork, or historical context, which can enhance their overall satisfaction. 3) Interpretation of information: Better-educated tourists may be able to interpret and understand informational materials, tour guides, or exhibits more thoroughly, leading to a richer experience and increased satisfaction. 4) Critical thinking: Tourists with higher education levels may be more inclined to critically evaluate their experiences, leading to more nuanced assessments of satisfaction based on factors such as crowd management, cleanliness, and accessibility. This finding is related to Geetha et al. (2022), who studied “Profiling the satisfaction of tourists visiting Mabul island as a tourist destination based on demographic factors” and indicated that overall, while education has been found to have some influence on tourist satisfaction, the specific effects may vary depending on the context and destination.

2.5 Comparison of the difference in the demography of occupation shows different satisfaction levels of Chinese tourists at tourist attractions in Guangxi, the People's Republic of China. Different occupations result in different satisfaction levels for Chinese tourists at tourist attractions in Guangxi, China, for several reasons: 1) Retired people might have less satisfaction at tourist attractions in Guangxi due to preferring quieter, less crowded environments, and popular tourist attractions can often be crowded, especially during peak seasons. Moreover, they may have physical limitations that make it difficult to fully enjoy certain attractions, especially if they involve much walking or climbing. 2) Interests and preferences: Occupations can shape individuals' interests and preferences, influencing the types of attractions they choose to visit and how they engage with them. For example, someone working in a creative field might appreciate cultural and artistic attractions more than someone in a technical or analytical profession. 3) Knowledge and expertise: Occupations requiring specialized knowledge or skills may impact tourists' perceptions and understanding of attractions. For instance, individuals in academia or education-related professions might have a deeper appreciation for historical sites or museums due to their background knowledge. This finding is related to Ahmad et al. (2017), who studied Tourist Satisfaction in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand: A Comparative Study. The findings imply significant differences

in tourist satisfaction based on age, gender, educational level, and occupation. Bhat and Mishra (2020) indicated that occupation is a significant indicator of attitude development towards tourism's effects on the local community.

Suggestion

1. Segment the market based on gender, age, education, and occupation to tailor marketing strategies accordingly.
2. Targeted Messaging: Craft messages that resonate with each demographic group. For instance, they emphasize adventure activities for younger tourists, cultural experiences for older tourists, and educational opportunities for those with higher education.
3. Educational Programs: Develop educational programs and workshops that cater to tourists with varying levels of education. Offer guided tours led by knowledgeable staff for intellectually curious visitors and interactive exhibits and hands-on activities for those seeking a more accessible learning experience.
4. Specialized Packages and Deals: Develop packages and deals tailored to the schedules and budgets of different occupation groups. Offer weekday discounts for professionals, student-friendly pricing for budget-conscious travelers and senior citizen discounts for retirees.
5. Other areas of Chinese tourism that could be investigated in the future include developing and promoting sustainable tourism practices, cultural heritage conservation, and Community-Based Tourism.

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