



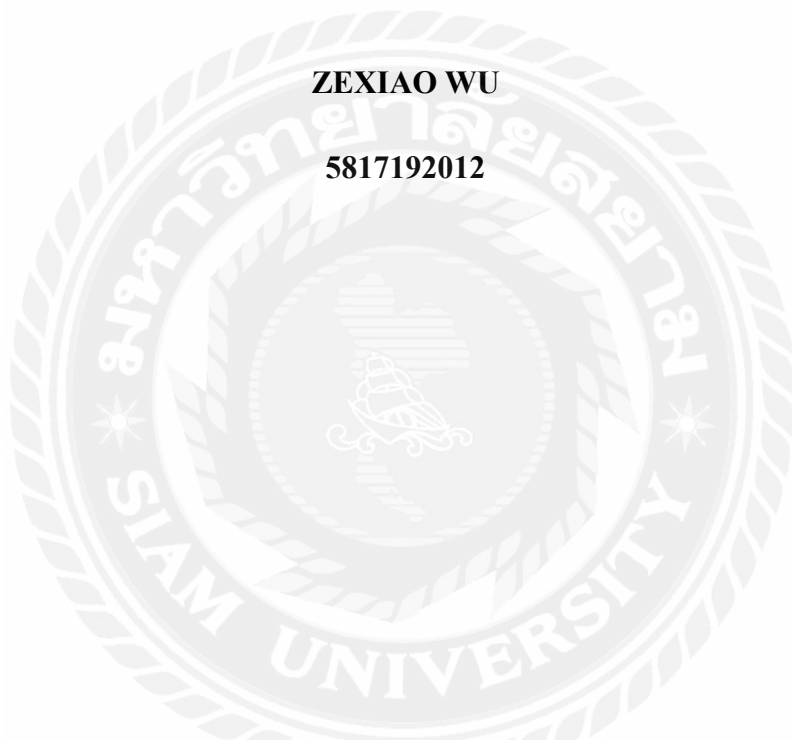
Research on Willingness and Satisfaction of

Chinese Tourists Travel to Thailand

----Taken security as an example

ZEXIAO WU

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AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

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Independent Study Title:

**Research on Willingness and Satisfaction of
Chinese Tourists Travel to Thailand
----Taken security as an example**

To

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This Independent Study has been approved as a Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement of
International Master of Business Administration in International Business Management

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Abstract

Title: Research on Willingness and Satisfaction of
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Degree: Master of Business Administration

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as a world famous tourist destination, Thailand boasts beautiful and rich tourism resources, extensive Buddhist culture and unique folk customs, which attract sightseeing visitors from all over the world. As China provides Thailand with the largest source of inbound tourists, satisfaction of Chinese tourists directly affects growth of tourism industry as well as economic income of Thailand. Along with vigorous development of tourism, tourist security also becomes increasingly serious, and therefore tourist security is an important task faced by Thailand tourism industry.

This paper studies causes, willingness and satisfaction of Chinese tourists, discusses influencing factors of Chinese tourists travel to Thailand and puts forward corresponding rectification opinions. It is suggested that Thai government and related departments should take innovative and suitable measures to tackle problems faced by foreign tourists and tourism industry, protect personal and property security of Chinese tourists in Thailand to the maximum extend, and improve the number of satisfied and pleasantly surprised Chinese tourists. Researchers also hope that study result could facilitate better development, prosperity and stability of Thailand's tourism industry.

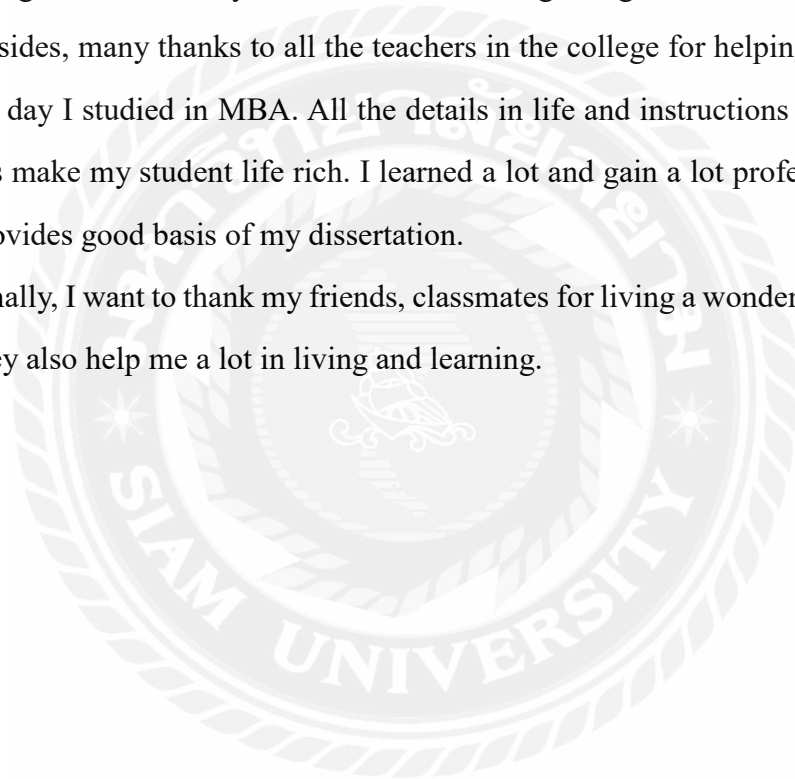
Key words: Chinese tourists, Thailand tourism, satisfaction, security

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Constant social progress and rapid development of science and technology have dramatically changed people's demand from seeking adequate food and clothing to pursuit of entertainment and enjoyment, especially increasing interest in tourism. From a global perspective, tourism is an emerging industry with rapid development. As an important part of the third industry, it is also called "sunrise industry". Tourism plays a positive role in boosting domestic demand, expanding consumption, increasing employment and foreign exchange income, get rid of poverty and become better off, as well as pushing first, second and third industry forward, so tourism industry has attracted attention from an increasing number of countries.

Thailand is a tourist resort in Southeast Asia with distinctive folk customs and unique natural landscape. It is one of the top ten tourist destinations in the world and most preferred sightseeing country in Southeast Asia tours. Besides rich tourism resources, Thailand is also closely connected to other Southeast Asian countries. West of Thailand is Indian Ocean Andaman coast, where world famous tourist scenic spot of Phuket is located; Pacific Ocean Siam Rowan coast is to its east, home to famous tourist attraction Koh Samui. In addition to all these, there is also sleepless city Pattaya, a number of other islands, beautiful coral reefs and charming beach throughout the year. Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai in Northern Thailand are full of rolling hills, green mountains and blue waters. Locale climate is delightful and pleasant all the year round, and moreover, people there are simple and honest with mild temper, polite and amiable with respect and courtesy. Most of Thai people are Buddhist who speaks softly with friendly smile, so Thailand is renowned for "a country of smile".

Thailand has four dynasties in a history of 800 years till now: Sukhothai dynasty,

Dacheng dynasty, Thonburi dynasty and Bangkok dynasty (Rama dynasty). Lots of beautiful palaces and Buddhist temples have been built in each dynasty and become today's legacy. They are treasure of Thailand history and also important tourist attractions for foreign tourists.

Tourism is an important pillar industry in Thailand economy, and an important source of foreign exchange. Tourism is an emerging comprehensive¹and service-oriented industry, also known as "smokeless industry". It makes use of unique and rich tourism resources to attract tourists from all over the world. Tourism is also an effective way to obtain foreign exchange income with the lowest cost.

Thailand is a free and open capitalist country where run a private travel agency to receive foreign visitors is quite easy, so competition in tourism industry is fierce. Some irresponsible travel agencies deliberately violate group travel schedule because they attract tourists with price lower than cost. After visitors have arrived Thailand, tour guides without certificate will be responsible for the touring group and induce tourists to participate in chargeable activities, some of which are even unsightly pornography shows; or induce tourists to purchase inferior goods with high price, and therefore damage interests of tourists and tourism image of Thailand. If these problems continue, they will not only damage interests of Thailand and other countries, but also affect long-term tourism cooperation between Thailand and other countries. So authorities are expected to solve the dilemma faced by tourism industry as soon as possible. Thailand's political situation is not very stable in recent years, which poses potential safety hazard to national stability and security, and incidents of violence have great impact on tourism. For example, several famous tourist resorts in southern Thailand had bomb attacks on August 11 to 12, 2016, resulting in 4 people dead and over 30 people injured. Dean of economy school, Thailand Rangsit University, predicted that serial bombings in 7 southern provinces of Thailand have caused economic loss of nearly 34 billion baht (about 6.5

¹ Xiuxiang Liu (1994), *Introduction to Tourism*, published by Yangzhi Cultural Affairs Co., Ltd.

billion RMB), in which tourism industry would be hit most seriously.

Table 1 Main bomb attacks in Thailand in recent years

Year	Bomb attacks	Casualties
2006	2006 new year eve , serial bomb attack in Bangkok	3 people dead and 38 people injured
2010	April 2010, five grenade attacks in Bangkok, the most serious sanguinary conflict in recent 20 years.	25 people dead and over 800 people injured
2011	In June, explosion when Yellow Shirts protested near Governor's House.	2 people injured
2013	In May, homemade explosives were found in a dumpster near a bustling shopping center in Bangkok.	7 people injured
2014	Jan 19, 2 bomb attacks targeted demonstrators in central Bangkok by unidentified persons.	28 people injured
2015	August 17, powerful explosion near tourist attraction Phra Phrom in Bangkok city center.	22 people dead including 4 Chinese citizen and 123 people injured.
2016	August 11 and 12, bomb attacks in several tourist attractions in southern Thailand.	4 people dead and over 30 people injured.

Data sources: China News data.

At the same time, along with Chinese tourists flooding to Thailand, various security incidents are also on the rise. Li Chunlin, counselor and consul general of Chinese Embassy in Thailand, said that there have been over 100 consular protection and

assistance incidents every month in 2016. In 2015, Chinese Embassy in Thailand has over 700 consular protection cases, while the number in 2014 was only 500. Among 2015 cases, top 2 death causes were drowning and traffic accidents. In 2015, over 70 Chinese citizens drowned in Thailand, and another 33 died in traffic accident.² According to Sing Sian Daily report on June 16, 15 Chinese tourists have been killed in Thailand in first half of 2016. Safety is the lifeline of tourism industry, and tourists can only enjoy their trips and have a pleasant consumption experience when their personal and property safety are fully guaranteed. We hope that Thailand government could pay enough attention to tourist security, and take corresponding measures actively.

1.2 The rise of tourism in Thailand

Thailand started to strongly advocate tourism development in 1924³, when head of train bureau established tourism publicity department to receive foreign tourists and help them have a convenient trip. There were three targets: 1. Attract foreign tourists via promotion; 2. Receive tourists; 3. Maintain tourist area and accommodation business.

In 1958, Thai Prime Minister back then studied tourism business in the United States, and overhauled Thailand tourism after his return by forming an independent organization called “Thailand Tourism Promotion Institution”. The institution was designed to promote Thailand's tourism industry and speed up its development. This organization drafted rules for Thailand travel agencies and tourism industry, specified its function and power, responsibility and tourists safety protection measures. However, it was not until May 4, 1979 that this organization was formally approved by congress.

At present, Thai government attaches great importance to tourism industry, and develops it as an important industry. Tourism development objective is: develop Thailand into Asian tourist center and international market, further increase tourism foreign exchange income, maintain average visitor entry days, and meanwhile cooperate with

² *Explosive Thailand Tour: drowning and car accident*, Southern Urban Daily, July 22, 2016. http://epaper.oeeee.com/epaper/A/html/2016-07/22/content_58839.htm#article

³ Thailand National Tourism Administration, www.tat.or.th

regional tourism alliance to keep market competitiveness, so as to develop tourism industry into the shaping force of Thailand's economic development.

According to the report of Thailand National Tourism Administration, Thailand received 7.9 million person-time tourists in 2015, the number jumped 71.6% compared with 2014. Chinese tourists accounted for 26.5% of the total number of foreign tourists, and brought Thailand as high as 370 billion baht tourism income, which was more than a quarter of total foreign tourists' consumption. Thailand was experiencing weak economic recovery, while tourism industry bucked the trend. Though Phra Phrom bomb attack in 2015 caused many casualties, the number of foreign visitors throughout the year was still as high as 29.9 million, who contributed 1.44 trillion baht and hit past 10 years' record.⁴ So it is visible that tourism is thriving in Thailand.

1.3 Inbound tourism business and related industries

Many unique tourism resources are gathered in Thailand, besides traditional rich and colorful places of interest, there is also beautiful scenery with endless variations, splendid and magnificent Buddhist temples with soaring spires, thickly wooded mountains in the north, beautiful beaches and islands in the east and south, and golden rice fields in fertile plain. With better tourism development conditions, visitors demand for satisfaction and happiness. Tourism industry mainly provides service to visitors, which requires a large number of service personnel. However good service quality demands for higher human quality, that's why great importance has been attached to human resources. So many tourism-related industries have been formed, such as airlines, airports, bus, hotel, catering, shopping, tourist attractions, travel agencies, etc. and each individual industry has employment opportunities and prospects for development.

Now travel is a kind of enjoyment which can increase experience and enrich knowledge. A trip, no matter long or short, is to temporarily relax tense mood. Below is a

⁴ *Thailand's tourism bucks the trend with biggest contribution from Chinese tourists*, Xinhuanet. http://news.xinhuanet.com/2016-08/17/c_1119408274.htm

brief introduction to related industries:

(1) Travel agency business. Travel agency cannot be neglected in all travels. Thailand has thousands of large and small travel agencies, whose business is mainly categorized into the following three types:

1) Outbound tourism, this refers to domestic citizens travelling abroad. These travelers are generally middle-income people with consumption ability. With increasing number of economic flights, however, number of low-income tourists is also on the rise gradually.

2) National tourist, this refers to domestic travel of people living in the same country. The “Thai people travel in Thailand” sponsored by tourism department of Thai government aims to encourage citizens’ domestic tourism; it is also partially sponsored by government agencies or some big groups in order to stimulate consumption and drive economic growth.

3) Inbound tourist, this refers to foreign visitors travel from abroad. These tourists could bring lots of foreign exchange income to destination country.

There are four forms of travel: 1. Group travel means that tourists completely follow travel agency’s schedule, such as transportation, hotel, meals, tourist attractions and team leader, tour guide and waiter. In such case, tourists don't have to make arrangements in advance, and travel agency will arrange everything instead. 2. Independent travel means that traveller has to make travel arrangement and doesn't need a tour guide. Travel agency only books tickets and accommodation, and the traveller will take care of the rest himself. 3. Discovery tour is different from the previous two types of tour, as tourists always try to avoid visiting general attractions where group tour would prefer to go. Such kind of travel aims to explore new tourist spots and study local culture. 4. Free-will tour visitors are similar to discovery tour travellers. They all prefer to make travel arrangements by themselves and are not interested in places of interest at all. Remote

places instead of popular group tourist destinations are more likely to become their target. This type of travellers could be preacher, doctor and teacher, whose mission is to make contribution to local people.

Thailand tourism authority has formulated some rules in order to control unqualified travel agencies. Entrepreneurs must register in tourism authority before start any business, and there are 5959 registered travel agencies at present.⁵

Following table clearly shows the number of different travel agencies registered with the authority in different regions.

Table 2 Thailand's registered travel agency statistical table

License type	Total	Bangkok	North	South region 1	South region 2	Northeast
Foreign group	2,490	1,957	123	101	223	86
Domestic group	672	420	80	56	94	22
Specified area	2,797	337	574	108	1,758	20
Total	5,959	2,714	777	265	2,075	128

Data sources: official website of Thailand's national tourism administration www.tat.or.th

(2) Airport. Thailand started using ten-times-bigger new airport on October 28, 2006. More flights have brought in increasing number of inbound tourists.

(3) Hotel. Since human started travel activities, various forms of "home outside home" accommodation also began to appear. Thailand has more than 3000 hotels. In

⁵ Thailand National Tourism Administration, www.tat.or.th

Bangkok, there are plenty of hotels at different star level to choose from economy to luxury. All equipment is comfortable and you can enjoy great hospitality and thoughtful service. Tourists can select from over 500 hotels based on their own budget.

(4) Airlines. Now plane is the most convenient and fast transportation tool, and can bring great convenience to tourists, so many countries have included air services into transport business, as a result of that, number of regional flights is on the rise, and low-cost airlines also join the market, forcing big airlines to offer lower price and better service.

(5) Sightseeing car service center. Unlike airlines, this industry does not require lots of capital investment, investors only need a small amount of money to prepare necessities: tourist coach, office, parking lot, maintenance field, etc. So sightseeing car service industry is thriving in Thailand and offers various models, such as: sedan, van, coach, etc.

(6) Catering industry. As food is the key in travel arrangement, we have to consider different tastes and eating habits of each country. Hygiene is another thing that needs to pay attention to, as travellers may feel uncomfortable in a new environment. So each dish should cater the tastes of visitors and win their appreciation.

(7) Tour guide. As an essential part of a touring group, tour guide is the representative of national image and also image of travel agency. However, there are a lot of unqualified tour guides at present. Thailand government and universities organize tour guide training every year, and now Thailand has 28,012 licensed tour guides.⁶ Following table shows the number of tour guides in different category and region.

Table 3 Thailand tour guide classified registration statistics

License type	Total	Bangkok	North	South region 1	South region 2	Northeast

⁶ Thailand National Tourism Administration, www.tat.or.th

1. General tour guide	22059	16829	3023	590	1024	575
1.1 Foreign (sliver)	20,692	15,523	2,997	584	1,032	556
1.2 Domestic (golden)	1,367	1,306	26	6	10	19
2. Special tour guide	5,953	1,708	1,801	618	16,26	200
2.1 Specified foreign region—pink	3,729	1,259	1,269	396	740	155
2.2 Specified domestic region—blue	395	193	113	21	66	2
2.3 Jungle walker—green	392	193	113	21	66	2
2.4 Art and culture—red	3	3	0	0	0	0
2.5 Sea (diving)—orange	4	0	0	2	2	0
2.6 Seaside—yellow	1,251	192	16	277	763	3
2.7 Natural landscape—purple	103	16	39	0	46	2

2.8 Regional culture—brow n	76	31	11	0	0	34
Total	28,012	18,537	4,824	1,208	2,668	775

1.4 Inbound tourism status quo of Thailand

Due to influence of SARS, Iraq war and global economic recession, inbound foreign tourists dropped from 10.8 million in 2002 to 9.8 million in 2003. In 2004, inbound tourists increased by 25%, and tourism foreign exchange income reached about 385 billion baht. Unfortunately, southern Thailand suffered from tsunami in December 2004. The disaster had a negative impact on Thai economy and tourism, causing declining tourism revenues and loss of 30 billion baht. In 2015, Thailand tourism has been developed to a new height. Deputy permanent secretary of Thailand tourism and sports department said publicly on November 4, 2015 that inbound tourists could reach 29.5 million that year, higher than previous forecast of 28.7 million, which might bring 1.4 trillion baht earnings. From January to October, inbound tourism revenue has reached 1.16 trillion baht, and full-year forecast is 1.4 trillion baht, this is a new record in the past eight years. She pointed out that success of inbound tourism mainly benefited from a series of promoting policies issued by the government, such as Thai Style Tourism Year and 12 must-see tourist destinations. In addition to that, seriously address problems in tourism industry, fight terrorism, solve the problem of zero fare tour and illegal tour guide have encouraged foreign tourists' confidence to come to Thailand. Kaitai research center predicted back then that if inbound foreign tourist market could continue current status, the number of inbound foreign tourists in the fourth quarter of 2015 would increase from 7.68 million to 8 million, up by 2.6% to 6.9% compared with the same

period in 2014 (7.3% growth rate)⁷.

May to September is off-season for tourism in Thailand, and Songkran Festival in April is the last tourist peak before off-season. Also known as water-sprinkling festival, Songkran Festival is one of the unique traditional festivals in Thailand. Thanks to vigorous promotion and all kinds of festival activities organized by government and civil society organizations, Songkran Festival is gaining increasing popularity in different countries and foreign tourists, attracting a large number of foreign tourists travel to Thailand during Songkran, thus bring up to 20-30 billion baht income to tourism service industry and related industries every year⁸.

Top three sources of inbound tourists in 2015 are China, Malaysia and Japan, whose number of tourists is 8 million, 3 million and 1.4 million respectively.

Chart 1: Top 10 destination countries or regions in the second quarter of 2015 by person-time of outbound tour

1.5 Status quo of Chinese tourists in Thailand

In 2011, the number of Chinese citizens for outbound tourism reached 70.25 million, an increase of 22.4% over the previous year, in which the number of outbound tour on business was 6.1321 million, up 4.3%; the number of exit for private affairs was 64.1179 million, an increase of 24.5%. If rank first stop by number of people, top ten countries and regions are Hong Kong, Macao, South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan, Thailand, the United States, Cambodia and Vietnam⁹.

Thailand received 2.7 million Chinese tourists in 2012, the number jumped to 4.7 million in 2013, up 68% from a year earlier.

In the fourth quarter of 2014, travel agencies have organized 10.7121 million

⁷ Thailand's number of inbound tourists will break the record and revenue will reach eight years' new height, China News. <http://www.chinanews.com/gj/2015/11-05/7607932.shtml>

⁸ Thailand may receive more inbound tourists in 2015, China's ambassador to Thailand responsible to business affairs. 21.6%<http://th.mofcom.gov.cn/article/jmxw/201505/20150500959286.shtml>

⁹ http://www.cnta.gov.cn/zwgk/lys/201506/t20150610_18900.shtml

person-time and 60.3123 million man-day outbound trips, and year-on-year growth is 22.61% and 29.68% respectively. Top 10 destination countries or regions for travel agency outbound tour in the fourth quarter by tourist number (from high to low) are Hong Kong, Thailand, South Korea, Taiwan, Macao, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and France.

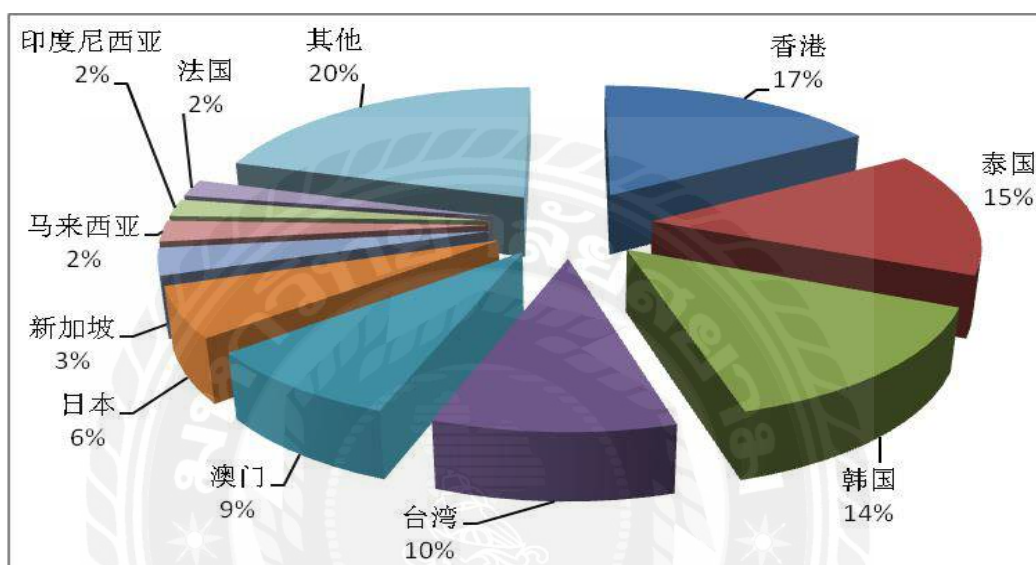


Chart 1: Top 10 destination countries or regions in fourth quarter of 2014 by person-time of outbound tour¹⁰

In the fourth quarter of 2015, there were 13.8385 million person-time outbound tours or 79.643 million man-day outbound tours organized by travel agencies, which increased 29.19% and 32.05% respectively compared with same period last year. Top 10 destination countries or regions in the fourth quarter by person-time of outbound tour organized by travel agencies are Thailand, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Macau, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia.

On September 1, 2016, China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) issued *CNTA National Travel Statistical Survey Bulletin for Second Quarter of 2016*, which showed that there were 13.7228 million person-time outbound tours or 75.8122 million

¹⁰ http://www.cnta.gov.cn/zwgk/ljsj/201609/t20160905_782744.shtml (official website of China National Tourism Administration)

man-day outbound tours organized by travel agencies, which increased 17.32% and 23.72% respectively compared with same period last year. Top 10 destination countries or regions in second quarter by person-time of outbound tour organized by travel agencies are Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia.

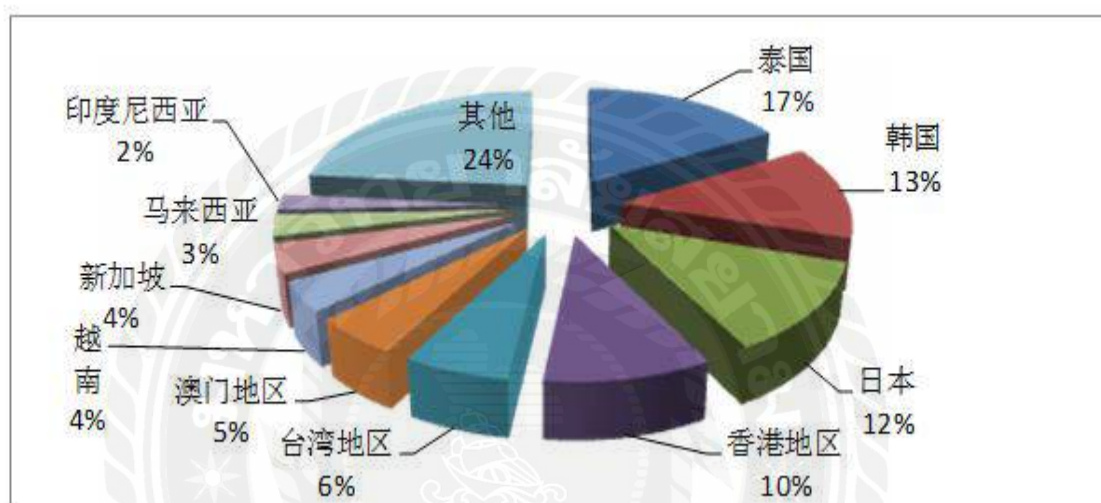


Chart 2: Top 10 destination countries or regions in second quarter of 2016 by person-time of outbound tour¹¹

Data since 2011 has shown that Thailand is one of the most popular countries among Chinese outbound tourists and ranks among the top destinations. Minister of Thailand Tourism and Sports Department said on 12, 2016 in Thailand-China joint conference that number of Chinese tourists continued to grow, and it is believed that outbound Chinese tourists to Thailand can achieve a new record of over 10 million this year. The minister also said that the number of Chinese tourists to Thailand increased 33.74% from September 1 to 11 over same period last year; the figure from January to September 11 this year rose 19.34% over same period last year, while the number of all

¹¹ Official website of China National Tourism Administration, http://www.cnta.gov.cn/zwgk/ljsj/201609/t20160905_782744.shtml (Official website of China National Tourism Administration)

visitors to Thailand grew by 12.10% during the same period¹².

1.6 Research purpose and significance

Thailand's unique folk customs and beautiful natural scenery are attractive to Chinese tourists. This paper studies willingness and satisfaction of Chinese tourists to Thailand, discusses influencing factors of tourists and puts forward corresponding rectification opinions. It is suggested that tourist administration should take innovative and suitable countermeasures to tackle problems faced by tourism industry, protect personal and property security of Chinese and other foreign tourists in Thailand to the maximum extent. Researchers also hope that study result could facilitate better development of tourism industry, prosperity and stability of tourism industry and social economy of Thailand, and also make contribution to the harmonious friendship between the two countries.

¹² NetEase News: <http://news.163.com/16/0914/07/COTJ2BFQ00014Q4P.html>

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Tourists satisfaction study at home and abroad

There are not many satisfaction researches on Chinese tourists to Thailand in recent years, and research content is quite concentrated as well, usually analyze influencing factors of Chinese tourists to Thailand and satisfaction level, and propose suggestion accordingly. Most of research subjects are Chinese overseas students in Thailand, and majority of researchers are master degree dissertations. Below are the main recent China and Thailand study results on Chinese tourists' satisfaction with Thailand tour.

Satisfaction analysis research of Kaifang Yi and Aixin Xu (2015) found that Chinese tourists were satisfied with Thailand tour in general. Research showed that almost half of respondents were returned visitors, accounting for 45% of total respondents. The other 55% Chinese tourists travelled Thailand for the first time. This indicates that Chinese tourists are pleased with the trip in Thailand and may come back again. According to the survey, most tourists (64% of the total respondents) travel with agency, 46% of visitors will stay in Thailand for 4 to 7 days, another 46% of visitors will stay for more than 8 days. This finding shows that most Chinese tourists are in-depth travellers. Advantages of Thailand tour are unique and interesting travel programs and places, safe and hygiene environment, while disadvantages are not enough tour packages and special souvenirs. Thailand's tourism industry should carry forward the advantages and overcome shortcomings in order to attract more Chinese people to travel to Thailand.

Aixin Xu (2016) has achieved several findings in the paper *A Empirical Study on Decision-making Factors Influencing Consumption of Chinese Outbound Tourists---Taken Thailand Market as An Example*, such as potential of China's outbound tourism is tremendous; middle-income families and highly educated young and middle-aged people with higher income have gradually become the backbone of

outbound tourists to Thailand, with growing market share. Travel purposes are mainly sightseeing and leisure; outbound tourists largely depend on Internet to receive tourism information; price is one of the influencing factors when choosing touring route, but not the only or decisive factor. Looking from future consumption trend of outbound tourists to Thailand, most tourists will be more willing to choose travel agency for overseas trip.

Zhiqiang Hou, Xuhong Fang and Cuilan Zhu (2013) analyzed perception and evaluation of Thailand tour based on discussion content of Internet forum—one of We Media—in Mainland China. The study concluded that Chinese mainland tourists were largely satisfied with Thailand tour, especially with elements of tourism consumption and environmental aspects.

Wen Ya and Zhongyu Liu (2015) studied influence of incident on Thailand tourism and analyzed response strategies, and concluded that Chinese tourists were more flexible in travelling to Thailand and vulnerable to interference of emergency incidents.

Weina Chen (2011) analyzed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by Thailand tourism development based on SWOT analysis and studied status quo of Thailand tourism industry and influencing factors of its development. The research also explored various subjective and objective factors affecting Thailand tourism industry, and proposed suggestions and countermeasures on how to improve tourism development.

Ruhai Long (Thailand, 2014) studied tourist satisfaction from 19 factors including tourist attractiveness, tourist city distribution, expected result, revisit rate and tourism influence in *Satisfaction Study on Chinese Tourists Travel to Thailand*, and study results showed that 55% of Chinese tourists consider the experience better than expected; over 90% of Chinese tourists said that they would revisit Thailand; most tourists were highly satisfied with its service quality.

Weisheng Qiu (Thailand, 2014) analyzed satisfaction of Chinese tourists to Thailand and found the following problems that need improvement: further explore cultural

connotation of tourism resources, further improve tourist shopping market and price mechanism, strengthen infrastructure construction and improve urban traffic; provide more healthy and tasty special diet.

Yuting Ye (Thailand, 2015) found that Chinese tourists were more satisfied with Bangkok's tourism environment rather than its tourist consumption environment through analyzing satisfaction of Chinese tourist travel to Bangkok.

Yun Chen (Thailand, 2015) discussed development status of Thailand tourism and service industry, overall blueprint and action plan under ASEAN framework, analyzed main content of ASEAN community and how current situation would affect Thailand tourism and service industry. AEC analysis based on SWOT method shows that establishment of AEC is not only beneficial to improvement and development of Thailand tourism and service industry as well as Thailand economy, but also good for common economic development of AEC.

Lai Kai (Thailand, 2016) studied China and Thailand tourism development status quo and trend, analyzed China's outbound tour development and tourism problems, such as tour group fare, pornography industry and political unrest, and finally analyzed tourism development trend in China and Thailand and forecasted tourism development prospect (tremendous potential). This paper also proposed solutions to current existing problems in development of tourism in both countries

2.2 Relevant theory

Purchase intention refers to the probability of consumers willing to adopt certain purchase behavior. Mullet believes that consumers' attitude towards a particular product or brand, plus effect of external factors constitute consumers' purchase intention. Purchase intention can be seen as subjective tendency of consumers when choosing a specific product, and it is confirmed that purchase intention can be used as an important index to predict consumer behavior. Dodds et al believes that purchase intention meant

subjective probability or possibilities of consumers willing to purchase a particular product. There are also other scholars think purchase intention is purchase plan consumers make to buy certain products. Chinese scholars Rui Han and Zhi-long Tian believe that purchase intention is possibility of consumers buying the product, while Zhixian Zhu considers purchase intention as psychological consultant for consumers to buy products that meet their need, so it is an expression of consumer psychology and a prelude to purchase behavior.

Tourist purchase behavior refers to the actual action tourists take to meet their needs, driven by tourist motives and in exchange for tourism products and services. In social life, any individual must constantly consume all kinds of material subsistence in order to meet physical and psychological needs, so purchase behavior is one of the most universal activities in human society. Happening process of purchase behavior is very complicated. Although tourists have some common needs and motivation during tourism activities, especially physiological needs and motivation, different tourists will have different purchase behavior, due to influence of social environment and human difference.¹ Regarding the relationship between purchase intention and purchase behavior, main argument is focused on whether purchase intention can effectively predict purchase behavior of consumers. Most previous scholars think purchase intention can be used to predict purchase behavior, while Lee and Steven questioned the predictive effect of purchase intention on purchase of durables in their study. After comparing willingness-based prediction and reason-based prediction, they believe that prediction based on purchase intention is inefficient and inaccurate. Later on, Armstrong and Morwitz chose four kinds of durable goods as experimental object, and study confirmed that purchase intention was effective in predicting future purchase behavior. Bruce further proposed that purchase behavior is directly related to purchase intention and purchase intention is the index that measures whether consumers will make purchase behavior.

¹ Zhaorong Li, Xueqing Chen and Xianchun Zhang, *Tourism Marketing*, Wuhan University Press, June 2006

Customer satisfaction is the joyful feeling created after comparing perceived effect with expectations.² Satisfaction is customers' feedback and evaluation of product or service performance, and product or service itself. It reveals pleasant and joyful level related to consumer satisfaction, including below or exceed satisfaction, so it is a kind of psychological experience. Tourist satisfaction is very important in tourism destination marketing, because it directly affects visitor's choice of tourism destination, consumption of tourism products and services and re-consumption ratio.

Some American scholars began customer satisfaction study in early 1960s. Cardozo R. (1964) and Miller J. A. (1977) explored the role of expectation – disconfirmation theory and product performance in the formation of customer satisfaction, and laid foundation for this field. In late 1970s and early 1980s, American scholar Oliver (1980), Olson and Dove (1979) set up “expectation – disconfirmation” model based on the theory of Cardozo and Miller et al. The model shows that customer expectation is the standard to measure customer satisfaction, i.e. customer will be satisfied if actual performance equals to customer expectation; customer will be highly satisfied if actual performance is greater than customer expectation; otherwise customers will not satisfied.

3

In 1978, study of American scholar Pizam et al on tourist destination satisfaction laid foundation for tourist satisfaction theory, and academic circles of tourism pay great attention to tourist satisfaction study both at home and abroad. Lots of valuable researches have formed a mature theory system and established solid theoretical basis. However, there are not many studies on outbound tourists satisfaction compared with domestic tourist satisfaction research, so academic circles lack in-depth quantitative analysis and research results targeted outbound tourists satisfaction.

² CARDOZO RICHARD N. An experimental study of customer effort, expectation, and satisfaction[J], Journal of Marketing Research, 1965(8) : 244-249.

³ Ying Sun, Outbound tourist satisfaction research based on social networking platform data mining. Shanghai Normal University, March 2015.



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This paper, Chinese Tourists' Intention and Satisfaction with Visits to Thailand, has made an investigation into Chinese tourists through questionnaires distributed randomly. The investigation was carried out during the first ten days in August, 2016, in the Grand Palace in Bangkok and Pattaya, two famous tourist attractions in Thailand, and lasted for five days. Altogether 300 questionnaires were handed out. Through combing through and analyzing the questionnaires, basic information about the Chinese travelers in Thailand was obtained and their satisfaction was also learned, which generated conclusions with general guiding significance.

3.2 Research subjects

Chinese travelers visiting Thailand.

3.3 Research methods

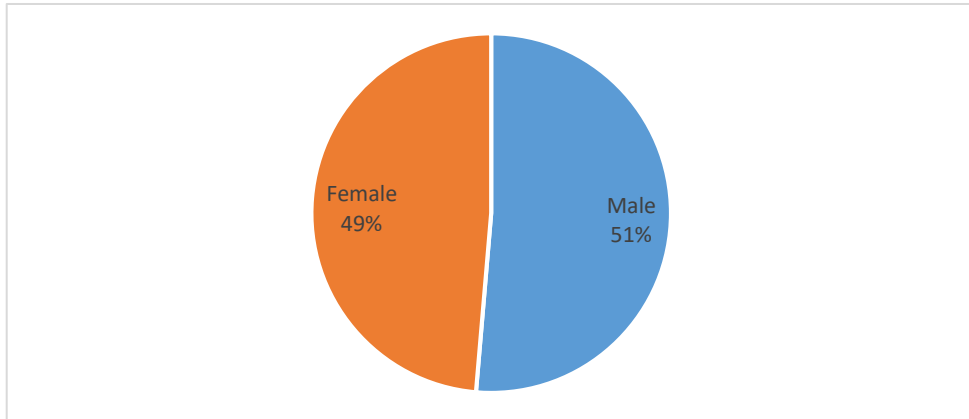
Structural questionnaires are mainly adopted.

3.4 Data analysis method

Altogether 300 questionnaires were handed out, 296 of which were answered, thus the response rate stands at 98.67%. Through analysis of the replied questionnaires, the following data were generated:

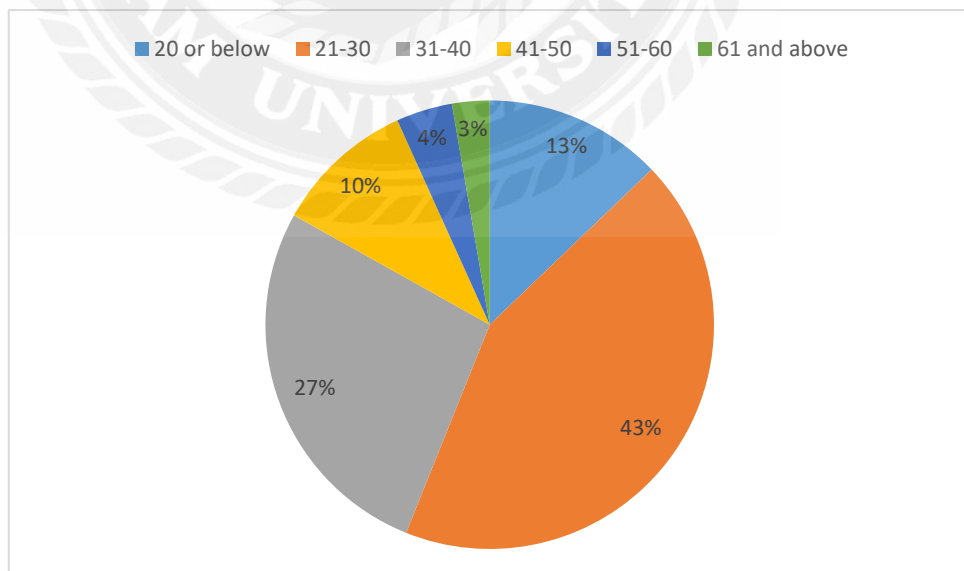
For Question 1 on gender, 152 are male travelers, accounting for 51.35%, in contrast to 144 females, taking up 48.65%. Male tourists and their female counterparts share a similar ratio. It can thus be seen that not only Chinese males, but also females, are interested in visiting Thailand. Males are no longer the majority.

Chart 3: gender ratio of Chinese tourists in Thailand



For Question 2, regarding age of tourists in Thailand, 43% are in their 20s, 27% are between 31 and 40 years old, suggesting that young people, being the majority of Chinese visitors, are more keen on visiting Thailand. In contrast, tourists in their 50s account for 4%, and seniors of 61 years old or above register 3%. The fact that relatively few senior people visited Thailand implies that Chinese seniors is a very promising market for Thailand tourism to probe into. 13% are below 20 years old, ranking the third, suggesting that more and more students go to Thailand in their summer vacations.

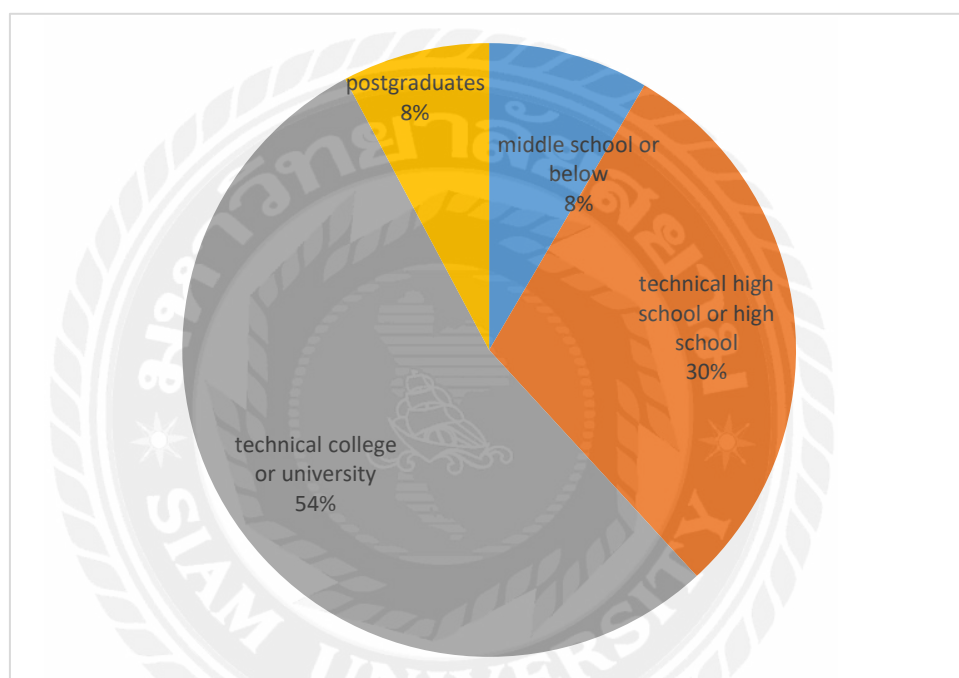
Chart 4: age group of Chinese visitors to Thailand



For Question 3, in respect of education background, 53% of tourists are university or technical college graduates, and 8% hold a master's degree or above, showing that

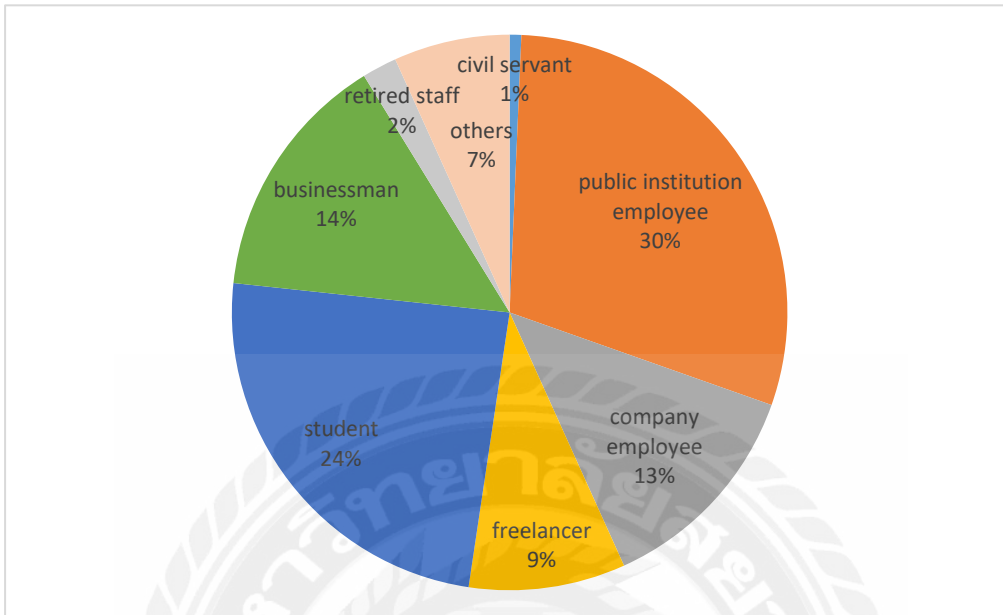
over half of the visitors are high-educated. 30% are technical high school or high school graduates, while 8% have not received education higher than middle school, but most among them are still in school, suggesting that many pupils in middle school or primary school are travelling abroad in holidays. Thailand tourism can better use vacation time to attract more students to visit Thailand.

Chart 5: Education background of Chinese travelers in Thailand



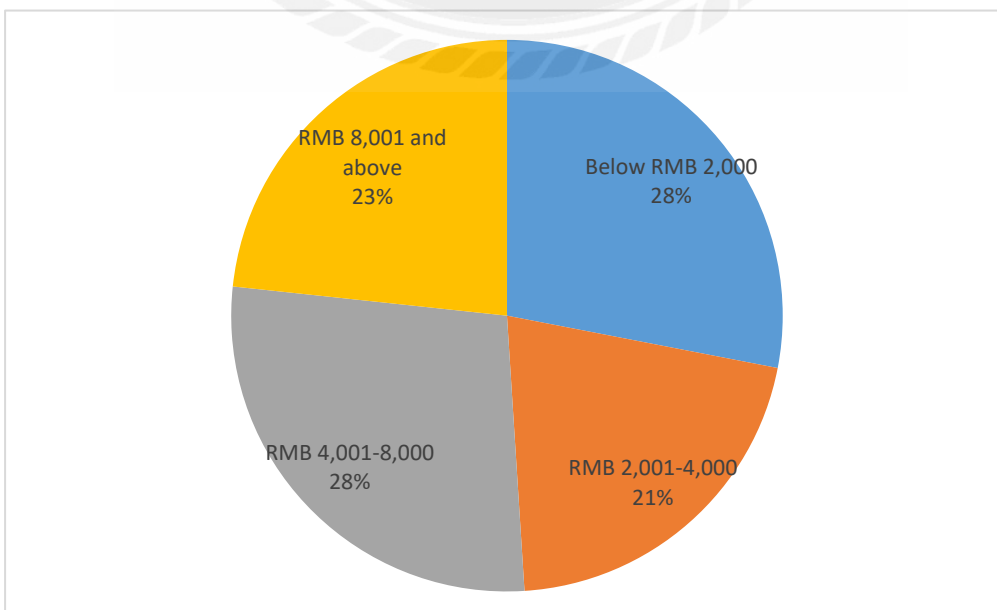
For Question 4, with respect to occupation, 30% of the Chinese visitors in Thailand work in public institutions, followed by students, accounting for 24%. Combined, they take up over half. Teachers working in public institutions and students usually travel abroad in summer vacations. Thus, it would be advisable for schools in China and Thailand to conduct more cooperation and to increase exchanges between teachers and students of the two countries. In terms of occupation, retired tourists register 2%, which can be higher. Civil servants take up the lowest proportion, only 1%. As Chinese government introduced various new policies, employees in state authorities are facing stricter regulations, thus having fewer opportunities to travel abroad in holiday.

Chart 6: Occupations of Chinese visitors in Thailand



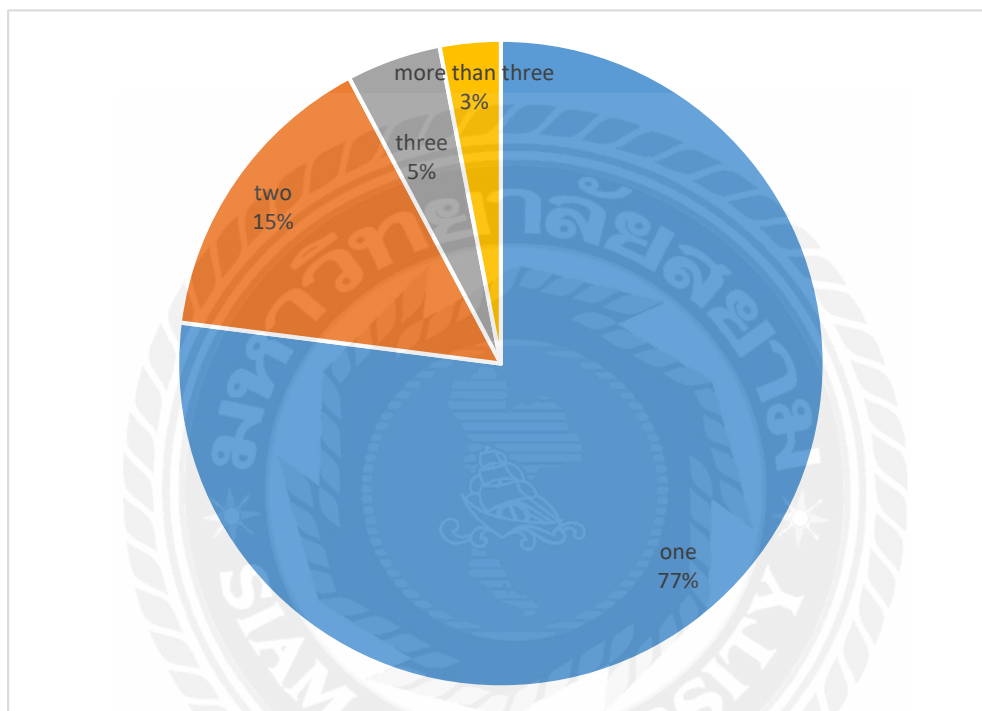
For Question 5, in terms of monthly income, 28% of the travelers earn less than RMB 2,000 per month, who are mainly students. The same proportion for earners with a monthly income between RMB 4,001 and 8,000. 23% make RMB 8,001 or above every month. Combined, individuals who earn above RMB 4,000 each month take up over half, suggesting that most of tourists who visited Thailand have a fairly good income.

Chart 7: Monthly income of Chinese tourists in Thailand



For Question 6, regarding the number of visits to Thailand, 77% are on their first visit, while 15% are on their second, 5% on their third, and 3% have been to Thailand more than four times. This shows that 23% of Chinese visitors have been to Thailand more than once.

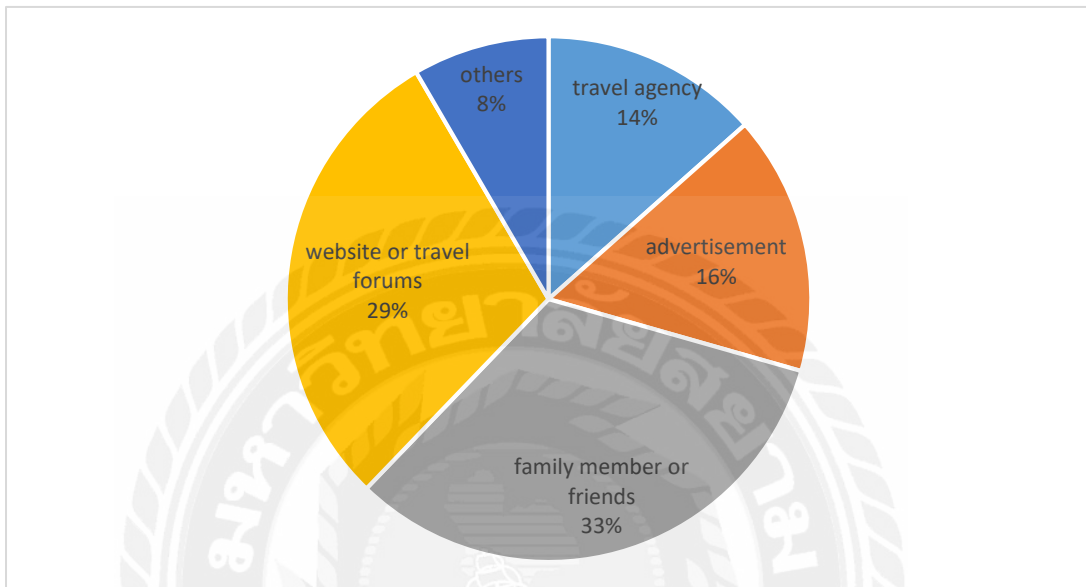
Chart 8: Number of visits to Thailand by Chinese tourists.



For Question 7, in terms of access to information on Thailand tourism, 33% said they obtained the information through friends or family members, ranking the first, which suggests that visitor satisfaction and recommendations are critical. When customers are very contented with a product, they will recommend it to friends and family members around. Such recommendations are more persuasive than advertisements. Individuals who accessed the information through internet or forums and advertisements account for 29% and 16% respectively. Today, in this fast-developing information era, information can spread very quickly and extend very wide, thus enabling tourists to quickly obtain the information they need, either through internet or advertisement. In contrast, only 14% followed advice from travel agencies, which shows that unfavorable news on travel agencies and tourist guides online have undermined people's trust on

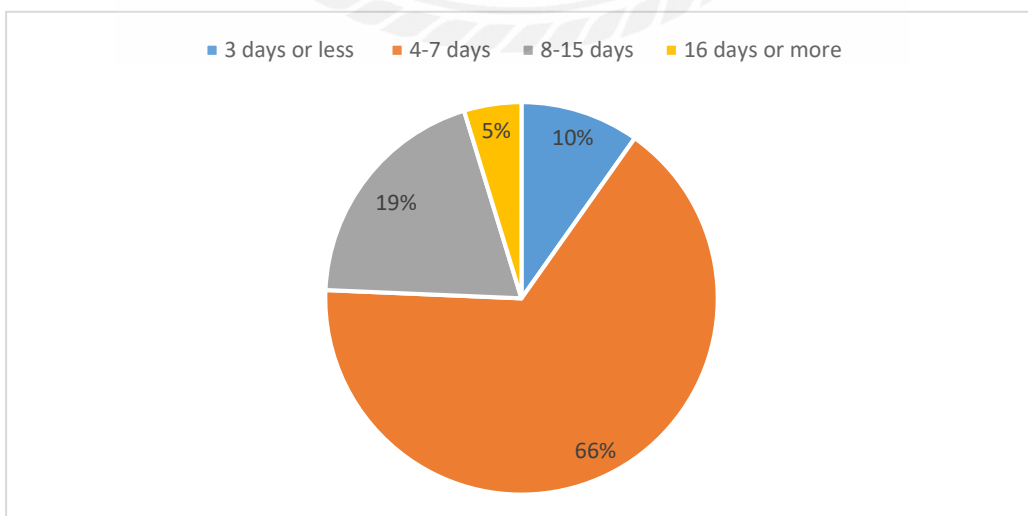
travel agencies. Meanwhile, many young people tend to do their own research on destinations, thus making tourist agency recommendations unnecessary.

Chart 9: Chinese tourists main access to information on Thailand tourism.



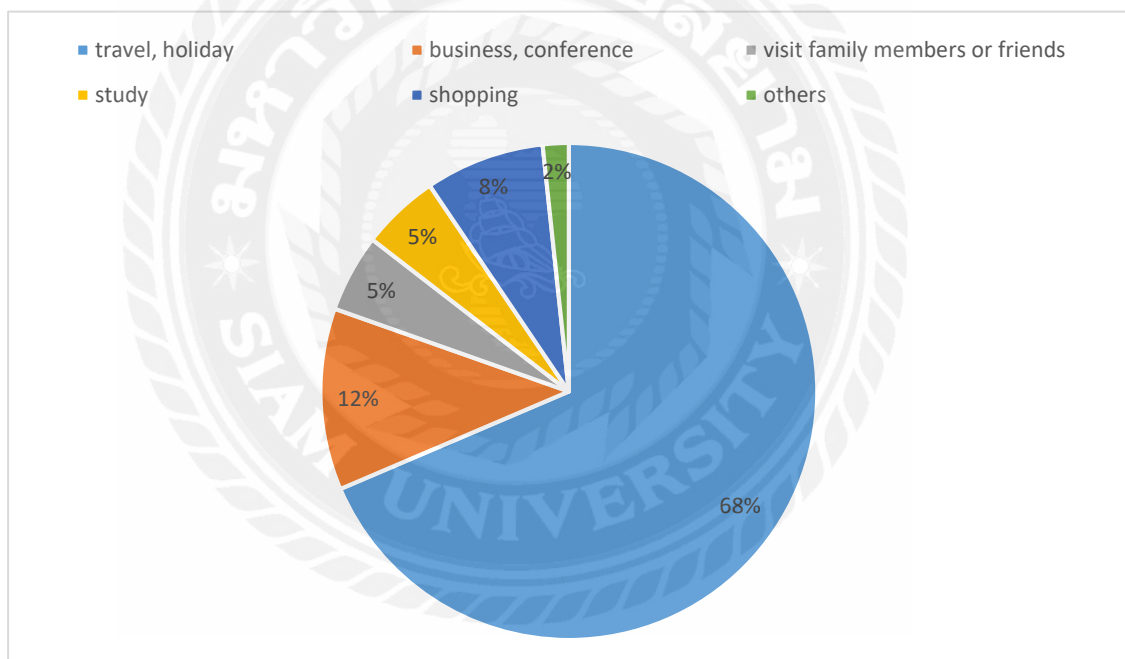
For Question 8, duration of stay in Thailand among Chinese visitors, it is found that 66% of visitors plan to stay for 4 to 7 days and 19% intend to spend 8 to 15 days, while 5% will stay over 16 days in Thailand and 10% shorter than 3 days.

Chart 10: Duration of stay in Thailand among Chinese visitors



For Question 9, regarding the main purpose of visit, 68% are holidaymakers, suggesting that going on holiday serves the main purpose for Chinese visitors. This is followed by business and conference purpose, which takes up 12%. As China expands cooperation with ASEAN, there will be more trades between China and Thailand. This purpose is expected to play a bigger role in the future. 8% came to Thailand for shopping due to its relatively affordable price and the growing popularity of its cosmetic products among Chinese females. 5% came to Thailand to visit family members or friends, or for education.

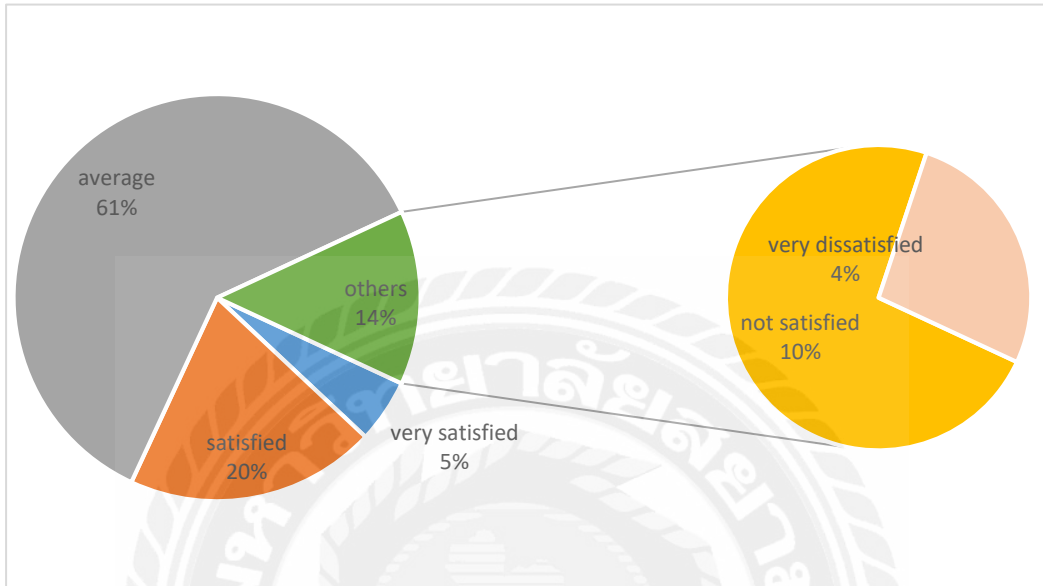
Chart 11: Main purpose of visiting Thailand



For Question 10, in terms of Chinese visitors' overall views on Thailand, 61% think safety in Thailand is just okay. 20% are satisfied. Only 5% feel very satisfied. In contrast, 10% feel dissatisfied and 4% are deeply dissatisfied. With respect to safety, in recent years, there have been some large explosions in Thailand. Drownings and traffic accidents also happened to tourists often. In the last two years, more than 10 Chinese visitors died from accidents in Thailand, which aroused concerns among Chinese visitors on travelling in Thailand. It is hoped that Thai government can strengthen security, so as

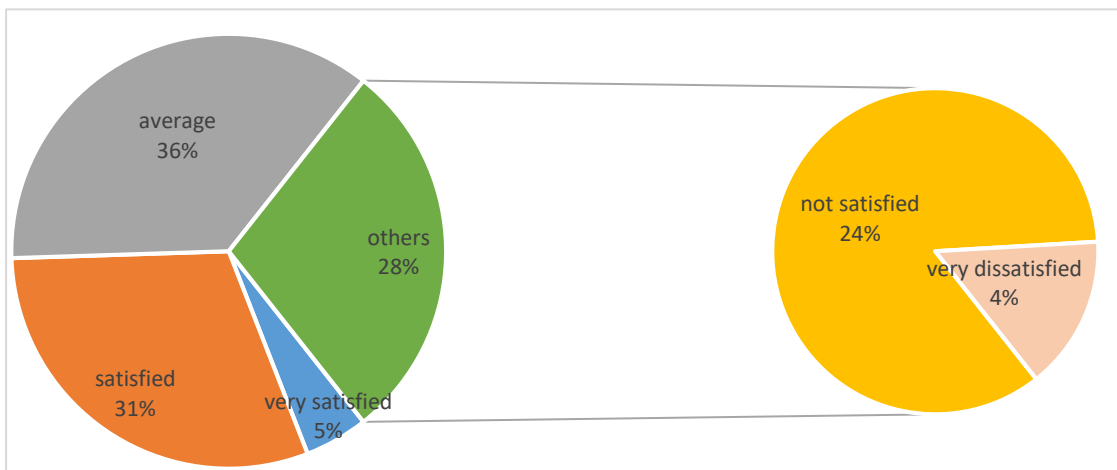
to ease their worries.

Chart 12: Satisfaction with safety in Thailand among Chinese visitors



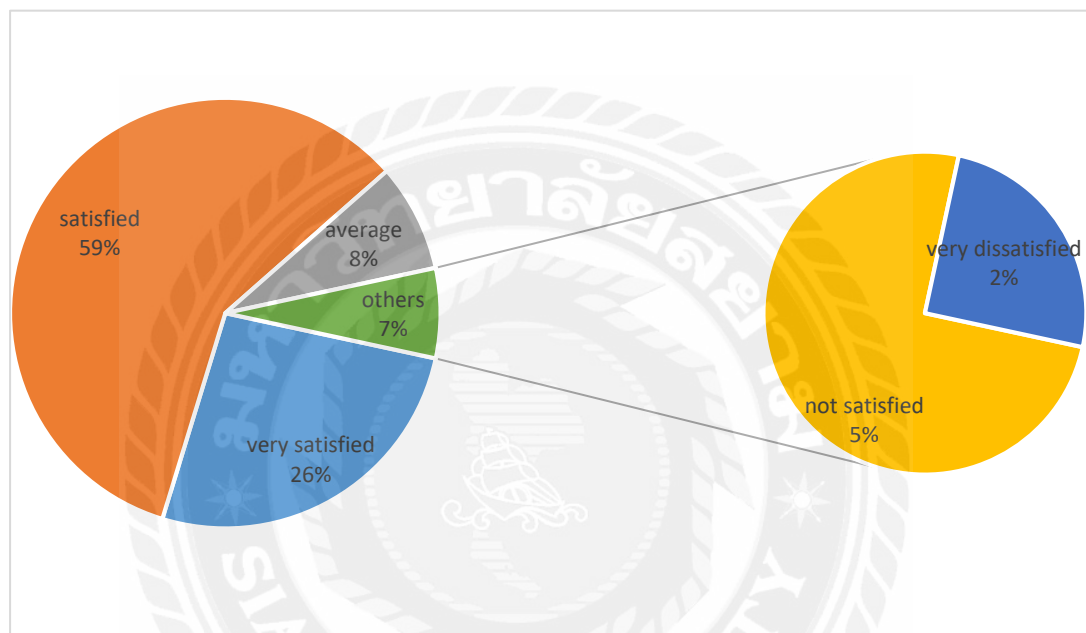
In respect of transport, 36% think it is okay, 31% feel satisfied, and 5% are very satisfied. In contrast, 24% feel dissatisfied and 4% are very dissatisfied. Transport in Thailand is very convenient and affordable. However, traffic congestion is a serious issue. Besides, there are many motorcycles on the road, many of which are reconditioned and can be quite noisy, something that upsets both residents and travelers.

Chart 13: Chinese visitors' satisfaction with transport in Thailand



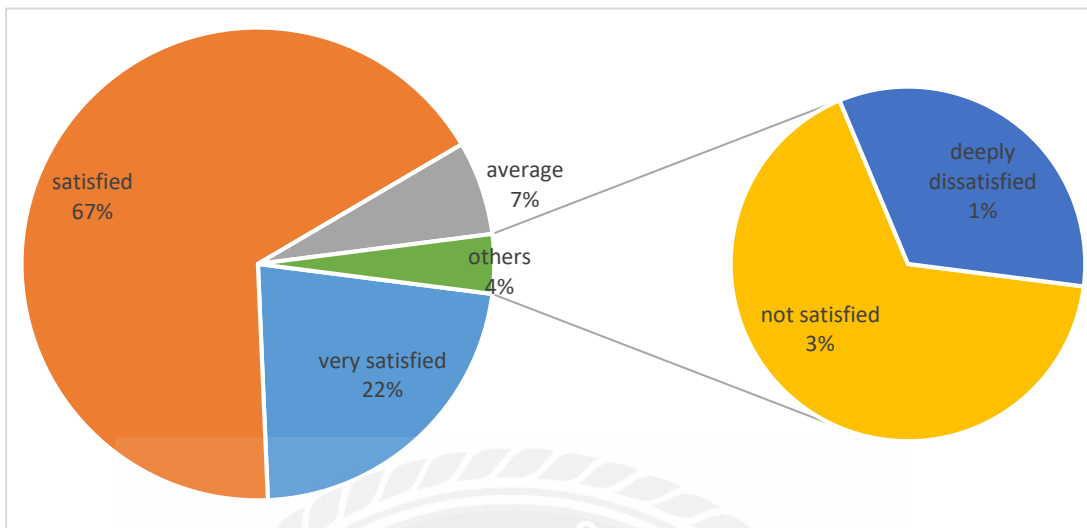
Cities and tourist attractions in Thailand are quite hygienic. 59% of Chinese visitors are satisfied with hygiene, 26% feel very satisfied and 8% think it is okay. In contrast, 5% are not contented and 2% are deeply dissatisfied.

Chart 14: Chinese visitors' satisfaction with hygiene in Thai cities and tourist attractions



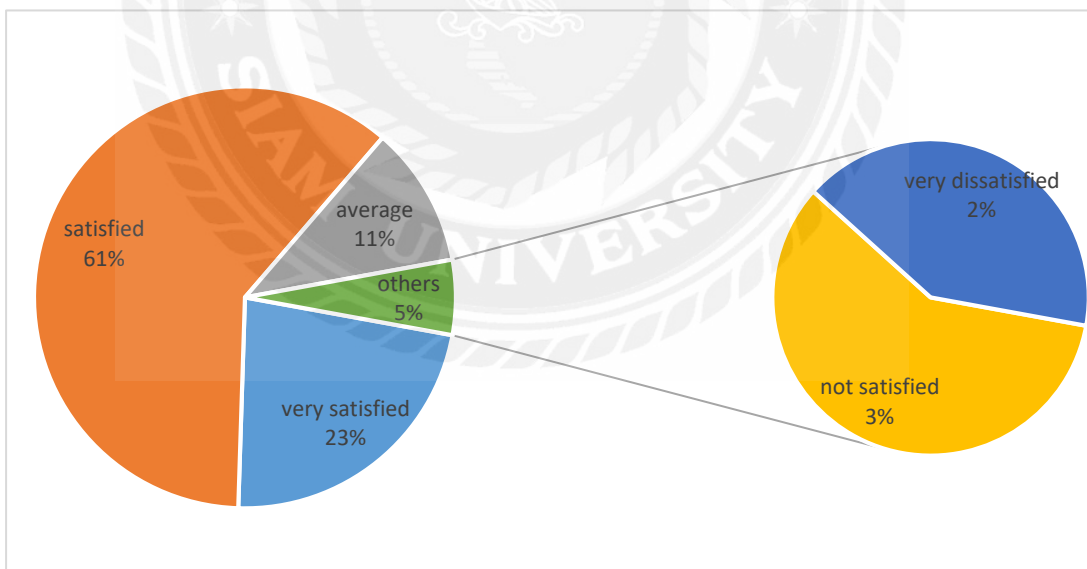
In terms of manner of employees in shopping malls, hotels and tourist attractions, 67% are satisfied and 22% feel very contented, which shows that services in Thailand are appreciated by most Chinese travelers. Thailand is known as a country of smiles, and Tourism is its main industry. Thai workers are praised by tourists across the world for their manner, which has also attracted many to visit Thailand.

Chart 15: Chinese visitors' satisfaction with service manner of employees in shopping malls, hotels and tourist attractions in Thailand.



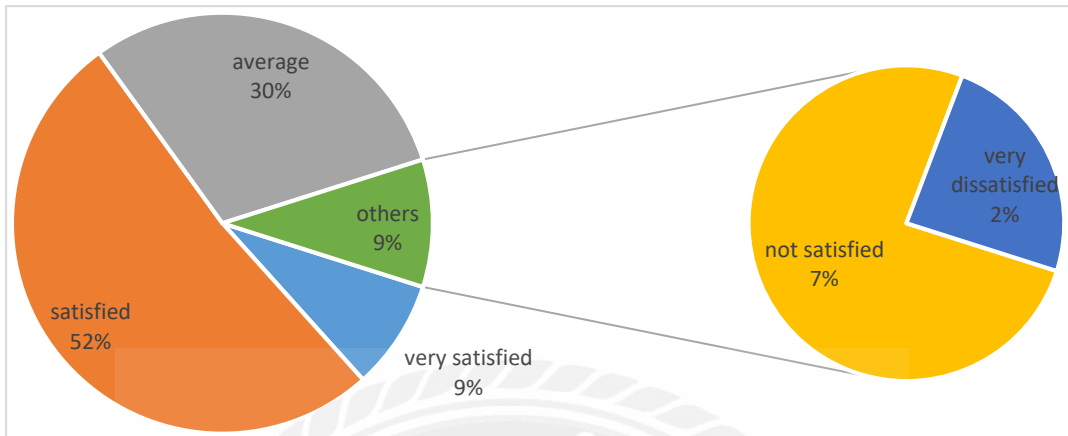
With regards to tourist attraction design, 61% are satisfied, 23% are very satisfied and 11% consider they are nothing special. In contrast, 3% feel dissatisfied and 2% deeply dissatisfied.

Chart 16: Chinese travelers' satisfaction with tourist attraction design in Thailand



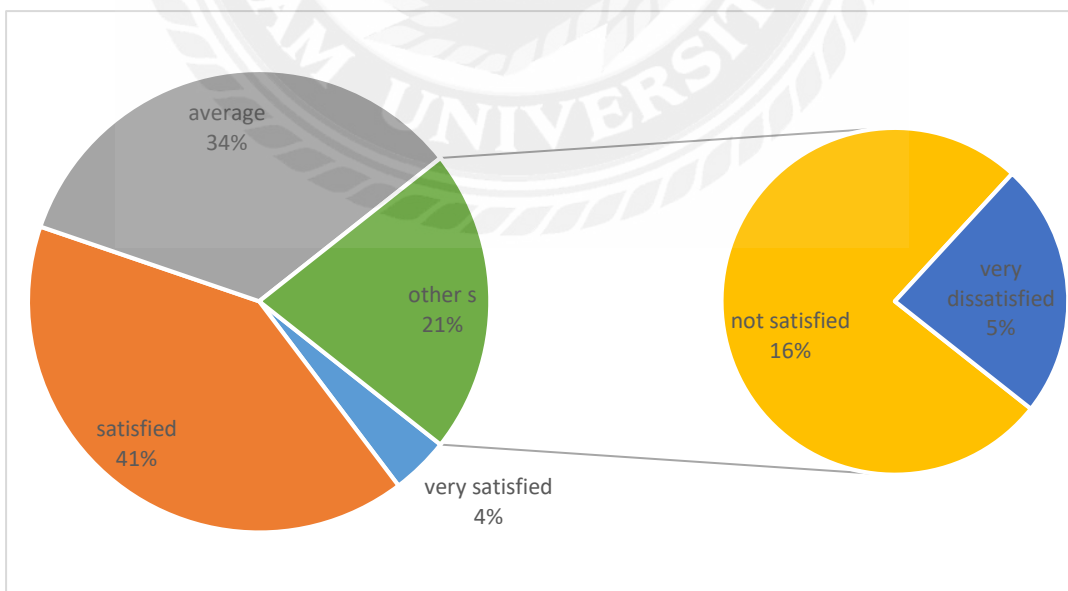
When it comes to specialties, about 52% are satisfied, 9% feel very satisfied, and 30% think they are okay, while 7% are discontented and 2% deeply dissatisfied. Among Thailand specialties, rice and tropical fruit are the most famous, very popular with tourists.

Chart17: Chinese visitors' satisfaction with Thailand specialties.



In terms of tourist attractions publicity, 41% are satisfied, 4% are very satisfied, while 34% think it is average, 16% are not satisfied, and 5% are deeply discontented, due to language barriers. It is hoped that there would be improvement and more explanations in Chinese in tourist attractions and other places in Thailand.

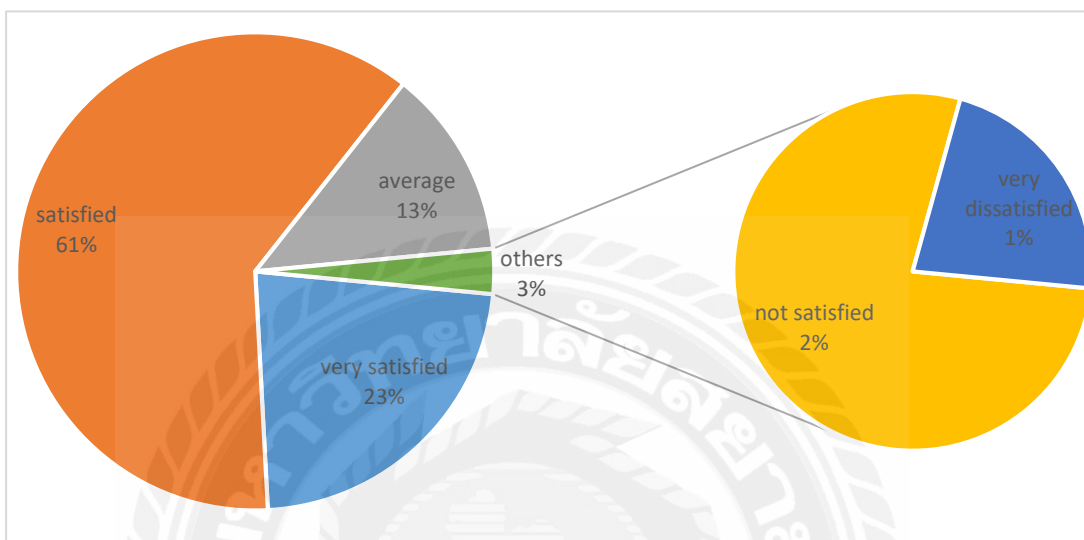
Chart 18: Chinese visitors' satisfaction with promotion in Thailand tourist attractions



With regards to accommodation, 61% say they are satisfied and 23% are very happy with, while 13% think it is average, 2% are not satisfied and 1% deeply dissatisfied.

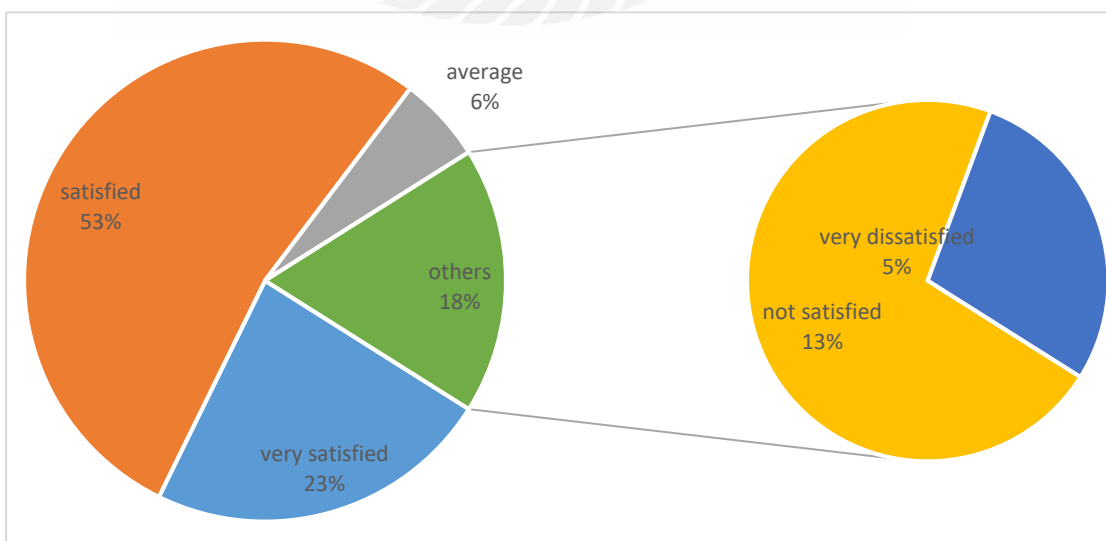
Accommodation in Thailand is arguably great, with various hotels, resorts and flats that are well-equipped, tidy and cost-effective.

Chart 19: Chinese visitors' satisfaction with accommodation in Thailand.



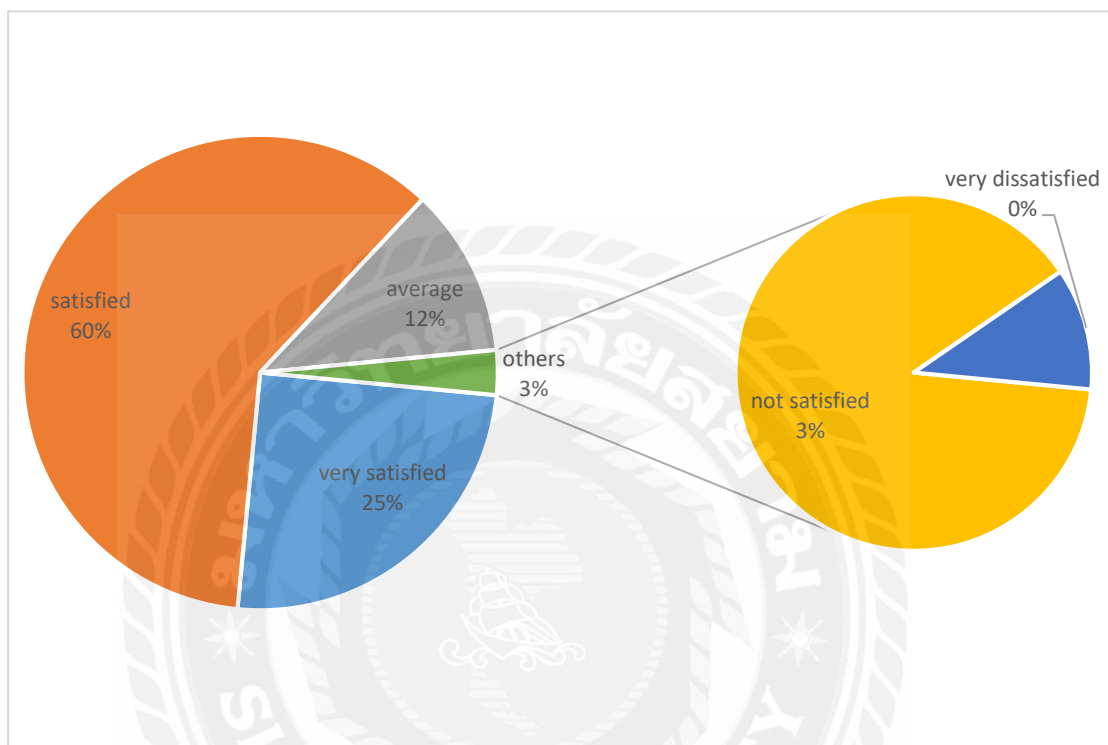
In terms of food, 53% are satisfied, 23% feel very impressed. In contrast, 6% say it is average, 13% are not very happy with, and 5% are deeply dissatisfied. Thai food features sour, spicy and sweet flavors, very popular with young people. However, some tourists are not satisfied because they have a low tolerance towards spicy food or they do not like sour-and-spicy food.

Chart 20: Chinese visitors' satisfaction with Thailand food



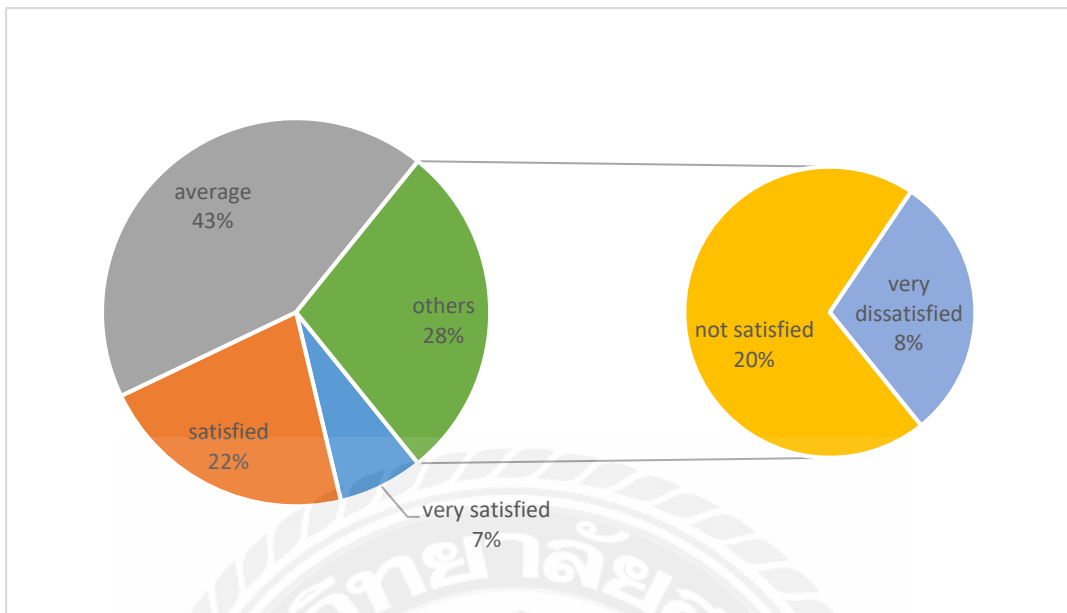
Respecting price, 60% of the tourists are satisfied, and 25% are very satisfied, while 12% say it is okay, and 3% are not very happy with. No one feels very dissatisfied.

Chart 21: Chinese visitors' satisfaction with price in Thailand.



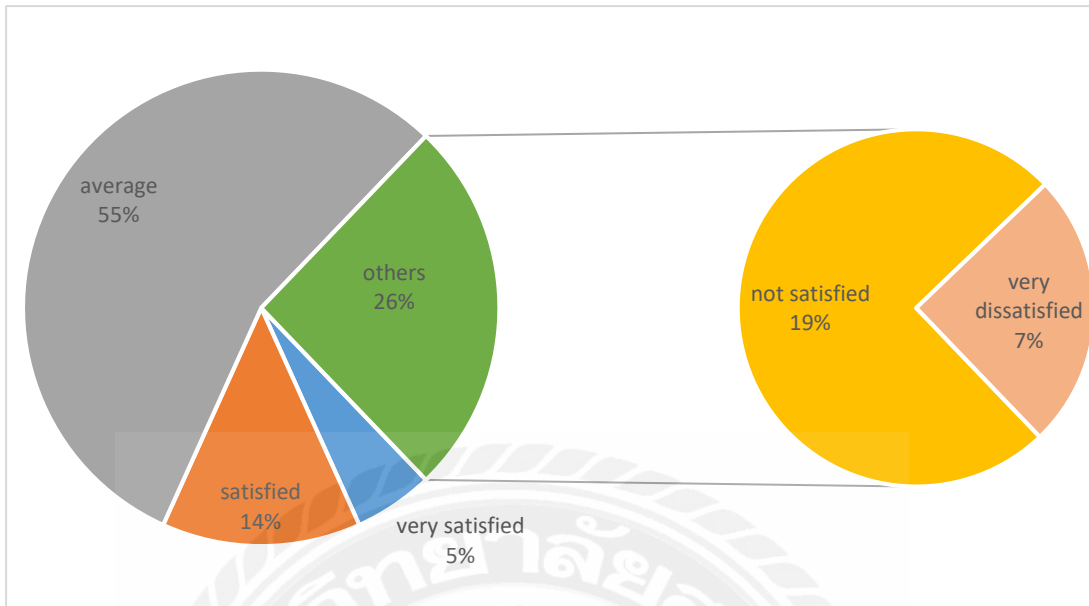
With regards to climate, 22% are satisfied, and 7% are very satisfied. As a contrast, 43% think it is just not too bad, 20% say they are not very happy with the climate, and 8% feel very dissatisfied. Thailand is hot throughout the year. Temperature in daytime is usually over 30 °C. June to September are the hottest period in a year, when the temperature stays around 36 °C. As a result, it is hard for many tourists from Northern China to get used to. Travelers are advised to try to avoid hot months.

Chart 22: Chinese visitors' satisfaction with climate in Thailand



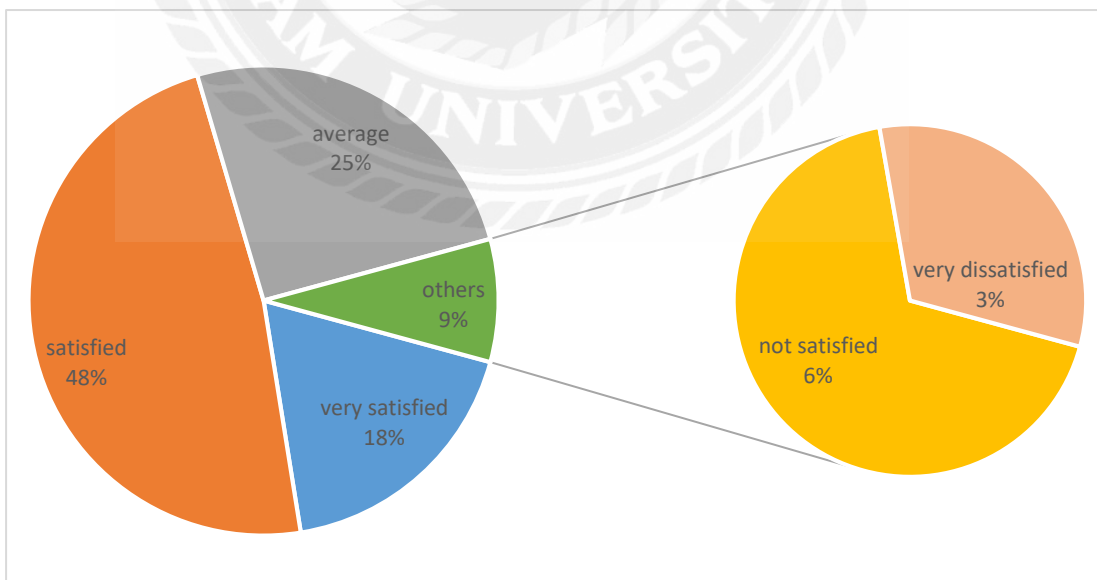
When it comes to tourist guide services and quality, 55% think they are average, 14% feel happy with, and 5% say they are very satisfied. In contrast, 19% are not satisfied, and 7% feel deeply dissatisfied. These figures show that a fairly large number of Chinese tourists are not impressed by tourist guide services in Thailand, to which Thailand tourism should pay attention. Occasionally, we can see news about tourists of budget groups being cheated and forced to make purchases, or reports about tourist guides hurling abuses on tourists. According to Thai media, at 2:00 on June 19th, 2016, Pattaya police received a report, saying 38 Chinese tourists were abandoned by their tourist guide in the lobby of a local hotel. This tourist group arrived in Chonburi Province around 21:00 on June 18th after having stayed in Bangkok for two days. Before checking in, the tourist guide required them to make extra payments. Many felt disgruntled. Subsequently, the tourist guide left the hotel, abandoning the tourists in the lobby.

Chart 23: Chinese visitors' satisfaction with tourist guide services in Thailand



Entertainment activities in Thailand are very diverse and special, such as lady boy performances, Thai boxing, and so on. In this respect, 48% of the tourists are satisfied, and 18% are very satisfied, while 25% think they are average, 6% say they are not satisfied, and 3% feel deeply dissatisfied.

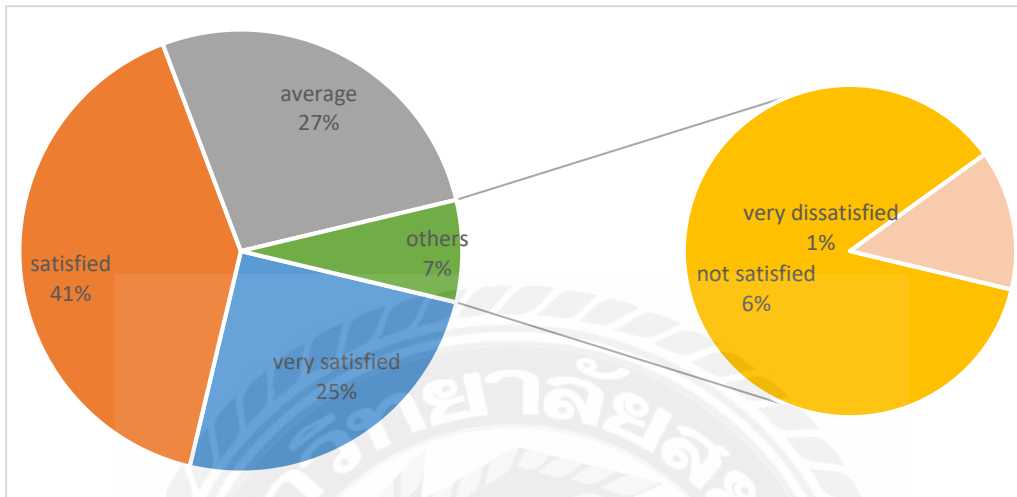
Chart 24: Chinese visitors' satisfaction with entertainment activities in Thailand.



In terms of local customs, 41% of the visitors are satisfied and 25% are very satisfied. In contrast, 27% think they are nothing special, 6% are not satisfied, and 1%

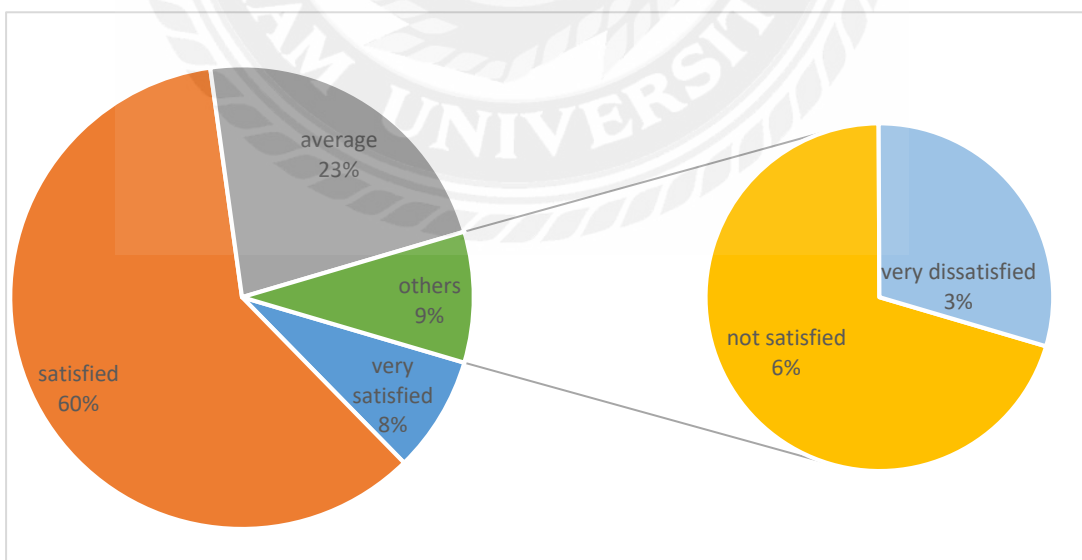
are deeply dissatisfied.

Chart 25: Chinese visitors' satisfaction with local customs in Thailand



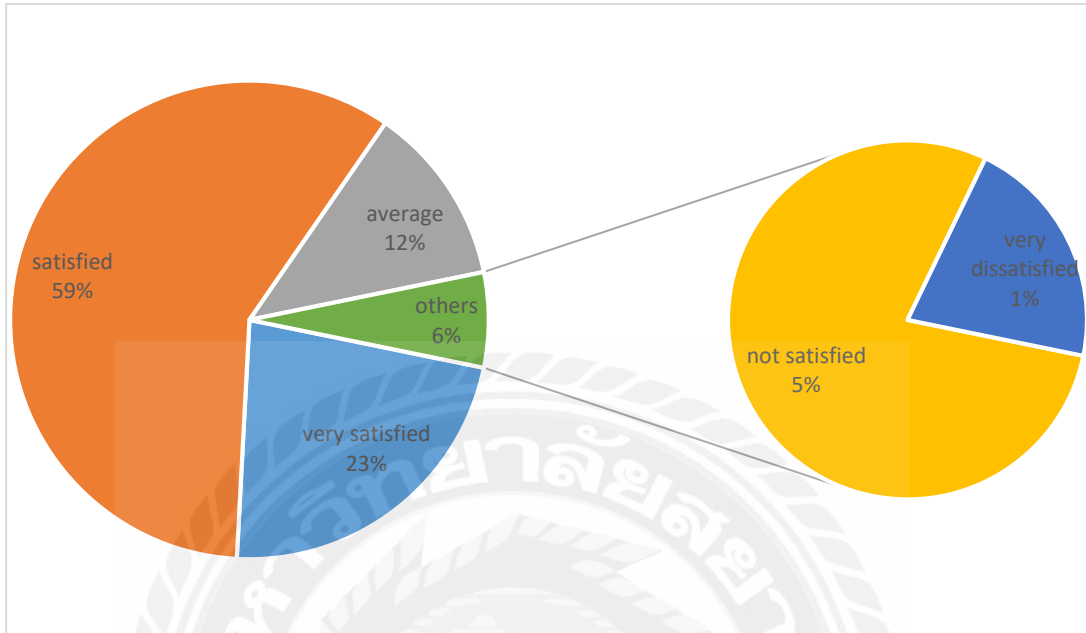
Regarding road signs, 60% are satisfied and 8% are very satisfied, while 23% feel they are not just too bad, 6% feel they are not very satisfied, and 3% say they are deeply dissatisfied.

Chart 26: Chinese visitors' satisfaction with road signs in Thailand



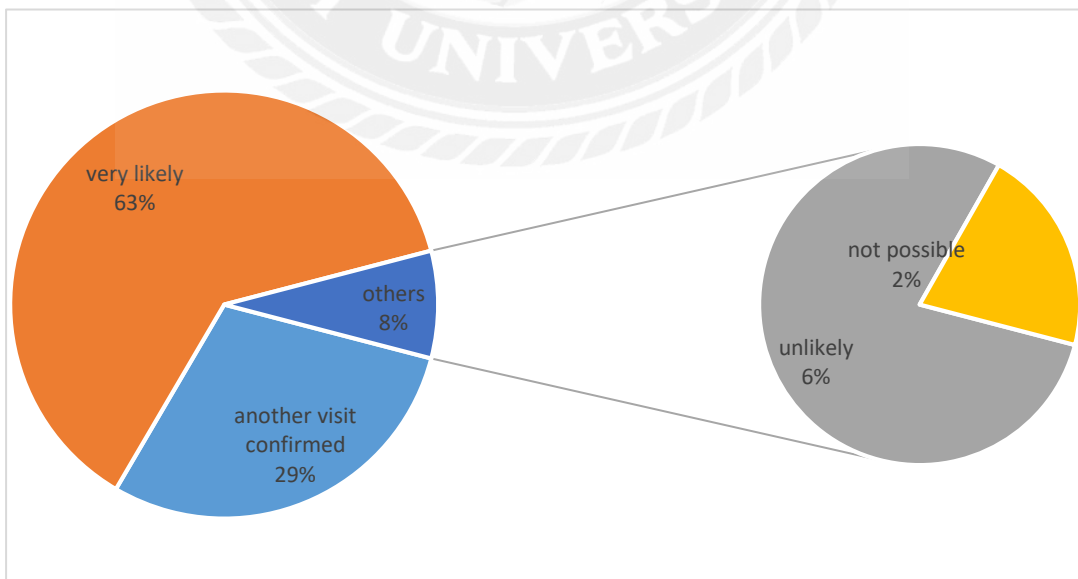
In terms of overall view, 59% of Chinese travelers say they are satisfied with this visit and 23% are very satisfied, while 12% say it is average, 5% are not very contented, and 1% feel deeply dissatisfied.

Chart 27: Chinese visitors' overall views on travelling in Thailand



For Question 11, on the likelihood of another visit to Thailand, 63% of the Chinese travelers say it is very possible, and 29% confirmed another visit. In contrast, 6% think they are not very likely to visit again, and only 2% say another visit is impossible.

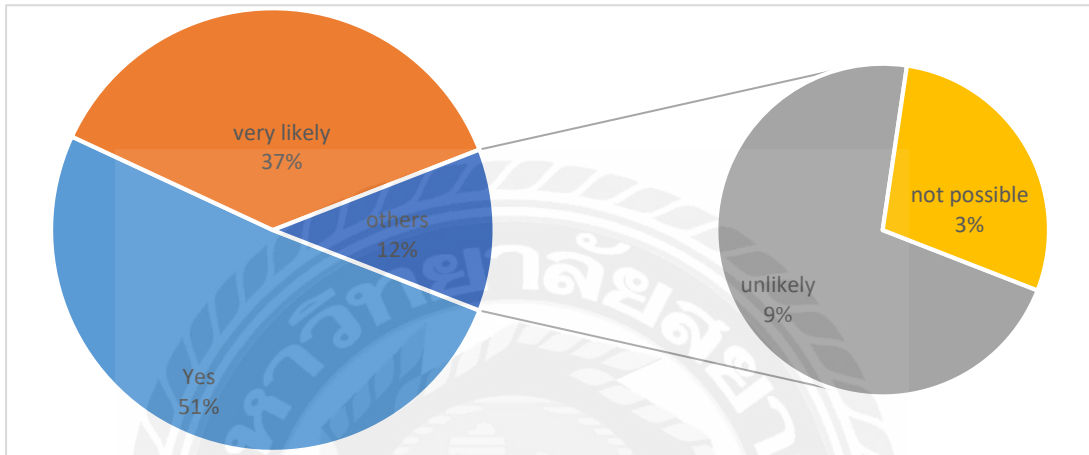
Chart 28: likelihood of another visit to Thailand among Chinese tourists



In terms of the possibility of recommending others to come to Thailand, 37% say

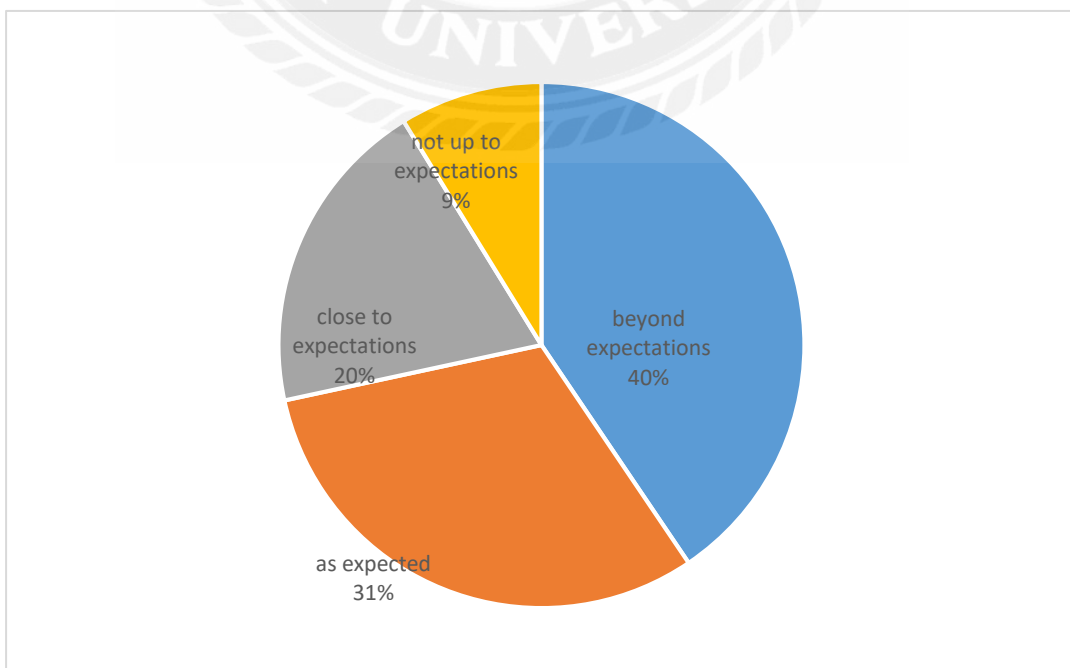
it is very possible, 51% say they will do it, while 9% believe the possibility is low, and 3% think it will not happen.

Chart 29: possibility of recommending others to visit Thailand among Chinese visitors



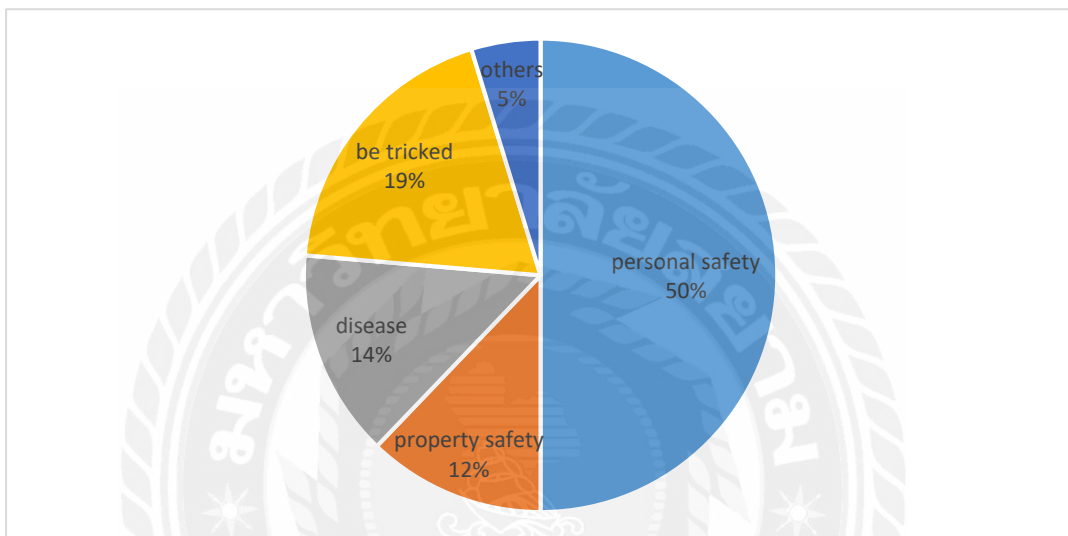
For Question 12, as for whether the journey met their expectations, 31% of the Chinese tourists think it did, 40% say it turns out better than what they expected, 20% believe it is close to their expectations, while 9% feel it fell short of their anticipations.

Chart 30: Chinese tourists' travel expectations V.S reality



For Question 13, the biggest concern of Chinese travelers in Thailand, 50% say it is personal safety, while illness causes most anxiety for 14%. Meanwhile, 19% are most worried about being tricked. Another 12% are most concerned about their property safety. 5% have other worries.

Chart 31: Biggest concern of Chinese travelers in Thailand



CHAPTER 4

RESULT

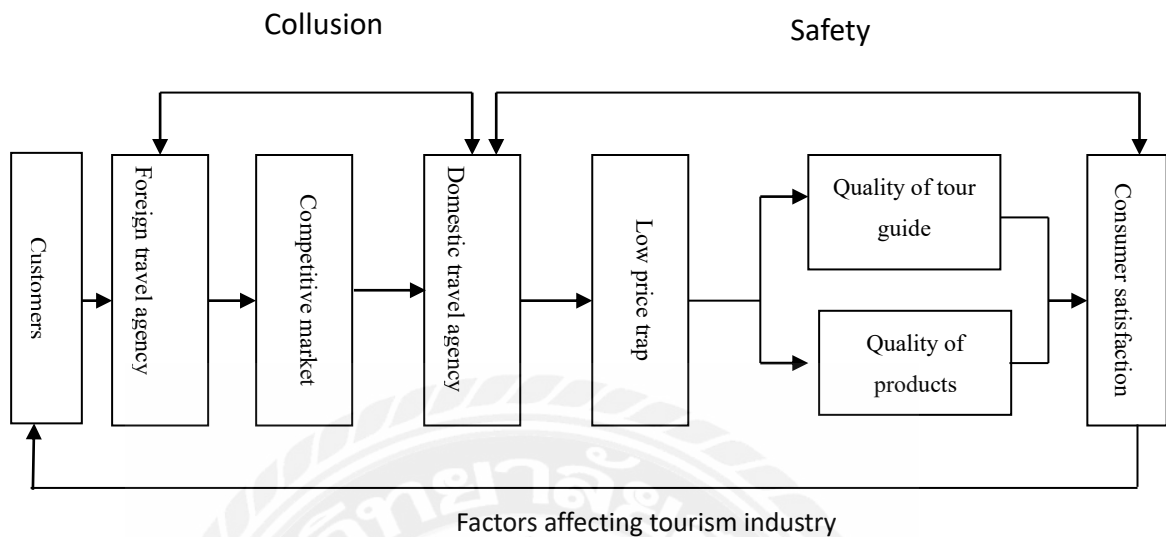
Tourism is a very important industry in Thailand. As an old saying goes, “Read 10,000 books and travel 10,000 miles”, travelling is not only an important form of entertainment, but more importantly, it is a great opportunity to broaden people’s mind and know about local customs and practices around the world and to enjoy cultural relics. Most of people would choose to join a tourist group of a travel agency, which is considered to be a time-saving and trouble-saving way. It’s of course takes time and energy to do all the travel arrangements by the tourists themselves such as applying for visa, booking flight tickets, hotel room and arranging for accommodation and catering and tours.

It is known that Thailand is a tourist mecca. With its superior tourist environment, Thailand attracts tens of millions of tourists every year. Decades years of improvement has made tourism industry in Thailand a non-smoking one and one of the most important sources of foreign currency revenue. It plays an even more important role in earning foreign currency revenue after the devaluation of Thai Baht caused by the financial crisis in 1997¹. In the three years from 1998 to 2001, the number of overseas tourists in Thailand saw an average increase of 8% per year with the revenue increasing by 15%. The tourism in Thailand, however, has suffered downturn caused by many man-made disasters and natural disasters since 1999.

Because of the fierce competition within the tourism industry, some travel agencies offer low price tourist group to attract tourists. Those tourist groups, however, are of low service level, and often leave tourists a bad impression, which therefore affects the prosperity and stability of tourism industry.

¹ China Vista: www.chinavista.com

Chart 32: A relationship diagram of factors affecting tourism



In recent years, natural and man-made disasters both inside and outside of Thailand such as terrorist attacks, avian influenza, SARS, dengue fever, soaring oil prices, earthquake and tsunami to a certain degree affects inbound tourism and service industry in Thailand. Therefore, the government should step up efforts to promote the tourism industry and lay a special emphasis on the security of life and property of tourists. Thailand government and tourism administration should restore the confidence of domestics and foreign tourists.

4.1 Man-made factors

First, the effect of man-made explosion accidents to tourism industry.

Chart 1 shows some man-made explosion accidents in recent years and from which we can conclude that some heavy casualties are caused by man-made accidents. It seems that the explosion incident rate is strangely high in the past 10 years. According to incomplete statistics, there are up to hundreds of casualties from explosions in Thailand since 2006. For example, the bloody conflict between Thailand army and Thailand anti-government protesters red shirts killed 21 people and injured over 800 people, including 3 Chinese people since it began in April 10th, making it the most severe conflict among conflicts in the past 18 years in Thailand. As the protesters continued to rally,

Thailand's SET index responded by plunging by 3.6 percent, reaching its lowest point in the past four weeks. Individual shares also plummeted and stocks tourism related stocks was the hardest hit by the tense situation, among which Thai Airways International shares plunged by nearly 11% at one point and Airports of Thailand shares fell by 4.7%. Thai Ministry of Finance said on April 12th that considering the continuing tense situation caused by the conflict, Ministry of Finance this year will lower the growth expectation of Thailand economy from the previous figure of 4.5% to 4%. It also predicted that tourism and domestic consumption which accounted for 6.5% of Thailand's gross domestic product (GDP) was expected to be severely affected. Fitch, the rating agency, said on April 12th that Thailand public finances would deteriorate after such a large-scale conflict and it also expressed its "deep concern" over Thailand's local currency rating. It was reported that Fitch's current rating of Thailand's local currency rating was A- with a stable rating outlook. Continued tension in Thailand, however, would cast a shadow over the already seriously affected tourism industry. It was said that 43 countries and regions had issued Bangkok travel alert by April 13th. Thani, Vice President of the Federation of Thai Industry said that anti-government demonstrations and bloody conflict had caused 35billion baht in damage to Thailand tourism industry.²

The outbreak of SARS in 2004 and riots in Muslim regions in some southern parts of Thailand including severe incidents in 3 changwats in the southern border of Thailand caused terrorists to shift their target from officials to common people. The first effect would be on tourism industry and related trade, hotel and industry. An explosion incident in Hat Yai, a city in Thailand's northern changwat Songkhla occurred on April 3rd was a hit for the image of Thailand's tourism and it frightened off foreign investors. It also imposed impact on customers' confidence and the development of tourism industry, whose index fell by 7.4% at one point.³ If the government could take some measures against the situation, the confidence of investors and tourists may quickly restored.

²Hexun Website: <http://stock.hexun.com/2010-04-13/123308398.html>

³China Weekly News <http://news.sina.com.cn/w/2004-12-30/19205380308.shtml>

Tourists are very concerned about the security of Thailand. It's a different country and people there speak different language. Those man-made explosion incidents undoubtedly hit the tourism industry hard. To make tourists feel safe travelling to Thailand, the Thai government must adopt safety measures to ensure the safety of life and property of tourists.

The second is low price trap targeted for foreign package tour.

Tourism industry is a service industry and therefore needs input of a lot of labor forces. Good service requires that the labor forces are of good quality. What the tourists need most is good service and genuine products at reasonable price instead of higher or lower price.⁴

Some domestic and foreign tourist agencies, however, collide with some companies to seize the market with informal ways such as by offering tourist groups which is lower than cost. On Aug 24th, 2016, tourist police in Thailand together with law enforcement departments conducted an unannounced check on OA Transportation Group and its subordinate brands like Royal Jewellery, Royal Snake Medicine, Royal Tourist Restaurant and Bangkok Leather Center and found that these companies are behind some Chinese tour groups which claim to be free. 10 billion Thai Baht (which is equivalent to 900 million yuan RMB) of liquid asset is investigated and confiscated from the network. On Sept 9th, 2016, tourist police in Thailand conducted another investigation on OA Transportation Group and detained a total of 2155 tourist buses and had 4.7 billion Thai Baht of assets of the group and its subordinate 381 companies (which is equivalent to 900 million yuan RMB) frozen. According to *Thai Rath*, a Thailand newspaper, OA Transportation Group is a tourism giant catering to Chinese tour groups. It has over 7,000 tour buses and has almost monopolized buses for tour groups for Thailand. It rents buses to local travel agencies for pretty low price or even for free on the condition that the local travel agencies take tour groups to OM Group's subordinate jewelry, food and snake medicine stores. If local travel agencies agree to do so, then they would gain around 30%

⁴Travel: <http://harbin.china.com.cn>

of shopping commission in return. The phenomenon of zero fee tour package has existed in Thailand for over 20 years. In this kind of tourism mode, travel agencies charge tourists tour fee which is lower than travel cost and lead tourists to designated shopping stores after they arrive Thailand to cover the costs. ⁵

Some travel agencies offer “zero fee tour packages” and charge tourists travel fee lower than the price of an individually-purchased round-trip ticket. It means that the travel agency covers all the costs including accommodation cost, meals and tourist bus expense and tickets for tourist attraction. But it’s totally impossible. The travel agencies would have local guides to lead the tourists to purchase high price products or inferior products, to attend extra charging items and to porn sites where porn performance is provided, and in which way the travel agencies would make profits from high commissions and make up the costs. Quarrels, however, may often occur between guides and tourists if tourists refuse to attend charging items. This would often leave a bad impression on tourists and they would give bad comments after they return to their home country. Those are negative factors which effect the development of tourism industry and would lead to huge loss to travel market.

Third, some guides are of low quality.

Guides are not only the representatives of companies they serve, but more importantly, they are representatives of the tourism industry. It’s important for them to maintain the reputation of their country by cherishing professional ethics in introducing local customs and practices, making travel arrangements, making sure the safety of tourists and answering questions raised by tourists. Though guides have received related training, some of them still use Thai as their working language and could only speak and understand Chinese and could not read and write in Chinese. Tour guides are under great pressure posed by travel agencies. They have to pay to travel agencies fee based on number of tourists and if they fail to reach the performance target, they will be fined. As to travel agencies, some of them care not about the quality of tour guides and focus only

⁵NetEase News: <http://news.163.com/16/0914/07/C0TJ2BFQ00014Q4P.html>

on how much profit the tour guides can make for the agencies. Those factors make some tour guides to mislead tourists to spend extra money.

Forth, some local products have quality problems.

Tourists are very likely to bring home local products and souvenirs. Thailand is a tropical country which is located in Southeast Asia and has a variety of local products including food, handicrafts and fruits.

Rubies and sapphires are the most famous specialties of Thailand. Thailand was a jewelry purchase center in Southeast Asia and exported parts of rubies and sapphires to places all around the world. Other specialties of Thailand are Thai silks, leather goods, Siam bird's nest and teak products.

There are a great variety of rubies and sapphires in Thailand which are of superior quality. There are natural products, products measured by weight, processed products and man-made products. Since there are too many varieties of rubies and sapphires, it's hard for tourists to distinguish between fake ones and real ones. The National Tourism Administration often receives complaints from tourists saying that the jewelries they have purchased are low-quality and overcharged. After investigation into the complains, it turns out that unlicensed tour guide or taxi drivers, being unable to resist the temptation of high commission, would mislead tourists to some small jewelry stores to buy fake jewelries at expensive prices.

4.2 Natural causes

Currently, the booming tourism industry accounts for 10% of GDP in Thailand. However, it is also effected by man-made or natural disasters occurred in recent years.

On Dec 26th, 2004, a great tsunami happened in Indian Ocean. Six changwats in the southern part of Thailand are areas worst hit by Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. A total of 5, 200 people including foreign tourists and local people died and about 2, 200 people were missing. Immeasurable damage was caused to tourism industry as well as fishing, agriculture and other business activities. Since the six changwats are tourist attractions in Thailand which holds several world's most famous beaches, tourist facilities,

hotels and beaches in those areas suffered from serious damage. After the tsunami, Thailand's tourism industry suffered a serious setback. The media reported that the loss suffered by tourism industry is up to 30 billion Thai Baht.

In recent years, there have been several bird flu outbreaks in Thailand. The bird flu has caused at least 90 deaths in Southeast Asia and China and is epidemic in Europe in some regions in America. According to figures from the World Health Organization, there are 844 people infected with bird flu in sixteen countries including Bangladesh and Canada and among them 449 people have died from 2003 to the present. Thailand has confirmed that the bird flu has infected 22 people and killed 14 of them who were mostly children and the elderly. From Jan 1st, 2014 to Apr 22nd, 2014, there were a total number of 1502 infected cases in Thailand with 1019 cases in Nakhon Ratchasima and among them 5 people were dead.⁶ Thailand is a country with a relatively high incidence of bird flu because of its hot climate. It was a serious blow to the tourism industry. Experts warned that the bird flu may mutate and become an influenza virus which spreads from person-to-person, which would make the situation even worse for the tourism industry. Although the Ministry of Agriculture in Thailand has taken a number of protective measures, there are still a few changwats suffering from the bird flu. It goes without saying that it will pose great impact on Thailand inbound tourism.

⁶Economic and Commercial Counsellor's Office of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of Thailand: <http://th.mofcom.gov.cn/article/jmxw/201404/20140400558094.shtml>

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Suggestions on improving Chinese tourists' willingness to travel to Thailand and their satisfaction about their traveling experience in Thailand

5.1.1 Outlook of tourism in Thailand under the management of Thai government

Tourism industry is a pillar industry in Thailand.¹ With the development of tourism economy, Thai government has been strengthening its effort in the management of tourism industry. As the management function being expanded from single market promotion to industry management, a centralized tourism management system has taken shape from the top down.

(1) Tourism administration of the highest level is formed by Tourism Management Committee. It is composed of senior officials from Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Environment Commission, National Economic and Development Commission, Legislative Committee, President of Thai Airways International, Head of Thailand Tourism Administration and trade union leaders and it serves to manage and supervise the Tourism Administration. Tourism Administration is a tourism administrative agency under the leadership of the Tourism Commission and is responsible for market promotion, investment guidance, information statistics, education and training, industry management, development of scenic spots and dealing with tourist complaints, etc. The tour management is supported by many state departments including National Tourism Administration which exercises strict administration on travel agencies, hotels and tourism service providers to ensure the service quality of tourism industry.

(2) Thailand Tourism Administration has made the following measures to promote the development of tourism industry in 2008:

The first measure to take is to maintain its long-term development in major

¹Economic and Commercial Counsellor's Office of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of Thailand: <http://th.mofcom.gov.vn>

Southeast Asian markets and develop new markets in countries including Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia and Russia.

The second measure to take is to create the brand called “Amazing Thailand” and to come up unique slogans to promote the development of tourism industry. There will be 7 programs under the brand, which are 10:

The world friendless culture;

Loud of heritage and history;

Sun of heritage and history;

Your sense with unique trends;

The beauty of natural wonders;

The beauty of wellness welling;

The loud of year round festivities.

Each country will be provided with services for high level consumption group and high-level travelling plan so as to open a way to tourists travelling to neighboring countries.

The third measure to take is to make policies that promote the development of tourism, including economic, cultural and green tourism as is put forward by the State tourism minister. The key of implementing this measure lays in the promotion of sustainable development which requires the tourism industry to take the environment and the tourists holding capacity of scenic spots into consideration and to make preparation for long-term development and impact of and to local area. It's equally important to promote the restoration and protection of the damaged environment and solve the credit problems of tourism industry, especially the problem of unqualified tour guides whether in government or in private areas.

(3) The National Tourism Fund is jointly set up in Jan 26th by sponsors including Vice President of the State Council, Minister of Environment, Minister of Industry and Minister of Tourism. It aims to promote the development of tourism, to improve the foundation, business management, marketing promotion, publicity and innovation of

environmental protection of tourist attractions, to increase the capital limit of developing a scenic spot and to convene relevant travel agencies including government bodies, private bodies, local administrative bodies and civil organizations.

The solution of problems existed in Thailand inbound tourism industry and the sound development of it require joint efforts of the government and the National Tourism Administration as well as people who work in inbound tourism industry. The government and the National Tourism Administration should be responsible for solving issues concerning legal rules, ensuring the safety of tourists, providing travel information and restoring damaged tourism environment while the entrepreneurs should, under the legal rules, solve the existing problems by improving product and service quality in an aim to improve Thailand inbound tourism industry development and maturity instead of attracting foreign tourists with low price. Multiple factors and forces are ways to keep the growing momentum of inbound tourism industry in the future.

5.1.2 Measures to attract tourists

The first is to take measures against the low price trap of inbound tour group.

It is pretty easy to invest and operate a travel agency in Thailand. Travel company registration statistics shows that there are more than 2,000 travel agencies in Thailand. To “stand out” in such a competitive environment, some irresponsible travel agencies attract tourists with low price tour groups or even no charge tour groups which are received by unlicensed guides who would deliberately violate the set group travel schedule and mislead or even force tourists to attend items at tourists’ own expense including watching porn performance or to buy some low quality goods at high prices to make up the costs. Some travel agencies would charge guides for fees based on the number of tourists (at an average of 3,000 or 4,000 Thai Baht), but some travel agencies, though require not charging fees based on the number of tourists at first, would impose a fine on guides if they fail to reach the performance target and still require fees based on the number of tourists, resulting in abnormal quoted price of tour groups. To deal with the situation, the National Tourism Administration should take following measures:

(1) To avoid the irregular behaviors of travel agencies, the government should require more deposit from travel agencies so that the deposit may be treated as compensation if any irregular loss occurs to tourists. In a worse situation, the travel agency involved should be ordered to stop its operation.

(2) The National Tourism Administration should ask each travel agency for recording documents on which specifies schedules, tourist registration time and times of shopping, especially for government license acknowledged by the international guarantee ISO for extra charging items and shopping places.

(3) Develop detailed industry standards and legal norms so as to control the service standards of tourism industry. Severe penalty should be imposed on travel agencies for violation of the standards.

(4) The travel agencies should improve their transparency and service quality, which require them doing well in every detail and employing staff of good quality. They should work hard on making tourists feel truly satisfied instead of using low price tour groups to attract tourists.

(5) Thailand National Tourism Administration should put existing travel agencies under strict control by restricting those low price tour groups and unreasonable regulations which charge guides fees based on the number of tourists again and impose fine on tourists if they fail to reach performance target, which are caused by low price trap in the competitive market.

The second is to take measures to ensure the safety of tourists.

Tourists would consider firstly public security and safety issues of their destination. Thailand is a Buddhist country where people are of gentle personality and treat other people very friendly and courteously. The Thai government should attach great importance to the safety of life and property of tourists and the sound development of tourism industry.

The following are measures the Thai government should take:

(1) Though Thailand National Tourism Administration has established National

Tourist Police Center in 1992, there are still many scenic spots that haven't been fully distributed and tourists find it hard to ask for help.

(2) Since there are tourists come from different countries, the hotline service center of the National Tourism Administration should provide multilingual service for tourists.

(3) Resources from existing websites should be integrated to create a resource sharing platform where tourists can have access to information they want and real-time feedback. Administrators can also use this platform to collect preferences and suggestions of tourists and according which the hotels may establish early warning system reminding tourists of safety issues such as tsunami or weather change, etc. If, for example, many tourists find and complain that there is no early warning system in a hotel nearby the beach on Phuket then they probably won't go there again.

The third is to take measures against guides of bad quality.

A guides is a tour group leader who will not only be responsible for leading a tour group to visit scenic spots and introduce local customs, geography, history, economy and culture to the group but also planning the trip including booking hotel rooms, meals and tourist bus. Besides, he also serves as a problem solver for tourists. Therefore, it is not easy to be a good guide.

As far as market concentration is concerned, tourism industry belongs to complete market competition, in which some profit-oriented travel agencies care only about guides' tricks to mislead tourists to buy some inferior goods at high price and take no account of the quality of guides and would impose a pine on guides (making them to repay fees based on the number of tourists) if they fail to lead tourists to go shopping and attend item at tourists' own expense. Some unlicensed guides would even give up the tour group under the great pressure. That's why some guides gradually withdraw from service industry.

Measures that should be taken by the government:

(1) Though there will be training for guides by Thailand National Tourism

Administration, they are not rigorous enough. In Thailand, a guide should be good at foreign languages apart from their mother language. Being good at speaking, reading and writing is a necessary requirement for a good guide.

(2) Thailand should build more Chinese language schools and give more support to the building of tour guide schools. The government should attract students to enter into guide industry with fixed salary higher than other industry so that they are more motivated in doing this job. Tour guide represent the country they serve for. They take time from their busy daily work to learn a new language so that they would provide better service to foreign guests. Tour guides of good quality will contribute to increase foreign currency revenue. In fact, social welfare system of Thai government for tour guides is yet to be improved. Incomplete pension and retired allowances plan and unsteady paycheck will only cause more highly-educated personnel to leave the tourism industry.

The fourth is to measures to ensure the quality of Thai local products.

Suvarn, director of Beijing office of a Thailand travel agency said that 90% of Chinese tourists who go on a package tour will not visit Thailand again since they have experienced unpleasant things in their journey including being misled to buy some inferior goods at high price. If the problem is not resolved, Thailand would lose a large number of tourists from China and other countries and suffer tourism decline. Since Thailand is famous for its jewelry, jewelry stores in Thailand are must visit places for tourists from all over the world. However, some unlicensed jewelry stores collude with some unlicensed local travel agencies and tour guides under the temptation of high commission and sell fake jewelry to tourists at high price. Many tourists' unwillingness to travel to Thailand again is caused largely by their experience of being cheated. Therefore, the National Tourism Administration, tourist police, Thailand Jewellers Association, Consumer Goods Protection Committee and Bureau of Export Promotions should jointly set up the Institute of Jewelry Quality Assurance and issue ISO international quality certificate to real jewelry and only those jewelry stores which join

the institute can continue to operate. This is to regularize the operation jewelry stores and those who violate the regulations will have their license revoked. It is believed that in this way the image of the Thailand jewelry industry will be improved and the rights and interests of tourists in Thailand will be ensured.

5.2 Outlook of Thailand tourism industry

In recent years, the booming Thailand tourism industry has shown a trend of diversified development. Apparently, Thailand is laying a greater emphasis on improving the quality of travel service and products instead of focusing only on numbers of incoming tourists. Currently, providing a safer and healthier environment is what the tourism in Thailand needs most.

There exist many problems in Thailand tourism industry like low-price inbound travel, security issues of tourists in Thailand, quality problem of tour guides and quality problem of Thailand products. It's hard to find solution in law since tourism industry nowadays involves many areas and the existing law is not able to provide solutions to the latest problems. Therefore, the government and the National Tourism Administration should introduce relevant laws as soon as possible so as to impose them on those problems. The solution of some of the problems, however, require service provider and industry insiders to strengthen their moral concepts.

The Thailand National Tourism Administration should take immediate measures to improve quality of travel service and make on-the-spot inspections with local travel agencies on problems existed in the markets. Strict penalties including public criticism should be imposed on violators and promotion and encouragement should be given to those legitimate and law-abiding travel agencies. The media should also promote more attractions in Thailand so that the world will have better understanding of Thailand.

This essay is about my understanding of the development of Thailand inbound tourism and the problems existed in it. Since there are still deficiencies because of my limited knowledge, I'll be very appreciated if they would be pointed out by fellow teachers.

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Appendix

Appendix A:

Questionnaire on Chinese Travelers' Satisfaction with Visits to Thailand

Dear Traveler

Hello! This questionnaire is mainly used to study Chinese tourists' satisfaction with visits to Thailand, which will be used for academic purposes only. What is written down will not be disclosed to the public. Please answer truthfully. Thank you very much for your support and cooperation. Have a nice journey.

1. Your Gender: A. Male B. Female
2. Your age: A. Below 20 B. 21-30 C. 31-40 D. 41-50 E. 51-60 F. Above 61
3. Your education background: A. Middle school graduate or below B. Technical high school or high school graduate C. Technical College or University Graduate D. Postgraduate
4. Your Occupation:
A. Civil servant B. Public institution employee C. Company employee D. Freelancer E. Student F. Retired G. Businessperson H. Others _____
5. Your monthly income:
A. RMB 2,000 or below B. RMB 2,001-4,000 C. RMB 4,001-8,000 D. Above RMB 8,000
6. How many times have you been to Thailand?
A. None B. Once C. Twice D. Three times or more
7. Where did you learn about information about Thailand Tourism?
A. Travel agency B. Advertisement C. Family member or friend's recommendation D. Websites or travel forums E. Others _____
8. How many days do you plan to stay in Thailand?
A. Three days or less B. 4-7days C. 8-15days D. 16 days or more
9. What the purpose of your visit this time?
A. Tourism, Holiday making B. Business, Conference C. Visit family member or friend D.

Study E. Shopping F. Others ____

10. Your overall view on Thailand:

No	Question	Answer
1	Are you satisfied with safety in Thailand ?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
2	Are you satisfied with urban traffic safety in Thailand?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
3	Are you satisfied with hygiene in Thai cities and tourist attractions?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
4	Are you satisfied with manner of employees in shops, hotels and tourist attractions in Thailand?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
5	Are you satisfied with the design of tourist attractions in Thailand?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
6	Are you satisfied with specialties in Thailand?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
7	Are you satisfied with publicity in tourist attraction?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
8	Are you satisfied with accommodation in Thailand?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
9	Are you satisfied with food in Thailand?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
10	Are you satisfied with price in Thailand?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
11	Are you satisfied with climate in Thailand?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
12	Are you satisfied with shopping in Thailand?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied

13	Are you satisfied with tourist guide services?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
14	Are you satisfied with entertainment activities in Thailand?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
15	Are you satisfied with local customs in Thailand?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
16	Are you satisfied with road signs in Thailand?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied
17	Overall, are you satisfied with this visit?	A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Average D. Dissatisfied E. Very dissatisfied

11. Possibility of another visit:

No	Question	Answer (notes: possibility increases with mark)
1	Will you visit Thailand again?	A. No B. Unlikely C. Very possible D. Yes
2	Will you recommend others to Thailand?	A. No B. Unlikely C. Very possible D. Yes

12. Has this visit met your expectations?

A. Yes B. Beyond my expectations C. Close to my expectations D. Not up to my expectations.

12. What was your biggest concern in Thailand?

A. Personal safety B. Property safety C. Illness D. Being tricked E. Others

13. After this visit, what part of Thailand tourism do you think needs improvement?

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you again for your help!