[1]Kritchakhun Bhanityanakorn

[2]Kittiwat Rattanamanee

[3]Teerakunya Tangsuvanrangsee

[4]Rathirat Kheawmesuan

[5]Suvimol Konwai

Competency Development of Food Tourism in Thailand

Abstract: - Food tourism has become great potential in the tourism industry, especially in Thailand. When foreign tourists come to travel and witness the diverse gastronomic experience at local levels, however, in 2022, Thailand received 11.15 million foreign tourists, and only 19.45% came because of food attractions. Therefore, this study aims to develop competency in food tourism in Thailand. This quantitative research collected data from food tourism stakeholders in Thailand 400, including foreign visitors, local visitors, restaurant owners, culinary academic institutions, and tourism authorities. Data were analysed in descriptive and inferential statistics, and a structural equation model tested the hypothesis.

The findings reveal that (1) Tourism policy must include food tourism in the tourism event and public relation scheme of tourism authorities, (2) Unique local cultural experiences must be embedded into food stories, and (3) Nutrition and herbal nutrition must be presented for health-conscious tourists. The observed variables had component weights between 0.241 and 0.79. They were significantly different from zero at the 0.01 level. Latent variables were between 0.058 - 1.153, and 2) the harmonization of the hypothetical model and the empirical data found that all criteria were within the acceptable range (Pass) structural equation model analysis (Chi-Square = 44.113, df = 35, p = 0.139, RMSEA = 0.026, GFI = 0.026, AGFI = 0.960).

Keywords: Competency Development, Food Tourism, Thailand

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry has been an important sector for social development and economic growth for both advanced and developing nations. Strong tourism industry enhances job creation, raises national income, and benefits the general competitiveness of economies through infrastructure improvements. All direct, indirect and induced impacts combined; it accounted for 9% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 9.1% of global jobs (Kururatchaikul, 2021).

Food is considered as a vital component of tourism experience, together with climate, accommodation, and scenery. Food tourism involves food and eating experience when a person travels. Food tourism is considered a subset of cultural tourism, as cuisine is a manifestation of culture. Individuals have different preferences; thus, their participation and contentment from the food aspect in tourism vary correspondingly. When travelling abroad, some travelers prefer to try local foods, while some are reluctant to and select food option that they are acquainted with. Even though they are exposed to similar activity or dine in the same places, foreign tourists obtain different experience and their levels of satisfaction vary.

[1] [1] Rangsit University

[2] Rajabhat Rajanagarindra University

[3] Rangsit University

[4] Rangsit University

[5] Rangsit University

Email : [1] kritchakhun.b@rsu.ac.th, [2] kittiwat.rat@gmail.com, [3] teerakunya@rsu.ac.th, [4] rathirat.k@rsu.ac.th, [5] suvimol.k@rsu.ac.th

In a global perspective, global international tourist arrivals reached 1,035 million tourists crossing borders in year 2020 while Asia and pacific region alone shared 23% in international tourist arrivals and 30% in international receipts Thailand shared, as a percentage of Asia and pacific region, 9.6% in term of number of tourists (international tourist arrivals) and 9.3% in term of tourism revenue (international tourism receipts). Accordingly, Thailand shared 2.2% of the global number of tourists and 2.8% in global tourism revenue in year 2020 (World Tourism Organization, 2021). In term of global travel and tourism competitiveness, Thailand ranked at the ninth in Asia Pacific region and 43rd in overall ranking in 2019. Competency of Thailand in terms of tourism is high, however, food is not the priority in attracting tourism to Thailand. This study aims to explore the status of food tourism and factors affecting the competitiveness of food tourism of Thailand in order to develop competency of food tourism in Thailand

II.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research methods are employed to collect and analyze numerical data. This section provides a detailed description of the various steps undertaken to ensure the reliability and validity of the data to achieve the research objectives.

Population consists of 400 samples including foreign visitors, local visitors, restaurant owners, culinary academic institutions, and tourism authorities.

Instruments: structured questionnaire collecting data from online google form.

Analysis: Data were analyzed in descriptive and inferential statistics; hypotheses were tested by structural equation model.

III.   RESEARCH FINDINGS
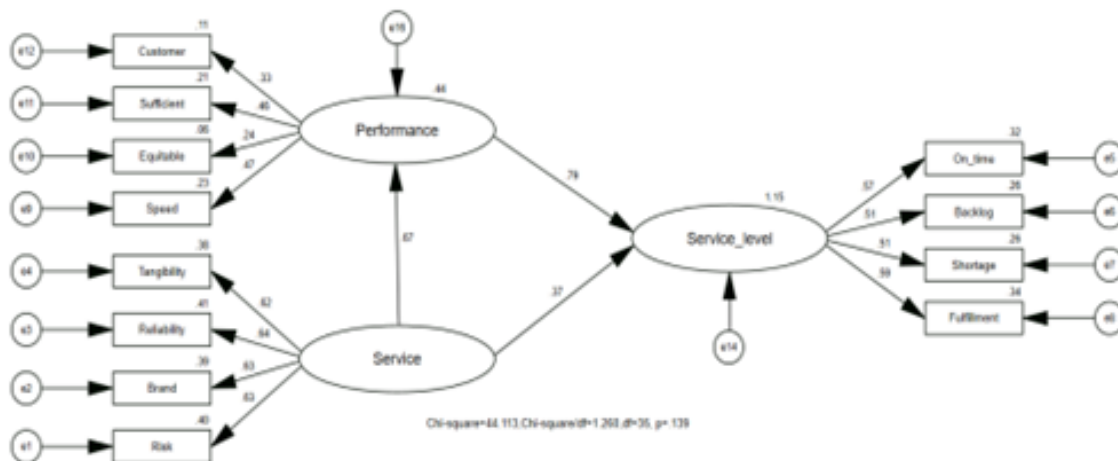
The researcher analyzed the development factor model of Competency of food tourism in Thailand in order to increase the competitiveness of Thai food tourism in the perspectives of foreign tourists. The results of measurement model analysis, Chi-Square = 44.113, df = 35, p = 0.139, RMSEA = 0.026, GFI = 0.026, AGFI = 0.960 can be described as follows. The results of the weight analysis of the components of the observed variables found that there were positive values of 12 variables ranging in size from 0.241 to 0.79 and differing from zero at a statistically significant level of 0.01. 11 variables were significantly different from zero. At the statistical level of 0.05, there was one variable. The observed variable with the highest component weight was the reliability factor, the weight value was 0.79, and the joint variance was 1.153%. is equality of services, the weight value is 0.457 and

the joint variance is 0.209 percent. Every observed variable (R2), which indicates the covariance of the externally observed variable, is from 0.058 - 1.153.

When considering the standard component weight (λ) for each component, it was found that the observed variable had the highest component weight. Reliability factor, weight value of 0.79 and 1.153% of common variance, food safety, weight of 0.63 and 0.396% of common variance, price, weight of 0.625 and total variance together 0.391%, the place of sale must be clean, hygienic, and diverse, weight value 0.642 and a common variance of 0.412%, organize promotional programs, weight value of 0.62, and a common variance of 0.385%, attractive, safe, portable packaging with comprehensive information, value weight 0.568 and a common variance of 0.322%; personnel with good personalities, knowledgeable, competent, and service-minded; a weight of 0.506 and a common variance of 0.256; a process of controlling the quality of the goods to maintain a high standard while communication of the benefits of the product; a weight of 0.514 and a common variance of 0.264. the quality of natural ingredients, weight value of 0.586 and a common variance of 0.343 percent, adequate service, a weight of 0.475 and a common variance of 0.226, customer service, a weight of 0.241 and a common variance of 0.058 and equality of services, the weight value was 0.457 and the joint variance was 0.209 percent, respectively.

Relationship			Component Weight				
			λ	SE	t–value	Sig.	R^2
Performance	<-	Service	0.665	0.075	6.042	***	0.443
Service_level	<-	Performance	0.372	0.152	2.216	0.027	1.153
Service speed	<-	Performance	0.790	0.31	3.387	***	1.153
Quality of food	<-	Service	0.630				0.396
Brand	<-	Service	0.625	0.092	9.517	***	0.391
Nutrition	<-	Service	0.642	0.106	9.715	***	0.412
Price	<---	Service	0.620	0.106	9.403	***	0.385
Personnel	<---	Service_level	0.568				0.322
Food safety	<---	Service_level	0.506	0.121	7.613	***	0.256
Promotion	<---	Service_level	0.514	0.111	7.648	***	0.264
Packaging	<---	Service_level	0.586	0.119	8.815	***	0.343
Speed	<---	Performance	0.475				0.226
Equitable	<---	Performance	0.241	0.118	4.162	***	0.058
Sufficient	<---	Performance	0.457	0.159	6.545	***	0.209
Customer	<---	Performance	0.328	0.146	5.181	***	0.108

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that (1) Tourism policy must include food tourism in the tourism event and public relation scheme of tourism authorities, (2) Unique local cultural experiences must be embedded into food stories (3) Nutrition and herbal nutrition must be presented for health-conscious tourists. The observed variables had component weights between 0.241 and 0.79 and were significantly different from zero at the 0.01 level, latent variables were between 0.058 - 1.153 and 2) the harmonization of the hypothetical model and the empirical data found that all criteria were within the acceptable range (Pass) structural equation model analysis (Chi-Square = 44.113, df = 35, p = 0.139, RMSEA = 0.026, GFI = 0.026, AGFI = 0.960) which in line with the study of Sarayuth Chaileuangleu that the competency of a professional chef has a positive effect on their instructional competency, while the instructional competency also has an effect on learning competency; these three key factors were found to be influential variables affecting the development of a culinary arts program. The results will be applied as a guideline for culinary arts program development in Thailand. The study also contributes new knowledge, skills, competency standards, implementation, and evaluation for the success of the chef profession, which is limited in the food service industry, particularly in the context of Thailand (Chaileuangleu, Chaiya, Batra, & Barnes, 2021) and in line with the study of Kritchakhun (2021) stated that the behavior of using digital media in marketing for food tourism among foreign tourists consists of searching for information, making reservations or payments for accommodations, and sharing or exchanging travel-related information. Furthermore, most respondents used more than one type of digital media, primarily utilizing online promotional media, followed by online advertisements and online sales promotion. Frequency of using digital media is at least once or twice a week. Moreover, digital media marketing factors affecting food tourism decision-making behaviors of foreign tourists visiting Thailand found that culinary tourism primarily emphasizes local food and showcases the interdependence between culinary experiences and the local community. As a result, culinary tourism experiences differ depending on geographical destinations, food preparation practices, cultural aspects, and the types and qualities of food and food-related tourists. The research findings have identified 5 main dimensions of culinary tourism experiences, which include (1) Unique local cultural experiences, (2) Interpersonal relationships, (3) Excitement, (4) Sensory perception and (5) Health issues.

The results of the study were concluded showing that the key independent variables, of professional chef, instructional, and learning factors, are significantly related to each other as underlying dimensions of the foundational standards of Thai culinary arts program development. Additionally, the three factors were found to be important variables influencing the success of program development in Thailand. For this purpose, food service operators and educational institutions can use the results of the current study as a guideline for culinary arts operation, and management in the culinary arts field, particularly for planning the development of staff in the kitchen department by using professional standards of chef training, as well as for developing chef learners through a new trend of learning in culinary arts education with a key requirement for the professional chef competency components that were found to be important indicators of culinary arts program development. It is essential for food service operators and culinary arts educators to implement professional chef competency in the professional chef development process as they are the keys of success for the achievement of future professional chefs, and to improve professional chef competencies and capabilities of cooking skills to meet international standards as qualified professional chefs in the food service industry in Thailand.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

VI. The results showed that the majority of interview respondents had the same behavioral opinions and needs, which were: 1) pay attention to the quality of natural ingredients and food safety for the benefit of the body; 2) price at an appropriate level depending on the quality of raw materials used and the quantity received; 3) the place of sale must be clean, hygienic, and diverse; 4) organize promotional programs that are as interesting as selling regular products and have public advertisements about the benefits and details of the goods that are clearly advertised; 5) attractive, safe, portable packaging with comprehensive information; 6) personnel with good personalities, knowledgeable, competent, and service-minded; 7) there is a process of controlling the quality of the goods to

maintain a high standard while communication of the benefits of the product reaches the target group. The guidelines to develop tourism potential to respond to healthy food tourists in Bangkok have been summarized, and those are: 1) enhancing the image by raising the quality of natural raw materials and safety for health as a selling point, 2) pricing products that are diverse and appropriate compared to the value and quantity received; 3) creating diverse, safe, and dependable sales channels; 4) providing promotional items that meet the needs of tourists; 5) creating packaging that is appealing, convenient, and safe; 6) clear communication, comprehension, and standard inventory control; and 7) personality training and skills.

VII.   CONCLUSION

Food tourism has become a great potential in the tourism industry, especially in Thailand. When foreign tourists come to travel and witness the gastronomic experience that is diverse in local levels. However, in 2022, Thailand received 11.15 million foreign tourists, only 19.45% came because of food attraction. Therefore, this study aims to develop competency in food tourism in Thailand. This is quantitative research collected data from food tourism stakeholders in Thailand for 400 including foreign visitors, local visitors, restaurant owners, culinary academic institutions, and tourism authorities. Data were analyzed in descriptive and inferential statistics; hypotheses were tested by structural equation model.

The findings reveal that (1) Tourism policy must include food tourism in the tourism event and public relation scheme of tourism authorities, (2) Unique local cultural experiences must be embedded into food stories (3) Nutrition and herbal nutrition must be presented for health-conscious tourists.

REFERENCES

[1]   Amekawa, Chaileuangleu, S., Chaiya, P., Batra, A., & Barnes, J. (2021). FACTORS AFFECTING THE CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FOR PREPARING PROFESSIONAL CHEFS IN THE FOOD SERVICE INDUSTRY IN THAILAND. *Social Science Asia, Volume 7 Number 1*, 1-14.

[2]   Kururatchaikul, P. (2021). FOOD TOURISM IN THAILAND: Consumer behaviors of foreign tourists in Thailand on Thai food. *GLOBALBUSINESS MANAGEMENT*, 13-35.

[3]   World Tourism Organization. (2021). *Global Report on Food Tourism.* Madrid, Spain: UNWTO.

[4]   Bhanityanakorn, K., Tangsuvanrangsee, T., Nienvitoon, S. & Kantajan, S. (2023). DIGITAL MARKETING THAT AFFECTS HEALTHY FOOD

[5]   CONSUMPTION FOR THE ELDERLY IN BANGKOK. Interdisciplinary Social Sciences and Communication Journal, 6(2), 25–36. https://doi.org/10.14456/issc.2023.22