A STUDY OF THE FACTORS AND UNDERLYING MECHANISM OF SATISFACTION AMONG MAINLAND CHINESE TOURISTS AT THE SONGKRAN FESTIVAL

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Abstract

The Songkran Festival, a cornerstone of Thailand's cultural heritage, has emerged as a significant attraction for mainland Chinese tourists seeking immersive cultural experiences. Despite its prominence, scholarly attention to the determinants of satisfaction among this demographic remains limited. This study addresses this gap by employing a qualitative methodology grounded in constructivist epistemology. Through purposive and snowball sampling, 20 mainland Chinese participants who attended the Songkran Festival in Thailand were selected for semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using Straussian grounded theory techniques, revealing six interrelated factors influencing tourist satisfaction: (1) cultural immersion and participatory engagement, (2) festive ambiance and interactive dynamics, (3) perceived safety and institutional trust, (4) travel service quality and logistical convenience, (5) emotional resonance and social connectivity, and (6) media influence and word-of-mouth referrals. These factors operate synergistically, shaping holistic satisfaction levels. The findings contribute to theoretical advancements in festival tourism satisfaction frameworks while offering actionable insights for optimizing Chinese tourists' experiences and informing the development of Songkran-specific tourism products in Thailand.

Keywords: Songkran Festival marketing; mainland Chinese tourists; Satisfaction; Qualitative research; Grounded theory

Introduction

Songkran Festival, a major traditional Thai event with deep cultural significance and unique celebrations (Wu, 2017), is crucial for Thais to pray for happiness and showcase their culture. Recently, it has become a key tourism brand for Thailand, drawing many international tourists. In 2024, Songkran generated over 140 billion baht for Thailand's tourism industry, marking a 37.54% increase from the previous year (Wiangwiset et al., 2025). Between April 1 and 21, over 1.92 million foreign tourists visited Thailand, with Chinese tourists making up the largest group at 395,000 (Daskin & Aşan, 2022). The festival's success enhances Thailand's tourism image and boosts its economy. For instance, during the April 11-13 celebrations in 2024, Bangkok's Ratchadamnoen Klang Road and Royal Field Square alone drew 299,425 visitors and generated 290 million baht. The Tourism Authority of Thailand projects that 2.9 million foreign tourists will visit Thailand in April, contributing 131.992 billion baht to the domestic market. However, the growing number of tourists has increased Songkran's commercialization, potentially impacting tourist experiences and satisfaction (Kang & Jiang, 2024).

Tourist satisfaction, defined as the overall evaluation of tourist destinations and services, has garnered significant attention. Studies have examined various factors affecting satisfaction, such as the natural environment and service quality (Pawattana & Jeefoo, 2021). Yet, there is a lack of critical synthesis on how existing models like SERVQUAL and Expectation-Confirmation Theory apply to festival tourism. Future research could investigate whether cultural festivals require unique satisfaction frameworks. During Songkran 2024, the Tourism Authority of Thailand's survey revealed high visitor satisfaction with the event's cultural uniqueness, parades, and services. Spending was primarily on accommodation, dining, and souvenirs. Personal factors, travel motives, and expectations also influence tourists' satisfaction evaluations. In 2024, foreign tourist spending rose significantly, with Chinese tourist spending up 89.16% year-on-year, underscoring Thailand's strong appeal to international visitors (Wiangwiset et al., 2025). Despite extensive research on tourist satisfaction, few studies focus on Chinese tourists' satisfaction in specific festival contexts, especially Songkran in Thailand (Xue, 2019).

Grounded Theory, a qualitative method that derives theories from data through systematic collection and analysis, offers significant value in tourism research. It aids researchers in deeply understanding tourist behavior, motivations, and experiences, and in uncovering the complex social and cultural factors behind tourism phenomena (Chantamool et al., 2015). In recent years, Grounded Theory has been widely applied in tourism research. For example, studies have shown that emotional touchpoints in travel experiences significantly impact tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, it can be used to deeply understand tourists' needs and expectations in specific tourism situations through in-depth interviews and text analysis. Consequently, this study employs Grounded Theory to explore the factors influencing Chinese tourists' satisfaction during the Songkran Festival in Thailand, offering a new perspective and method for relevant research.

Research Objectives

1. This study aims to explore the key factors influencing the satisfaction of Chinese tourists participating in the Songkran Festival in Thailand.

2. The research will construct a theoretical framework based on grounded theory to reveal the interactions among various factors and their influence on tourists' satisfaction.

3. This study is expected to provide theoretical support for optimizing the festival travel experience of Chinese tourists.

4. The research results will provide practical guidance for the development of Songkran Festival tourism products in Thailand.

Literature review

Songkran Festival and Thailand Tourism

Songkran Festival is a key traditional Thai event with deep cultural significance and unique celebrations (Yang, 2019). It's a time for Thais to pray for happiness and prosperity and a showcase of Thai culture. Recently, it has become a major Thai tourism brand, attracting many international tourists. In 2024, Songkran brought in over 140 billion baht for Thailand's tourism industry, a 37.54% year-on-year increase. From April 1 to 21, 1.92 million foreign tourists visited, with 395,000 from China. The festival's success boosts Thailand's tourist image and economy, but rising commercialization may affect tourist experiences (Kang & Jiang, 2024).

Research on Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is the overall evaluation of tourist destinations and services. Many studies have looked into it, considering factors like the natural environment and service quality (Yu & Phakdee-auksorn, 2016). Models like SERVQUAL and Expectation-Confirmation Theory have been applied, but their use in cultural festivals like Songkran is limited. Such festivals have unique features like cultural rituals and interactive experiences, which may need a different satisfaction framework.

In 2024, Thailand's Tourism Authority found visitors highly rated Songkran's cultural aspects, parades, and services. Spending was mainly on accommodation, food, and souvenirs. Personal factors and travel motives also affect satisfaction. Foreign tourist spending rose significantly, with Chinese tourists showing an 89.16% year-on-year increase (Kang & Jiang, 2024).

The commercialization of Songkran raises concerns about balancing economic benefits and cultural authenticity. Wang (1999) warned that commercialization could lead to the loss of cultural essence and impact tourists' authenticity perception. Getz (2008) stressed the importance of managing commercialization and authenticity in event tourism for sustainable development.

Application of Grounded Theory in Tourism Research

Grounded Theory, a qualitative method extracting theories from data (Virdee, 2017), is useful in tourism research. It helps understand tourist behavior and the social factors behind tourism phenomena (Krueaphat et al., 2023). Recent studies using Grounded Theory have shown that emotional touch points in travel experiences significantly impact tourist satisfaction (Zhang, 2017). This study applies Grounded Theory to explore factors influencing Chinese tourists' satisfaction at Songkran.

Chinese Tourist Behavior Theories

In Chinese tourist behavior, mianzi (面子), a core cultural concept rooted in personal dignity and social harmony (Hsu & Huang, 2016), significantly shapes travel experiences. Mianzi refers to the social value or "face" individuals strive to maintain through respectful interactions, avoidance of embarrassment, and recognition by others. For Chinese tourists, preserving mianzi during trips—such as receiving courteous treatment from service providers or engaging smoothly with locals—directly enhances their satisfaction. This cultural lens is particularly relevant to understanding Chinese tourists' social and emotional experiences at Songkran, as it explains how cultural values influence their expectations of hospitality, group dynamics, and interactions with hosts. By prioritizing mianzi, tourists seek not only personal

comfort but also social validation, which can amplify their overall enjoyment of cultural events like Songkran (Tsai et al., 2016).

Research Methodology

Research design

This study adopted qualitative research methods and collected data through semi-structured interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing the satisfaction of Chinese tourists attending Songkran Festival in Thailand. The research design follows the research procedure of grounded theory, and through systematic data collection, coding and analysis, builds a theoretical framework to reveal the key factors affecting tourist satisfaction and their interrelationships. The research process of grounded theory includes three stages: open coding, spindle coding and selective coding, aiming at generating theory from data.

Sample selection

In this study, objective sampling and snowball sampling methods were used to select research objects. First, six Chinese tourists who had participated in the Songkran Festival in Thailand were selected as initial samples through tourism social platforms, travel agencies and related tourism activity organizers. These visitors come from different ages, genders, occupations, and educational backgrounds, providing diverse perspectives for research. Then, through the method of snowball sampling, the initial sample recommended other eligible tourists to participate in the interview. Finally, a total of 20 Chinese tourists were selected as research objects. While snowball sampling may risk homophily bias, as participants may share similar traits (e.g., tech-savvy tourists), the sample in this study shows diversity in age/occupation. However, there is still a lack of diversity in travel motivations (e.g., first-time vs. repeat visitors). Future research could consider expanding the sample in this aspect. Their basic information is shown in the following table:

Table 1: Basic information of research objects

No.	Age	Gender	Occupation	Education Level	Number of Times Attended Songkran Festival
1	25	Male	White-collar worker	Bachelor's degree	2
2	30	Female	Freelancer	Master's degree	3
3	22	Male	Student	Bachelor's degree	1
4	28	Female	Teacher	Master's degree	2
5	35	Male	Business owner	Doctoral degree	4

No.	Age	Gender	Occupation	Education Level	Number of Times Attended Songkran Festival
6	27	Female	Media worker	Master's degree	3
7	24	Male	Internet worker	Bachelor's degree	1
8	33	Female	Finance worker	Master's degree	2
9	29	Male	Freelancer	Bachelor's degree	3
10	31	Female	Tourism worker	Master's degree	4
11	26	Male	Student	Bachelor's degree	2
12	32	Female	Business owner	Master's degree	3
13	36	Male	Internet worker	Bachelor's degree	4
14	23	Female	Media worker	Master's degree	1
15	37	Male	Finance worker	Doctoral degree	2
16	28	Female	Freelancer	Bachelor's degree	3
17	34	Male	Tourism worker	Master's degree	4
18	39	Female	Teacher	Doctoral degree	2
19	41	Male	Business owner	Bachelor's degree	1

No.	Age	Gender	Occupation	Education Level	Number of Times Attended Songkran Festival
20	38	Female	Media worker	Master's degree	4

Table 1 presents the basic details of 20 research participants who attended Thailand's Songkran Festival. It includes their ages (ranging from 22 to 41), genders (10 male, 10 female), occupations (e.g., white-collar workers, freelancers, students), education levels (bachelor's, master's, doctoral degrees), and the number of times they have attended the Songkran Festival (1 to 4 times). The travel motivations for tourists to participate in Songkran Festival are diverse, including experiencing Thai culture, engaging in social interactions, pursuing personal growth and being influenced by practical considerations.

The lead researcher is a PhD candidate in tourism studies with prior experience in cross-cultural festival research. To mitigate potential biases arising from cultural assumptions, the researcher engaged in reflexive journaling throughout the study, documenting preconceptions and iteratively challenging them during data analysis. Additionally, a peer debriefing process was employed, where two independent researchers reviewed the coding framework to ensure analytical rigor.

Data collection

Data collection was mainly conducted through semi-structured interviews. The outline of the interview focuses on the experience, feeling and satisfaction factors of tourists participating in the Songkran Festival in Thailand, including cultural experience, festival atmosphere, security, tourism services, personal feelings and other aspects. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and lasted an average of 45 minutes. In the interview process, the researcher flexibly adjusts the questions according to the interviewees' answers to obtain more in-depth and detailed information. All interviews were conducted with the consent of the respondents, and the interviews were recorded for subsequent transcription and analysis.

Data analysis

The interview protocol underwent iterative refinement based on emerging themes from ongoing coding. For example, initial questions centered on general satisfaction drivers (e.g., "What aspects of Songkran enhanced your experience?"). After open coding revealed the salience of safety concerns, subsequent interviews probed deeper into institutional trust (e.g., "How did Thailand's security measures influence your perception of the festival?"). Similarly, axial coding highlighted the role of social media, prompting the addition of questions on digital word-of-mouth (e.g., "How did online reviews shape your expectations?"). This adaptive approach ensured theoretical saturation across all six identified factors.

Data analysis adopts the coding method of grounded theory, which is divided into three stages: open coding, spindle coding and selective coding.

Open Coding

Open coding is the first step in grounded theory, with the aim of identifying different concepts and categories from interview data. Through word-for-word analysis of the interview transcripts, the researchers extracted key words and phrases related to tourist satisfaction and summarized them into preliminary concepts. For example, concepts such as "cultural experience",

"festival atmosphere" and "safety guarantee" are identified at this stage. Subsequently, these concepts were further integrated into broader categories such as "cultural experience and participation" and "festival atmosphere and interactivity". To illustrate the process of theory generation from data, examples of Open Coding and Selective Coding are provided as follows: In Open Coding, the concept of "cultural experience" was extracted from tourists' descriptions of their participation in water-splashing activities and Buddha-bathing rituals. In Selective Coding, this concept was integrated with "sense of participation" to form the core category of "cultural experience and sense of participation."

Axial Coding (Axial Coding)

The purpose of spindle coding is to associate and integrate concepts and categories in open coding to form more spindle coding categories. By comparing the relationships between different categories, the researchers identify the interactions between these categories. For example, the relationship between "cultural experience and sense of participation" and "festival atmosphere and interaction", as well as the direct impact of "security and trust" on tourists' satisfaction. The analysis at this stage helps the researchers build a preliminary theoretical framework and reveal the key factors affecting tourist satisfaction and their interrelationships.

Selective Coding

Selective coding is the final stage of the root theory, which aims to further integrate and refine the categories in spindle coding and build a complete theoretical framework. Through this stage of analysis, researchers identify the core categories and integrate other related categories around the core categories. For example, in this study, "cultural experience and sense of participation" is identified as the core category, and other factors such as "festival atmosphere and interaction", "security and sense of trust" are centered around this core category, which jointly affect tourists' satisfaction. Finally, the researchers constructed a complete theoretical framework to reveal the key factors affecting the satisfaction of Chinese tourists attending Songkran Festival in Thailand and their interactions.

Sample Size Justification

The sample size of 20 is justified by referring to Guest et al. (2006), which indicates that data saturation in homogeneous groups can typically be achieved with 12–30 interviews. This suggests that the sample size of 20 used in this study is sufficient to reach saturation, ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings.

Findings

(1) Cultural experience and participation

Cultural experience and participation are key factors affecting mainland Chinese tourists' satisfaction at Thailand's Songkran Festival. Tourists are attracted to activities like water splashing and bathing Buddha statues, which offer a sense of integration into Thai culture. For instance, Tourist P1 said, "Participating in the water-splashing activity gives me a feel for Thai life and enhances my satisfaction." Additionally, a deeper understanding of Thai culture enriches the experience, as highlighted by Tourist P5: "Learning about Thai culture helps me better understand the event, making the experience more fulfilling." Compared to Tsai et al. (2016), who found that Taiwanese tourists also value cultural experience but focus more on local customs, mainland Chinese tourists in Thailand emphasize understanding Thai culture.

(2) Festival atmosphere and interactivity

The vibrant atmosphere and interactive activities during Songkran Festival greatly influence mainland Chinese tourists' satisfaction. Tourists are drawn to the joyful streets of Thailand and actively participate in various events. As Tourist P3 stated, "The strong festival atmosphere makes me feel the charm of Songkran." Interactions with locals and other tourists also enhance satisfaction, as Tourist P7 noted, "Meeting friends from different countries and splashing water together is very interesting." Compared to Tsai et al. (2016), who indicated that Taiwanese tourists

may have more diverse interactive forms, including participating in festival preparation, the creation of festival atmosphere and enhancement of interaction are crucial for mainland Chinese tourists but differ in specific ways.

(3) Security and trust

Security and trust are crucial for mainland Chinese tourists' satisfaction. Despite the abundant activities, safety concerns can affect satisfaction, as Tourist P2 mentioned, "Large crowds worry me." The Thai government's enhanced security measures, such as increasing police presence, are crucial for boosting tourists' sense of security. Trust in travel service providers also impacts satisfaction, as Tourist P4 stated, "Safe and reliable travel services make me feel more comfortable." Compared to Tsai et al. (2016), who found that Taiwanese tourists may have higher expectations for security and trust due to familiarity with local festivals, mainland Chinese tourists in Thailand have specific concerns that need attention.

(4) Tourism services and convenience

Tourism services and convenience are important factors for mainland Chinese tourists. Tourists expect high-quality services like accommodation, catering, and transportation. For example, Tourist P6 mentioned, "High hotel prices and heavy traffic during Songkran are inconvenient." Providing convenient tourism information services is also significant for enhancing satisfaction, as Tourist P8 stated, "Knowing the event schedule and precautions in advance would help me plan better." Compared to Tsai et al. (2016), who suggested that Taiwanese tourists may be more familiar with local services, mainland Chinese tourists in Thailand have higher expectations due to cultural and language differences.

(5) Personal emotion and social experience

Personal emotion and social experience play a significant role in mainland Chinese tourists' satisfaction. Many visitors stated that the joyful atmosphere and activities during Songkran provided emotional satisfaction, as Tourist P9 said, "I felt unprecedented joy during Songkran." Social experiences also affect satisfaction, as Tourist P10 noted, "Making new friends and sharing experiences was unforgettable." Compared to Tsai et al. (2016), who found that Taiwanese tourists prefer communicating with friends and family, mainland Chinese tourists may be more willing to share experiences on social media.

Table 2: Key Contrasts Between Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese Tourists at Songkran Festival

Factor	Mainland Chinese Tourists (This Study)	Taiwanese Tourists (Tsai et al., 2016)	Key Contrast
Cultural Experience & Participation	Emphasize understanding Thai culture through activities (e.g., water splashing, Buddha bathing).	Focus on local customs and traditional practices.	Mainland tourists prioritize cultural immersion; Taiwanese prioritize authenticity.
Festival Atmosphere & Interactivity	Value vibrant street atmosphere and spontaneous interactions with locals/international tourists.	Engage in diverse interactive forms (e.g., festival preparation).	Mainland tourists seek joyful participation; Taiwanese seek active involvement.
Security & Trust	Concerned about crowd safety and rely on government measures (e.g., police presence).	Expect higher security standards due to familiarity with local festivals.	Mainland tourists require reassurance; Taiwanese expect proactive safety.

Tourism Services & Convenience	Expect high-quality services (accommodation, transport) and accessible information (e.g., schedules).	More familiar with local services due to cultural/linguistic similarities.	Mainland tourists face language/cultural barriers; Taiwanese face fewer barriers.
Personal Emotion & Social Experience	Derive emotional satisfaction from the festive joy and share experiences on social media.	Prefer communicating with friends/family during the festival.	Mainland tourists prioritize digital sharing; Taiwanese prioritize personal connections.

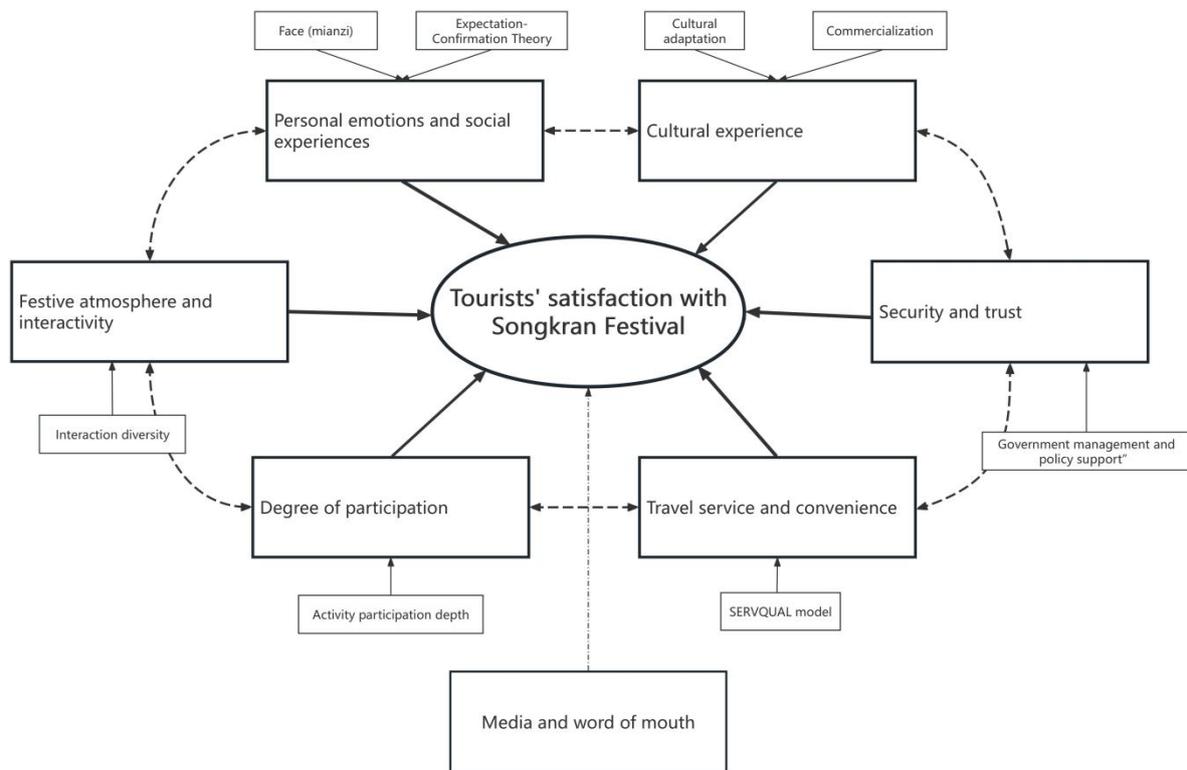## Theoretical framework construction

Figure 1 Research Framework

Based on the above research results, this study constructs a theoretical framework of the factors influencing the satisfaction of Chinese tourists attending Songkran Festival in Thailand. In this theoretical framework, figure 1 shows research conclusions takes tourists' satisfaction with Songkgan Festival as the core and analyzes various factors influencing satisfaction and their interrelationships. Cultural experience is influenced by commercialization and cultural adaptation, and interacts with tourists' personal emotions and social experiences. These personal emotions and social experiences are in turn affected by the theory of face and expectation confirmation. Together, they have an impact on satisfaction. The festive atmosphere and interactivity are influenced by the diversity of interactions, directly affecting tourists' satisfaction. Participation is influenced by the depth of activity involvement and directly affects satisfaction. Tourism services and convenience are affected by the service quality gap model, while safety and trust are influenced by government management and policy support. Both directly affect satisfaction. In addition, the media and word-of-mouth also have a certain influence on tourists' satisfaction.

Discussion and Recommendations

Research conclusions

This research delves into the satisfaction of Chinese tourists experiencing Thailand's Songkran Festival and contributes to the extension of the expectation-confirmation theory. It reveals that the satisfaction is not merely based on the confirmation of prior expectations but is also significantly influenced by the interplay of diverse factors such as cultural experience, festival atmosphere, security and trust, travel services and convenience, personal emotions and social experiences, as well as media and word of mouth. Specifically, the study proposes that the depth of cultural experience and participation can enhance tourists' perceived value, which in turn strengthens their satisfaction; the positive festival atmosphere and interaction can positively deviate from tourists' expectations, leading to higher satisfaction; security and trust serve as the foundation, and their presence can reduce tourists' perceived risk, thereby increasing satisfaction; quality travel services and convenience can meet tourists' functional needs and indirectly affect satisfaction; personal emotions and social experiences add an emotional dimension to satisfaction; and media and word of mouth can shape tourists' pre-trip expectations and influence post-trip satisfaction evaluation.

However, the conclusions should be interpreted cautiously due to limitations such as a small sample size and the predominance of qualitative research methods. Future research incorporating quantitative data would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing tourist satisfaction.

Practical suggestions

Deep immersion in cultural experience and sense of participation

To enhance tourists' satisfaction, tourism practitioners and institutions should focus on creating immersive cultural experiences. For instance, launching a "Cultural mentor" program where local cultural experts or volunteers lead tourists to experience traditional Songkran customs like Buddha bathing and sand pagoda piling. Through storytelling and interactive Q&A sessions, tourists can gain a deeper understanding of Thai culture. Additionally, organizing "cultural workshops" such as traditional costume making and Thai musical instrument playing can increase tourists' involvement and enrich their cultural experience.

Innovative creation of festive atmosphere and interactivity

During the Songkran Festival, innovative methods can be employed to create an appealing festive atmosphere. Developing a "Songkran Festival Cultural Tour" mobile app using augmented reality (AR) technology allows visitors to scan street decorations or temples to access virtual historical stories and cultural backgrounds. Online interactive games like virtual water pouring prayer can also be incorporated. Furthermore, hosting an "International Songkran Festival Culture Fair" to invite tourists from various countries to showcase their cultures and interact with Chinese tourists can enhance the cross-cultural festival experience.

All-round construction of security and trust

The Thai government and relevant departments should establish a "Songkran Festival Security Alliance" to integrate police, medical emergency services, volunteers, and other resources. Utilizing big data analysis and real-time monitoring technology can help predict and respond to potential security issues in advance. For example, setting up intelligent monitoring systems in crowded areas to monitor crowd density in real time and immediately initiating evacuation plans once the safety threshold is exceeded. Tourism

service providers can introduce "safe travel packages" offering services like emergency rescue insurance and safety training manuals to enhance tourists' sense of security and trust.

Intelligent optimization of travel services and convenience

Introducing smart tourism technology can improve the convenience and quality of tourism services. Developing a "Songkran Festival Intelligent Navigation" app to provide real-time traffic information, scenic spot queue time predictions, and personalized itinerary planning can help tourists arrange their trips more efficiently. Collaborating with local hotels and restaurants to launch a "one-stop booking platform" allows tourists to book accommodations, dining, event tickets, and other services while enjoying discounts. Additionally, establishing a "smart travel assistant" with chatbots to answer common tourist questions and provide real-time language translation and cultural interpretation services can further enhance convenience.

The depth of personal emotion and social experience

Paying attention to tourists' emotional needs and building "emotional care stations" is crucial. Setting up a "spiritual station" at the Songkran Festival event site with professional psychological counselors to offer emotional support and stress relief services can improve tourists' emotional well-being. Organizing "cross-cultural friendship parties" in various forms such as themed parties and bonfire parties can promote exchanges and interactions between tourists and local residents, as well as among tourists themselves, thereby enhancing their social experience and emotional satisfaction.

Multi-dimensional communication of media and word of mouth

Tourism practitioners and relevant organizations should leverage multi-channel media and social platforms to create a three-dimensional communication matrix. For example, partnering with social media platforms like Douyin and XiaoHongshu to launch a "Songkran Festival Challenge," inviting internet celebrities and tourists to share their festival experiences, setting trending hashtags, and attracting potential visitors' attention. Collaborating with travel bloggers to conduct "Songkran Festival Experience Tour" live streaming events with real-time interactions to answer viewers' questions can enhance tourists' expectations. Moreover, establishing a "visitor feedback reward mechanism" to encourage tourists to share their experiences on travel platforms and rewarding positive reviews can further expand the word-of-mouth promotion of the Songkran Festival.

This research provides novel insights into the satisfaction of Chinese tourists experiencing Thailand's Songkran Festival by integrating multiple factors and theoretical perspectives, offering valuable references for the development of cultural tourism and the enhancement of tourist satisfaction.

Recommendations for future research

Although this study reveals to some extent the key factors affecting the satisfaction of Chinese tourists attending Songkran Festival in Thailand, there are still some research limitations. First of all, the sample size is relatively small, and the representativeness of the sample may be limited, which may affect the universality of the research results. Secondly, this study mainly adopts qualitative research methods, and lacks the support of quantitative data, so it may not be able to fully reflect the influencing factors of tourist satisfaction. Additionally, the study did not explicitly examine the role of tourism policies (e.g., visa facilitation, cultural preservation regulations, or safety protocols) in shaping tourist experiences, which could be a critical contextual factor. Future studies can further expand the sample size and adopt mixed research methods, combining quantitative and qualitative data, to more fully reveal the factors that influence the satisfaction of Chinese tourists attending Songkran Festival in Thailand. Specifically, future research could investigate how policy frameworks (e.g., Thailand's tourism safety policies or China's outbound travel

guidelines) interact with cultural, service, and experiential factors to impact tourist satisfaction. In addition, we can further explore the differences in the factors affecting the satisfaction of different tourist groups, and how to improve the satisfaction of tourists through the innovation of tourism products and services.

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