

# **SUGGESTIONS TO PROMOTE GOOD EXPERIENCE TO THAILAND'S STREET FOOD BY ENHANCING THE COMPLETE USE OF FIVE SENSES OF TOURISTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Street food is recommended as a 'must do' experience while travelling in Thailand. The ready-to-eat food has delighted tourists from around the world. The street food types are distinguished by the origin of their ingredients, preparation methods, and flavors, including easy-cooked food, finger food, desserts, and fresh fruits. Thai street foods create big impression on foreign tourists appreciated by this experience.

The researcher observed and interviewed fifteen foreign tourists in three touristic locations: Kaosan Road, Yaowarat Road and Silom Road. The researcher collected visual images of street foods, observed, and talked to fifteen vendors and fifteen foreigners. Customer Experience Framework (Jean Paradis et. al 2007) is used to set up research questions and data collection methods. According to the data analysis, most of the foreign visitors have used their 5 senses as basic instinct to motivate, memorize, extend, and complete their own food experience. Also, it is suggested that the street vendors are not only selling and cooking food, but they are also trying to inform, so as to sell the 'food experience', such as welcoming gestures, unique cooking styles and attractive food appearance. The vendors wish that their customers are happy and enjoy their food.

The guideline book is used as a media to help the street vendors to enhance the customer experience. To evaluate the book efficacy on the improvement of the vendors' idea and attitude, the comparative study is selected by the comparison between the before and after reading the book.

The outcome of this study suggests that the implementation of the good street food guidelines helps and supports the vendors in the development of their entrepreneurial skills, such as thinking skills, cooking hygiene, and communication.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Currently, the Thai government injects a great deal of money into tourism due to the fact that the number of tourists has dramatically increased over the last 20 years and is now one of the main sources of income for the country. Why is Thailand so popular? There are a few reasons; Thailand has many beautiful tourist destinations; it has a rich, vibrant culture and history and (most importantly) extremely delicious, aromatic food. Numerous foreign tourists are fond of Thai food which is now available in either 5-star pricey restaurants or cheap food carts on streets. In fact, the latter is now one of Thailand's main characters as the land of 24-hour eating. Many tourists are now spotted on trying many types of street food at day and night time especially in popular tourist area as they feel they need to 'experience' this must-try food while staying Thailand.

## **2. REVIEW OF STUDY**

Street food is ready-to-eat food or drink sold in a street or other public place, such as a market or fair, by a hawker and vendor, often from a portable stall. While some street foods are regional, having spread beyond their region of origin such as Pad-thai (from Thailand), Sushi (from Japan), Kimbub (from Korea), Bakmi goring (from Indonesia), and so on. Most street food are both finger food and fast food. Street food costs less than a restaurant meal. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, 2.5 billion people eat street food every day<sup>1</sup> because of its convenience and suitability for nowadays lifestyle.

Nowadays, street cooking is threatened to sell by a move to sidewalk where vendors selected those areas around Bangkok. The foreign eaters adore in source of the colors, smells, textures and unique tastes. However, the street vendors provide an essential service by making inexpensive food, and foreign eaters also usually recall those street foods with great enthusiasm of the magnificent array of exquisite sweetmeats and other fabulous treats along the sidewalks of the city.

## 2.1 Value of street food

The market of street food vendors has become a part of culture for urban population. Since the proclamation of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), companies have turned their focus from selling goods to selling experiences. The street food sector has been serving up experiences since the 1700s. Yet very little is actually known in regard to how these business entities deliver these experiences.<sup>2</sup>

Street food is something you must have at least once (or more than once) in your lifetime. Eating street food is like having and joining in that local specialties of food and food culture. Street food is a must have, and everyone's favorite.

Source : <sup>1</sup>[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Street\\_food](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Street_food)

Source : <sup>2</sup>A Case Study on Street Vendor Operators in Central Florida, 2011

## 2.2 Value of Thai street food

In Thailand, the eating habits along the street are easily satisfied by the wealth of varieties of street food. Nowadays, street cooking is threatened to sell by a move to sidewalk where vendors selected those areas around Bangkok. The foreign eaters adore in source of the colors, smells, textures and unique tastes. However, the street vendors provide an essential service by making inexpensive food, and foreign eaters also usually recall those street foods with great enthusiasm of the magnificent array of exquisite sweetmeats and other fabulous treats along the sidewalks of the city.

## 2.3 A street food cart vendor

A street food cart vendor is the person who sell the food along the tourist spots. The enterprising street food vendors set up clusters of stalls and carts, transforming along the major street corners, empty lots and alleys into lively food bazaars or others tourist spots.<sup>3</sup>

The street food can be categorized to the instant cook food and the preparation cooking food on carts. Furthermore, dessert, ice creams, fruits and beverages are also selling on the carts. The Thai popular foods are rice with omelets (Khao-kai-jeaw), stir-fried rice noodle with shrimp (Pad-Thai), spicy soup (Tom yum), Thai spicy salad (yum), Thai dessert, fruits and etc.

However, there are many activities and actions that the vendors usually do while they are selling their food. They are allowed to stand behind and serve food through a pushcart. Besides, they put all cooking equipment such as cooking machinery or glass, utensils and food ingredient inside the cart for storage. They usually put some type of grilling on the cart surface.

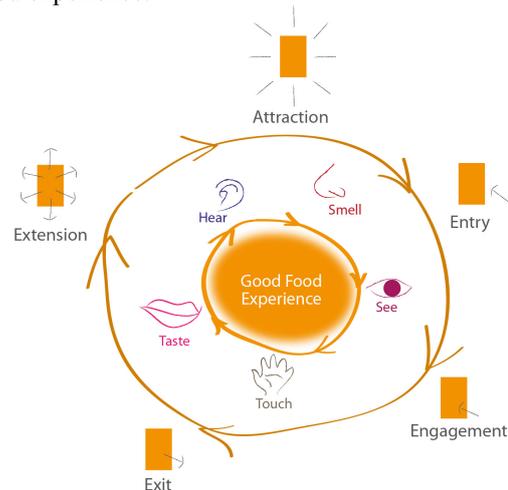
Source : <sup>3</sup> Kasma Loha-unchit, 1995

## 3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- (1) To understand the attitude of foreign tourists about Thai street food and street food vendors.
- (2) To provide suggestions to enhance the good experience of foreign tourists for Thai street food.
- (3) To promote Thai street food by creating value of street food experience with foreign tourists.

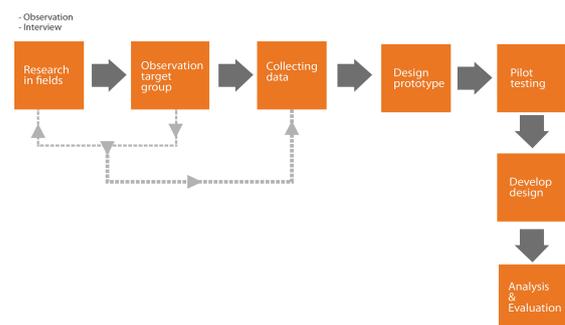
### 3.1 CONCEPT FRAMEWORK

*Customer experience framework* (Jean Paradis et.al 2007) and *the complete use of five senses* are combined together for the aim to enhance more good food experience.



## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology clarified the study process through user's experience and attitude. The data collections were approached in order from research in field, observation target group, collect data, design prototype, pilot testing, develop design, testing, and finalize with evaluation.



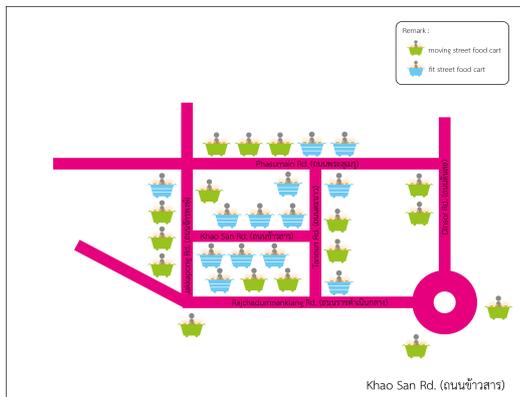
### 4.1 Field research

The three famous tourist spots at night time are the field research. The researcher explored various points such as the identity and type of food in each observation location, the same and the different types of street food carts, and the attitude in both of foreign tourists and Thai street vendors.

Furthermore, the research in fields is very helpful for understanding and analyzing the focus group. The researcher is also observing the real action and behavior in the real situation.

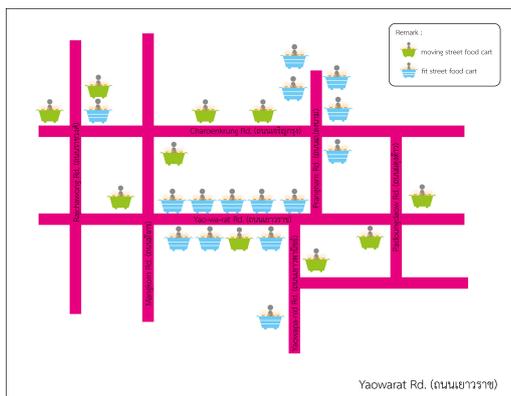
### 4.1.1 Locations of the study

The research method was applied to evaluate a study on personal experience and interests of foreign tourists by focusing on the Thai street food. The research took place around Bangkok tourist spots are Khaosan road, Yaowarat road, and Silom road.



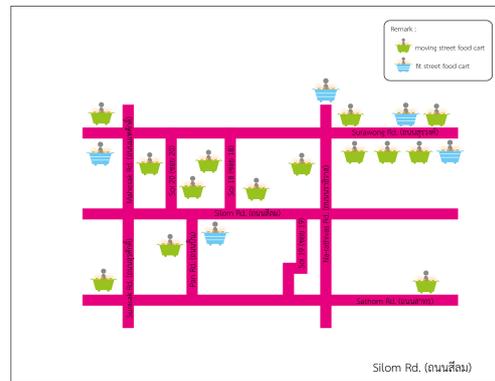
*Khaosan road*

The center of tourists in Thailand because Khao San has many entertainment places and good budget hotels. Many foreign tourists around the world know this road as the meeting point and travel spot that cannot be missed out when visiting Bangkok. There are about 180 Thai street food carts and hawkers that can be found along this 500-meter long road.



*Yaowarat road*

One of the famous places in Bangkok. This area is the Bangkok's Chinatown within 1 kilometer square. The street is lined with ubiquitous goldsmith shops, shark fin and bird nest restaurants, shops and vendors selling Chinese herbal medicine, dried mushrooms, salted fish, roast, Chinese calendars, almanacs and etc. There are many small streets and alleys full of shops and vendors selling all types of goods. Yaowarat Road is also famous for many varieties of delicious foods, and there are more than 100 types of street food be sold along the street at night. This is why everybody calls it the night food street.



*Silom road*

The area of a modern business and tourist district with a high density of banks as well as the finest hotels in the city. The Silom Road with 2.78 Kilometer square also is the oldest nightlife district for foreign tourists. Silom area is famous for various kinds of entertainment, food, wine, beer, music, dance pub. Moreover, about 100 of Thai street food carts and great sidewalk shopping are sightseeing attractions in the nightlife area of the road.

## 5. ANALYSIS

### 5.1 Thai street vendors

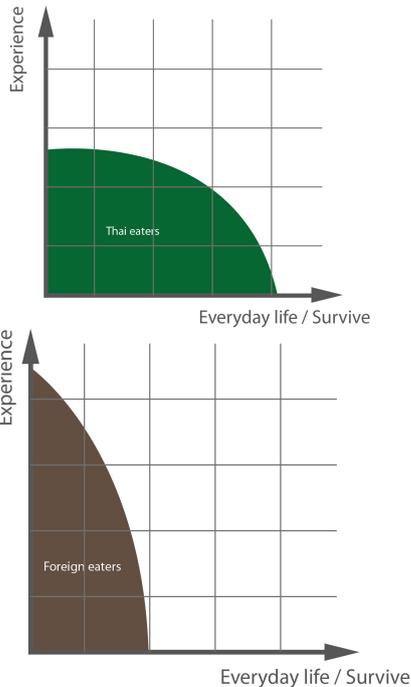
The sanitary is the main concerned of Thai street vendors. They gave the reason that hygiene or food cleanliness and safety can keep and catch more customers.

The street vendors also realized and created more attractive movement in terms of the way they cooked, the way they served, the way they talked, and the way they interacted to their customers. The purpose of their actions were to:

- **Create the attractive:** to make their stalls more charming and outstanding. Then the attractiveness can stimulate and draw more new coming customers.
- **Build up the confidence:** to ensure that all customers can eat their food.
- **Make an impression:** to make their customers get a good food experience and memorize them and their food.
- **Want their customers to extend the experience on their food**

### 5.2 Foreign tourists

The reason of Thai eaters is significantly different from foreign eaters. Usually Thais buy street food as an everyday life practice. On the other hand, most foreign eaters decide to taste and buy because of the desire to get experience. Thus, the good food experience is really important for every vendor has concern more as it affects the sales of street food especially for those in tourist spots.



## 6. CONCLUSION

The study was done on the street food. Besides, the data reveals that street food is not only convenient and inexpensive but also plays an important role in *food culture of the tourist attitudes*. It starts with the topic that seeing the food being sold along the streets all days and all night long is normal scene for every body not only Thais but also foreign tourists. As Thais realize street food is for everyday consumption but for foreigners' point of view, street food is rich of cultural and charming characteristics food. Thus, it shares an increasing proportion of the domestic income from tourists each year.

Thus, this is the beginning of enhancing more good food experience of foreign tourists, promoting Thai street food, creating more value of Thai street food, and enhancing more benefits in terms of academic contribution and Thai street food.

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