

Safety and Perceived Risks of International Female Tourists: A Case Study of Bangkok, Thailand

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Abstract

This study examined perception of international female tourists about safety and perceived risks while travelling in Bangkok, Thailand. The objectives were to study level of perceived risks of international female tourists; and to study opinions of international female tourists towards effect of perceived risks on destination image and management of safety for international female tourists in Bangkok. The study applied quantitative method and questionnaire was used for collecting the data. The sample size was 100 international female tourists who visited Bangkok. The scope concerned their perceived risks on tourist destination, accommodations, transportation, foods, drink and restaurant. The results of the research are useful in contributing ideas on safety management for international female tourists and approaches for reducing risks and dangers.

Keyword: Bangkok, female tourists, perceived risk, safety

Introduction

Nowadays women become more important and women have been empowered, presenting roles in many areas of works. Women have also been more independent. That includes travelling. According to the George Washington University School of Business, nearly two-thirds of today's travelers are women (Landers, 2018). In fact, 80% of all travel decisions are made by women, regardless of who they are travelling with, who's paying for the trip, and where they are travelling to. Many of those women travel solo, with 73% of travel agents saying women likely to travel on their own than men there are so many female travelers who travel with a big group with friends or even travel alone in Thailand including Bangkok.

Bangkok is one of the world's top tourist destinations. The city itself is a true tourist paradise, proved by the growing number of travelers coming each year. There are great varieties of tourist attraction in Bangkok, mostly historical attractions and temples with elaborate architectures and arts. There are palaces, museums, park, and a wide array of shopping centers, from luxury malls to flea markets and street markets such as Chatuchak weekend market, Sampeng market, and Pahurat Textile market. Bangkok nightlife is another highlight that has attracted many tourists from all over the world. With the national tourism policy Thailand supports promotes tourism and very much welcomes tourists from all around the world.

One of the notable concerns in tourism industry today regards travel safety, especially among female traveler. Despite the fact that Bangkok has provided management in safety security for tourists, there still are some areas or spots that are perceived risky and dangerous for foreign female tourists such as around construction worker camp, dark corners bus stops or even taxi service. With this concern, the researcher aimed to study about safety and perceived risks for international female tourists; other factors that could be perceived dangerous for international female tourists; what could make international female tourists feel safer while travelling; and effects of their perceived risks on Bangkok destination image. Behavior of female tourist while travelling was also explored. The study was hoped to contribute future management approaches in reducing risks and dangers, both real and perceived ones. Moreover, the result of this study can be an example case study in terms of safety management for international female tourists.

Literature Review

In 'Sustainable Tourism Environment: Perceptual women travelers on safety and security in Kuala Lumpur' (Amir, Ismail and See, 2014), the success or failure of a tourism destination depends on being able to provide safe and secure environment for visitors. Women were more fearful of crime either as result of perceived vulnerability compound by sexual risks or by difference in acknowledging fear. In this study, 99 percent of respondents perceived that walking around in Kuala Lumpur during day time as very safe. This perception decreased to 15 percent during night time. The significant unsafe condition perceived by respondents was the road traffic. Main concern reported was pick-pocketing and snatch thief case. Close-circuit television was found to be important to be an important mechanism that may enhance the safety perception.

The second study was 'Factors Influences Destination Image and Visit Intention among Young Women Travelers: Role of Travel Motivation, Perceived Risks, and Travel Constraints' (Khan, Chelliah, Ahmed, 2017). The study detailed the effects of travel motivation, risks perceptions and travel constraints on the destination image and travel behavior of individuals. However, the study explained that these factors in the context of perspective young women travelers was on cognitive and affective perceptions about destination, travel motivations, perceived risks and travel constraints. A quantitative study was performed on 370 young university women in Malaysia. The results revealed that the travel motivation of young women had positive effects on the cognitive and affective image; whereas the dimensions of perceived travel risks and results also found that cognitive and affective images positively influenced the visit intention of prospective young women travelers. Travel constraints were found to have negative effects on cognitive and affective destination images. Another study investigated safety of female traveler (Ahokas, 2017). It aimed to investigate how female travelers experienced safety by using the quantitative method utilizing questionnaire in respondent-completion format. The conclusion of the study was that one main reason for feeling safe was preparation, for instance having information about the destination, cultural norms and the language of the destination. Moreover, other people as well as safe neighborhoods made participants feel safe. Feeling safe was also linked to confidence and awareness. The fourth study was 'Tourists' Perceptions of Safety and Security while Visiting Cape Town (George, 2003) The study had the purposes to find out whether visitors to Cape Town felt unsafe and whether they chose to limit their activities because they were afraid of crime; to establish whether specific personal factors of the respondents, such as crimes were unrecorded; and to gain a greater understanding of individuals' perceptions of safety and security while visiting Cape Town. The methodology of this research was a survey, involving a sample of 438 visitors to Cape Town. The survey instrument was a self-administered questionnaire with two parts of questions. The questions in the first part asked about respondents' socio-demographics and the duration of their holiday. In the second part, respondents were asked about their perceptions of crime and their intentions for future visits to Cape Town the result found that a number of personal factors, such as nationality and previous experience of crime, also found to affect respondent's perceptions of safety and security. The last study was about Australian and Russian tourists' perceptions of Phuket's destination image (Welledits, 2016, cited in Thongkudam and Promsivapallop, n.d.). The objectives were to determine whether there were differences on Phuket's destination image perceived by these two nationalities. In addition, it aimed to

investigate the relationship between Phuket's destination image and future behavioral intentions. The results stated that public transportation and traffic had the highest mean difference in a way image was perceived between two nationalities; the Australians mostly perceived Phuket as a good place to enjoy wide varieties of tourist infrastructures and attractions differently, whereas the Russians perceived Phuket as excellent natural and cultural environment than other counterparts. Nevertheless, the Russian tourists were reported to have higher positive attitudes on overall image and future behavioral intentions than the Australian tourists at the moderate positive level.

Methodology

Quantitative method was used in this research. Questionnaire was used for collecting data. The sample size was 100 international female tourists. The questions concerned international female tourists' perception towards safety while travelling in Bangkok and their opinions on perceived risks that affected Bangkok destination image. The questionnaire survey was conducted to study international female tourist about safety and risks perception.

Results

The study of safety and perceived risks of international female tourists while travelling in Bangkok revealed the findings as shown in Table 1-6.

Table 1: International female tourists' perception towards safety when travelling in Bangkok in terms of tourist destination

Attributes	Mean	Std. Deviation	Meaning
1. Walking in the area during day time	2.08	0.506	Low
2. Walking in the area during night time	2.61	0.906	Medium
3. Crossing roads in the area	2.75	0.906	Medium
4. Adequacy of lighting	2.50	0.772	Medium
5. Sufficiency of police men security	2.67	0.817	Medium
6. Pickpocket and petty thieves	2.90	0.030	Medium
7. Language barriers thieves	2.24	0.793	Low
8. Using public bathroom	2.12	0.715	Low

Table 1 shows that pickpocket and petty thieves attribute gained the highest score (2.90). The second one was crossing roads in the area (2.75), followed by sufficiency of police men security (2.67) and walking in the area during night time(2.61). The lowest was walking in the area during day time (2.08).

Table 2: International female tourists' perception towards safety when travelling in Bangkok in terms of accommodation

Attributes	Mean	Std. Deviation	Meaning
1. Location of accommodations	2.09	0.621	Low
2. Reliability and information of booking online	2.10	0.280	Low
3. Facilities and electric devices of accommodations	2.10	0.628	Low
4. Staying at hotel and guesthouse	2.02	0.696	Low

Table 2 presents the highest score on reliability and information of booking online (2.10) and facilities and electric devices of accommodations (2.10). The lowest score was on staying at hotel and guesthouse (2.02).

Table 3: International female tourists' perception towards safety when travelling in Bangkok in terms of transportation

Attributes	Mean	Std. Deviation	Meaning
1. Bangkok sky train, Bangkok Metro, Airport rail link,	1.88	0.820	Low
2. Chao Phaya expresses boats, Shuttle boats on Chao Paya river	2.10	1.030	Low
3. Getting around Bangkok by bus and Taxi	2.09	0.922	Low

Table 3 shows that the highest score is on Chao Phraya expresses boats, shuttle boats on Chao Phraya River (2.10), followed by getting around Bangkok by bus and Taxi (2.09). The lowest score was on Bangkok sky train, Bangkok Metro, Airport rail link (1.88).

Table 4: International female tourists' perception towards safety when travelling in Bangkok in terms of foods, drink and restaurant

Attributes	Mean	Std. Deviation	Meaning
1. Local restaurant	2.19	0.929	Low
2. Street foods	2.55	0.993	Medium
3. Drinking alcohol at the party	2.60	0.888	Medium

In Table 4, the result shows that perceived risk during drinking alcohol at the party has the highest score (2.60), followed by perceived risk onstreet foods (2.55) and the lowest was that on local restaurant (2.19).

Table 5: Perceived risks that affects destination image

Attributes	Mean	Std. Deviation	Meaning
1. Perceived risk of tourist destination affects image of Bangkok.	2.26	0.676	Low
2. Perceived risk of accommodation affects image of Bangkok.	2.25	0.609	Low
3. Perceived risk of transportation destination affects image of Bangkok.	2.28	0.712	Low
4. Perceived risk of foods drink and restaurant affects image of Bangkok.	2.02	0.531	Low

Table 5 shows the result related with the previous 4 factors: tourist destination, accommodation, transportation and food, drink and restaurant, in the question of how much these factors affected destination image, in this case, Bangkok. The study found that the highest score was on perceived risk of transportation that affected the image of Bangkok (2.28), followed by perceived risk of tourist destination (2.26) and the lowest was perceived risk of foods drink and restaurant affecting the image of Bangkok (2.02).

Table 6: Opinions of international female tourists while travelling in Bangkok

Attributes	Mean	Std. Deviation	Meaning
1. There are good hospitality, honesty, and receptiveness friendly local people	2.06	0.547	Low
2. There is international service quality standard for female tourists	2.07	0.555	Low
3. There is high standard for sanitation and cleanliness for female tourists	2.06	0.600	Low
4. The price of foods, transportation accommodation and shopping are reasonable	2.11	0.618	Low
5. Nightlife and entertainment are safe and variety	2.08	0.692	Low
6. Cuisines or drinks are good quality	2.13	0.636	Low
7. Shopping places are safe	2.06	0.547	Low
8. There is variety of fun and safe activities for international female tourists	2.10	0.560	Low

Table 6 exhibits the result of opinions of international female tourists while travelling in Bangkok. The highest score was good quality of cuisines or drinks (2.13), meaning that tourists agreed on the quality of foods and drink the most. This was followed by the reasonable prices of foods, transportation accommodation and shopping (2.11) and variety of fun and safe activities for international female tourists (2.10). The lowest score was about good hospitality, honesty, and receptiveness friendly local people (2.06) and safety at shopping place (2.06).

Conclusion

The study found that the majority of international female tourists who traveled in Bangkok came for a leisure trip, travel, relaxing and shopping. The results explained that international female tourists had high level of perceived risks mostly about destination, pickpocketing, using road, taking boat and taxi, cleanness of food and restaurant. Also, nightlife and party in Bangkok were in high level of perceived risks. The lowest level of risks that international female tourists perceived was taking sky train, Metro, Airport rail link and staying at hotel and guesthouse. The study of opinions of international female tourists towards effect of perceived risks on destination image found that for international female tourists perceived risks of transportation to affect the image of Bangkok the most. This study found that the tourists agreed that prices of foods, transportation accommodation and shopping were reasonable and there was a variety of fun and safe activities for them.

However, they thought that the factors of good hospitality, honesty, and receptiveness friendly local people, high standard for sanitation and cleanliness for female tourists did not affect much on the image of Bangkok.

Discussion and Recommendation

Thailand has income from the tourism industry and Bangkok is one of the most cities that tourists want to visit. The study on safety and perceived risks of international female tourists: a case study Bangkok may provide an important contribution to destination marketers and government, and stakeholders may have a better understanding on the key components to be considered in managing and promoting Bangkok as a safe and friendly tourist destination that is safe for tourists especially for female tourists.

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