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EXAMINING THE PAIN POINTS EXPERIENCED BY CHINESE TOURISTS IN THAILAND

Zhang Kunying*

Faculty of Business Administration, Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand

Nirundon Tapachai

Faculty of Business Administration, Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand.

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ABSTRACT

The research objectives were to 1) analyze the pain points of Chinese tourists traveling to Thailand, and 2) compare the pain point level among tourists with different genders, educational backgrounds, occupations, and incomes. The study collected pain point data of Chinese tourists through a questionnaire. Data analysis was then conducted using t-tests, One-way ANOVA, and LSD to analyze the collected data and determine the differences in pain points among Chinese tourists with different tourist characteristics. The research showed that there were significant differences in the level of pain points of Chinese tourists by gender, occupation, and income before, during, and after the journey. There was no significant difference in the level of pain points between tourists with different educational backgrounds before and during the journey, but there was a significant difference after the journey.

Keywords: Tourism, pain point, Chinese tourists, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a crucial component of Thailand's GDP. According to Thailand department of tourism's data (2019), tourism contributed approximately 20% to Thailand's GDP. It's worth noting that Chinese tourists constitute the largest segment of international visitors to Thailand annually. For instance, around 11 million Chinese tourists visited Thailand in 2019, comprising 29% of all foreign tourists. In addition, according to Statista research department data, Chinese tourists contributed 543,707.33 million baht to Thailand's economy in 2019. Chinese tourists were the primary source of tourism revenue in Thailand, followed by European, ASEAN, and Southeast Asian visitors.

***Correspondence to**: Zhang Kunying, Faculty of Business Administration, Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand, Tel: 17830671445; Email: 1586581654@qq.com

Thailand's tourism industry has been severely affected by the COVID-19, with a sharp drop in international tourists. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of international tourists visiting Thailand has plummeted, from 39,916,251 tourists in 2019 to 6,702,396 tourists in 2020. Among these, the figure of Chinese tourists dropped from 10,997,169 in 2019 to 1,249,910 in 2020, representing an 88.6% year-on-year decline. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the Thai government formulated policies such as expanding the visa-free system to more countries, conducting joint travel promotions with airlines, and extending the business hours of entertainment venues in popular tourist destinations. The aim was to revive Thailand's tourism industry by 2024 (Sullivan, 2023). Besides these measures, the Thai government and tourism-related businesses need to create a favorable environment to provide a good experience for international tourists.

Effectively understanding and addressing the challenges or pain points faced by international tourists is vital for the success of Thailand's tourism industry. These challenges play a pivotal role in shaping tourists' decisions throughout their journey (Li & Cao, 2022). Notably, Chinese tourists make a substantial contribution to Thailand's GDP, emphasizing the urgency for the Thai government to identify and alleviate these pain points. Despite their importance, there is currently a lack of comprehensive research focusing on the experiences of Chinese tourists and the challenges they encounter in Thailand. This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining these pain points, offering practical recommendations for policymakers and industry stakeholders to improve the overall tourist experience, and providing a foundation for future academic inquiry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pain Points in Business and Tourism

Pain points are the specific challenges that consumers encounter during their customer journey, which can really throw a wrench in their experience or decision-making process (Martinez, 2023). These hurdles can pop up at various stages, from the initial consideration phase all the way to post-purchase satisfaction (Martinez, 2023). Shewan, (2022) breaks down pain points into four main categories: support (like inadequate help), productivity (think inefficiencies or processes that take too long), financial (issues related to costs), and process (troubles with everyday tasks). On top of that, Nectar Group, (2023) highlights pain points through different lenses: functional (defects in products or services), emotional (negative feelings), convenience (barriers to ease of use), and payment (problems with payment methods). By getting a grip on these classifications, we can better pinpoint and tackle the specific challenges that Chinese tourists face while visiting Thailand.

Finding references to existing research on the pain points faced by tourists can be quite a challenge, mainly because there isn't a lot of focused research in this area. Still, we can draw some valuable insights from

broader studies that tackle tourist difficulties and challenges. So, what exactly are these tourist pain points? They refer to specific problems or challenges that travelers encounter throughout their journey-before, during, and after their trips. Before the journey, tourists might struggle with issues like not being able to use software to find information (Xifanwanshuma, 2023) or dealing with fluctuating exchange rates (Adeleye, 2022). During their travels, they often face language barriers (Li, 2019), inconvenient payment options (Tencent, 2024), concerns about personal safety (Wongmonta, 2021), and even scams from locals (Li, 2017). Other common issues include heavy congestion at popular spots (Dodds & Butler, 2019), misleading advertising, high travel costs (Li, 2017), and pollution-both in the air (Kummetha, 2022 & seawater & Tdri, 2021). After the journey, one of the biggest headaches for tourists is navigating the complicated tax refund process (Lvbo.com, 2023).

Measurement pain points

Pain point levels can be assessed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative approaches, such as interviews, surveys, focus groups, and user testing, provide in-depth insights into tourist experiences and emotions (Khan, 2024). On the other hand, quantitative methods, including the use of indicators, benchmarks, and rating scales, offer measurable data for analysis (Khan, 2024). Common rating scales include Star Ratings, Smiley Ratings, Likert Scales, Net Promoter Scores, Customer Satisfaction Surveys, and Customer Effort Score Surveys (Daur, 2024). By combining these methods, researchers can obtain a comprehensive understanding of tourists' pain points, enabling effective identification and prioritization of issues.

Solutions to tourists' Pain Points

To really enhance the travel experience for tourists, it's essential to tackle their pain points. This can be broken down into three key stages: before, during, and after the trip. According to Bond (2021), we can ease productivity-related issues by streamlining processes. Plus, collaboration between Thai tourism companies and Chinese software providers can make information more accessible (Li, 2017) along with implementing targeted marketing strategies (Gallegos, 2023). When it comes to support-related challenges, it's vital for companies to regularly train their support teams so they can address customer concerns swiftly and effectively (Khachina, 2022). During the trip, solutions should include fair pricing (Martinez, 2023), use of Alipay or wechat payment (Li, 2017). use the online reservation system (Thrill Syndicate, 2024), public transportation discounts (Reporters, 2024), provide Chinese language services (Techawongsathian and Zhao, 2021) enhancing product quality (Patel, 2023) creating policies to cut down on air pollution (Walker, 2024), and boosting safety training for tourism professionals (Xiao, 2023). After the journey, relevant organization should focus on making tax refund processes easier and improving product mailing services (Martinez, 2023).

Hypotheses

Given the absence of direct research linking pain points to specific demographic factors like gender, education, or occupation, this study examined tourism risk perception and destination image perception among tourists with varying characteristics. These insights served as a proxy for understanding how different segments of the tourist population might experience pain points.

Gender and pain points: Existing research highlights significant gender differences in tourism-related perceptions. Carballo, (2021) emphasized disparities in risk perception between male and female tourists. Park & Reisinger, (2010) further corroborated these findings by demonstrating how gender influences the impact of perceived travel risk on international travel decisions. Notably, Qi, (2009) underscored a heightened perception of violence risk among female travelers compared to their male counterparts. These findings were also similar to those of Mlozi, (2022).

H1: Tourists with different genders have different levels of pain points

Educational background and pain points

Research indicates that education significantly shapes individuals' views on tourism. Park and Reisinger, (2010) first highlighted that education influences the relationship between perceived travel risks and international travel behavior. Fernanda, (2019) later reinforced this by showing that higher educational attainment correlates with greater awareness of travel risks. Mlozi, (2022) expanded on this, observing that individuals with lower educational levels often perceive less risk compared to those with secondary or higher education. Most recently, Sun, (2023) confirmed these findings, emphasizing the role of education in shaping risk perception among tourists.

H2: Tourists with different educational backgrounds have different levels of pain points Occupation and pain points

Occupation plays a crucial role in shaping how tourists see and behave in different environments. Sizoo (2010) pointed out that various jobs can lead to different perspectives on traffic issues, indicating that the type of work someone does can interact with other demographic factors to impact the overall tourist experience. Later, Park and Reisinger, (2010) showed how a person's occupation influences the way they perceive travel risks when planning international trips. Zhan, (2020) also noted that individuals in related fields often feel a heightened sense of risk. Most recently, Sun, (2023) found a positive link between a person's job and their perception of risk.

H3: Tourists with different occupation have different degrees of pain points

Income and pain points

Income plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences of tourists. Park & Reisinger, (2010) were the first to point out that a person's income level can influence how they perceive travel risks and make decisions about their trips. Later, Shao, (2019) highlighted that low-income tourists often struggle with price sensitivity, making them more susceptible to the stress of scams or being overcharged. Fernanda, (2019) backed this up by showing that tourists with higher incomes generally see lower risks compared to their lower-income counterparts. Koščak & O'Rourke, (2023) built on this idea, stressing that low-income travelers are particularly vulnerable to financial stress while on the road. Most recently, Sun, (2023) discovered a positive link between income and risk perception, providing a more nuanced understanding of how income impacts tourism experiences.

H4: Tourists with different personal monthly income have different degrees of pain points

Methodology

Research design

A descriptive research design was applied using primary data obtained by questionnaire survey. Descriptive research aims to provide a comprehensive and accurate description of the group or phenomenon being studied and to describe the relationships, patterns, and trends present in the data (Sirisilla, 2023).

Population and Sample

The focus of this study was on independent Chinese tourists aged 15 and older who have traveled to Thailand. While we don't have the exact number of this population, we believe it's quite substantial. To ensure a solid representation, a sample size of 384 was determined using Cochrane's formula (Cochran, 1977) which is ideal for larger groups. To account for any potential gaps in information and to make the average calculation smoother, the researchers opted to bump the sample size up to 400 participants. They used a convenience sampling method, which is the most common form of non-probability sampling. This approach aims to gather data from the most readily available and accessible participants (Cleave, 2023).

Research instrument

The questionnaire consists of three main sections: Part 1: Screening Respondents (3 questions). This section ensured respondents met the following criteria: Chinese tourists, over 15 years old, and a prior independent travel experience in Thailand. Part 2: Demographics (4 questions). Respondents chose one answer from multiple options for: gender (male/female), education (below high school, high school, diploma, bachelor's, master's, doctorate), occupation (student, teacher, government official, management, company staff, farmer, other), and pre-tax income (less than 5,000-yuan, 5,000-10,000-yuan, 10,001-25,000-yuan, 25,001-50,000 yuan, above 50,000 yuan). Part 3: Pain Points (24 questions).

The questions were adapted from related literature, prior studies, and in-depth interviews. This part was divided into pre-journey, during journey and after-journey.

Pre-journey questions (5 questions): These questions addressed issues such as visa complications, high currency exchange fees (depth-interview), and unfavorable exchange rates (Adeleye et al., 2022). Travelers also struggled with finding reliable travel information and using budget-friendly online travel agencies (Xifanwanshuma, 2023).

During-journey questions (17 questions): The questions focused on challenges faced by tourists, including crowded attractions (Dodds & Butler, 2019), language barriers (Li et al, 2019), and safety concerns (Wongmonta, 2021). Additional problems included traffic jams (Seon, 2023), tricky payment options (Tencent, 2024), and environmental issues like seawater and air pollution (Tdri, 2021, Kummetha, 2022). Some tourist sites were found to be closed (depth-interview). Other difficulties involved high costs for public transportation and attraction tickets, overpriced goods and services (depth-interview), vendor scams (Li, 2017). noisy accommodations, and subpar handicrafts (depth-interview).

Post-journey questions (2 questions): These addressed high postage fees and the complicated tax refund process (Lvbo.com, 2023).

Pain points were measured on a scale of 0-10 developed by NPRS-11 (as cited in Morrow, 2024. The pain point levels were classified based on these scores (0-0.99=no pain, 1-2.99=mild pain, 3-4.99=moderate pain, 5-6.99=severe pain, 7-8.99=very severe pain, 9-10=worst pain possible).

Data Collection and Analysis

Since the target population of this survey was Chinese tourists, the online questionnaire was distributed to the respondents through wechat, Weibo, QQ and other social media platforms. A total of 415 respondents completed the survey but only 400 questionnaires were deemed usable.

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were employed to analyze all collected data. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to examine respondents' personal characteristics and travel pain points. For hypothesis testing, inferential statistical methods were applied, such as t-tests in variance analysis, one-way ANOVA (F-tests), and LSD.

Findings

Respondents' Personal Demographic Information

According to the study, the most of respondents were women (69.5%). Most had a bachelor's degree (67.5%). The majority occupation of respondents was student (32%). The majority respondents' income was less than 5,000 yuan (37.3%) and 5,000-10,000 yuan (34.0%).

Analysis of pain points of respondents at various stages of the journey

Before journey stage

By looking at the mean scores of the five pain point items in the before-journey stage, all contributed to this moderate level of pain. Difficulty in obtaining a visa (Mean = 4.02), high handling fees for exchange (Mean = 4.19), inability to obtain information (Mean = 4.53), exchange rate fluctuations (Mean = 4.33), and inability to use low-priced OTAs (Mean = 4.58).

During journey stage

According to the mean score of each of the 17 pain point items, there were four severe pain points: products containing cannabis (Mean = 5.69), tourist safety (Mean = 5.63), overcharging fees (Mean = 5.38), and being scammed by local vendors (Mean = 5.23). Thirteen of the 17 pain points were classified as moderate: crowded tourist attractions (Mean = 4.84), language barriers (Mean = 4.84), traffic congestion (Mean = 4.95), inconvenient payments (Mean = 4.95), seawater pollution (Mean = 4.44), closure of tourist attractions (Mean = 4.94), higher travel costs (Mean = 4.59), excess billing (Mean = 4.25), expensive tourist attraction tickets (Mean = 4.45), shoddy handicrafts (Mean = 4.46), noisy hotels (Mean = 4.69), high public transportation costs (Mean = 4.71), and severe air pollution (Mean = 4.41).

After journey stage

There were two pain points identified after the journey. According research, the average scores for high postage (Mean = 4.64) and cumbersome tax refunds (Mean = 4.73) indicate a moderate level of pain for these post-trip experiences.

As showed in **Table 1** a one-sample t-test was performed to compare the mean pain point scores to the test value of 5 (where a pain point level of 5 or above is classified as severe). Of the 24 comparisons, 9 pain points were classified as severe. These included 4 pain points for which the mean scores showed statistically significant deviations from the test value of 5 ($p < 0.05$) and were higher than 5 (Cannabis, tourist safety, overpriced products and service fees and being scammed by local vendors), and another 6 pain points for which the mean scores did not show statistically significant deviations from 5 ($p > 0.05$) (crowded tourism attractions, language barriers, traffic congestion, inconvenient payments, closure of tourism attractions, and being scammed by local vendors).

Table 1. One-Sample test.

	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Std. Error Mean
Before the journey					
Difficulty obtaining visa	400	4.02	2.854	-6.886	0.143
High exchange rate	400	4.19	2.650	-6.131	0.133
Inability to obtain information	400	4.53	2.693	-3.509	0.135
Unstable exchange rate	400	4.34	2.647	-5.025	0.132
Inability to use low- priced OTA	400	4.58	2.653	-3.147	0.133
During the journey					
Cannabis product (1)	400	5.69	3.003	4.613	.000
Crowded attractions (2)	400	4.84	2.498	-1.281	0.201
Language barriers (2)	400	4.84	2.664	-1.239	0.216
Tourist safety (1)	400	5.63	2.857	4.376	0.000
Traffic congestion (2)	400	4.95	2.604	-0.422	0.673
Inconvenient Payments (2)	400	4.95	2.680	-0.354	0.723
Seawater pollution	400	4.44	2.621	-4.254	0.131
Closure of attractions (2)	400	4.94	2.641	-0.435	0.664
Higher travel costs	400	4.59	2.772	-2.977	0.139
Excess bill	400	4.25	2.692	-5.609	0.135
Expensive tourist attraction tickets	400	4.45	2.790	-3.960	0.140
Shoddy handicrafts	400	4.47	2.751	-3.890	0.138
Overpriced products and service fees (1)	400	5.38	2.572	2.935	0.004
Noisy hotel	400	4.69	2.614	-2.391	0.131
High public transportation costs	400	4.72	2.591	-2.200	0.130
Severe air pollution	400	4.41	2.719	-4.358	0.136
Being scammed by local vendors (1) (2)	400	5.24	2.696	1.743	0.82
After the journey					
High postage costs	400	4.64	2.710	-2.639	0.135
Complexity of tax refund	400	4.73	2.654	-2.035	0.133

1= Items that are significantly different and greater than 5; 2= Items that are not significantly different from 5

In short, only 9 pain points were severe pain points, therefore only these 9 pain points were carried out in the hypothesis test.

Hypothesis testing

H1: Tourists with different genders have different degrees of pain points. The study investigated whether male and female Chinese tourists experience different pain points using a t-test.

According to **Table 2** the research findings revealed some notable differences in pain levels across 4 out of 9 severe pain points experienced by tourists of various genders. These included issues like crowded tourist attractions (P=0.018), language barriers (P=0.013), inconvenient payment methods (P=0.011), and the closure of tourist sites (P=0.026). However, among the 9 severe pain points, there were no significant differences in pain levels for 5 of them, which included products containing Cannabis (P=0.481), tourist safety (P=0.188), traffic congestion (P=0.051), overpriced products and service fees (P=0.178), and the risk of being scammed by local vendors (P=0.391).

Table 2. Pain point level of Chinese tourists with different genders.

	Male n=122		Female n=278		t	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Cannabis product	5.85	2.690	5.62	3.132	0.705	0.481
Crowded attractions	5.29	2.397	4.64	2.520	2.384	0.018*
Language barriers	5.34	2.508	4.62	2.704	2.509	0.013*
Tourist safety	5.89	2.567	5.51	2.971	1.319	0.188
Traffic congestion	5.33	2.498	4.78	2.636	1.955	0.051
Inconvenient payments	5.47	2.740	4.73	2.627	2.562	0.011*
Closure of Attractions	5.39	2.508	4.75	2.679	2.232	0.026*
Overpriced Products and Service Fees	5.64	2.533	5.26	2.586	1.350	0.178
Being Scammed by Local Vendors	5.41	2.567	5.16	2.751	0.859	0.391

H2: Tourists with different educational backgrounds have different degree of pain points. This study used the F-test to investigate whether Chinese tourists with different educational backgrounds experienced different pain points.

As shown in **Table 3** an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to investigate potential differences in the mean scores of pain points across four distinct educational background groups. The results revealed no statistically significant differences among the groups for any of the nine pain points. These include products containing cannabis (P=0.790), overcrowded tourist attractions (P=0.458), language barriers (P=0.085), tourist safety (P=0.587), traffic congestion (P=0.318), inconvenient payment options (P=0.662), closure of tourist attractions (P=0.216), overpriced goods and service fees (P=0.155), and fraudulent practices by local vendors (P=0.185).

The findings suggest that educational background does not play a significant role in shaping the perceived severity of these pain points. As a result, no further studies were deemed necessary.

Table 3. Pain point level of Chinese tourists with different education backgrounds Group A.

	Group A n=26		Ground B n=52		Group C n=270		Group D n=52		F	Sig.	LSD
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Cannabis product	5.92	2.348	5.58	3.089	5.63	3.022	5.58	3.089	0.349	0.790	N/S
Crowded attractions	4.88	2.389	4.92	2.757	4.73	2.458	5.33	2.495	0.867	0.458	N/S
Language barriers	5.46	2.716	5.10	2.892	4.61	2.591	5.44	2.682	2.224	0.085	N/S
Tourist safety	5.85	2.461	5.48	3.000	5.54	2.893	6.10	2.724	0.644	0.587	N/S
Traffic congestion	5.27	2.570	5.02	2.987	4.80	2.553	5.48	2.453	1.178	0.318	N/S
Inconvenient payments	4.96	2.537	4.75	3.048	4.91	2.558	5.37	3.003	0.530	0.662	N/S
Closure of attractions	5.42	2.469	5.00	2.765	4.77	2.576	5.52	2.887	1.493	0.216	N/S
Overpriced products and service fees	5.81	2.315	5.54	3.121	5.19	2.496	5.98	2.421	1.758	0.155	N/S
Being scammed by local vendors	5.35	2.622	5.02	2.947	5.12	2.676	5.98	2.517	1.617	0.185	N/S

Group A=High school or below; Group B=Diploma degree; Group C=Bachelor's degree; Group D=Master's degree or above

H3: Tourists with different occupation have different degrees of pain points. This study used the F-test to investigate whether tourists of different occupations experienced different pain points.

As showed in **Table 4** The results revealed that among the 9 major pain points experienced by Chinese tourists from various professions, there are notable differences in the severity of 5 specific issues. These include cannabis products (p = 0.032), crowded tourist attractions (p = 0.031), traffic congestion (p = 0.017), inconvenient payment methods (p = 0.008), and the closure of tourist attractions (p = 0.013). However, for 4 out of the 9 pain points, there wasn't a significant difference in severity. These points are language barriers (p = 0.366), tourist safety (p = 0.073), overpriced products and service fees (p = 0.259), and the risk of being scammed by local vendors (p = 0.313).

Table 4. Pain point level of Chinese tourists with different occupation.

	Group A n= 129		Group B n=40		Group C n=45		Group D n=32		Group E n=119		Group F n=35		F	Sig.	LSD
	symbol-x̄	SD	symbol-x̄	SD	symbol-x̄	SD	symbol-x̄	SD	symbol-x̄	SD	symbol-x̄	SD			
Cannabis product	5.85	3.148	6.5	2.926	5.58	2.973	6.13	2.871	5.6	2.903	4.26	2.694	2.466	0.032*	F<A,B,C,D,E, A=B=C=D=E
Crowded attractions	4.65	2.555	5	2.522	5.04	2.628	6.16	2.529	4.73	2.41	4.26	2.034	2.389	0.031*	D>A,B,E,F, A=B=C=E=F, D=C
Language barriers	4.75	2.776	5.03	2.616	5.09	2.61	5.69	2.729	4.66	2.669	4.4	2.226	1.089	0.366	N/S
Tourist safety	5.84	2.954	6.03	2.597	5.73	2.816	6.06	2.895	5.48	2.89	4.31	2.423	2.035	0.073	N/S
Traffic congestion	4.69	2.413	5.55	2.717	5.02	2.784	6.09	2.889	4.94	2.618	4.06	2.235	2.81	0.017*	A<D, A=B,C,E,F, B>F, B=C,D,E, C=D,E,F, D=F, D>E>F
Inconvenient payments	4.8	2.708	5.43	2.551	5.04	2.763	5.84	3.194	5.05	2.58	3.71	2.052	3.291	0.008*	F<B,D,E, A=B=C=D=E, A=F, C=F
Closure of attractions	4.57	2.669	5.23	2.434	5.07	2.508	6.16	2.996	5.13	2.649	4.09	2.161	2.918	0.013*	A<D, A=B,C,E,F, B=C,D,E,F, C=D,E,F, F<D,E, D=E
Overpriced products and service fees	5.13	2.486	5.83	2.448	5.53	2.418	6.19	3.095	5.33	2.668	5	2.288	1.31	0.259	N/S
Being scammed by local vendors	5.33	2.736	5.65	2.348	5.04	2.576	5.91	3.031	5.09	2.759	4.54	2.477	1.191	0.313	N/S

Group A=Student; *Group B=Teacher; *Group C=Government officials; *Group D=manger; *Group E=Company staff; *Group F=Others

Different pain point score on products containing Cannabis among Chinese tourists with different occupation

An LSD analysis uncovered some interesting differences in pain point scores for cannabis containing products among Chinese tourists with different jobs. It turns out that students, teachers, government officials, managers, and company staff reported much higher scores than those in other

professions. However, there weren't any significant differences among the other occupational groups.

Different pain point score on crowded tourism attractions among Chinese tourists with different occupation

When it comes to crowded tourist spots, the experience varied for Chinese tourists depending on their jobs. The LSD analysis showed that people in management positions reported much higher pain point scores compared to students, teachers, government officials, and company staff. Other groups didn't show any significant differences.

Different pain point score on traffic congestion among Chinese tourists with different occupation

The analysis pointed out that traffic congestion was particularly frustrating for Chinese tourists in management roles, who felt more stressed than students and company staff. On the flip side, tourists in other occupations reported significantly lower pain point scores compared to teachers and company staff. There weren't any significant differences among the other groups.

Different pain point score on inconvenient payments among Chinese tourists with different occupation

Looking at the frustrations with inconvenient payment systems, the LSD analysis revealed that tourists in other occupations felt the most annoyed, scoring higher than students, managers, and company staff. The scores among the other occupational pairs didn't show any significant differences.

Different pain point score on closure of tourism attractions among Chinese tourists with different occupation

The way tourists reacted to the closure of attractions also depended on their job roles. Students seemed to be the least frustrated, while those in management roles were the most upset. Additionally, tourists in other occupations expressed significantly less frustration than managers and company staff. No other significant differences were found among the various occupational groups.

H4: Tourists with different personal monthly incomes have different degrees of pain points. This study used the F-test to investigate whether tourists with different incomes experienced different pain points.

Table 5 highlights that, among the nine severe pain points experienced by Chinese tourists with varying income levels, significant differences were observed in the severity of four pain points. These include products containing cannabis (P=0.013), traffic congestion (P=0.003), the closure of tourist attractions (P=0.011), and being scammed by local vendors (P=).

Table 5. Pain point level of Chinese tourists with different incomes.

	Group A n=150		Group B n=135		Group C n=89		Group D n=26		F	Sig.	LSD
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Cannabis product	5.81	3.168	5.13	2.979	5.98	2.804	7.00	2.227	3.657	0.013*	A=B,C,D, B=C, B<D, C=D
Crowded attractions	4.54	2.418	4.86	2.483	5.10	2.563	5.58	2.686	1.813	0.144	N/S
Language barriers	4.62	2.595	4.65	2.716	5.21	2.626	5.73	2.736	2.136	0.095	N/S
Tourist safety	5.67	2.870	5.19	3.015	5.99	2.652	6.58	2.351	2.195	0.088	N/S
Traffic congestion	4.56	2.307	4.85	2.697	5.29	2.719	6.46	2.775	4.749	0.003**	A<C,D, A=B,C, B=C
Inconvenient payments	4.77	2.693	4.84	2.566	5.13	2.719	5.96	2.946	1.681	0.170	N/S
Closure of attractions	4.65	2.604	4.76	2.706	5.34	2.522	6.27	2.491	3.779	0.011*	A<C,D, A=B, B<D, B=C, C=D
Overpriced products and service fees	4.93	2.389	5.41	2.733	5.75	2.569	6.50	2.302	3.911	0.009**	A=B, B<D, B=C, C=D
Being scammed by local vendors	5.08	2.689	5.12	2.696	5.45	2.747	6.00	2.530	1.136	0.334	N/S

Group A=Less than 5,000/- Yuan; *Group B=5,000-10,000/- Yuan; *Group C=10,001-25,000/- Yuan; *Group D=Over than 25,001/- Yuan

However, no significant differences were found in the severity of the remaining five pain points, which include overcrowded tourist attractions (P=0.144), language barriers (P=0.095), tourist safety (P=0.088), inconvenient

payment options (P=0.170), and fraudulent practices by local vendors (P=0.334). These findings suggest that income level influences the perception of some pain points but not all.

Different pain point score on products containing Cannabis among Chinese with different Income

The findings showed that Chinese tourists earning over 25,000 Yuan felt a lot more dissatisfied with cannabis-related products than those making between 5,000 and 10,000 Yuan. Interestingly, there weren't any significant differences in pain points among the other income groups.

Different pain point score on traffic congestion among Chinese with different Income

Traffic congestion stirred up different levels of frustration among Chinese tourists, depending on their income. Those in the 10,001 to 25,000 Yuan bracket reported much higher dissatisfaction compared to those earning under 5,000 Yuan. Plus, tourists with incomes above 25,000 Yuan had the highest dissatisfaction scores, outpacing all other groups, including those earning below 5,000 Yuan, 5,000–10,000 Yuan, and 10,001–25,000 Yuan. The other groups didn't show any significant differences.

Different pain point score on closure of tourism attractions among Chinese with different Income

Regarding the closure of tourism attractions, tourists earning between 10,001 and 25,000 Yuan showed significantly more frustration than those making less than 5,000 Yuan. Likewise, those with incomes over 25,000 Yuan were notably more dissatisfied than tourists earning below 5,000 Yuan or between 5,000 and 10,000 Yuan. The remaining income brackets didn't reveals any meaningful differences.

Different pain point score on overpriced products and service fees among Chinese with different Income

Overpriced products and service fees were a major source of dissatisfaction for Chinese tourists, especially those with higher incomes. Tourists earning between 10,001 and 25,000 Yuan reported significantly more dissatisfaction compared to those earning less than 5,000 Yuan. Additionally, those with incomes over 25,000 Yuan expressed the highest levels of dissatisfaction, surpassing both the below 5,000 Yuan and 5,000–10,000 Yuan groups. The other income groups didn't show any significant differences in their levels of dissatisfaction.

DISCUSSION

According to the research, the serious pain points that tourists encounter during their travels mainly include encountering marijuana products, tourist attractions and traffic congestion, language barriers, payment difficulties, attraction closures, high prices, safety concerns and scams. The study also highlighted some notable differences in how these pain points

affected respondents based on their gender, occupation, and income. Interestingly, male tourists tended to report higher levels of pain points compared to female tourists, which aligns with findings from Carballo, (2021) regarding risk perception and gender. On the other hand, tourists with varying educational backgrounds didn't report significant pain points at any stage of their trips, which contradicts Mlozi's study, (2022) that suggested differences in risk perception based on education level.

Moreover, tourists of different occupations show significant differences in several pain points such as cannabis-containing products, tourist attractions and traffic congestion, inconvenient payment and the closure of tourist attractions. This aligns with the research by Sun et al. (2023) regarding occupation and risk perception. Additionally, the challenges faced by travelers with different incomes also vary significantly, especially in terms of cannabis products, traffic congestion, the closure of scenic spots and the increase in service prices. This supports the idea that lower-income travelers might be more vulnerable to scams or overcharging, as highlighted by Koščak and O'Rourke (2023).

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that Chinese tourists often faced some moderate pain points during their travels. More serious issues popped up in areas like cannabis products, crowded tourist attractions, language barriers, tourist safety, inconvenient payment, closure of tourism attractions, overpriced goods and services, and scams from local vendors. When testing the hypotheses, researchers found notable differences in pain points related to gender, occupation, and income, but educational background didn't seem to play a role. Interestingly, male tourists with master's degrees, working in management, and earning over 25,000 Yuan reported the highest levels of discomfort. The research offers several insights and suggestions for organizations: Product Mislabeling: The hidden presence of cannabis in products creates significant anxiety for tourists. It's recommended that strict regulations be put in place to ensure clear ingredient labeling (Patel, 2023). Pain points of scenic spots: including congestion and closure of scenic spots. Scenic spots can use an online reservation system, which can solve the problem of tourist congestion while clearly presenting the information of the scenic spots to tourists (Thrill Syndicate, 2024). Language barrier: Chinese tourists are unable to communicate in Thai. It is suggested to provide Chinese services in some famous scenic spots or shopping malls (Techawongsathian and Zhao, 2021). Traffic congestion: The Thai government should help promote the 20-baht policy for all BTS lines (Reporters, 2024). Political Instability: Tourists are particularly worried about political instability. The Thai government should focus on maintaining stability to guarantee tourist safety and safeguard the tourism sector. Inconvenient payment: It is very difficult for Chinese tourists to carry cash with them. Enabling Alipay and wechat Pay can make the journey easier (Li, 2017). Overpriced Products and Services: Overcharging is a common frustration for travelers. It's advisable to

implement stricter pricing regulations and consumer protection measures (Martinez, 2023). Tourist Scams: Scams from local vendors are a major issue. Raising awareness and increasing regulations around common scams is essential to improve Thailand's image as a safe travel destination (Khachina, 2022).

Based on what this study has uncovered, here are some recommendations for future research: 1) A Closer Look at Specific Pain Points: It would be beneficial to carry out detailed qualitative studies that dig into the root causes of significant pain points related to cannabis products, crowded attractions, language barriers, inconvenient payments, closed attractions, traffic congestion, tourist safety, and pricing. 2) Tailored Strategies through Segmentation: Investigate the pain points of Chinese tourists by considering various factors such as personality, motivation, travel purpose, travel style, and travel experience. This will help pinpoint specific issues and create targeted strategies. 3) Longitudinal Studies: Implement longitudinal studies to monitor how Chinese tourists' perceptions of pain points change over time, particularly as tourism trends and government policies evolve.

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