Research Article

Influential Factors on Chinese Tourists' Intention to Reuse Thai Traditional Massage Service

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Abstract.
This research delves into the challenges Thai traditional massage establishments face in attracting and retaining Chinese tourists. It aims to assess the impact of service quality components, including staff quality, service attitude, and service environment, on Chinese tourists' intention to reuse traditional Thai massage services. Additionally, it explores the influence of cultural image aspects, such as traditional cultural experiences, cultural exchange and interaction, and cultural presentation, on this intention. Rooted in a comprehensive literature review highlighting established models like SERVQUAL and the Service-Profit Chain, a causal associative approach with a quantitative methodology is employed. Data analysis techniques encompass descriptive and inferential statistics, revealing positive perceptions among Chinese tourists toward staff quality, service attitude, service environment, and cultural image, all contributing to their Intention to reuse. The discussion underscores the intertwined nature of service quality and cultural image, emphasizing the pivotal role of cultural experiences. Strategic implications advocate for continuously elevating standards, adapting to changing preferences, and adopting an integrated approach for holistic customer experiences. Recommendations for future research include a longitudinal approach, expanding demographic scope, exploring psychological underpinnings, experimental designs, and leveraging digital data. Overall, this research provides valuable insights into the complex interplay of the above-mentioned factors, offering practical guidance for the growth and adaptability of the Thai traditional massage industry in catering to Chinese tourists.

Keywords: Thai traditional massage services, service quality, cultural image; Intention to reuse

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1. Introduction

Thai traditional massage, known as Nuad Thai, is integral to Thailand's rich cultural heritage. This ancient practice, which traces its roots back to around 2,500 years ago, is a holistic system of healing that combines physical manipulation, stretching, and pressure point therapy to promote relaxation, improve circulation, and relieve muscle tension. It has been an essential element of the local healthcare system, often used to

restore balance and harmony in the body. For traditional Thai massage establishments, attracting Chinese tourists is the initial step. The real challenge lies in fostering customer intention to reuse and encouraging repeat visits to ensure their long-term success and competitiveness in the market [1]. Customer intention to reuse, often gauged by the Intention to reuse services, plays a crucial role in the success and sustainability of businesses in the tourism industry. It signifies the willingness of customers to engage with a particular service provider or establishment repeatedly, demonstrating their preference and trust in the offered products or experiences.

In the context of Thai traditional massage services, Chinese tourists' Intention to reuse represents their commitment to reusing the same establishment for future massage experiences during their stay in Thailand or on subsequent visits. Such intention to reuse is vital for traditional Thai massage establishments as it directly impacts their long-term success and profitability. Repeat customers contribute to stable revenue streams and serve as brand advocates, promoting the establishment through positive word-of-mouth and online reviews [2]. Also, loyal customers are more likely to explore the establishment's other services or products, leading to potential cross-selling opportunities.

In this context, two key factors have been widely recognized for their significant impact on customer intention to reuse in the tourism industry: service quality and cultural image. Service quality encompasses various elements, such as staff competence, service attitude, and the overall ambiance of the service environment [3]. These factors collectively contribute to customers' satisfaction with their experience. On the other hand, cultural images represent how Thai traditional massage establishments present and promote their cultural heritage, traditional practices, and artistic expressions to Chinese tourists [4]. An authentic and appealing cultural image can evoke positive emotions and enhance the overall perception of the service, further influencing customer intention to reuse.

1.1. Research objectives

To assess the influence of service quality components (staff quality, service attitude, and service environment) on Chinese tourists' intention to reuse traditional Thai massage services.

To examine the impact of cultural image aspects (traditional cultural experiences, cultural exchange and interaction, and cultural Presentation) on Chinese tourists' intention to reuse traditional Thai massage services.

To understand the overall relationship between service quality, cultural image, and the intention of Chinese tourists to reuse traditional Thai massage services.

2. Literature Review

Parasuraman [5] introduced the foundational SERVQUAL model in their seminal work, emphasizing the importance of "Assurance," which relates to the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. This dimension is closely linked to staff competence and professionalism, which are central to the service quality literature. Similarly, Heskett, Sasser, and Schlesinger [6] highlighted the "Service-Profit Chain" model in their book. This model underlines the direct link between employee satisfaction—which is intrinsically tied to staff competence and professionalism—service value, customer Intention to reuse, and profitability.

Building on this, Bitner et al. [7] examined the service encounter more closely, introducing the concept of "critical incidents" in service delivery. In their study, they argued that the competence and professionalism of staff are vital components that can significantly enhance or detract from the overall customer experience. They emphasized the critical role of staff in shaping these encounters, highlighting the notion that employees are central to customer perceptions of service quality.

Expanding on the role of employees, their comprehensive textbook discusses various aspects of service delivery, positing that skilled and professional staff are vital to achieving high service quality and customer satisfaction. In addition, a service quality model in which he introduced the concept of "functional quality." He highlighted the significance of the service process, including staff interactions, in shaping the overall perceptions of service quality. In this perspective, Staff competence and professionalism are deemed essential elements of functional quality.

Their key textbook on services marketing covers a wide range of topics, including dedicated sections on service delivery. They underscore the critical role of staff competence and professionalism in achieving customer satisfaction and Intention to reuse, emphasizing that well-trained and courteous staff are not merely peripheral to service delivery but central to the entire experience.

Service quality and customer intention to reuse are crucial aspects of the tourism industry. Researchers have extensively explored the relationship between service quality and customer intention to reuse and the behavioral consequences of service quality

in influencing customer intention to reuse. Understanding the frontier of service quality and implementing effective service strategies can positively influence customer intention to reuse in tourism.

Understanding the influence of cultural image on customer intention to reuse is crucial in tourism services. Cai [8] delved into cooperative branding for rural destinations, highlighting the significance of collaboration between various stakeholders in enhancing destination branding. This research sheds light on how cultural elements can be integrated into destination branding efforts to influence customer intention to reuse.

Konecnik et al. [9] focused on customer-based brand equity for a destination, emphasizing the role of customers' perceptions and experiences in shaping destination intention to reuse. This study provides insights into how cultural image can contribute to the overall brand equity of a destination, influencing tourists' intention to reuse and repeat visits.

Ekinci et al. [10] explored the symbolic consumption of tourism destination brands, revealing how customers' emotional and symbolic connections with a destination's cultural image influence their Intention to reuse. This research offers valuable insights into the intangible aspects of cultural image and its impact on customer intention to reuse.

Pike et al. [11] examined consumer-based brand equity for Australia as a long-haul tourism destination in an emerging market, considering the role of cultural image in attracting tourists from different regions. Tasci [12] compared destination brands with destination images, aiming to clarify the concepts and their implications for customers' intention to reuse. This research contributes to a better understanding of how cultural image shapes destination perceptions and Intention to reuse, emphasizing the need for consistent and coherent destination branding efforts.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Research design

This research is included in the category of causal associative research using a quantitative approach because the research design is structured to examine causal relationships between variables. This research will explain the relationship between influencing and being influenced by the variables to be studied.

Research framework and research hypotheses

The research framework explores the relationships between service quality, cultural image, and Chinese tourists' intention to reuse traditional Thai massage services. The Intention to reuse is the dependent variable, influenced by both service quality and cultural image, which are the independent variables.
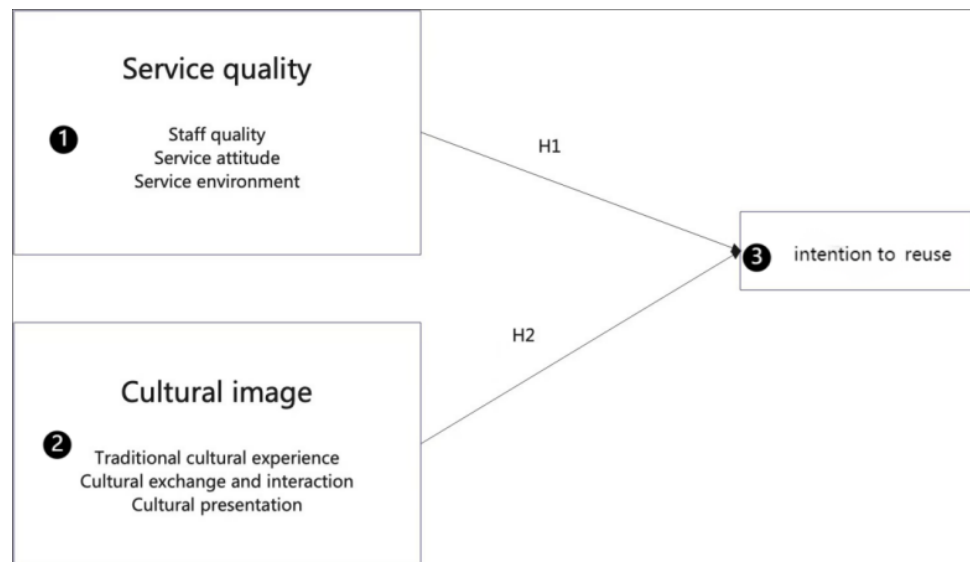

Figure 1: Conceptual framework.

3.2. Population and research sample

To calculate the sample size for an infinite population (N > 100,000) with a desired confidence level and margin of error, we can use the following formula:

$$.n = (Z \wedge 2 * p * (1 - p))/E^2$$

n = required sample size

Z = Z-score (corresponding to the desired confidence level, e.g., 1.96 for a 95% confidence level)

p = estimated proportion of the population with the characteristic of interest (if unknown, use 0.5 for maximum sample size)

E = desired margin of error (expressed as a proportion)

Assuming we want a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 5%, the Z-score would be 1.96. For a conservative estimation, let us assume p = 0.5. Moreover, E would be 0.05.

n = (1.96∧2 * 0.5 * (1-0.5)) / 0.05∧2

n = (3.8416 * 0.5 * 0.5) / 0.0025

n = 0.9604 / 0.0025

n = 384.16

The required sample size is approximately 384. Since we want around 452 question-naires, this sample size should be sufficient for the study.

3.3. Data analysis techniques

The data analysis will play a pivotal role in extracting valuable and actionable insights from the collected data. Through a rigorous approach, the study will employ a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics to address the research questions and test the research hypotheses comprehensively.

4. Research Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

The data for this research was meticulously collected, processed, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics offered an initial overview of the characteristics of the data. In contrast, inferential statistics, such as correlation and multiple regression analysis, enabled deeper insights into the relationships and influences among variables. The analysis of data and interpretation use statistics symbols and meanings as follows:

N = number of population

n = number of sample

$\underline{X}$ = Mean

SD = Standard Deviation

t = t-Distribution

F = F-Distribution

SS = Sum of Square

MS = Mean of Square

df = Degree of freedom

LSD = Least Significant Difference

R = Pearson of Correlation

Sig = The level of statistics significance to test hypothesis

* = The statistical significance is at the 0.05 level

4.1.1. Data validity and reliability

Validity: An item-objective congruence (IOC) analysis will be conducted to assess the content validity of the questionnaires further. IOC measures the degree of correspondence between each questionnaire item and the intended construct. An IOC value of ≥ 0.5 indicates acceptable content validity, confirming that the questions effectively capture the constructs under investigation and align with the research objectives [13].

Reliability: Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of a research tool in measuring constructs across participants. Cronbach's alpha coefficient will be calculated to assess the reliability of the questionnaires. An alpha value of ≥ 0.7 indicates good internal consistency and reliable measurement of the constructs.

After data collection, statistical software will calculate each questionnaire's IOC values and Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Confirming that the IOC values are ≥ 0.5 and Cronbach's alpha is ≥ 0.7 ensures the questionnaires demonstrate satisfactory content validity and reliability. If necessary, adjustments will be made to the research instruments to improve their validity and reliability [13].

4.1.2. Descriptive statistics

TABLE 1: Descriptive analysis of independent and dependent variables.

Variable	Mean	S.D	Meaning
Staff Quality	3.48	.846	Agree
Service Attitude	3.49	.833	Agree
Service Environment	3.62	.804	Agree
Authentic Traditional Cultural Experiences	3.51	.852	Agree
Cultural Exchange and Interaction	3.49	.848	Agree
Cultural Presentation	3.45	.853	Agree
Intention to Reuse	3.54	.836	Agree

Note: 1-2.00 = disagree, 2.01-3.00 = indifferent, 3.01-4.00 = agree, 4.01-5.00 = total agree
Table source: Author's own

The descriptive statistics in Table 1 offer a detailed overview of tourists' perceptions on various dimensions. Some metrics witness high average ratings, indicative of positive experiences, while others highlight potential areas for improvement.

4.1.3. Inferential statistics

In this research, we will test the hypotheses about the influence of service quality and cultural image on Chinese tourists' intentions to reuse traditional Thai massage services. Through these tests, we aim to demystify the intricate interplay between perceived service quality, cultural perceptions, and their cumulative impact on tourists' behavioral intentions. With the significance level set and by evaluating the p-values, we can determine if we should accept or reject our null hypotheses, thereby paving the way for deeper insights and discussions in subsequent sections of this research.

The significance level (alpha) is set at 0.05 for this research. This means there is a 5% risk of rejecting a true null hypothesis.

TABLE 2: Factors that make up the construct (latent variable) health information.

	Staff Quality	Service Attitude	Service Environment	Authentic Experiences	Cultural Interaction	Cultural Presentation	Intention to Reuse
Staff Quality	1.000						
Service Attitude	.654*	1.000					
Service Environment	.725*	.564*	1.000				
Authentic Experiences	.682*	.634*	.702*	1.000			
Cultural Interaction	.583*	.533*	.623*	.654*	1.000		
Cultural Presentation	.603*	.482*	.642*	.712*	.752*	1.000	
Intention to Reuse	.554*	.527*	.575*	.641*	.693*	.734*	1.000

Note: * significance at .05, ** significance at the 0.01 Table source: Author's own

Given the provided correlation matrix, we can observe the relationships between different variables related to the intention to reuse traditional Thai massage services among Chinese tourists. Let us undertake a detailed and careful analysis of the data.

Preliminary Insights and Considerations: Multicollinearity Concerns: While strong correlations provide insightful details, they also raise an alert about potential multicollinearity, especially in regression analysis.

Strategic Implications: The evident correlations between Staff Quality, Service Attitude, and Intention to Reuse emphasize the quintessential role of human resources in shaping customer intention. Training programs emphasizing cultural knowledge and customer service skills could be pivotal.

Enriching Authentic and Cultural Experiences: The strong relationships between cultural experiences, interactions, and presentations highlight the importance of ensuring that cultural elements are not merely symbolic but woven into the customer service experience interactively and genuinely.

Future Research Directions: Moderation/ Mediation Analyses: Investigate whether certain variables act as mediators or moderators in the relationship between predictors like staff quality, service attitude, and Intention to reuse.

Qualitative Insights: In-depth interviews or focus group discussions could unearth the nuances and reasons behind these numerical correlations, providing rich insights into customer motivations, preferences, and pain points.

Comparative Analysis: Exploring correlations within different demographic or psychographic segments of tourists might reveal varied patterns, aiding in tailoring service strategies accordingly.

This data provides a compelling starting point and directs attention toward variables of pronounced influence, yet should be complemented with additional research to forge comprehensive strategies.

Multiple regression analysis

The regression equation is as follows:

Intention to Reuse = 1.243 + 0.312 (Staff Quality) + 0.276 (Service Attitude) +0.248 (Service Environment) + 0.212 (Authentic Experiences) + 0.189 (Cultural Interaction) + 0.174 (Cultural Presentation)

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF): VIF values for all variables are less than 10, meaning multicollinearity is not a concern for this regression model.

R^2 And Adjusted R^2. The values are all close to 1, indicating that the error in the standard estimation approaches 0.

In summary, all the independent variables are significant predictors of Intention to Reuse, with Staff Quality having the highest influence, followed closely by Service Attitude and Service Environment.

TABLE 3: Multiple linear regression of service quality and cultural image.

Coefficients						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	VIF
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	1.243	0.216	-	5.756	0.001	-
Staff Quality	0.312	0.071	0.258	4.408	0.000	2.436
Service Attitude	0.276	0.065	0.242	4.246	0.000	2.521
Service Environment	0.248	0.069	0.219	3.594	0.001	2.698
Cultural Experiences	0.212	0.058	0.196	3.655	0.001	2.312
Cultural Exchange	0.189	0.062	0.179	3.048	0.003	2.457
Cultural Presentation	0.174	0.057	0.163	3.051	0.003	2.289
R^2	.994					
Adjusted R^2	.923					
a Dependent Variable: Intention to Reuse						

Note: * significance at .05, ** significance at the 0.01 Table source: Author's own

4.2. Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings derived from the data analysis, situating them within the broader context of existing research. We delve into the implications of these results, the limitations of the present study, and potential avenues for future research. Ultimately, this chapter concludes by summarizing the primary contributions of this research to the field.

At its core, tourism is a profoundly personal experience influenced by many tangible and intangible factors. This research journey into understanding the intentions of Chinese tourists visiting Thai traditional massage establishments has provided an in-depth perspective on the multifaceted drivers behind their desire to revisit. While vital, the crucial realization that cultural experiences augment service quality reiterates the essence of travel – the quest for experiences that resonate on a personal and cultural level.

The results are as follows: The interplay between service quality and cultural image emerged as intertwined and mutually reinforcing. While excellent service quality acts as the foundation for a memorable experience, the overlay of cultural elements amplifies the richness of the experience, making it truly unforgettable. The combined influence

of these factors has cemented Thai traditional massage services as more than just a relaxation tool but a comprehensive cultural journey. The holistic appeal of these services drives Chinese tourists' firm Intention to revisit, seeking physical rejuvenation and cultural immersion.

4.2.1. The pivotal role of culture

Depth of Experience: One of the standout findings from our study was the profound impact of cultural experiences and exchanges on the intention to reuse traditional Thai massage services. It is not just about experiencing a massage but about the stories, history, and values woven into each session. This suggests a shift from viewing massages as mere physical relaxation to a deeper, more meaningful interaction that resonates with one's cultural curiosity.

Bridging Cultures: The strong correlations, especially regarding cultural experiences and exchange, emphasize the unique position of Thai traditional massage services as a bridge between cultures. The experience serves as an introduction to Thai culture for many Chinese tourists, subsequently becoming a significant part of their travel memory.

4.2.2. Service beyond the physical

Emotional Connections: While the technical quality of massage services is crucial, our findings shed light on the emotional facets of the experience. The service environment and staff attitude contribute to physical relaxation and help forge an emotional connection with the tourists. It is this connection that often determines a revisit.

Holistic Wellness: A traditional Thai massage is a treatment and a journey. From the massage center's ambiance to the staff's demeanor, every aspect plays a pivotal role in offering holistic wellness to tourists. This emphasizes the need for establishments to focus on massage techniques and the entire experience spectrum.

4.2.3. Strategic implications

Elevating Standards: The industry cannot remain stagnant. For establishments in the Thai massage industry, these results highlight the necessity to elevate standards continuously. Whether refining massage techniques, enhancing ambiance, or training staff to be cultural ambassadors, every aspect needs periodic review and refinement.

Adapting to Changing Preferences: The high correlation values, especially with cultural aspects, point towards evolving tourist preferences. Establishments must be agile, ready to adapt, and cater to these emerging trends.

An Integrated Approach: Beyond offering massages, establishments could think of integrated experiences. This could include brief sessions on Thai history, workshops on massage techniques, or even cultural performances. This holistic experience can further cement the bond between the tourist and the establishment, enhancing the chances of a revisit.

As stated previously, The strategic implications derived from the research findings emphasize the imperative for Thai traditional massage establishments to adapt to evolving tourist preferences. This involves continuous improvement in massage techniques, ambiance, and cultural training for staff, aligning with established models like SERVQUAL [5]. The dynamic nature of tourist preferences, especially in cultural aspects, underscores the strategic importance of agility and adaptability, resonating with global research on destination competitiveness [14]. Furthermore, the suggested integrated approach for establishments, incorporating experiences beyond traditional services, aligns with the "experience economy" [15]. This comprehensive strategy, integrating Thai culture and maintaining high service standards, positions traditional massage establishments to exceed tourist expectations and align with global trends in tourism. Leveraging these strategic implications is crucial for long-term success and sustainability, emphasizing the need for further research into specific strategies and their impact on customer intentions and business success.

4.2.4. Recommendations for future research

In summary, future research should adopt a longitudinal approach to understand the dynamic changes in tourist sentiment over time. Assessing both stated intentions and actual behaviors post-intervention will offer a comprehensive understanding of influential factors. Broadening the demographic scope to include diverse cultural backgrounds and comparing preferences between local and international tourists can provide a holistic industry perspective. Exploring psychological underpinnings through qualitative methodologies will reveal motivations behind tourist choices, especially regarding cultural elements. Experimental designs, such as exposing tourists to the same service in varied cultural environments, can isolate effects on reuse intentions. Additionally, leveraging digital data sources and cutting-edge technologies like Virtual Reality (V.R.)

and Augmented Reality (A.R.) can provide real-time insights into tourist preferences. While this research offers valuable current insights, adapting and expanding methodologies are essential to stay ahead in comprehending the evolving landscape of tourist needs and desires.

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