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**THE IMPACTS OF SERVICE QUALITY AND
MARKETING MIX ON VISITOR SATISFACTION IN
SOUTHERN THAILAND MODERATED BY
GASTRONOMY EXPERIENCE**

JARUMAS SANEHA



**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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ON VISITOR SATISFACTION IN SOUTHERN THAILAND MODERATED
BY GASTRONOMY EXPERIENCE**

By

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**Thesis Submitted to
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Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, gastronomy tourism has gained increasing importance in the tourism sector, particularly in Southern Thailand. However, existing studies have given limited attention to the relationships among food service quality, the marketing mix, and visitor satisfaction, especially within the context of gastronomy experiences. Accordingly, this study aims to (1) examine the impact of food service quality on visitor satisfaction, (2) assess the influence of the marketing mix on visitor satisfaction, (3) determine whether gastronomy experience moderates the relationship between food service quality and visitor satisfaction, and (4) determine whether gastronomy experience moderates the relationship between the marketing mix and visitor satisfaction. This study is grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (EDT), which provide a theoretical foundation for explaining visitors' evaluations and satisfaction in gastronomy tourism contexts. A quantitative research approach was employed, and data were collected from international visitors in Phuket, Krabi, Phang Nga, and Surat Thani using a stratified sampling approach. A total of 387 valid questionnaires were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results show that reliability has a positive and significant effect on visitor satisfaction. The product dimension of the marketing mix also has a positive and significant effect on visitor satisfaction. Gastronomy experience does not significantly moderate the relationship between the marketing mix and visitor satisfaction, but shows a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between food service quality and visitor satisfaction. These findings suggest that reliability plays a more prominent role in influencing visitor satisfaction, while the moderating role of gastronomy experience is inconsistent, with a negative effect observed in the relationship between food service quality and visitor satisfaction. This indicates that gastronomy experience may function more as a direct experiential factor rather than a consistent moderator. This extends the application of SET and EDT in gastronomy tourism and provides practical insights for tourism stakeholders to emphasise consistent service delivery.

Keywords: Gastronomy tourism, Food service quality, Visitor satisfaction, Gastronomy experience, Marketing mix.

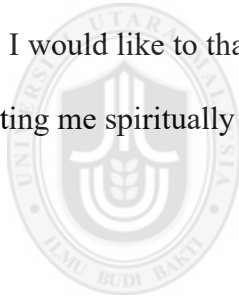
ABSTRAK

Pelancongan gastronomi semakin mendapat perhatian dalam sektor pelancongan, khususnya di Selatan Thailand. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian terdahulu masih memberikan perhatian yang terhad terhadap hubungan antara kualiti perkhidmatan makanan, campuran pemasaran, dan kepuasan pelawat, terutamanya dalam konteks pengalaman gastronomi. Sehubungan itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk (1) meneliti kesan kualiti perkhidmatan makanan terhadap kepuasan pelawat, (2) menilai pengaruh campuran pemasaran terhadap kepuasan pelawat, (3) menentukan sama ada pengalaman gastronomi menyederhana hubungan antara kualiti perkhidmatan makanan dan kepuasan pelawat, serta (4) menentukan sama ada pengalaman gastronomi menyederhana hubungan antara campuran pemasaran dan kepuasan pelawat. Kajian ini berasaskan Teori Pertukaran Sosial (TPS) dan Teori Ketidakselarasan Jangkaan (EDT), yang menyediakan asas teori untuk menerangkan penilaian dan kepuasan pelawat dalam konteks pelancongan gastronomi. Pendekatan penyelidikan kuantitatif telah digunakan, dan data dikumpulkan daripada pelawat antarabangsa di Phuket, Krabi, Phang Nga, dan Surat Thani melalui kaedah pensampelan berstrata. Sebanyak 387 soal selidik yang sah telah dianalisis menggunakan kaedah *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling* (PLS-SEM). Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa kebolehpercayaan mempunyai kesan positif dan signifikan terhadap kepuasan pelawat. Dimensi produk dalam campuran pemasaran juga mempunyai kesan positif dan signifikan terhadap kepuasan pelawat. Selain itu, pengalaman gastronomi didapati tidak menyederhana secara signifikan hubungan antara campuran pemasaran dan kepuasan pelawat, tetapi menunjukkan kesan penyederhanaan negatif tetapi signifikan terhadap hubungan antara kualiti perkhidmatan makanan dan kepuasan pelawat. Dapatan ini menunjukkan bahawa kebolehpercayaan memainkan peranan yang lebih menonjol dalam mempengaruhi kepuasan pelawat, manakala peranan penyederhanaan pengalaman gastronomi adalah tidak konsisten, dengan kesan negatif yang diperhatikan dalam hubungan antara kualiti perkhidmatan makanan dan kepuasan pelawat. Ini memperluaskan aplikasi SET dan EDT dalam pelancongan gastronomi serta memberikan implikasi praktikal kepada pihak berkepentingan pelancongan untuk mengutamakan penyampaian perkhidmatan yang konsisten.

Kata kunci: Pelancongan gastronomi, Kualiti perkhidmatan makanan, Kepuasan pelawat, Pengalaman gastronomi, Campuran pemasaran.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AS	Assurance
EM	Empathy
EDT	Expectation Disconfirmation Theory
EXP	Gastronomy experience
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HA	Horizontal Tourists' Gastronomy Experience
HTML	Heterotrait-Monotrait
OTOS	The Office of Trade Policy and Strategy
PLS	Partial Least Square
PLS- SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling
PRI	Price
PRO	Product
REL	Reliability
RES	Responsiveness
SAT	Tourists' satisfaction
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
TA	Tangibles
TAT	Tourism Authority of Thailand
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
VE	Vertical Tourists' Gastronomy Experience



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Background

Gastronomy tourism is renowned among international visitors. The Global Gastronomy Tourism Market 2020-2027 report demonstrated that international gastronomy tourism expanded at an average of 16.8% annually, with 5.4 billion visitors visiting different nations for diverse gastronomy experiences annually. An economic value of \$1,796.5 billion was anticipated by 2027 (Junlaphan, 2023). Food tourism has also significantly appealed to visitors, which has contributed to constant economic growth in local destinations (Vasileska & Reckoska, 2010). Italian wines have garnered higher traction through diverse offerings among connoisseurs and visitors across the globe and contributed approximately \$12 billion to the national economy (Colombini, 2015). Visitors primarily consumed meals at selected hotels and restaurants before the emergence of food tourism (Hall, 2013) due to the perceptions of safety at both hotels and restaurants (Sirichokchatchawan et al., 2021). The current rise of gastronomy tourism is owing to the capability of food functioning as a motivational factor to travel to a specific country (Hjalager & Richards, 2002), offering unique experiences (John Selwood, 2003; Long, 2004), symbolising unique cultures (Boniface, 2017), enhancing competitive edges and promoting economic sustainability, and driving economic growth (Ümit Çelebi, 2022). These developments indicate that gastronomy tourism is increasingly evaluated not only in economic terms but also through visitors' satisfaction with food-related travel experiences.

Food serves as a significant drive to travel to a particular nation as food offers distinctive experiences on top of cultural engagement and immersion (Cracolici &

Nijkamp, 2009). The Asia-Pacific Travel Intentions Survey revealed that 61% of international visitors demonstrated higher return intention to Thailand due to unique gastronomy experiences (Dayee et al., 2019), which increased the popularity and reputation of visitor destinations in Thailand. Simultaneously, more visitor destinations have been established in different nations, including Mexico, Vietnam, and Thailand, to appeal to more visitors via distinctive cuisines (LE Tuan Anh, 2010). Gastronomy tourism can also provide unique cultural experiences by symbolising the history, society, and lifestyle of local communities (Hall, 2013; Wolf, 2002). López-Guzmán et al. (2017) delineated that local cuisines are an integral component of cultural heritage, wherein local communities constantly evolve and transform respective gastronomy into unique arts and cultures, including chopsticks, pho, roti, sushi, market shopping, and European cafeteria, and exhibit local wisdom (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2017). Gastronomy experience is often conceptualised as more than food consumption, encompassing aspects such as food quality, service encounters, and the surrounding local ambience and culture. Such experiences emerge through visitors' involvement with multiple elements of the dining environment, contributing to sensory perceptions (e.g., taste and smell) and overall dining satisfaction (Gajdzik et al., 2023; Kovalenko et al., 2023)

Gastronomy tourism can provide unique, meaningful, and engaging experiences, which suits the trend of visitors proactively searching for alternative experiences and contributes to their overall satisfaction with food tourism experiences. In this study, the term gastronomy experience is used to represent food-related tourism experiences that extend beyond food preparation or culinary techniques to include service encounters, ambience, and cultural context. (Kivela & Crofts, 2006). Gajdzik et al. (2023) explicated that the emerging trend of gastronomy tourism stems from the

desire of visitors for alternative experiences, with local cuisines and quality experiences playing pivotal roles in ensuring visitor satisfaction, suggesting visitor satisfaction as an important outcome of gastronomy tourism experiences (Baluyot & Pampolina, 2021; Ghanem, 2019). In addition, food tourism can generate competitive edges, promote economic sustainability, and boost national revenue by attracting more visitors, offering quality and unique experiences, which contribute to visitor satisfaction guaranteeing high levels of life quality among local communities, and preserving local culture (Rinaldi, 2017). Numerous nations have also endeavoured to develop gastronomy tourism to gain a higher market share in the tourism sector by implementing competitive marketing approaches and advertising features distinctive from other nations (Singsomboon, 2014). Tourism firms in Europe, the United States of America (USA), Australia, and Asia have increasingly offered food tour packages by integrating local cuisines into typical travel schedules (Shalini & Duggal, 2015).

International visitors contributed \$9.59 billion to the national income via gastronomy tourism in 2016 (USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, 2017). The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) also discovered in 2017 that visitors spent approximately one-third of the travel budgets on food (Suanpleng, 2016), which provided benefits directly and indirectly to the tourism sector (Venkatesh & Goyal, 2010). Hence, gastronomy tourism can considerably influence the perception of a specific travel experience and visitor satisfaction, suggesting the relevance of visitor satisfaction in gastronomy-related tourism activities (Ghanem, 2019) while heightening the cognisance of local culture (Hall, 2013) and driving local economic growth (Jeremy Smith, 2017). Concurrently, consumers frequently (above 90%) peruse online and social media reviews to ascertain the value of and guide a specific purchase (Moran et al., 2014). Gastronomy tourism emphasising visitor experience

necessitates high service quality to ensure visitor contentment (Balderas-Cejudo et al., 2019; Björk et al., 2020). Visitor experience encapsulates direct or indirect engagement with product or service offerings, which leads to experiential value that determines the marketing strategies of a company (Richards, 2021; Mathwick et al., 2001).

Multiple Asian nations have substantially developed food tourism and relevant marketing strategies (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2017) to advertise unique local cuisines (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Du & Heath, 2006; McKercher et al., 2008). Hong Kong portrays an extensive spectrum of local and global cuisines, while Singapore highlights a rich cultural heritage for distinctive gastronomy experiences among international visitors. Taiwan is also popular for the diverse and distinctive Chinese food culture (Horng & Tsai, 2012), whereas Vietnam is popular for street food (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2017). Thailand was significantly and adversely impacted by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in 2020, as indicated by a substantial decline in visitor numbers and national income over the past decade (Siam Rath Online, 2020). The Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand identified a shift in visitors' patterns and demeanours and catalysed the rejuvenation of the tourism industry by developing food tourism (Krungthai Compass, 2024). The TAT also launched the "Year of Thai Gastronomy" campaign and the "Amazing Thailand Gastronomy City" project jointly to depict unique Thai food culture while promoting responsible tourism that positively contributed to local communities and the environment. Such initiatives may be relevant to enhancing visitors' overall satisfaction with gastronomy-related travel experiences.

The TAT recognised that restaurants certified by the Michelin Guide frequently appealed to more international visitors, which offered higher income to the

national economy when gastronomy tourism elevated from 223 million baht in 2022 to 263 million baht in 2023 (Junlaphan, 2023). Visitors frequently possess personally shortlisted food menus or restaurants, as reflected via the Food Travel Monitor Survey 2024 revealing that above 53% of visitors selected a tourist destination based on the offered cuisines in personal lists. Similarly, the International Tourist Behaviour Analysis Survey (2024) uncovered that food was a primary driver of travelling to Thailand (47%), with enjoying Thai food as the most frequently performed activity (89%). Food consumption also accounted for 20 to 25% of overall travel budgets (Krungthai Compass, 2024) as sufficient agricultural resources in Thailand offered adequate primary raw materials for preparing various cuisines with distinctive flavours across regions. As a result, significant and quality experiences were offered to visitor (Gajdzik et al., 2023; Chaigasem & Tunming, 2019) Such quality experiences may contribute to visitors' overall satisfaction with gastronomy-related travel in Thailand.



Figure 1. 1
Thai Food Market Value
 Source: Krungthai Compass, 2024

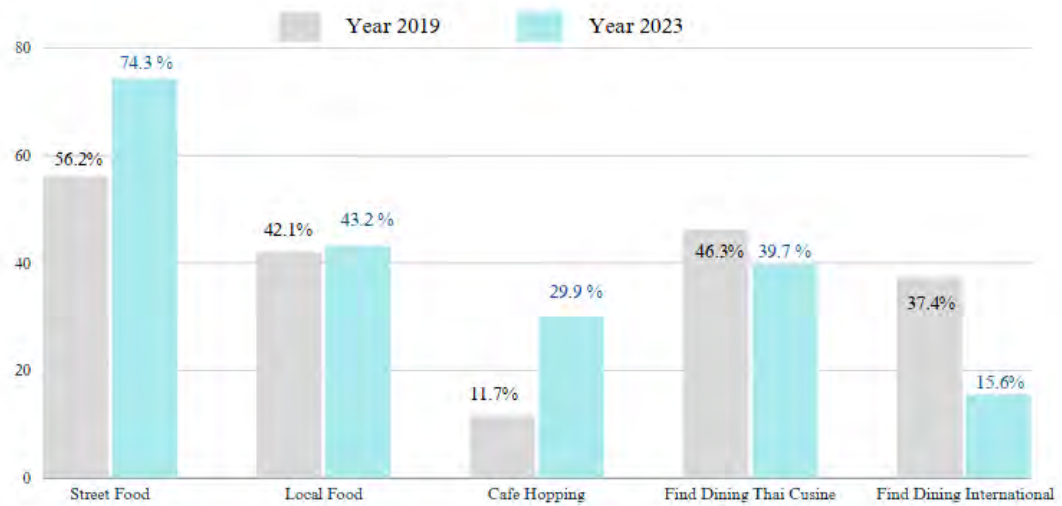


Figure 1. 2
Food Types Renowned among International Visitors
 Source: Krungthai Compass, 2024

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate that Thai local and street food, fine dining cuisines, and cafeterias or restaurants are constantly renowned among foreign visitors. Specifically, the most popular activity among foreign visitors when visiting Thailand was consuming Thai food (89.5%), with street food (18.1%) and café hopping (+18.2%) demonstrating growing trends compared to periods before the COVID-19 pandemic. The growing trend of Thai food also corresponded to the Office of Trade Policy and Strategy (OTPS), which projected that the Thai food market value would expand at an average of 6.72% annually between 2023 and 2028 when international visitors highly enjoyed Thai food and were predisposed to spend more on Thai national cuisines (Henkel et al., 2006). Smith, (2010) also elucidated that Thailand functions as a global centre for food tourism due to the exotic and unique food culture, which enables local cultural engagement and immersion that connects gastronomy tourism with experiential tourism. A visitor will be content when experiences are consistent with experiences and vice versa (Hughes, 1991; Pizam, 1982). Satisfaction is the sentiments elicited when contrasting personal anticipations with the subjective value of service or

product offerings (Kotler, 1997). Accordingly, visitor satisfaction in gastronomy tourism reflects visitors' overall evaluations of food-related experiences rather than isolated service encounters. The four main issues highlighted in the complaint data on gastronomy tourism reported by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT, 2023) can be explained as follows. First, food quality and hygiene remain a key concern: Thailand has a comparatively poor position in the world ranking (ranked 88th) for food service quality and food safety, indicating a need for destinations and foodservice companies to strengthen compliance with food quality and food safety requirements expressed both by visitors and other interested parties. Second, ambiance and local culture: The Cultural Resources pillar also scores below average because significant portions of authenticity are lost in destinations experiencing mass tourism, where visitors often lament overcrowding. Third, service quality: There is a recognized shortage of skilled workers and a lack of foreign language expertise, which may impede the level of service delivered to foreign visitors. Finally, product and price: One of the key complaints raised relates to the absence of standardized products and prices. In addition, food-related products are reported to be overpriced while simultaneously being associated with poor quality. When considered in total, these aspects might play a role in shaping visitors' assessment of their overall trip experiences, hence underscoring the significance of visitor satisfaction in the context of gastronomy tourism.

Gastronomy tourism has encountered multiple challenges, such as economic aspects, infrastructure, local cultures, services, environmental impacts, and safety (Şengül et al., 2024). Considerable literature gaps are also present in the current knowledge corpus. Past researchers primarily assessed physical characteristics, including amenities along the roads (Denstadli et al., 2011) and the routes and distance

between each attraction (Shoemaker et al., 2006). Investigations of factors contributing to visitors' experiences were limited (Garcia et al., 2013). Rather (2020) underscored that experiential marketing played a profound role in optimising the sequence of visitor attractions in a specific trip. Le et al., (2019) also emphasised that contemporary visitors frequently search for unique and alternative tourism experiences, with positive experiences and sentiments significantly contributing to higher visitor satisfaction (Oh et al., 2007; Yuan & Wu, 2008).

Furthermore, Tung and Ritchie (2011) delineated that tourism planning should be based on the objective of offering memorable experiences, in which a universal framework is infeasible. Alternative tourism modes, including cultural, recreational, ecological, ethnic, and heritage tourism, impact visitor experiences at varying degrees depending on the specific location, travel budget, and season (Moon, 1997, as cited in Yamashita, 2015). Thus, existing findings on gastronomy tourism as part of cultural tourism remain ambiguous.

1.2 Problem Statement

Gastronomy tourism is a niche tourism mode for visitors to acquire satisfaction from unique food experiences and engage in local cultures. Governments are required to effectively establish unique gastronomy sites through meticulous planning, product development, prevention, and personnel cultivation with continuous training to improve and sustain visitor satisfaction (Gheorghe et al., 2014). Visitors who are dissatisfied would exhibit lower revisit intention (Moutinho, 1987) as contented visitors would promote the visited destinations on social media and provide positive online reviews (Panagiota, 2017). The low service efficiency in Thailand has adversely impacted international visitor satisfaction (Office of the Permanent Secretary for Tourism and Sports, 2018).

Service quality and marketing mix have long been recognised as key determinants of visitor satisfaction in tourism research. Previous studies consistently demonstrate that service quality plays a critical role in shaping tourists' evaluations and satisfaction, particularly in service-intensive tourism contexts (Aeknarajindawat, 2019). Similarly, marketing mix components—especially product and price—have been shown to influence perceived value and satisfaction during the consumption stage of tourism experiences (Karim et al., 2021; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2003). In gastronomy tourism, food-related services are not only functional offerings but also represent cultural, sensory, and experiential elements that form an integral part of the overall visitor experience (Gheorghe et al., 2014; Kivela & Crotts, (2006).

From a theoretical perspective, tourism satisfaction studies have predominantly relied on Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) to explain how visitors form satisfaction judgments based on the comparison between expectations and perceived performance (Oliver, 1980). EDT has therefore been widely adopted as a core theoretical framework in tourism and hospitality research. In contrast, Social Exchange Theory (SET) has been applied less frequently as a primary explanatory theory in tourism satisfaction studies and has instead been used as a complementary lens to interpret perceived benefits and costs arising from service encounters (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). While these theories provide valuable insights into satisfaction formation, their application in tourism research has largely focused on direct and linear relationships between antecedents and satisfaction outcomes.

Despite the extensive application of EDT-based models, a clear knowledge gap remains regarding the conditional nature of visitor satisfaction formation in gastronomy tourism contexts. Existing studies have often examined service quality and

marketing mix components as direct predictors of satisfaction, while experiential factors—particularly gastronomy experience—have tended to be treated as separate or supplementary constructs (Somchan & Attabhanyo, 2020). As a result, it remains unclear whether gastronomy experience alters the strength or direction of the relationships between service quality, marketing mix, and visitor satisfaction.

Importantly, gastronomy experience is not treated merely as an additional food-related factor, but as a contextual condition that may shape how visitors interpret service encounters and marketing cues. Drawing on Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) and Social Exchange Theory (SET), this study proposes that the effects of service quality and marketing mix on visitor satisfaction may vary depending on visitors' level of gastronomy experience. In other words, individuals with richer gastronomy experience may evaluate service performance, product value, and pricing fairness differently compared to less experienced visitors. This moderating perspective remains underexplored in gastronomy tourism research, and therefore provides a stronger theoretical justification for adopting gastronomy experience as a moderating variable within the proposed framework.

To address this unresolved issue, the present study explicitly proposes gastronomy experience as a moderating variable. By examining how and under what conditions service quality and marketing mix exert differential effects on visitor satisfaction, this study adopts an integrative perspective that moves beyond direct-effect models and provides a more nuanced explanation of visitor satisfaction formation within a gastronomy tourism context (Chen & Chen, 2010).

Furthermore, this study focuses specifically on the product and price elements of the marketing mix, as these components are most closely associated with tourists'

on-site consumption experiences and direct evaluations of value. Other marketing mix elements, such as place and promotion, are primarily pre-consumption and managerial in nature and are therefore considered beyond the scope of the present investigation (Karim et al., 2021). Overall dissatisfaction may occur if tourists have unfavourable experiences with food services, which may subsequently reduce their intention to revisit a destination (Aeknarajindawat, 2019). Such inefficiencies have been identified as factors influencing international visitor satisfaction, particularly when tourists experience unfavourable food service conditions. Previous studies in the Thai tourism context have highlighted that shortcomings in food hygiene control, food handling practices, and service processes may negatively affect tourists' confidence and dining experiences (Booranakittipinyo, 2021). Table 1.1 demonstrates the declining pattern owing to food quality control issues and service delays (Office of the Permanent Secretary for Tourism and Sports, 2018). The restaurant ambience, hygiene, and food safety levels are also significant contributing factors. Moreover, the substandard food service quality, the incapacity to support large-scale tourism, and inadequate diversity are profound challenges in southern Thailand (Bunsirat, 2017). Restaurants in southern Thailand should also enhance hygiene and food quality and provide pricing labels to prevent overpriced food. Concurrently, the government can increase amenities in surrounding areas and continuously guarantee tidiness and cleanliness (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2019; Kee et al., 2024)

Table 1. 1

Factors related to food contributing to international visitors' revisit to Thailand in the following three years

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
%	51.90	57.40	38.40	42.20	41.15

Source: The Ministry of Tourism and Sport, 2015-2019

Although the official longitudinal statistics are only available up to 2019, recent national reports continue to highlight persistent concerns regarding food service quality and pricing fairness in Thailand's gastronomy sector (TAT, 2023)

Boonpienpon and Wongwiwattana (2017) elucidated that restaurant service quality should encompass food safety. Reliability should also be emphasised, including the restaurant name, price, menu, and certificate to ensure a high standard, price fairness, and a comfortable environment. Dissatisfied visitors would share negative experiences online, which can reduce future revisit intention (Chiwakunanan, 2018) and diminish local economies depending on tourism (Bank of Thailand, 2024). Numerous scholars examined the five aspects of service quality, namely assurance, reliability, empathy, responsiveness, and tangibles, to attain consumer satisfaction. Oh and Kim (2017) also propounded that service quality, consumer satisfaction, and consumer value are crucial aspects of the hospitality and tourism sectors. Nevertheless, relevant academic interests and investigations on service quality and the marketing mix have continually decreased (Kuruppu et al., 2018).

Previous tourism studies have predominantly relied on Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) to explain visitor satisfaction, particularly through tourists' evaluations of service quality and marketing-related attributes based on the comparison between expectations and perceived performance (Oliver, 1980). EDT has therefore been widely recognised as a core theoretical framework in tourism and hospitality research.

In contrast, Social Exchange Theory (SET) has been used less frequently as a primary explanatory theory in tourism satisfaction studies and has instead served as a complementary theoretical lens to support interpretations of perceived benefits and

costs arising from service encounters (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). While these theories provide valuable insights into satisfaction formation, their application in tourism research has largely focused on direct and linear relationships, offering limited explanation of how contextual or experiential conditions may influence these relationships.

In the context of gastronomy tourism, however, visitor evaluations are closely tied to experiential and contextual elements, particularly food-related experiences, which shape how service encounters are perceived and interpreted rather than functioning as intermediary mechanisms within the satisfaction process (Gheorghe et al., 2014). Gastronomy experiences are inherently subjective and experiential, involving sensory, emotional, and cultural dimensions that influence visitors' overall evaluations of tourism services. Although an increasing number of tourism studies have examined service quality, marketing mix components, and visitor satisfaction, much of the existing literature has addressed these factors in a fragmented manner. Some studies concentrate on the individual dimensions of service quality, while others focus on the role of the marketing mix in shaping visitor satisfaction. However, such approaches tend to pay limited attention to the experiential context in which tourists actually consume services, particularly within the setting of gastronomy tourism. Consequently, a clear knowledge gap remains in understanding how gastronomy experience influences the relationships between service quality, marketing mix, and visitor satisfaction. More specifically, it is still unclear whether variations in gastronomy experience can strengthen or weaken the effects of service quality and marketing mix on visitor satisfaction, rather than merely acting as another direct antecedent.

To address this gap, the present study explicitly examines the moderating role of gastronomy experience. By adopting this integrative approach, the study moves beyond the direct-effect models commonly employed in prior tourism research and offers a more nuanced explanation of how visitor satisfaction is shaped under different gastronomy experience conditions. Accordingly, this study addresses this theoretical gap by proposing gastronomy experience as a moderating variable, thereby extending the application of EDT and SET to better capture experiential influences on the relationships between service quality, marketing mix, and visitor satisfaction (Oliver, 1980; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Gheorghe et al., 2014). By incorporating gastronomy experience as a contextual condition, this study seeks to explain how and under what circumstances service quality and marketing mix exert differential effects on visitor satisfaction within a gastronomy tourism context.

Service quality serves as a vital factor contributing to visitor satisfaction across countries and the overall experience of travellers to Thailand. Aeknarajindawat (2019) appraised visitors' perceptions of food service quality in Thailand and discovered that foreign visitors highly emphasised service quality. Conversely, Chen & Chen (2010) revealed that the impact of service quality on visitor satisfaction is not always direct and may depend on additional explanatory mechanisms or contextual conditions. This suggests that the service quality–satisfaction relationship is complex and may vary across different experiential contexts. Therefore, rather than introducing a mediating mechanism, the present study adopts gastronomy experience as a moderating variable to examine how and under what conditions service quality and marketing mix exert differential effects on visitor satisfaction in a tourism setting. Other studies have also demonstrated that factors such as the marketing mix play an important role in shaping visitor satisfaction (Azhar et al., 2019), while food-related experiences may vary

across different ethnic groups (Kivela & Crofts, 2006). Although several studies have introduced mediating variables to explain how service quality affects visitor satisfaction, these mediating variables mainly explain the process through which service quality influences satisfaction; however, they are less effective in explaining when this relationship may vary across different experiential contexts. As a result, less attention has been given to understanding the conditions under which this relationship may change across different experiential contexts. In the field of gastronomy and tourism, most existing studies continue to examine direct relationships and have recommended that future research incorporate mediating and moderating variables to strengthen explanatory insight (Somchan & Attabhanyo, 2020).

In gastronomy tourism, food experience is inherently experiential and subjective. It influences how visitors perceive and evaluate service encounters rather than acting as an intermediate outcome in the satisfaction process (Gheorghe et al., 2014). Accordingly, this study proposes gastronomy experience as a contextual moderating variable to examine how differences in food-related experiences may strengthen or weaken the relationships between service quality, marketing mix, and visitor satisfaction. This highlights a theoretical gap in understanding the conditional mechanisms through which service quality and marketing mix influence visitor satisfaction within the proposed conceptual framework.

The marketing mix encompasses the place, price, product, and promotion or collectively the 4Ps (Relifra & Wardi, 2022; Walker, 2021), which can determine customers' decisions to travel to a tourist attraction (Giang, 2022). Sarker et al. (2012) also uncovered that price sensitivity for quality food and beverages, accommodations, transportation, and travel expenditures functioned as a profound competitive edge for

travel agencies. Simultaneously, products play an essential role in customer loyalty (Ribka et al., 2023), with visitor satisfaction contingent on location-specific and customised marketing approaches (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2003). While the marketing mix components potentially allow tourism firms to formulate pertinent strategies (Sarker et al., 2012), visitor dissatisfaction and lower revenue would be observed when being inappropriately implemented (Azhar et al., 2019). Prior scholars scarcely assess the impacts of the 4Ps on food tourism.

Prior research on the service marketing mix suggests that different elements of the marketing mix do not contribute to consumer experience and behavioural outcomes in the same way. Empirical studies in tourism and service contexts indicate that the influence of marketing mix components varies depending on contextual and experiential conditions (Karim et al., 2021; Azhar et al., 2019). In gastronomy tourism contexts, visitors tend to evaluate food quality, menu variety, and price fairness as integral parts of their overall dining experience, which directly shapes satisfaction formation (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2003; Sarker et al., 2012). In contrast, other marketing mix components, such as place and promotion, are typically encountered prior to consumption and mainly function as managerial or decision-support mechanisms rather than experiential elements during service encounters (Karim et al., 2021). These patterns indicate that marketing mix components are not uniformly perceived or evaluated during experiential consumption, thereby supporting the decision to focus on product and price in this study's conceptual framework.

Performance expectancy would lead to higher revisit intention through more unique experiences and higher satisfaction (Roy Dholakia & Zhao, 2010) when visitors were immersed and engaged in local cultures (Lee, 2015). Past academicians

extensively evaluated the degree of visitor satisfaction. The topic has also garnered higher traction in recent years. Numerous scholars also scrutinised overall visitor satisfaction via different aspects, such as integrating general dimensions of the dining experience with visitor satisfaction metrics. The dimensions include overall food (Carvalho et al., 2023), variety, and quality (Hui et al., 2007). Certain researchers also employed alternative methods, including appraising visitor satisfaction in terms of the trip experience. While tourism activities and products were frequently explored, solely concentrating on visitor satisfaction through the dining experience and individual variations remained limited. Meanwhile, certain academicians analysed particular populations, including students or the elderly (Correia et al., 2008). Accordingly, the present study seeks to investigate the interaction between food service quality, the marketing mix, food experience, and visitor satisfaction to resolve the aforementioned tourism challenges in southern Thailand while bridging existing literature gaps. The moderating role of food experience was also scrutinised.

1.3 Research Questions (RQs)

1. Does service quality significantly impact visitor satisfaction?
2. Does the marketing mix significantly impact visitor satisfaction?
3. Does gastronomy experience moderate the relationship between food service quality and visitor satisfaction?
4. Does gastronomy experience moderate the relationship between the marketing mix and visitor satisfaction?

1.4 Research Objectives (ROs)

1. To examine the impact of food service quality on visitor satisfaction.
2. To assess the influence of the marketing mix on visitor satisfaction.
3. To evaluate whether gastronomy experience moderates the relationship between food service quality and visitor satisfaction.
4. To evaluate whether gastronomy experience moderates the relationship between the marketing mix and visitor satisfaction.

1.5 Study Significance

Theoretical contributions would be provided to researchers by developing a theoretical model to delineate the dynamics between visitor satisfaction and contributing factors. By positioning gastronomy experience as a moderating condition, the study extends Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) beyond direct-effect models and contributes to a more contextualised explanation of visitor satisfaction formation in gastronomy tourism. Potential moderating variables, including gastronomy experience, could also be determined. Previous academicians uncovered significant associations between the components of service quality and visitor satisfaction (Iskandar, 2019; Javed et al., 2020) and between the marketing mix elements and visitor satisfaction (Mustaqimah et al., 2019; Mulyana & Prayetno, 2018; Verma & Singh, 2017). The current study incorporated gastronomy experience as a moderating variable in the interplay between food service quality, the marketing mix, and visitor satisfaction, especially in southern Thailand. Gastronomy experiences differ according to individual variations in dining experiences (Correia et al., 2008).

1.5.1 Significance to Scholars

Theoretical contributions would be provided to researchers by developing a theoretical model to delineate the dynamics between visitor satisfaction and contributing factors. Potential moderating variables, including gastronomy experience, could also be determined. Previous academicians uncovered significant associations between the components of service quality and visitor satisfaction (Iskandar, 2019; Javed et al., 2020) and between the marketing mix elements and visitor satisfaction (Mustaqimah et al., 2019; Mulyana & Prayetno, 2018; Verma & Singh, 2017). The current study incorporated gastronomy experience as a moderator in the interplay between food service quality, the marketing mix, and visitor satisfaction, especially in southern Thailand. Gastronomy experiences differ according to individual variations in dining experiences (Correia et al., 2008).

1.5.2 Significance to Practitioners

Practical insights were provided to practitioners via pertinent suggestions to enhance food tourist satisfaction in southern Thailand and the revisit intention. The findings could aid the TAT or food tourism firms and other stakeholders in establishing efficacious strategies for resolving food quality issues and creating unique selling points. Simultaneously, the findings could assist in creating more revenue for local, regional, and national communities that depend on tourism as the primary income source while guaranteeing tourism sustainability in southern Thailand. Restaurants and food tourism organisations can also develop schemes with more unique food experiences, higher service quality, more stringent local food standards, and reasonable pricing points to maximise international visitor satisfaction.

1.6 Study Scope and Limitations

The current investigation concentrated on international visitor satisfaction who visited southern Thailand for gastronomy experience. Contemporarily, gastronomy satisfaction has considerably dwindled among international visitors in southern Thailand, which has led to diminished revenue. The present study gathered responses from international visitors who had travelled to and dined in the old town areas of Krabi, Surat Thani, Phuket, and Phang Nga provinces. Concurrently, the current knowledge corpus on food service quality was systematically reviewed in terms of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. The marketing mix components, namely products and pricing, and visitor (Kewas et al., 2020; Mantik et al., 2022) were also scrutinised as the current literature has demonstrated that both components are the primary challenges encountered by international visitors in southern Thailand. Moreover, the moderating role of gastronomy experience was appraised in this study owing to limited investigations by prior academicians (Correia et al., 2008).

The current investigation focuses on international visitors who visited southern Thailand for gastronomy experience. Specifically, the respondents comprised international visitors aged 18 years and above who had travelled to southern Thailand and dined in the old town areas of Krabi, Surat Thani, Phuket, and Phang Nga provinces. International visitors were selected as the target respondents because they constitute a major segment of Thailand's tourism market and are more exposed to diverse food service standards and marketing practices. Their evaluations therefore provide meaningful insights into visitor satisfaction in relation to food service quality, the marketing mix, and gastronomy experience within the southern Thailand context.

Detailed respondent characteristics and sampling procedures are further elaborated in Chapter 3.

The geographical scope of this study is limited to Krabi, Surat Thani, Phuket, and Phang Nga, which are key tourism provinces in southern Thailand. These provinces were selected because they are well-known tourism destinations that consistently attract a high number of international visitors and offer a wide range of food service establishments representing diverse gastronomy experiences. In addition, the selected provinces include old town areas where local food culture, traditional cuisines, and food service practices are prominently preserved and experienced by visitors. Focusing on these provinces allows the study to appropriately examine the relationships among food service quality, marketing mix, gastronomy experience, and visitor satisfaction within a representative southern Thailand tourism setting, without extending beyond the defined research scope.

1.7 Definitions of Key Terms

- 1.** Service quality refers to consumers' subjective perceptions of particular characteristics of service offerings, namely assurance, responsiveness, empathy, reliability, and tangibles (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). In this study, service quality is operationalised based on international visitors' perceptions of food service encounters experienced during their visit.
- 2.** Tangibles are defined as services offered to consumers that can be measured to gauge the service quality. Tangibles are related to equipment, staff, communication instruments and signals, locations, and the environment (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1988). In this study, tangibles are operationalised based on visitors' perceptions of the physical aspects of food service environments during dining experiences.

- 3.** Reliability refers to the services with promised quality standards offered accurately and consistently (Zeithaml et al., 1988). In this study, reliability is operationalised based on visitors' perceptions of the consistency and dependability of food service performance.
- 4.** Responsiveness is defined as the capability of a service provider to efficiently and effectively address consumers' requirements depending on internal management and service procedures, and employee preparedness to aid and service consumers (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). In this study, responsiveness is operationalised based on visitors' perceptions of how promptly and effectively food service staff respond to their needs and requests.
- 5.** Assurance refers to the capacity of a service provider to ensure consumers' well-being through appropriate service attitudes to inject high trust and confidence levels in service quality (Zeithaml et al., 1988). In this study, assurance is operationalised based on visitors' perceptions of food service staff knowledge, courtesy, and professionalism.
- 6.** Empathy refers to a customer's predisposition to be recognised and respected by service providers to fulfil personal needs through effective communication (Zeithaml et al., 2000). In this study, empathy is operationalised based on visitors' perceptions of personalised care and attention provided during food service interactions.
- 7.** The marketing mix encapsulates tactical marketing instruments to regulate and stimulate intended responses from target consumers (Tanveer et al., 2017). In this study, the marketing mix is operationalised by focusing exclusively on the product and price components within the context of food services in gastronomy tourism. The promotion and place components are excluded from the study scope.

8. A product includes three categories, namely core products (the essential benefit), tangible products (provided for sale and usage), and augmented products (tangible with value-added features) (Levitt, 1981). In this study, product is operationalised based on visitors' perceptions of food and beverage offerings and their associated attributes in food service settings.

9. Price refers to the combination of all values exchanged by customers for the benefits of utilising a specific service or product (Kotler & Gary, 2008). In this study, price is operationalised based on visitors' perceptions of price fairness and value for money in relation to food service experiences.

10. Gastronomy tourism involves visitors travelling to specific tourist destinations catered for distinctive cuisines, restaurants, food festivals, and food production (Hall & Mitchell, 2006).

11. The gastronomy experience is a memorable journey visitors acquire after enjoying offered services or products related to food (Joseph & Gilmore, 1998). In this study, gastronomy experience is operationalised based on visitors' overall experiential perceptions derived from dining activities during their visit.

12. Horizontal gastronomy experiences include visitors' active and passive participation, with relevant impacts on the event directly or indirectly (Joseph & Gilmore, 1998).

13. Vertical gastronomy experiences refer to tourists resonating with the psychological, physical, or virtual engagement or immersion in a specific food event (Joseph & Gilmore, 1998).

14. Visitor satisfaction refers to visitors' elicited feelings after a trip (Baker & Crompton, 2000). In this study, visitor satisfaction is operationalised based on visitors' overall evaluation of food service experiences during their visit.

1.8 Study Organisation

The present study comprises five chapters, with the first chapter delineating the study background and offering a general overview of gastronomy tourism. Problem statements, RQs, ROs, significance, scope, and limitations have also been elucidated. The second chapter delineates food tourism in southern Thailand and conducts literature reviews on relevant variables, namely food service quality, the marketing mix, gastronomy experience, and visitor satisfaction, to establish a conceptual model and propose pertinent hypotheses. The following chapter delineates the study design and methodology, measurement scales, sample population, data collection techniques, the questionnaire, and the reliability and validity of the gathered data. The fourth chapter assesses the gathered data while the final chapter summarises and concludes the findings based on stipulated RQs and ROs. Theoretical and practical implications and future directions are also discussed.

1.9 Summary

The present chapter has delineated the study background, general food tourism, problem statements, significance, RQs, and ROs, scope, and limitations while defining key terms. Potential theoretical and practical contributions have also been discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The current chapter provides a holistic literature review on service quality, the marketing mix, gastronomy experience, and tourist satisfaction while discussing the interaction between the aforementioned variables, proposing a pertinent conceptual model, and developing hypotheses.

2.2 Tourism and Gastronomy Tourism in Thailand

Gastronomy tourism is a popular type of travel worldwide, especially among international tourists who experience travel through authentic food. Tourists around the world find this interesting and choose destinations in order to gain memorable culinary experiences. In the past, tourists often viewed food as a secondary activity during travel, but today gastronomy tourism has become a primary activity for many visitors. However, gastronomy tourism can also serve as an economic driver for destinations. Gastronomy tourism reflects a more experience-oriented perspective, in which food quality, restaurant settings, and local food identity affect tourists' overall evaluations of their travel. This identifies the need to study the connection between the growth of gastronomy tourism and service quality and satisfaction perspectives in southern Thailand.

Tourism functions as a significant economic sector across the globe and substantially contributes to economic growth in above 185 nations and across 25 regions due to extensive tourist spending, procurement, and revenue. Tourism is also one of the rapidly expanding sectors worldwide by offering numerous employment opportunities, regional economic benefits, and national pride, particularly among

developing economies (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019). Furthermore, the sector is service-based and serves as a major driver of the Thai economy by producing considerable revenue above 100 billion baht annually. Other economic benefits, including the proliferation of restaurants, accommodations, and souvenir shops, have also been observed in local communities. Accordingly, the Thai government has developed numerous strategies to increase the efficiency and quality of Thai tourism for global visitors. Travel destinations, transportation, and accommodations have been expanded by developing alternative travel sites, more accommodations in each province, convenient travel routes to multiple destinations, and various restaurants (Hirunprueck, 2023). In the tourism context, destination and travel experiences generate profits for many destinations worldwide and create a competitive advantage over others.

The Thai economy primarily relies on tourism, agriculture, and service. The largest sector is the service industry, which has constituted approximately 50% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the past vicennial period. Nevertheless, the service industry has not constantly increased the contribution to the national GDP compared to other similar nations due to the prevalence of general service offerings and low-skilled labour. Thus, the service sector in China has swiftly elevated the contribution to the national GDP and is about to be on par with Thailand (Ulrich Zachau, 2016). The TAT reported above 28 million international visitors visited Thailand in 2023, with South Korea, India, China, Laos, Malaysia, Russia, and Vietnam contributing above 1 million visitors (Mingsan Khaosat, 2024). Nonetheless, Thailand was ranked 47th among 119 nations in terms of tourism development by the World Economic Forum (WEF), which declined from 41st in 2019 due to a decrease of 2.5% in the overall score. The primary contributing factor was the presence of

multiple substandard tourism services and infrastructure to be further enhanced despite being renowned as a global travel destination (BrandAge, 2024). In the context of gastronomy experiences, service quality and visitor satisfaction are key areas for improvement. Hence, effective service improvements and marketing approaches are imperative to attaining sustainable tourism growth and elevating the contribution to national GDP through quality travel destinations to offer remarkable, unique, and meaningful experiences and improve visitor satisfaction and revisit intention (Timdang & Panjakajornsak, 2011).

Gastronomy tourism is popular among international visitors and is growing, as gastronomy experiences are related to how international visitors evaluate destinations. Gastronomy, culinary, or food tourism demonstrates an average of 16.8% growth or 5,4 billion visitors annually, in which visitors actively search for distinctive local cuisines as an integral part of the trip (World Tourism Organization, 2012). This form of tourism also serves as a pivotal selling point in tourism branding to boost the local image. The usage of multiple local ingredients for service quality is a unique selling point in Thailand. Numerous restaurants offer food that integrates local culture with innovation to preserve local identity while sustaining a competitive advantage (World Tourism Organization, 2017). While reasonable pricing points significantly promote Thai gastronomy tourism (Chamnancha, 2018), issues related to restaurant hygiene, cleanliness, food quality, and price labels to prevent overpriced food persist in southern Thailand. Problems related to poor hygiene and price fairness can reduce international visitor satisfaction, as restaurant experiences affect the overall travel evaluation.

The Thai government should support local restaurants in enhancing the image of restaurants and surrounding areas by stipulating high standards of cleanliness, hygiene, and tidiness among tourism operators who receive inadequate promotion and education from culinary tourism organisations (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2019).

Importantly, international tourists often evaluate destinations not only through cultural authenticity but also through service performance and marketing-related attributes such as food quality and price fairness. This reflects that gastronomy tourism should not be viewed simply as one of the activities of tourism, but rather as an experiential trip involving dining experiences, ambience settings, and customer-perceived value. Therefore, gastronomy tourism research is needed in order to provide a more coherent understanding of visitor outcomes by connecting satisfaction, selected marketing mix elements (product and price), and service quality perspectives. Thus, examining service quality and the marketing mix in an integrated manner within gastronomy tourism can improve visitor satisfaction outcomes. The next section provides a definition of gastronomy tourism for clarity of this concept.

In summary, Thailand has actively promoted gastronomy tourism, including the positioning of certain areas as gastronomy cities. Recently, both scholars and tourism practitioners have increasingly recognised gastronomy tourism as an important element in shaping a destination's brand image and attracting international visitors. At the same time, challenges related to service standards, food quality, and perceptions of price fairness suggest that gastronomy experiences are not always equally positive across destinations. These concerns indicate the need to examine gastronomy tourism using a more integrated perspective that links service quality and selected marketing mix cues with visitor satisfaction. Such an approach provides a

clearer basis for understanding how international tourists evaluate their experiences and supports the development of the proposed hypotheses in this study.

2.3 Definition of Gastronomy Tourism

Research in gastronomy tourism has received increasing attention, as gastronomy experiences are a key part of travel. To understand this concept, several scholars have provided definitions that emphasise cultural authenticity and food encounters as important motivations for visitors when choosing a destination. Urry (2002) denoted gastronomy tourists as visitors in search of authentic culinary experiences that symbolise simplicity, uniqueness, local culture, and local lifestyle. Hall and Mitchell (2006) described gastronomy tourism as travelling to primary and secondary food producers, restaurants, festivals, and specialised locations to experience unique food and acquire food processing knowledge in different nations. Ignatov and Smith (2006) also elucidated that the primary drivers to attending food events or activities are purchasing and consuming regional food and beverages. Hence, culinary tourism is a trip encouraged by local food, unique food festivals, distinctive food production methods, specialised restaurants, and food-specific destinations (Hall & Mitchell, 2006). Overall, these definitions suggest that gastronomy tourism is an experiential form of travel in which authentic food encounters become central to how tourists evaluate a destination. Since such experiences are often delivered through service settings, visitor satisfaction is shaped not only by cultural authenticity but also by service quality and perceived value.

2.4 Tourist Satisfaction

Satisfaction is an emotion elicited when the perceived values of service or product offerings align with an individual's anticipations before utilising specific products and services. Similarly, a mismatch would result in dissatisfaction (Kotler, 1997). Visitor satisfaction refers to the consistency between visitors' anticipations and experiences at specific travel destinations (Cadotte et al., 1987; Moutinho, 1987; Pizam & Calantone, 1987; Whipple & Thach, 1988). Hughes (1991) discovered that visitors' experiences aligned with anticipations would be satisfied with the trip. Meanwhile, Ølander (1977) contended that visitors would remain satisfied despite a mismatch as satisfaction could emerge from personal standards, needs, beliefs, or values being fulfilled (Pearce & Moscardo, 1998). Satisfaction is not related only to achieving expectations. In particular, it concerns tourism experiences that visitors evaluate during the trip.

2.4.1 Visitor Satisfaction on Food Tourism

A meal can generate contentment from the restaurant ambience or the direct engagement with unique local food and food culture instead of fulfilling the physiological requirement, namely hunger, or survival purposes. Culinary tourism in Thailand consists of unique origins, stories, and production methods, which have produced amiable relationships with international visitors and elevated visitor satisfaction (Privitera & Nesci, 2015). Lowenberg et al. (1970) implemented Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory to elucidate how food consumption demeanours could generate life satisfaction. Specifically, consumption fulfils physiological requirements, which are fundamentals of human survival. Food consumption is also related to social needs in terms of gathering food for security or peace of mind. Simultaneously, food functions as a medium to develop interactions, create

belongingness, generate cultural significance, and produce cultural unity. The consumed food also symbolises the social status of an individual, such as caviar frequently associated with luxury or premium image. An individual can attain self-realisation by fulfilling the aforementioned requirements before developing unique experiences from food across various cultures. Accordingly, Yüksel and Rimmington (1998) revealed that food served as a driver of revisit intention and Hu and Ritchie (1993) food was the top motivational factor in tourism, followed by weather, infrastructure, and scenery. However, visitor dissatisfaction can stem from negative gastronomic experiences, such as inconsistent service performance, communication difficulties during dining encounters, low food quality, and unfair pricing.

2.4.2 Dissatisfied Visitors

Food tourism potentially engenders visitor dissatisfaction owing to inconsistent food service quality and communication barriers in Southern Thailand, apart from certain restaurant operators not sustaining local identity, food standards, taste, and culinary quality (Wanphen Kuensman et al., 2022). Therefore, visitors might become less inclined to revisit and switch to other tourist destinations (Moutinho, 1987). Besides, in gastronomy tourism, how tourists assess restaurant-based experiences is strongly linked to service quality (SERVQUAL), such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, and this affects their satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Overall, visitor satisfaction in gastronomy tourism cannot be explained solely by food consumption itself. Rather, satisfaction emerges from the broader service experience and the value perceptions formed throughout the dining process. While gastronomy tourism highlights authenticity and local culture, satisfaction studies emphasise whether visitors' expectations are fulfilled after consumption. Importantly,

dissatisfaction often occurs when service delivery, pricing clarity, or restaurant ambience fails to meet tourists' anticipated standards. This suggests that gastronomy tourism outcomes are multidimensional and require an integrated explanation that links service quality and marketing-related factors within the same framework.

Therefore, to evaluate gastronomy experiences and services in southern Thailand, this study positions visitor satisfaction as the dependent variable.

2.5 Service Quality and Visitor Satisfaction

Service quality in gastronomy tourism is particularly important for visitor satisfaction, as tourists evaluate their satisfaction through service encounters, dining experiences, and cultural authenticity. Service quality is an intangible component that can fulfil customers' requirements (Etzel et al., 1997) and impact satisfaction degrees. Lewis and Booms (1983) denoted service quality in terms of the extent to which consumers' requirements are fulfilled while aligning with customers' anticipations (Zeithaml et al., 1988). Schmenner and Swink (1998) also delineated service quality as the consistency between experiences and anticipations. A mismatch would lead to a negative evaluation of service quality. Contrarily, fulfilled or surpassed anticipations would render a positive appraisal of service quality. Thus, service quality is a concept and practice among consumers based on the alignment between personal experiences and anticipations, which determines consumer satisfaction (Zeithaml. et al., 1988). Various nations have increasingly focused on service quality to appeal to more tourists (Dawkins & Reichheld, 1990; Zeithaml et al., 1996) as a sustainable strategy for promoting tourism (Yoon & Ekinci, 2003). Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Muskat et al. (2019) discovered high service quality degrees significantly and positively contributed to visitor satisfaction and revisit rates. Other researchers also demonstrated

the significant impact of service quality on visitor satisfaction (Rajaratnam et al., 2014;Tefera & Govender, 2017).

Maestro et al. (2007) uncovered that service quality was a multifaceted concept, which encompassed several crucial aspects to be fulfilled to ensure consumer satisfaction. Han and Hyun (2017) demonstrated that Korean restaurant service quality directly impacted consumer satisfaction while Chang (2006) revealed that hotel employees' personalities were highly associated with service quality. Meanwhile, Manurung and Wahyono (2018) demonstrated that service quality insignificantly impacted tourist satisfaction and the decision-making process in Pati, Central Java. Javed et al. (2020) also demonstrated that service quality insignificantly influenced visitor satisfaction at the popular zoo of the Moravian region in the Czech Republic. The contradictory results in past research required further examinations to thoroughly comprehend the respective impacts of relevant factors on visitor satisfaction.

Many past studies have found a positive relationship between service quality and satisfaction; however, some studies suggest that the effect of service quality may depend on experiential factors, particularly in gastronomy tourism, as gastronomy tourism is an experience of food-related travel. Service quality becomes a key factor that visitors use to evaluate and interpret their dining experiences. Tourists frequently assess professionalism and cultural hospitality based on tangible elements, staff responsiveness, and empathy. However, empirical findings remain inconsistent across various tourism contexts, suggesting that service quality may not have a uniform impact in all situations. This reinforces the need for further context-specific examination, particularly within gastronomy destinations such as southern Thailand.

Despite the extensive use of SERVQUAL models for assessing service quality in tourism, there are variations within the gastronomy tourism context. Therefore, gastronomy experiences are multidimensional and context-dependent. This supports the need to discuss SERVQUAL in relation to gastronomy experience.

2.5.1 Service Quality Dimensions

Zeithaml et al. (1990) initially developed 10 dimensions to assess service quality, namely accessibility, security, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, competence, credibility, courtesy, communication, and tangibles, before streamlining them into five dimensions after performing factor analysis. This SERVQUAL framework uses these five dimensions, namely tangibles, such as equipment, infrastructure, and staff; reliability, which is the capacity to efficiently and appropriately deliver the promised service; responsiveness, which is the tendency to assist tourists and efficiently provide relevant services; assurance, which refers to staff knowledge, competence, credibility, and courtesy, as well as the ability to instil confidence and trust; and finally, empathy, which is personalised assistance for tourists while seeking to understand consumers through effective communication, together when visitors assess their gastronomy experience and their effect on satisfaction. These SERVQUAL dimensions are interrelated and jointly influence visitors' satisfaction evaluations in gastronomy tourism, rather than operating independently.

2.5.1.1 Tangibles and visitor satisfaction

Tangibles encapsulate multiple aspects, including employees, infrastructure, locations, equipment, communication means and signals, and the environment (Zeithaml et al., 1990). Omar, Arifin and Ahmad (2016) discovered that tangibles were significantly and positively correlated to tourist satisfaction. Akbaba (2006) scrutinised the quality of hotel services in Turkey and revealed that tangibles produced the highest impact on visitors' evaluation of service quality. Al-Ababneh (2013) revealed that the tangibles of tourism services significantly and positively contributed to visitor satisfaction. Luu Thanh Duc Hai (2014, as cited in Huynh et al., 2021) and Nguyen Thi Cam (2018 as cited in Mai et al., 2023) uncovered that tangibles positively impacted visitor satisfaction. Conversely, Giao et al. (2020) investigated the correlation between tourism service quality factors and visitor satisfaction in Bao Loc City through the SERVQUAL scale and discovered that tangibles insignificantly influenced visitor satisfaction. Siregar et al. (2019) also measured the impact of service quality on visitor satisfaction at Medan Zoo, North Sumatra, Indonesia and revealed that tangibles did not produce any influence on visitor satisfaction. Additionally, Fakharyan et al. (2014) interviewed hotel guests in Tehran and demonstrated that tangibles were ambiguous or inconsistently maintained. Khunwanich and Tarnittanakorn (2017) also uncovered that visitors concentrated more on different factors in service quality, such as food taste and unique experiences. Tangibles in gastronomy tourism can reflect the cultural ambience and food authenticity of a destination, which can enhance visitors' satisfaction with their dining experiences. Demoulin and Willems (2019) elucidated that an aesthetically unattractive environment would result in visitor dissatisfaction. Summarily, inconsistent results require more investigations to deepen the comprehension of potential factors contributing to visitor satisfaction.

Overall, prior studies have reported mixed empirical findings regarding the effect of tangibles on visitor satisfaction, as some studies have identified significant relationships, whereas others have reported insignificant effects. Such variations suggest that the influence of tangibles on visitor satisfaction may differ across tourism contexts, thereby indicating the need for further investigation within gastronomy tourism settings. Overall, prior studies have reported mixed empirical findings regarding the effect of tangibles on visitor satisfaction, as some studies have identified significant relationships, whereas others have reported insignificant effects. Such variations suggest that the influence of tangibles on visitor satisfaction may differ across tourism contexts, thereby indicating the need for further investigation within gastronomy tourism settings. Beyond tangible settings, reliability reflects the consistency of service delivery, which is a key factor in visitor satisfaction in gastronomy tourism.

2.5.1.2 Reliability and visitor satisfaction

Reliability refers to a consumer's trust in the capability of a service provider to address consumers' requirements through delivered promises and high-quality service consistently (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003; Zeithaml et al., 1990). Zeithaml et al. (1988) and Parasuraman et al. (1988) underscored that reliability was highly crucial to consumers in appraising the quality of received services. While food quality and perceived value profoundly and positively contribute to customer satisfaction (Qin et al., 2010), the reliability aspect of service quality also considerably influences consumer satisfaction (Yeilada & Direktör, 2010). Lee and Ulgado (1997) revealed that low food prices and customer trust were integral aspects to the consumers in the USA, whereas Korean consumers prioritised empathy and reliability. Contrastingly, Saragih and Jonathan (2019) revealed that reliability insignificantly impacted

customer satisfaction. Nguyen et al. (2018) also demonstrated reliability in UK fast-food restaurants produced marginal impacts on customer satisfaction despite exhibiting a positive relationship. Bougoure and Neu (2010) demonstrated that service reliability in the Malaysian rapid-food industry was suboptimal while Agbor (2011) uncovered that reliability only marginally impacted consumer satisfaction across different service industries. Reliability in gastronomy tourism refers to consistent food service standards, which can enhance visitors' satisfaction with their dining experiences.

Hence, more examinations are necessary to delineate the influence of reliability on customer satisfaction. Although reliability has been widely recognised as an essential dimension of service quality, existing empirical evidence remains inconclusive, as previous studies have reported both significant and insignificant relationships with visitor satisfaction. This inconsistency suggests that the effect of reliability on satisfaction outcomes may be contingent upon contextual or experiential factors. Moreover, responsiveness is important in unfamiliar restaurant environments, as it reflects how promptly service staff address tourists' needs.

2.5.1.3 Responsiveness and visitor satisfaction

Responsiveness is defined as the service provider's capability to effectively and efficiently address consumers' requirements depending on internal management and servicing effectiveness and employee preparedness to efficiently aid and service consumers (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Previous academicians discovered that responsiveness was significantly and positively correlated to consumer and visitor satisfaction. Qin and Prybutok (2008) discovered that responsiveness played a pivotal role across fast-food restaurants in China. Saad Andaleeb and Conway (2006) demonstrated that food quality, reliability, infrastructure, price, and service

responsiveness were vital to consumer satisfaction. The perception of service quality can be enhanced when staff promptly address a consumer's requirement. Nonetheless, Gumussoy and Koseoglu (2016) revealed that responsiveness did not produce a pronounced impact on hotel guest satisfaction in Turkey. Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (2001) also demonstrated negative perceptions of service quality would be engendered when consumers were retained without rationales being communicated. Responsiveness in gastronomy tourism is particularly important for visitor satisfaction when tourists require assistance in unfamiliar dining environments. Thus, inconsistent results in past studies necessitate more investigations to thoroughly understand the role of responsiveness in customer or tourist satisfaction.

2.5.1.4 Assurance and visitor satisfaction

Assurance is defined as the capacity of a service provider to offer information, services, and responses for customers' well-being based on respective requirements and through appropriate service etiquette to inject high customer trust and confidence in the service quality (Zeithaml et al., 1990). Peter and Donnelly (2004) elucidated that assurance includes servicing staff who are skilful, polite, knowledgeable, honest and professional in communication. Surapranata and Iskandar (2013) scrutinised the linkage between family restaurant service quality and consumer satisfaction in Indonesia and uncovered that assurance significantly influenced consumer satisfaction. Almohaimmed (2017) also appraised restaurant quality and consumer satisfaction in Saudi Arabia and revealed that assurance was substantially and positively associated with consumer satisfaction. Additionally, Matolo and Salia (2021) evaluated service quality at Serengeti National Park (SENAPA) in northern Tanzania and demonstrated that visitors were dissatisfied with the assurance aspect of service quality owing to insufficient courtesy, knowledge, and capability to instil trust

and confidence in tourists. Meanwhile, Silva et al. (2022) revealed that assurance did not produce a significant influence on consumer satisfaction in a university-based mini supermarket. Ibrahim and Ismail (2015) also discovered that assurance was regarded as a secondary factor without a high impact on consumer satisfaction. Assurance in gastronomy tourism is especially important, as staff professionalism and trust shape visitors' satisfaction. Therefore, more research on assurance is required to determine the actual impact on customer or tourist satisfaction.

2.5.1.5 Empathy and visitor satisfaction

Empathy refers to a consumer's need for personal significance to be recognised in the servicing location, wherein a service provider should serve every customer equally and effectively fulfil unique requirements with effective communication (Zeithaml et al., 2000). Al-Tit (2015) scrutinised the impact of service and food quality on consumer satisfaction and retention and revealed that empathy produced a pronounced and positive effect on customer satisfaction. Gumussoy and Koseoglu (2016) also analysed the influences of perceived value, service quality, and price fairness on hotel guest satisfaction and loyalty and discovered that empathy, which was one of the service quality dimensions, substantially influenced hotel guest satisfaction. In addition, Aunalal et al. (2017) uncovered that empathy considerably and positively influenced visitor satisfaction in Maluku Province, Indonesia. Wongphan (2018) also identified that insufficient hospitality staff empathy adversely impacted European visitor satisfaction and revisit intention to Bangkok. Conversely, Thi et al. (2020) assessed the linkage between service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty among foreign tourists in Vietnam and discovered that empathy produced minimal effects on visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Ziyad Ibrahim et al. (2015) also demonstrated that empathy insignificantly contributed to higher tourist satisfaction and retention in the Maldives.

Empathy in gastronomy tourism is related to hospitality and personalised service, which shape visitors' satisfaction. Summarily, more research is imperative to resolve existing contradictions on how empathy influences tourist satisfaction.

The reviewed literature demonstrates inconsistent empirical results regarding the effects of responsiveness, assurance, and empathy on visitor satisfaction. These variations across prior studies imply that the strength of these relationships may depend on specific experiential contexts, supporting the need for further context-specific examination. In gastronomy tourism, marketing factors, in particular food quality and pricing fairness, influence visitor satisfaction, as gastronomy experiences are created from food offerings and price evaluations. This study focuses specifically on product and price because these are the most relevant marketing mix components in gastronomy tourism.

2.6 Marketing Mix and Visitor Satisfaction

The marketing mix refers to a combination of tactical marketing strategies designed to evoke desired responses from target customers (Kotler, 2011). Several studies have revealed that marketing mix components profoundly impact consumer satisfaction and play an integral role in tourist satisfaction. (Yelkur 2000; Sajuyigbe et al., 2013; Mustawadjuhaefa et al., 2017) and Rasyid et al., 2017). Furthermore, place and product components have been found to substantially influence tourist satisfaction and loyalty in specific destinations. (Al Muala and Al Qurneh, 2012); Selang, 2013). The findings propounded that effectively employing the marketing mix components could boost consumer satisfaction, which aligned with other scholars (Kewas et al., 2020; Mulyana & Sugeng, 2018; Mustawadjuhaefa et al., 2017; Radiman et al., 2018; Veva, 2015; Verma & Singh, 2017). Contrarily, Motyka et al. (2016) and Nuryadin et al. (2021) revealed a non-significant and negative impact of the marketing mix on consumer

satisfaction and loyalty, similar to other researchers (Garg et al., 2016; Jahmani et al., 2024; Nurfadhilah et al., 2021) who demonstrated that the marketing mix did not directly impact consumer satisfaction, especially when marketing mix components were ineffectively integrated that engendered diminished attention. Azhar et al. (2019) also underscored that lower tourist satisfaction levels would be observed if the marketing mix was ineffectively executed. Therefore, more studies are required to thoroughly understand the most optimal methods to employ different marketing mix elements to enhance visitor satisfaction.

The marketing mix has long been recognised as an important driver of visitor satisfaction, and many scholars have found inconsistent results in hospitality and tourism contexts. In gastronomy tourism, product quality and price fairness are key factors through which visitors evaluate their overall experience, particularly in terms of authentic food offerings, food quality, and perceived price appropriateness. These inconsistencies in previous findings indicate that the impact of marketing mix components may not be uniform across different locations. Hence, this study focuses on examining product and price in the gastronomy tourism context. This emphasis is particularly important in southern Thailand, where visitors' satisfaction is largely influenced by their direct experiences of food quality and price fairness. In gastronomy tourism studies and related contexts, some marketing mix components, such as people, physical environment, and place, are conceptually similar to service quality constructs such as assurance, tangibility, and reliability. Therefore, the inclusion of all marketing mix components together with service quality components may result in redundancy and a lack of clarity in interpreting empirical relationships. Hence, this study focuses specifically on product and price.

Table 2.1

Summary of Empirical Findings on Marketing Mix Elements and Visitor Satisfaction in Food, Restaurant, and Gastronomy Tourism Studies

No.	Author(s)& Year	Context	Key Marketing Mix Elements	Main Findings
1	Namkung & Jang (2007)	Restaurants	Product	Product quality shows a significant relationship with customer satisfaction.
2	Özdemir-Güzel & Baş (2020)	Restaurants	Price, Physical, People	Physical environment cues shape customers' price perceptions, which significantly influence satisfaction formation and loyalty outcomes.
3	Ryu & Han (2010)	Quick-casual restaurants	Product, Price, People, Physical	Product quality and price demonstrate relatively stable effects on satisfaction; other elements vary by condition.
4	Zhong & Moon (2020)	Fast-food restaurants	Product, Price, People, Physical	Product quality and price perception significantly predict satisfaction outcomes
5	Konuk (2019)	Organic food restaurants	Product, Price	Food quality and price fairness significantly influence customer satisfaction.
6	Hanaysha (2016)	Fast-food restaurants	Product, Price, Promotion	Product quality and price fairness show significant relationships with customer satisfaction, while promotional effects are weaker.
7	Pedraja-Iglesias et al. (2004)	Restaurants	Product, Price	Perceived product quality and price perceptions are positively associated with satisfaction formation.
8	Jeaheng et al. (2023)	Thai street food (tourists)	Product, Price, Physical	Street food quality and reasonable pricing significantly influence tourist satisfaction; physical aspects vary across settings.
9	Luekveerawattana (2016)	Street food (Thailand)	Product, Price, People	Product quality and price reasonableness significantly affect tourist satisfaction; people-related factors are context-specific.
10	Privitera & Nesci (2015)	Street food	Product, Physical	Street food consumption reflects the role of local food quality and environment in visitor experience and satisfaction.
11	Babolian Hendijani (2016)	Gastronomy tourism	Product	Food experiences significantly influence tourist

No.	Author(s)& Year	Context	Key Marketing Mix Elements	Main Findings
				satisfaction in gastronomy tourism settings.satisfaction; spatial factors vary by destination.
12	Mora et al. (2021)	Gastronomy destinations	Product, Promotion	Gastronomic experiences are key drivers of destination satisfaction and tourism development.
13	(Kim et al., 2011)	Food tourism/events	Product, Price	Perceived value and spending considerations significantly affect satisfaction and revisit intention.
14	Ali et al. (2016)	Resort hotels	Price, Physical	Price perceptions and physical environment contribute to satisfaction through emotional responses.
16	Han & Ryu, (2009)	Upscale restaurants	Physical, People	Environmental cues influence satisfaction through emotional and behavioral intentions.
17	Mathwick et al., 2001	Service/product experience	Product	Experiential value from service encounters contributes directly to satisfaction.
18	Jang, Kim, & Bonn (2011)	Green/organic restaurants	Product, Price	Product quality and fairness perceptions strongly predict satisfaction outcomes.
19	Seo & Lee (2021)	Robotic restaurants	Product, Price, Physical	Trust and perceived risk in robot services significantly shape satisfaction.
20	Rather (2020)	Tourism services	Product, Promotion	Customer experience and experiential marketing significantly influence satisfaction in tourism contexts.

As shown in Table 2.1, previous studies have found that product and price are key factors influencing post-consumption outcomes and visitor satisfaction across different locations. Other marketing mix elements may have lower or less consistent effects under specific contextual conditions. Empirical research has therefore emphasised the roles of product quality and price fairness in influencing satisfaction in gastronomy tourism and related contexts. Most prior literature has focused on restaurant environments, often examining these relationships in isolation, with relatively few studies conducted in gastronomy tourism, where experiential and contextual dimensions may shape how product and price influence visitor satisfaction. This gap in the literature provides a clear empirical justification for the focus of the present study. This empirical pattern also provides direct support for the development of Hypotheses H6 and H7, which examine the effects of product and price on visitor satisfaction within gastronomy tourism contexts. In addition, the literature has consistently reported relationships between product, price, and satisfaction outcomes across food, restaurant, and gastronomy tourism contexts. This recurring empirical pattern suggests that product and price represent the core value exchange experienced by visitors during food consumption. Accordingly, the present study places specific emphasis on product and price as primary predictors of visitor satisfaction, while recognising that other marketing mix elements may function as complementary or contextual factors rather than central explanatory variables.

2.6.1 The Hospitality Marketing Mix Components

The hospitality marketing mix comprises place, price, people, programming, product, packaging, promotion, and partnership (8Ps). The efficiency of restaurants is contingent upon service quality, the environment, food quality, nutritional quality, comfort, price, and infrastructure (Dogdubay & Avcikurt, 2008; Andaleeb & Conway, 2006). Accordingly, the current study integrated programming, packaging, and partnership into the product dimension, while both place and promotion dimensions were embedded within the tangibles aspect of service quality. The people dimension was incorporated into the assurance aspect of service quality. Therefore, only two marketing mix components, namely product and price, were scrutinised. This decision is further supported by Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory (EDT), which emphasises satisfaction formation through performance evaluation of core product attributes and price fairness, and Social Exchange Theory (SET), which explains visitors' evaluations based on perceived value exchange between what is received (product) and what is sacrificed (price).

2.6.1.1 Product and visitor satisfaction

Holloway (2004) defined a product that is consumable or a brand name, quality, style, and variety with pertinent features customised for visitors under the tourism context (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004). Ferrell and Hartline (2005) recommended the product dimension as the primary factor in the marketing mix to be differentiated from competitors through symbolic and experiential characteristics, on top of styles, consistency, specifications, brand names, and sizes (Borden, 1964; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Cuisine in an exquisite restaurant can be the primary product in the hospitality sector, with suitable companions, such as entertainment, appetite, coffee, wine, and

desserts. Tourism marketing classifies a product into three categories, namely core products (essential services), tangible products (services for sale and consumption), and augmented products (tangible products with all added-value features) (Levitt, 1981). Ziyad Ibrahim et al. (2015) delineated that a tourist would be satisfied or contented when the performance of a specific product matched subjective anticipations. A visitor would be dissatisfied when a mismatch exists between the performance and anticipations. Hikmah et al. (2018) appraised the impact of service quality, tourism products, and the uniqueness of the tourist destination on visitor satisfaction and loyalty and uncovered a substantial and positive impact. Dwi Martina et al. (2023) also evaluated the impact of food tourism product quality on the satisfaction and loyalty of local visitors travelling to Nasi Balapan Puyung Inaq Esun in Lombok and revealed that product quality considerably and positively impacted visitor satisfaction. Contrastingly, N, A., Listihana, W. D., and Nofrizal, N. (2018) demonstrated that the product did not produce a pronounced influence on satisfaction among four-star hotel service guests in Pekanbaru City. Gebremichael and Dillon (2021) also uncovered a non-significant impact of products on visitor satisfaction in Erta Ale and Dallol, Ethiopia. Hence, the ambiguous findings in the existing literature necessitate more investigations to corroborate the actual impact of products on tourist satisfaction.

2.6.1.2 Price and visitor satisfaction

Price refers to the combined values exchanged by customers for the benefits of possessing or employing a specific product or service (Kotler & Gary, 2008), which serves as a fundamental in tourism to differentiate from competitors (Sarker et al., 2012). Peng and Wang (2006) revealed that customers preferred reasonably priced and affordable items, which was consistent with other academicians (Meng & Elliott,

2008; Oh, 2000; Ranaweera & Neely, 2003). Mahmoud et al. (2019) also propounded that reasonably priced items would substantially impact tourist satisfaction while Meng and Elliott (2008) demonstrated that a fair pricing point profoundly influenced tourists' experiences. Simultaneously, the physical environment significantly influences consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Han & Ryu, 2009b; Reimer & Kuehn, 2005; Ryu & Jang, 2007). Nonetheless, the gastronomy sector frequently stipulates high pricing points due to constant pricing fluctuations, which substantially impact consumer demands. Firms can lower price sensitivity through personalised pricing strategies, including discounts, price differentiation, and exclusive promotions (Nezakati et al., 2012).

Abdullah Kadhim et al. (2016), Kadhim et al. (2016), and Luekveerawattana (2016) demonstrated that price played a pivotal function in consumer satisfaction. Ketut et al. (2021) examined how food quality and price could boost consumer satisfaction at Anantara Uluwatu Bali Resort and uncovered substantial and positive impacts. Zardi et al. (2019) appraised the impacts of product price, quality, and location on consumer satisfaction and loyalty at Simpang Raya Restaurant and demonstrated that price considerably influenced consumer satisfaction. Meanwhile, Hui et al. (2007) demonstrated an insignificant impact of price on visitor satisfaction, recommendations, and revisit intention to Singapore across different categories of visitors. Akdag et al. (2018) also discovered that food availability, food or cuisine types, sensory attributes, and quality profoundly predicted visitors' gastronomic satisfaction but not the price. The findings corresponded to Mattila (2001) who postulated that visitors would prioritise food quality instead of the pricing point and value. Moreover, Hui et al. (2007) elucidated a travel budget would be established before embarking on a trip, which suggested that visitors would emphasise other

factors rather than price. Summarily, inconclusive findings in past studies require more examinations to determine the actual role of price on tourist satisfaction. Previous empirical studies on marketing mix elements have reported mixed results, particularly regarding how product and price influence visitor satisfaction. These varying findings suggest that the effects of marketing mix components may differ across tourism settings, and therefore require further investigation within gastronomy tourism contexts. Overall, both service quality and the marketing mix have been widely recognised as important predictors of visitor satisfaction. However, evidence remains inconsistent, especially in gastronomy tourism, where experiential conditions may shape how visitors evaluate product quality and price fairness. For this reason, Table 2.2 summarises the key empirical patterns from prior studies and highlights the remaining gaps that provide the motivation for the present research.

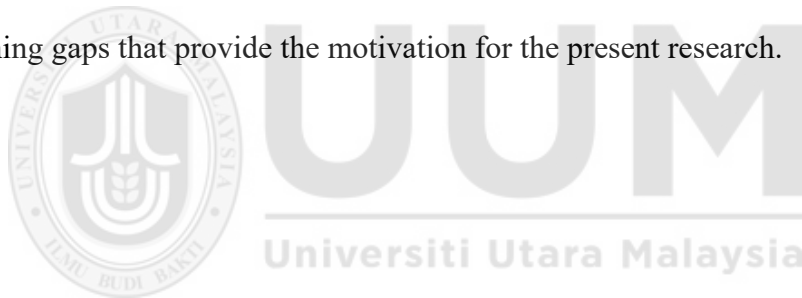


Table 2.2
Summary of Key Empirical Patterns and Research Gaps in Gastronomy Tourism Satisfaction Literature

Independent Variable(s)	Dependent Variable(s)	Evidence in Previous Studies	Research Gap
Service Quality (SERVQUAL dimensions)	Visitor Satisfaction	Prior studies reported mixed findings on the service quality–satisfaction relationship (Iskandar, 2019; Javed et al., 2020).	Conditional or moderating explanations remain limited in gastronomy tourism contexts.
Marketing Mix (Product and Price)	Visitor Satisfaction	Empirical evidence shows divergent results regarding the influence of product value and pricing fairness (Choe & Kim (2018); Konuk (2019)).	Limited integration of marketing mix effects with service quality mechanisms.
Gastronomy Experience	Satisfaction	Gastronomy experience has been commonly examined as a direct predictor of satisfaction and outcomes (Correia et al., 2008; Gheorghe et al., 2014).	Rarely positioned as a contextual moderator shaping satisfaction formation.
Moderation Perspective	Moderating effects on the relationships between service quality, marketing mix components, and visitor satisfaction	Few studies explicitly test gastronomy experience as a moderating condition (Somchan & Attabhanyo, 2020).	This underexplored perspective represents the core theoretical contribution of the present study.

Note. This table summarises evidence drawn from the reviewed literature in Chapter 2.

2.7 Moderating Impact

A moderating variable is necessary when the association between an independent and a dependent variable necessitates additional factors to be significant and determine the strength and direction (positive or negative) of the association (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Patricia & Walker, 1993). The moderator in this study was gastronomy experience.

2.7.1 Gastronomy Experience and Visitor Satisfaction

Experiences are customers' direct or indirect perceptions of received goods or services (Mathwick et al., 2001a). Perceived excellence reflects a service provider's product success and overall consumer appreciation of product quality and efficient service. Chaney and Ryan (2012) delineated that culinary tourism conveys the history and culture to tourists through unique and local cuisines that provide authentic experiences, especially to visitors seeking such experiences (Sims, 2009). Visitors also frequently prefer restaurants with hedonic and experiential ambience (Kim & Moon, 2009). Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2013) discovered that gastronomy experiences significantly shaped the development of memorable events and consumer satisfaction. Kim et al. (2011) also contended that culinary experiences enhance holistic satisfaction among food tourists. In addition, Agyeiwaah et al. (2019) discovered that gastronomy experiences were considerably and positively correlated to visitor satisfaction and loyalty, which aligned with the findings of other academicians (Hendijani, 2016; Ullah et al., 2022; Yoo et al., 2022). Contrarily, Khalid et al. (2024) scrutinised the impact of tourism experience on village visitor satisfaction in the Kelimutu district of Ende Regency, East Nusa Tenggara and discovered an insignificant impact, similar to the results of Martalia et al. (2022), Murphy et al. (2011), and Pujiastuti et al. (2017).

Past studies have explored gastronomy experience as a driver of visitor satisfaction. For example, Rodrigues, Borges, and Vieira (2023) found that specific dimensions of gastronomic and food-related experiences were positively associated with tourists' life satisfaction and happiness in an urban tourism destination. Consistent with this, Khan, Marshall, and Khan (2025) explained that sensory and experiential aspects of food consumption may enhance satisfaction, although the strength of these effects may differ depending on the destination and cultural context.

In addition, García-Pérez et al. (2024) reported that gastronomy experiences are related to tourist satisfaction and behavioural outcomes. Recent studies have also highlighted the importance of experiential and contextual conditions in shaping how service-related attributes translate into satisfaction outcomes. For instance, Sthapit et al. (2020), in a Southern Thailand setting, reported that gastronomy experience moderated the relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction, indicating that the impact of service quality may depend on tourists' experiential engagement. Similarly, Zhu et al. (2024) demonstrated through moderated analysis that individual and experiential characteristics can influence how food experiences shape destination image and revisit intention. Overall, these findings suggest that experiential variables may serve as boundary conditions rather than universal predictors of satisfaction. Although gastronomy experience has been widely acknowledged as an important concept in tourism research, empirical evidence regarding its influence on visitor satisfaction remains mixed. This lack of consensus implies that gastronomy experience may function primarily as a conditional factor that shapes the strength of the relationships between service quality, marketing mix elements, and visitor satisfaction within gastronomy tourism contexts.

Table 2.3

Summary of Independent and Dependent Variables in Previous Studies on Gastronomy Experience and Visitor Satisfaction

Author(s)	Research Context	Independent Variable(s)	Dependent Variable(s)
Mathwick et al. (2001)	Consumer experience	Experience value	Satisfaction
Kim et al. (2011)	Food tourism	Culinary experience	Tourist satisfaction
Quadri-Felitti & Fiore (2013)	Gastronomy / wine tourism	Gastronomy experience	Consumer satisfaction
Babolian Hendijani, R. (2016)	Tourism experience	Experience attributes	Satisfaction
Agyeiwaah et al. (2019)	Heritage tourism	Gastronomy experience	Satisfaction; loyalty
Murphy et al. (2011)	Tourism destination	Tourist experience	Visitor satisfaction
Pujiastuti et al. (2017)	Tourism destination	Tourism experience	Satisfaction
Martalia et al. (2022)	Village tourism	Tourism experience	Visitor satisfaction
Ullah et al. (2022)	Hospitality and tourism	Dining / gastronomy experience	Visitor satisfaction
Khalid et al. (2024)	Village tourism (Indonesia)	Tourism experience	Visitor satisfaction

As shown in Table 2.3, most previous studies have mainly examined the direct effects of experience-related factors on visitor satisfaction. While gastronomy and tourism experiences are often treated as important predictors, far less attention has been paid to whether these experiences might also shape or strengthen the relationships in different contexts. This remaining gap provides a clear rationale for the present study to consider gastronomy experience as a moderating condition in explaining visitor satisfaction within gastronomy tourism settings.

Gastronomy or food tourism plays an essential role in the development of regional cultures, which strengthens the relationship between identification and food encompassing local consciousness, heterogenisation, and local culture. Food tourism also offers another avenue for urban and regional growth while reinforcing local identity (Mak et al., 2012). Schmitt (1999, p. 60) defined experience as “involving the

entire living being. They often result from direct observation and/or participating in the event – whether they are real, dreamlike or virtual”. Carbone and Haeckel (1994, p. 8) denoted experience as “the takeaway impression formed by people’s encounters with products, services, and businesses, which is a perception produced when humans consolidate sensory information”. Pine II and Gilmore (1999, p. 12) also described experiences as “events that engage individuals in a personal way”, whereas Lemon and Verhoef (2016, p. 71) elucidated experience as “a multidimensional construct focusing on a customer’s cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial, and social responses to a firm’s offerings during the customer’s entire purchase journey”. Pine II and Gilmore (1998) recommended appraising experience via two aspects. The first aspect is horizontal, wherein consumers can either actively or passively participate in relevant experiences or directly or indirectly influence the event. Visiting a theatre is a form of passive participation while surfing is an active participation mode. The second aspect is vertical, in which consumers can develop a connection with the experience by absorbing (mentally engaging) or being immersed (physically or virtually) in a specific event. The current study employed the two experience aspects recommended by Pine and Gilmore (1998).

2.7.1.1 Horizontal gastronomy experience and visitor satisfaction

The horizontal aspect of the experience or participation has become increasingly popular among academicians and practitioners. Polgar and Landry (2004) elucidated that mind, body, and soul involvement is required for participation in an event to acquire abilities, which is also vital to relationships with other individuals and the pursuit of reason and value in life (Law, 2002). Borell et al. (2006) and Haak et al. (2008) posited two participation modes, namely performance-oriented (personal actions benefitting other individuals and creating personal satisfaction) and joint

participation (sharing experiences with other individuals and acquiring experiences from the external environment). Pine II and Gilmore (1999) explicated that customers' participation includes two experience types, namely being committed or immersed (passive participation) and being part of the creator (active participation). Schmitt (1999, p. 60) also described that "experience is often the result from direct observation and/or participation in the event, whether the event is real, dreamlike or virtual".

Visitor satisfaction refers to a visitor's emotional state after a trip (Baker & Crompton, 2000).

Past researchers revealed a substantial and positive impact of horizontal gastronomy experiences on visitor satisfaction either through active or passive participation. Relevant gastronomy events could be entertaining or engaging, which allowed visitors to be fully immersed in the experiences and increased satisfaction levels. Similarly, Ouyang et al. (2024) underscored the significance of entertainment in tourism service offerings to ensure visitor satisfaction. Vo Thanh and Kirova (2018) also highlighted the significant role of essential services for visitors visiting wineries, including institutional information, local history, traditions, and the wine-making process. Conversely, Jurowski and Nickerson (2016) scrutinised the association between the activities participated by tourists and satisfaction levels with a specific tourist destination and demonstrated an insignificant linkage. While inconclusive evidence existed to determine the correlation between higher satisfaction and participation, Jurowski (2010) offered certain empirical support to the relationship. More research is necessary to thoroughly understand the association between horizontal gastronomy experience and visitor satisfaction.

2.7.1.2 Vertical gastronomy experience and visitor satisfaction

The vertical aspect of consumer experiences can be categorised into two different types, namely being absorbed in a specific experience with emotional connections (watching TV) and self-experience or immersion physically or virtually (playing virtual games) (Pine II & Gilmore, 1999). Both types of vertical experiences encompass four areas, namely flight, education, entertainment, and aesthetics. An experience will be passively absorbed when individuals seek entertainment for personal experience, including listening to music, watching a performance, or perusing a book. Immersion or active participation involves visiting casinos, theme parks, or a paintball game. Meanwhile, aesthetic experiences, such as visiting an art gallery or museum, allow individuals to be immersed in a specific activity but continue to be passive (Nakhasuwan, 2010). Summarily, vertical experience refers to a connection with the experience developed by consumers either through psychological engagement or physical or virtual immersion in a specific activity (Pine II & Gilmore, 1998). Björk et al. (2020) revealed that gastronomy experiences obtained via absorption and immersion in food events enriched tourist experiences and satisfaction. Nevertheless, more findings are imperative to conclude the relationship between vertical gastronomy experience and visitor satisfaction due to limited investigations in the existing literature.

2.7.2 The Moderating Impact of Gastronomy Experience on the Linkage between Service Quality and Visitor Satisfaction

Visitor experiences produce direct impacts on satisfaction degrees with service quality through the consistency with visitors' expectations before embarking on a trip (Yasin et al., 2017). Visitor experiences would also determine the perceptions of overall service quality and revisit intention (Cooper & Hall, 2008). Multiple researchers

discovered that suboptimal service quality of restaurants profoundly diminished visitor satisfaction and vice versa. Forgas-Coll et al. (2017) revealed that visitors with prior travel experiences would exhibit higher anticipations on travel destinations, particularly when being highly satisfied with previous destinations. Less experienced visitors would be more influenced by the initial perception of travel destinations and service quality. Yasin et al. (2017) also explicated that visitor experiences function as a foundation for comparing received services with personal expectations. Service quality corresponding to or surpassing anticipations would result in higher satisfaction, whereas unfulfilled expectations would lead to dissatisfaction (Qu et al., 2017).

2.7.3 The Moderating Impact of Gastronomy Experience on the Linkage between The Marketing Mix and Visitor Satisfaction

The marketing mix is a combination of tactical marketing strategies to evoke the intended behaviours of target consumers (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Visitor satisfaction refers to a visitor's emotional state after a trip (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Visitors generally focus more on the benefits of a specific trip experience. The findings of Mathis et al., 2016 and Prebensen et al., 2016). demonstrated that travel destinations, journey durations, and expenses profoundly impacted tour preparatory efforts and positively contributed to visitor satisfaction through co-creation experience and revisit intention. Tourists also seek alternative experiences, including food and beverages, to acquire short getaways from the daily routine (Du Rand & Heath, 2006; Freire & Gertner, 2021). Visitors will plan unique approaches to enjoy the trip by deliberately choosing restaurants that can adequately fulfil personal preferences (Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Adam et al. (2023) discovered that the destination image, marketing mix, and e-word of mouth (e-WOM) played supportive and substantial functions in increasing the revisit rate. Pyo et al. (1991) uncovered that visitors tended to pay a

higher price for local cuisine to explore different food types and obtain alternative experiences. Söderström (2022) also demonstrated that the experience of local cuisine could attract visitors to become more engaged in gastronomy experiences compared to other trip factors, including price.

Although the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is widely applied in tourism research, it is primarily intended to explain behavioural intentions rather than the formation of satisfaction after a consumption experience. In gastronomy tourism, satisfaction is closely tied to whether service performance and perceived value meet or exceed visitors' prior expectations, making Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) particularly appropriate. Social Exchange Theory (SET) further strengthens this explanation by clarifying how tourists evaluate gastronomy experiences through perceptions of reciprocity, fairness, and experiential value. Taken together, EDT and SET provide a robust theoretical foundation for understanding both the direct effects of service-related attributes and the moderating role of gastronomy experience within the proposed research framework.

2.8 Underpinning Conceptual Models

A theoretical framework offers a holistic picture of the interplay between multiple variables in delineating and predicting a specific event (Abdi & Amat Senin, 2015). The underpinning conceptual models employed in the present study to develop the current theoretical framework were social exchange theory (SET) and expectation-disconfirmation theory (EDT).

2.8.1 SET

The SET elucidates that the exchange relationship consists of social exchange and economic exchange, which generates an anticipation of future returns (Damrongkiattisak, 1999). The SET has also been widely applied to explicate

alterations in social stability, including bargaining between two groups of individuals in society by assessing, gauging, and contrasting benefits and costs, especially in a commercial context with the process of exchanging goods or the interaction between multiple business groups (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Relevant alterations are similar to social behaviours with respective influences on the economy and society, which are employed to scrutinise interactions with customers while appraising different social factors contributing to entrepreneurship (Jeong & Oh, 2017). Specifically, the dynamics between individuals, entrepreneurs, and customers can be delineated through SET to gauge consumer loyalty to product offerings (Singh & Sirdeshmukh, 2000). The theory can also be utilised to elucidate the rationale of purchasing decisions when the social exchange directly impacts the power structure of a specific relationship based on the perception of the exchange and each individual's satisfaction level. Therefore, interdependence and independence are observed, which can ascertain the degrees of various relationships between one another (Wang et al., 2019).

The SET is employed in the tourism sector to examine the association between local communities or service providers and visitors via the exchange or spending for local food, which generates profits for tourist destinations. The reciprocal interaction between the host and guest can be elucidated by the theory in terms of the host promoting social values, emotions, attitudes, and reciprocity to welcome guests as complementary income to sustain and improve the current living standard (Robina-Ramírez et al., 2020). Sutton (1967) also delineated that the interaction between the host community and guests offers an opportunity for rewarding and satisfying exchanges or supporting the host economically. Similarly, Yoon et al. (2001) revealed that the social, economic, and environmental aspects of the exchange process

significantly influenced tourists' perceptions. Nunkoo (2015) also discovered that an exchange process not only encompassed the economic aspect but also social-cultural and environmental. Meanwhile, Coulson et al. (2014) adapted the theory to explore potential tourism development in Afghanistan. Summarily, the SET elucidates the interaction between individuals, consumers, entrepreneurs, hosts, and guests or visitors, which has assisted in cultivating entrepreneurial marketing skills, including understanding consumer accessibility, developing products, improving service or product quality, and enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty (Deng & Srinivasan, 2013).

2.8.2 EDT

The EDT was initially developed by Oliver (1980) from extensive customer behavioural and social psychology research, which propounds that the gaps between expected service quality and actual performance can manifest as a positive deviation when performance exceeds anticipations or a negative deviation when performance (Erevelles & Leavitt, 1992) (Erevelles & Leavitt, 1992). The theory has extensively been employed to evaluate post-commercial marketing behavioural patterns, including consumer satisfaction, repurchase intention, and grumbling demeanours (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982; Oliver, 1980; Spreng et al., 1996; Swan & Trawick, 1981; Tse & Wilton, 1988; Venkatesh & Goyal, 2010; Wilton & Myers, 1986; Yoon & Kim, 2000). Customer satisfaction is generally perceived as the key driver of repurchase or continuous usage intention (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Oliver, 1980; Venkatesh & Goyal, 2010) through five phases. The first stage involves customers developing expectations or perceptions regarding specific products or services before performing purchasing actions (Venkatesh & Goyal, 2010). The second stage is consumers experiencing and enhancing personal knowledge of the products or services

(Premkumar & Bhattacharjee, 2008) before assessing relevant benefits by referring to the demand level as a standard (Oliver, 1980). Subsequently, consumers exhibit different satisfaction levels according to the trust deg(Premkumar & Bhattacharjee, 2008)(Premkumar & Bhattacharjee, 2008), which will influence the repurchase intention (Bhattacharjee, 2001).

The EDT elucidates how consumers' emotions are elicited after encountering particular products or services (Oliver, 1980). This process may result in three possible outcomes: dissatisfaction or negative disconfirmation when personal expectations are not fulfilled, satisfaction or positive disconfirmation when the experience exceeds expectations, and confirmation when the experience matches expectations. Therefore, customer satisfaction is a form of relationship between costs (effort or time) and expected benefits or rewards. Norms also function as references to gauge an offered product or service before leading to confirmation outcomes (Lorenzo et al., 2010). Zehrer et al. (2011) examined the influence of customers who published travel blogs on other blog users and demonstrated that the EDT could efficaciously elucidate the approaches to acquiring relevant information online. Pinem et al. (2018) also applied the theory to assess the factors contributing to customers' negative demeanours through structural equation modelling (SEM). The findings revealed that disconfirmation evoked negative sentiments in consumers and resulted in negative demeanours. Disconfirmation of information quality could also evoke sentiments of regret in consumers, which could engender negative WOM. The present study employed both SET and EDT as underpinning theories to delineate and thoroughly comprehend the impact of service quality and marketing mix components on visitor satisfaction moderated by gastronomy experience.

The reviewed literature in the context of gastronomy tourism reveals fragmented and inconsistent empirical findings across service quality dimensions, marketing mix components, and gastronomy experience. These unresolved issues highlight the need for an integrative and context-specific research framework to better explain visitor satisfaction within gastronomy tourism settings. In the present study, Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) provides the primary theoretical foundation for explaining how discrepancies between expectations and perceived performance of service quality and marketing mix attributes, particularly product and price, shape overall visitor satisfaction. In contrast, Social Exchange Theory (SET) offers a complementary perspective by clarifying how gastronomy experience may function as a contextual condition that influences visitors' evaluations through perceived value and reciprocal benefits. Accordingly, EDT supports the explanation of the direct effects of service quality and marketing mix elements on visitor satisfaction, whereas SET underpins the moderating role of gastronomy experience in strengthening or weakening these relationships within the proposed conceptual framework. To further clarify the theoretical positioning of this study, Table 2.4 summarises major tourism theories and explains their relevance to visitor satisfaction as the main outcome variable.

Table 2.4

Comparison of Tourism Theories and Justification for the Present Study

Theory	Dependent Variable(s)	Relevance to This Study (Visitor Satisfaction)
Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) (<i>Oliver, 1980</i>)	Satisfaction	Directly relevant, as satisfaction is conceptualised as a post-consumption evaluation of gastronomy experiences.
Social Exchange Theory (SET) (<i>Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005</i>)	Satisfaction, value	Relevant, as visitors may assess whether service and marketing benefits outweigh travel and dining costs.
Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (<i>Ajzen, 1991</i>)	Intention	Less central, since the study focuses on satisfaction rather than behavioural intention.
Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) (<i>Mehrabian & Russell, 1974</i>)	Emotion-based responses	Often applied to emotions and servicescape effects (<i>Kim & Moon, 2009; Jang & Namkung, 2009</i>), while this study explains satisfaction mainly through EDT and SET.
Destination Image Theory (<i>Echtner & Ritchie, 1993</i>)	Destination perception	Mainly used at destination level (<i>Tasci & Gartner, 2007</i>), whereas this study examines restaurant-based gastronomy satisfaction.

In this study, EDT and SET are considered more appropriate than alternative frameworks because they provide a clearer explanation of satisfaction formation in gastronomy tourism experiences. While experiential marketing or consumption value theory broadly describe tourist experiences and perceived values, EDT directly explains how satisfaction arises from the confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations during dining encounters. In addition, SET offers an exchange-based perspective that captures tourists' evaluations of fairness, benefits, and perceived value, which are particularly relevant in food and restaurant settings. Therefore, the combined use of EDT and SET enables this study to explain visitor satisfaction not only as an emotional outcome, but also as a cognitive evaluation shaped by service quality and marketing-related cues in gastronomy tourism contexts. Table 2.4 highlights that several theoretical perspectives have been applied in tourism research depending on the primary outcome of interest. Since this study focuses on visitor

satisfaction as a post-consumption evaluative outcome, EDT and SET offer the most directly aligned foundation, whereas frameworks such as TPB, S–O–R, and destination image theory are more commonly applied to behavioural intention, emotional atmospherics, or destination-level perceptions.

2.9 Current Conceptual Model

Figure 2.1 depicts the proposed theoretical framework with theoretical paths among all variables, namely two independent variables, one dependent variable, and one moderating variable. The independent variables are service quality and the marketing mix, the dependent variable is visitor satisfaction, whereas the moderating variable is gastronomy experience. Particularly, visitor satisfaction, which is the primary objective, is based on the level of amenities provided by tourism operators at the tourist destination (Supitchayangkool, 2012) The decline in the visitor number could be attributed to the environment, location, and other factors. Yoon & Uysal (2005) discovered that the decline in the visitor number was owing to dissatisfaction with the destination. Kozak (2001) also discovered that visitor satisfaction significantly determined the visitor number at specific attractions.

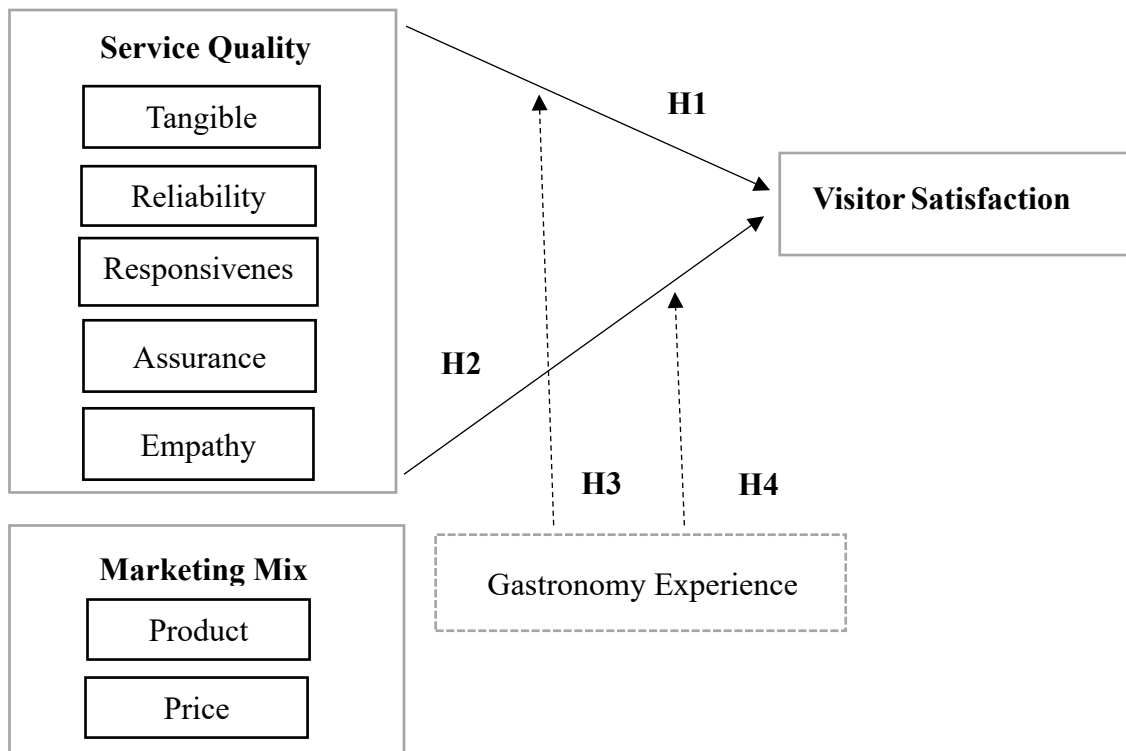


Figure 2. 1
The current theoretical model

International visitor dissatisfaction with food or restaurants in Thailand is due to low service efficiency. Table 1.1 portrays a declining pattern in the number of international visitors travelling to Thailand between 2015 and 2019 owing to ambiguous prices, low food quality control, and service delays Office of the Permanent Secretary for Tourism and Sports, 2018). Restaurants in southern Thailand, which is the most frequently visited region by international visitors, cannot effectively support macro-scale tourism owing to improper and inefficient planning and low diversity in tourism promotion (Bunsirat, 2017), apart from substandard food service quality (Office of the Permanent Secretary for Tourism and Sports., 2016; Office of the Permanent Secretary for Tourism and Sports Tourism Strategy Thailand, 2015).

2.10 Hypotheses

The current study hypotheses were based on the proposed conceptual model and supported by previous findings revealing the relationships between the study variables, which aided in answering RQs and ROs in this study.

2.10.1 Direct-Effect Hypotheses Related to Service Quality

Direct-effect hypotheses were developed according to the linkage between the dimensions of service quality (empathy, responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and tangibles) and visitor satisfaction, namely H1 to H5, with H10 as the overall relationship.

2.10.1.1 Tangibles and visitor satisfaction

Tangibles encapsulate equipment, amenities, and staff (Monther & Mahadevan, 2019) employed by restaurants to enhance the image and service to customers through sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch (Kasapila, 2006). Omar et al. (2016) revealed that tangibles were significantly and positively correlated to consumer satisfaction. Akbaba (2006) scrutinised the quality of accommodation services in Turkey and discovered that tangibles produced the highest impact on visitors' perceptions of accommodation service quality. Al-Ababneh (2013) also assessed the quality of tourism services and demonstrated positive impacts on visitor satisfaction, which aligned with Nguyen et al. (2018) and Thanh and Hài (2014). Additionally, Albayrak et al. (2010) appraised the correlations between tangible and intangible aspects of hotels and overall hotel guest satisfaction and uncovered that tangibles produced higher impacts compared to intangibles. Nguyen et al. (2024) also examined the factors contributing to community-based tourist satisfaction in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam and demonstrated that amenities profoundly and positively influenced visitor satisfaction. Srichai (2020)

also scrutinised the linkage between the perception of service quality and visitor satisfaction through a case study of Thai homestay businesses. The findings revealed that the tangibles of service quality produced favourable influences on visitor satisfaction. Harnburut (2014) analysed how the image and quality of hotel services influenced international visitors' tendency to employ the services offered at medium-sized hotels in Bangkok. The results demonstrated a significant impact as the tangible aspects of service quality were evident, which enabled hotel guests to immediately perceive and comprehend the usage purposes of tangibles with high confidence levels. Therefore, the hotel guests were highly satisfied and tended to revisit the same hotel. Accordingly, the current study propounded that:

H1: A significant positive association exists between tangibles and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.1.2 Reliability and visitor satisfaction

Zeithaml et al. (1988) highlighted the significance of reliability to consumers when appraising service quality. While both food quality and perceived value profoundly and positively impacted customer satisfaction (Qin et al., 2010), reliability also played an integral role (Yeilada & Direktör, 2010). Lee and Ulgado (1997) demonstrated that low food pricing and high consumer trust were crucial factors in the USA, whereas Korean consumers emphasised reliability and empathy more. Loan et al. (2023) evaluated the influences of service quality on visitor satisfaction and how the satisfaction degree impacted visitor loyalty at Sam Son Beach, Thanh Hoa by establishing a service quality model. The findings affirmed the significant positive impact of reliability on visitor satisfaction, which produced the second-highest impact among other contributing factors. Furthermore, Srichai (2020) scrutinised the association between perceived service quality and visitor satisfaction by conducting a

case study of Thai homestay businesses. The results revealed that Thai homestay visitors prioritised reliable service quality to ensure adequate satisfaction. Basyony (2014) performed SEM to assess the causal influence of service quality on consumer satisfaction and behavioural intention directly and indirectly. The findings demonstrated that all service quality dimensions, namely assurance, reliability, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness, directly and substantially impacted consumer satisfaction while indirectly influencing behavioural intention via consumer satisfaction. Abdul Rahim et al. (2023) also investigated the drivers of visitor satisfaction with e-hailing services, with the linkage between safety and reliability significantly determining local visitors' satisfaction. The present study posited that:

H2: A significant positive linkage exists between reliability and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.1.3 Responsiveness and visitor satisfaction

Responsiveness refers to the service provider's capability to efficiently and efficaciously address consumers' requirements depending on internal management and service process effectiveness and employee preparedness to promptly aid and service consumers (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Abdul Rahim et al. (2023) assessed and revealed that food pricing, food quality, food reliability, infrastructure, and service responsiveness were significant determinants of consumer satisfaction. The perception of service quality will also become more positive when staff promptly responds to customers' needs (Zeithaml et al., 1988), which could enhance consumer satisfaction (Saad Andaleeb & Conway, 2006). Qin and Prybutok (2008) also discovered that responsiveness and efficiency substantially improved consumers' perceptions of received service quality and consumer satisfaction with fast-food restaurants in China. Additionally, Boro (2020) uncovered that high staff responsiveness significantly and positively contributed to visitor satisfaction moderated by visitors' occupation and

income. Ulfy et al. (2021) also scrutinised visitors' satisfaction with maritime tourism service quality in Malaysia and discovered the dimensions of service quality, namely empathy, reliability, tangibles, assurance, and responsiveness were profoundly and favourably correlated to consumer satisfaction. Lagat and Uyoga (2019) also demonstrated airline passengers in Kenya were satisfied when airline staff immediately responded to passengers' requirements mediated by service performance. Accordingly, the current study postulated that:

H3: A significant positive association exists between responsiveness and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.1.4 Assurance and visitor satisfaction

Parasuraman et al. (1988) elucidated that assurance is a service provider's knowledge level that instils confidence in customers when receiving the service. Past researchers revealed the significant and positive impact of assurance on visitor satisfaction (Almohaimmeed, 2017; Commer et al., 2018; Hông et al., 2022; Kansiiime, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2024; SON et al., 2023; Surapranata & Iskandar, 2013). Surapranata & Iskandar (2013) evaluated the linkage between service quality and consumer satisfaction in an Indonesian family restaurant and uncovered the pronounced impact of assurance. Hon Tat et al. (2011) also appraised the impact of confirmation on student satisfaction at university fast-food restaurants. The findings revealed the profound influence of assurance on customer satisfaction. Moreover, Almohaimmeed (2017) uncovered a significant positive relationship between assurance and consumer satisfaction in Saudi Arabia. Aruho and Noel (2021) also analysed the interplay between assurance, reliability, and tangible dimensions of service quality and hotel guest satisfaction and trust degrees in Ugandan hotels. The results underscored that higher levels of assurance, reliability, and tangibles would lead to higher hotel guest

satisfaction and trust and vice versa. In addition, Nguyen et al. (2024) assessed the factors contributing to community-based visitor satisfaction in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam, in which assurance substantially and positively impacted visitor satisfaction. The present study propounded that:

H4: A significant positive correlation exists between assurance and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.1.5 Empathy and visitor satisfaction

Empathy refers to the treatment and personalised care provided by an enterprise to consumers by treating customers as unique and valuable individuals through customised services (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Restaurant staff can also exhibit empathy to customers by addressing customers' names and being cognisant of unique dietary preferences or needs (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Empathy can motivate staff to thoroughly understand consumers' requirements and enhance consumer satisfaction levels (Homburg et al., 2009). Prior scholars also demonstrated a significant positive association between empathy and consumer satisfaction (Al-Tit, 2015; Aunalal et al., 2017; Gumussoy & Koseoglu, 2016; Hien et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2018; Phung et al., 2024; Talukder et al., 2023). Gumussoy and Koseoglu (2016) analysed the influence of service quality in terms of perceived value and price fairness on hotel guest satisfaction and loyalty. The results highlighted that service quality, particularly empathy, substantially and positively contributed to hotel guest satisfaction. Al-Tit (2015) also examined and revealed the profound and positive influence of food and service quality on consumer satisfaction and retention. Additionally, Aunalal et al. (2017) discovered that empathy played a considerable and positive role in visitors' destination loyalty in Maluku Province, Indonesia. Nguyen et al. (2018) also uncovered a significant positive relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction at UK fast-food restaurants. The current study posited that:

H5: A significant positive linkage exists between empathy and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.1.6 Service quality and visitor satisfaction

Service quality is an intangible yet crucial element in effectively fulfilling consumers' requirements (Etzel et al., 1997), which is gauged by consumers through experiences. High service quality will result in higher consumer or visitor satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Muskat et al., 2019) and revisit intention. Rasyid et al. (2017) also uncovered that service quality significantly and positively impacted visitor satisfaction, which corresponded to Ngurah et al. (2017), Rajaratnam et al. (2014a), Setiawan and Sayuti (2017), and Tefera and Govender (2017). Maestro et al. (2007) discovered that service quality was a multidimensional variable, which comprised several elements with significance on visitor satisfaction. Additionally, Han and Hyun (2017) revealed that service quality profoundly and directly impacted consumer satisfaction in Korean restaurants. Chang (2006) also demonstrated that hotel guests' perceptions of service quality were substantially associated with hotel staff personality. Meanwhile, Tuncer et al. (2021) evaluated the impact of perceived service quality on consumer satisfaction among 309 consumers and discovered that perceived service quality, such as staff service quality, food quality, and timeliness, significantly and positively contributed to consumer satisfaction. Sadeh et al. (2012) determined that perceived service quality profoundly predicted Iranian tourist satisfaction. Khuong and Phuong (2017) also uncovered a significant positive association between perceived service quality and visitor satisfaction among 1,673 tourists in Vietnam. Hence, the current study postulated that:

H10: A significant positive linkage exists between service quality and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.2 Direct-Effect Hypotheses Related to the Marketing Mix

Hypotheses, namely H6, H7, and H11, were formulated according to the associations between the two marketing mix components, namely the product and price, and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.2.1 Product and visitor satisfaction

A product can lead to satisfaction through unique features to appeal to target consumers (Nuseir & Madanat, 2015), coupled with effective marketing approaches (Sukanto & Lumintan, 2015). Nikhashemi et al. (2017) delineated that customers will be satisfied when received products are consistent, which can increase product loyalty. Prior academicians also demonstrated products significantly influenced visitor satisfaction (Abdullah Kadhim et al., 2016; Al Muala & Al Qurneh, 2012; Hikmah et al., 2018; Holloway, 2004; Lewis & Chambers, 1989; Martina et al., 2023; Sudari et al., 2019). Holloway (2004) elucidated a tourism product as a brand name, variety, quality, style, and features customised to visitors. Hikmah et al. (2018) also scrutinised the respective impacts of service quality, tourism products, and destination uniqueness on visitor satisfaction and loyalty. The findings revealed that tourism products substantially and positively contributed to visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, Sudari et al. (2019) scrutinised the impact of marketing mix elements on consumer loyalty via consumer satisfaction levels with food and beverage products offered by Malaysian small and medium enterprises (SMEs), in which the 4Ps significantly and positively influenced consumer satisfaction. Martina et al. (2023) also appraised the impact of gastronomy tourism product quality on local visitor satisfaction and loyalty at Nasi Balapan Puyung Inaq Esun in Lombok. The findings demonstrated that gastronomy tourism product quality substantially and positively contributed to local visitor satisfaction. Thus, the current study propounded that:

H6: A significant positive association exists between products and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.2.2 Price and visitor satisfaction

Price is the combination of all values exchanged by customers for the benefits of possessing or employing a service or product offering (Kotler & Gary, 2008). Price serves as the fundamental of tourism business strategy and an instrument to gain competitive edges over competitors (Sarker et al., 2012). Consumers will also be satisfied when product quality surpasses the costs. Abdullah Kadhim et al. (2016), Luekveerawattana (2016), and Teas (1993) demonstrated the significance of price on consumer satisfaction. Ketut et al. (2021) also scrutinised the impact of food quality and price on consumer satisfaction at Anantara Uluwatu Bali Resort. The findings demonstrated that food quality and price substantially and positively impacted consumer satisfaction. Moreover, Zardi et al. (2019) appraised the impacts of product price, quality, location, and consumer satisfaction on consumer loyalty at Simpang Raya Restaurant, Bukittinggi. The findings uncovered that price profoundly impacted consumer satisfaction. Marpaung et al. (2023), Meng and Elliott (2008), and Ranaweera and Neely (2003) also demonstrated that reasonable prices substantially and positively influenced visitor satisfaction, which was aligned with other academicians (Han & Ryu, 2009b; Reimer & Kuehn, 2005; Ryu & Jang, 2007). The current study posited that:

H7: A significant positive linkage exists between price and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.2.3 The marketing mix and visitor satisfaction

The marketing mix is a combination of tactical marketing instruments that can be regulated and integrated by firms to evoke intended responses from target consumers (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Owomoyela et al. (2013) and Yelkur (2000)

demonstrated that all marketing mix components substantially and positively contributed to consumer satisfaction. Mustawadjuhaefa et al. (2017), Rasyid et al. (2017), and Verma and Singh (2017) revealed that the service marketing mix played a pivotal function in visitor satisfaction. Al Muala and Al Qurneh (2012) also elucidated that products and locations considerably influenced tourist satisfaction and loyalty in Jordanian curative tourism. In addition, Selang (2013) demonstrated that products and prices profoundly influenced consumer loyalty towards Shoulder Mall Fresh Mart Manado, which suggested that implementing an optimal marketing mix could boost customer satisfaction. Other researchers also revealed similar findings (Hayuningtyas, 2020; Khatab et al., 2019; Kewas et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Mustawadjuhaefa et al. (2017), Mulyana and Sugeng (2018), and Verma and Singh (2017) discovered that improving the service marketing mix profoundly increased hotel guest satisfaction and hotel marketing performance. Magatef (2015) also uncovered that product and promotion produced the highest impact on international visitor satisfaction, with price and distribution also playing substantial roles. Furthermore, Zahara (2024) assessed and revealed the significant impacts of marketing mix elements on tourist satisfaction at Alamendah Tourism Village, Bandung Regency. The current study posited that:

H11: A significant positive correlation exists between the marketing mix and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.3 Direct-Effect Hypotheses Related to the Gastronomy Experience

Hypotheses, namely H8, H9, and H12, were developed according to correlations between horizontal and vertical gastronomy experiences and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.3.1 Horizontal gastronomy experience and visitor satisfaction

Horizontal experience or participation has emerged as an increasingly popular concept among academicians and practitioners. Landry and Solmon (2004) explicated that mind, body, and soul participation necessitates engagement, with acquired capabilities vital to personal relationships with other individuals and the pursuit of reason and value in life (Law, 2002). Borell et al. (2006) and Haak et al. (2008) elucidated two participation modes, namely performance-oriented (personal actions to benefit and satisfy other individuals) and joint participation (sharing experiences with other individuals and perceiving the external environment). Pine II and Gilmore (1999) also categorised participation into two groups, namely involvement or passive participation and being a pivotal part of generating personal experience (active participation). Past academicians demonstrated that horizontal gastronomy experiences profoundly and positively influenced visitor satisfaction, which suggested active or passive participation in gastronomy tourism would positively contribute to satisfaction through enjoyment (Mora et al., 2021; Richards, 2024; Stone et al., 2019). Liu et al. (2022) also revealed the significance of entertainment in ensuring tourist satisfaction. In addition, Vo Thanh and Kirova (2018) underscored the significance of offering essential services to visitors at wineries, including institutional information, local history, traditions, and the wine-making process. Schmitt (1999, p. 60) also delineated that “experience is often the result of direct observation and/or participation in the event, whether the event is real, dreamlike, or virtual”. Participation in relevant food experiences can lead to tourist satisfaction (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Kim et al., 2011; Nield et al., 2000):

H8: A significant positive linkage exists between horizontal gastronomy experience and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.3.2 Vertical gastronomy experience and visitor satisfaction

Vertical experiences are related to associating with the customer's environment in the event, wherein the customer is either absorbed in or connected to the experience or immersed in self-experience physically and virtually (playing video games). Essentially, vertical experiences are a connection developed by consumers with the experience either via mental engagement or physical and virtual immersion in the event (Pine II & Gilmore, 1998). Björk et al. (2020) uncovered that vertical food experiences acquired via absorption or immersion contributed additional value to food experiences and visitor satisfaction. Li et al. (2023) also analysed and revealed the significant and positive impact of immersion on visitor satisfaction through perceived attractiveness and contentment. Moreover, Lunardo and Ponsignon (2020) developed a framework to elucidate how immersion obtained via autonomy could result in higher tourist satisfaction via temporal dissociation. Previous scholars also demonstrated that food experiences through absorption or immersion led to higher tourist satisfaction (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Kim et al., 2011; Nield et al., 2000). The present study propounded that:

H9: A significant positive linkage exists between vertical gastronomy experiences and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.3.3 Gastronomy experience and visitor satisfaction

Experiments are direct or indirect observations of customer's perceptions regarding specific products or services (Mathwick et al., 2001). Perceived product excellence signifies a service provider's product success and overall consumer appreciation of high product competence or efficient services. Chaney and Ryan (2012) also revealed that local history and culture were shared with tourists via gastronomy experiences, such as local food (Sims, 2009) or hedonic and experiential restaurants (Kim & Moon,

2009). Additionally, Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2013) uncovered that food experiences assisted in creating memories and satisfaction. Kim et al. (2011) elucidated that gastronomy experiences offered comprehension trip satisfaction. Agyeiwaah et al. (2019) also demonstrated that gastronomy experience was profoundly and positively correlated to visitor satisfaction and loyalty, which corresponded to other researchers (Hendijani, 2016; Ullah et al., 2022; Yoo et al., 2022). The current study posited that: **H12:** A significant positive association exists between gastronomy experience and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.4 Moderating Impact

Relevant hypotheses, H13 and H14, were formulated according to the moderating role of gastronomy experience on the linkage between service quality, the marketing mix, and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.4.1 The moderating impact of gastronomy experience on the linkage between service quality and visitor satisfaction

The tourism experience directly influences visitor satisfaction and contentment with received service quality, which is vital for determining visitors' anticipations for tourist destinations (Yasin et al., 2017). Tourism experiences also determine the perceptions of overall service quality, satisfaction, and post-consumption behavioural intentions (Cooper & Hall, 2008). Numerous scholars discovered that the service quality of multiple restaurants did not fulfil the stipulated standard, which diminished visitor satisfaction and vice versa (Delfin et al., 2019; Diangha Sylvanus Ngoata et al., 2021; Kim, 2024; Kumolu-Johnson, 2024; Parichard Benrit & Numtip Trakulmaykee, 2016; Tran, 2023). Forgas-Coll et al. (2017) uncovered that visitors with prior experiences and who were satisfied with previous destinations would exhibit higher

anticipations compared to the counterparts with limited experience, in which the initial perception of destinations and service quality produced more substantial impacts. Yasin et al. (2017) also elucidated that visitors' experiences function as the fundamental or essential consideration factor for evaluating visitors' anticipations, with fulfilled anticipations leading to tourist satisfaction. Furthermore, Chou et al. (2024) compared hotel fine dining and chain restaurant customers' perceived service quality and satisfaction and revealed that consumer experiences considerably moderated consumer satisfaction. Rajaratnam et al. (2014a) also uncovered the moderating impact of previous tourism experiences on the association between travellers' perceptions of service quality and satisfaction in rural tourism destinations. Additionally, Gu (2023) demonstrated the moderating role of trip experiences in the profound and positive linkage between overall service quality and consumer satisfaction, with the presence of travel experience further reinforcing the linkage. Therefore, the present study postulated that:

H13: Gastronomy experience significantly moderates the correlation between service quality and visitor satisfaction.

2.10.4.2 The moderating impact of gastronomy experience on the linkage between the marketing mix and visitor satisfaction

A previous study revealed the positive impact of the Internet on satisfaction with tourist destinations, which was moderated by travellers' previous experience of the destination and experience of the Internet (Castañeda et al., 2007; Gračan et al., 2023; Majeed et al., 2020; Natalia Kristiani Tandafatu et al., 2024). Adam et al. (2023) also demonstrated that the destination image, marketing mix, and e-WOM collectively contributed to higher revisit intention. Furthermore, Pujiastuti et al. (2017) scrutinised and uncovered the significant moderating roles of the marketing mix, culture, and

experience in the association between purchase intention and the actual action of purchasing online music products in Indonesia. The current study posited that:

H14: Gastronomy experience significantly moderates the linkage between the marketing mix quality and visitor satisfaction.

2.11 Chapter Summary

The current chapter presented a comprehensive literature review of previous research on the aspects of service quality, namely responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and tangibles and the marketing mix (product and price) as independent variables, with gastronomy experience as the moderating variable and visitor satisfaction as the dependent variable. The proposed conceptual model was also delineated with an explanation of relevant prior studies and two underpinning theories, namely SET and EDT. Past empirical findings have also been elucidated to determine the most optimal approach to formulating the study hypotheses. The following chapter elucidates the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The present chapter delineates the proposed theoretical framework and the study methodology through a comprehensive literature review. The framework incorporated a moderating variable, namely gastronomy experience, in the interplay between the independent variables (service quality and the marketing mix) and the dependent variable (visitor satisfaction). Additionally, the quantitative methodology was selected according to the stipulated RQs and ROs in the first chapter.

3.2 Research Design

A study design guides data collection for analyses and inferences (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). This study employed a quantitative research approach using a survey-based and cross-sectional explanatory design. This design was considered appropriate as the study aimed to examine the relationships between service quality, marketing mix, gastronomy experience, and visitor satisfaction, as well as to test the moderating role of gastronomy experience. Data were collected at a single point in time in order to explain and validate the hypothesised relationships among the study variables.

The quantitative methodology was employed in this study (1) to appraise the impact of service quality on gastronomy experience and visitor satisfaction, (2) to assess the impact of the marketing mix on gastronomy experience and visitor satisfaction, (3) to evaluate the influence of gastronomy experience on visitor satisfaction, and (4) to scrutinise the moderating role of gastronomy experience in the linkage between service quality, the marketing mix, and visitor satisfaction. Quantitative studies generally concentrate on deduction, corroboration, hypothesis testing, explanation, prediction,

standardised data collection (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

3.3 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this study was the individual. The target respondents were international visitors who travelled to Phuket, Krabi, Surat Thani, and Phang Nga and had experienced local restaurants located in the old towns of these provinces. Respondents were requested to evaluate restaurant-related attributes, including service quality, marketing mix, gastronomy experience, and visitor satisfaction, based on their actual dining experiences during their visits. To ensure that the responses reflected meaningful restaurant-based experiences, participation was limited to tourists who confirmed having visited local restaurants during their trip. This study focused specifically on formal local restaurants in old town areas, while informal street food vendors were excluded to ensure consistency in evaluating restaurant service quality attributes

3.4 Study Population

Phuket and Krabi are located along the Andaman Sea, while Surat Thani and Phang Nga are situated on the Gulf of Thailand. These southern provinces are well-established tourism destinations that combine natural attractions, multicultural heritage, and long-standing local food traditions. International visitors travelling to these areas commonly engage in local food consumption as part of their overall travel experience, particularly within old town areas where local restaurants and food-related cultural activities are concentrated. Southern Thailand was selected as the study area because it represents a prominent regional context for gastronomy tourism in Thailand. The region is characterised by strong culinary heritage, historic old towns, and

continuous flows of international tourists. Several southern destinations have been positioned as gastronomy-oriented tourism cities, supported by distinctive local food identities and food-based tourism development. For example, Phuket has received formal international recognition as a Creative City of Gastronomy under the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UNESCO, 2015). This recognition reflects the significance of Southern Thailand in the development of gastronomy-related tourism and visitor experiences. As shown in Table 3.1, a total of 114,074 international visitors travelled to Southern Thailand in 2021 (Ministry of Tourism and Sport, 2021). This volume of international arrivals supports the suitability of Southern Thailand as the study population, particularly for investigating the experiences and satisfaction of international visitors who have dined at local restaurants located in the old towns of Phuket, Krabi, Surat Thani, and Phang Nga.

Table 3.1
Total Number of Foreign Visitor Arrivals in Southern Thailand in 2021

Tourist Attraction (Southern Thai Provinces)	Number of Tourists
Phuket	89354
Surat Thani	7616
Krabi	2359
Phang Nga	14745
Total	114,074

Source: The Ministry of Tourism and Sport, 2021

Evidence from 2021–2025 suggests that Southern Thailand, particularly Phuket, Krabi, Surat Thani, and Phang Nga, have continued to be recognised as a major destination for international tourists, supporting the continued relevance of the study area (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2021; Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2024 ; Thai Government Public Relations Department, 2025).

In addition to the international visitor population, the restaurant context in the four selected provinces was also considered, as gastronomy experiences are closely formed through dining-related settings. Official business statistics from the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP, 2021) indicate the number of registered restaurant enterprises operating in Phuket, Surat Thani, Krabi, and Phang Nga. This information is provided to illustrate the restaurant environment that supports visitors' gastronomic experiences in the selected destinations.

Table 3.2
Number of Registered Restaurant Enterprises in Selected Southern Provinces (2021)

Tourist Attraction (Southern Thai Provinces)	Number of Restaurant
Phuket	5,594
Surat Thani	7,962
Krabi	2,852
Phang Nga	1,705

Source: Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion. (2021)

However, it should be emphasized that restaurants were not treated as the unit of analysis or sampling unit in this study. The focus remains on individual international visitors, as they represent the primary respondents in assessing gastronomy experiences and satisfaction.

3.5 Sampling Design

Probability sampling refers to recruiting respondents from the target population, wherein each respondent possesses the opportunity to be selected. Comparatively, non-probability sampling involves determining the specific samples to be recruited (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). Probability sampling can generally provide more precise results compared to non-probability sampling, although non-probability sampling is preferred when costs and convenience are major concerns (Wiśniowski et al., 2020).

The present study applied a stratified sampling approach with proportionate quotas due to the heterogeneity in the target population, which could be differentiated by province. In practice, because a complete list of all international visitors was not available, respondents were recruited through an intercept survey at key tourism sites. Respondents were recruited through an intercept survey at key tourism sites, with stratification applied by province to ensure proportional representation. Therefore, stratification was used to ensure adequate representation across the four provinces. Alvi (2016) and Cochran (1977) also suggested stratified approaches to acquire more representative findings when population characteristics differ across subgroups.

3.5.1 Sample Size Calculation

The target population is the group of individuals to be assessed, whereas a sample is the subset of the target population (Cavana et al., 2001). Probability sampling allows every individual to be equally selected as a respondent. This study referred to the criteria of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) and Sekaran and Bougie (2016) to calculate the sample size at a 95% confidence level, with the population size at 114,074. Hence, the minimum sample size was 384. This sample size also exceeds the minimum requirement recommended for PLS-SEM analysis, such as the 10-times rule, indicating sufficient statistical power for structural model testing. In addition, a slightly larger sample is appropriate for moderation analysis, which typically requires higher statistical sensitivity.

3.5.2 Sample Size Technique

The study respondents were foreign visitors in the Krabi, Surat Thani, Phuket, and Phang Nga provinces of Southern Thailand. The stratified sampling technique enabled the researcher to categorise the study respondents into relatively homogeneous and

non-overlapping subgroups. The technique is the most efficient compared to other methods as all members of the target population possess a certain probability of being recruited. The number of respondents in each province was determined by multiplying the total number of international visitors in a specific province with the minimum sample size before being divided by the total number of foreign tourists in the four provinces. For instance:

$89,354$ (international visitors in Phuket) \times 384 (minimum total samples) = $34,311,936$ / $114,074$ (total international visitors in Krabi, Surat Thani, Phuket, and Phang Nga) = 301 samples to be recruited from Phuket. The same calculation approach was implemented in the other three provinces. Table 3.3 depicts the proportionate sample size in each southern Thai provinces. To account for incomplete or unusable questionnaires, the final number of valid responses retained for analysis increased slightly to 387.

Table 3.3
Proportionate Stratified Sampling by Province

Tourist Attraction (Southern Thai Provinces)	Number of Tourists	Proportionate Sample Size
Phuket	89354	301
Surat Thani	7616	26
Krabi	2359	8
Phang Nga	14745	50
Total	114,074	384

3.6 Instrument

The current questionnaire was developed based on prior findings, which consisted of six sections, with a cover letter outlining the study purpose and assurance of respondents' confidentiality (see Appendix A):

Section A: Term Definition

Section B: General Information

Section C: Service Quality Measurement Items

Section D: Marketing Mix Measurement Items

Section E: Gauging the Moderating Role of Gastronomy Experience

Section F: Visitor Satisfaction Measurement Items

In this study, the marketing mix is measured through product and price, as these two components are the most directly connected to visitors' gastronomy consumption and satisfaction evaluations. The decision to focus on these elements is also supported by the empirical justification discussed earlier in Chapter 2 (Table 2.1), where product quality and price fairness are consistently identified as key drivers of satisfaction in gastronomy tourism contexts.

Horizontal gastronomy experience represents visitors' active engagement in gastronomy activities, such as participation, learning, and enjoyment during local dining. Vertical gastronomy experience, on the other hand, reflects a deeper level of immersion and absorption within the dining atmosphere and cultural environment.

The questionnaire was prepared in English as the primary language for international visitors. To ensure that the items were clear and appropriate, the instrument was reviewed by experts and pilot-tested prior to the main survey, with support provided when necessary without influencing respondents' answers.

All constructs in this study were assessed using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Repetitive explanations in Section 3.7.1 were reduced by retaining only one concise justification for this scale, as it provides sufficient sensitivity for capturing visitors' perceptions in tourism and service quality research.

3.7 Variable Operationalisation

Questionnaires are generally developed to collect a huge quantitative and measurable dataset regarding the defined variables (Brace, 2018). A survey is generally restricted to a specific region, which allows efficient data collection through personal administration among respondents within a short timeframe (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Oppenheim (2001) also elucidated that questionnaires could effectively account for large sample sizes at relatively low expenses, which enhances geographical flexibility. Thus, the questionnaire should sufficiently represent the research concept and instruments when determining an appropriate multivariate analysis approach. The questionnaire should be developed based on the study objective, research questions, and hypotheses to accurately appraise the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable. The current 10-page questionnaire comprises a cover letter and the first section defines various terms. Section B asked about demographic variables, including age, gender, education, and marital status, with visitor behaviours measured from Sections C to E. The questions were developed to be concise, unambiguous, and comprehensible to avoid misinterpretation (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007), which were aligned with the measurement scales, developed hypotheses, and philosophical structures of the analysis, terminologies, question clarity, term definition, and the approximate completion time. Five experts were also involved in scrutinising the language and content accuracy of the questionnaire to ensure consistency with ROs.

The content validity test demonstrated that the item-objective congruence (IOC) index of each question exceeded 0.5, which demonstrated adequate content validity (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1976).

3.7.1 Measurement Scale

The Likert scale was utilised in this study to assess the responses due to its widespread use in social science research (Likert, 1932; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Finstad (2010) suggested that higher response reliability could be obtained through a seven-point scale, as it provides greater sensitivity than shorter formats. Accordingly, a seven-point Likert scale was adopted in this study to allow respondents to express more nuanced evaluations of restaurant experiences (Hair et al., 2022). All constructs were measured consistently from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

3.7.2 Variable Measurement

Phayoonpun (2015) recommended that measurements can be adopted or adapted from previous studies after evaluating the reliability of the employed measurement scales to save time and effort from developing instruments. Table 3.4 portrays measurements of all four latent constructs, namely service quality, the marketing mix, gastronomy experience, and visitor satisfaction. Particularly, service quality was assessed via 27 items in terms of responsiveness, assurance, reliability, tangibles, and empathy adopted from Zeithaml et al. (1988) on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 7 as strongly agree.

In line with the conceptual discussion presented in Chapters 1 and 2, gastronomy experience in this study is approached through two experiential dimensions, namely horizontal and vertical components. Horizontal gastronomy experience reflects visitors' active and passive participation in gastronomy-related

activities, capturing learning, curiosity, and entertainment aspects of food tourism (Manthiou et al., 2014). In contrast, vertical gastronomy experience represents a deeper level of psychological and emotional immersion, where tourists engage with the dining experience through feelings of escape, harmony, and mood enhancement. Together, these two dimensions provide a comprehensive understanding of international visitors' gastronomy experiences in Southern Thailand. Cronbach's alpha values for all items were between 0.70 and 0.91 as reported in previous studies (see Table 3.7).

Table 3.4
Variable Measurement Scales and Items

Measurement	Item	Source
Visitor Satisfaction	9	Castaldo et al. (2016); Oliver (1996)
Horizontal Gastronomy Experience	8	Manthiou et al. (2014)
Vertical Gastronomy Experience	8	Manthiou et al. (2014)
Tangibles	5	Zeithaml et al. (1988); Shafiq et al. (2013); Seyanont (2007)
Reliability	5	Zeithaml et al. (1988); Shafiq et al. (2013); Seyanont (2007)
Responsiveness	6	Zeithaml et al. (1988); Shafiq et al. (2013); Seyanont (2007)
Assurance	6	Zeithaml et al. (1988); Shafiq et al. (2013); Seyanont (2007)
Empathy	5	Zeithaml et al. (1988); Shafiq et al. (2013); Seyanont (2007)
Product	5	Ofosu (2016); Nguyen et al. (2019)
Price	5	Ofosu (2016); Nguyen et al. (2019)

Table 3.5
Measurement of Service Quality Dimensions

No.	Items
Tangibles	
1	The physical facilities of the restaurant are visually appealing.
2	The menus of the restaurants reflect-gastronomy tourism.
3	The restaurant attendants or staff were neat and clean in appearance.
4	The materials and utensils of restaurants are appealing and interesting.
5	The restaurants are decorated to reflect the traditional localities.
Reliability	
6	The restaurants provided service as promised.
7	The restaurants paid attention to the details of the services.
8	The taste of the menu items served met the customers' expectations.
9	The restaurants billed you accurately and correctly.
10	The restaurants were consistent in service provision.
Responsiveness	
11	The restaurants provided prompt service for you.
12	The restaurants were always willing to help you.
13	The restaurants provided extra service to meet customers' special requests.
14	The restaurants responded to the complaint in time.
15	Services are provided on time.
16	The service timing was well-managed.
Assurance	
17	The restaurants have expertise in the food ingredients and preparation methods for menu items.
18	The attendants or staff displayed politeness and courtesy.
19	You felt safe while receiving service from the restaurant attendants/staff.
20	You felt secure when making payment.
21	The attendants/staff had patience.
22	The attendants/staff were emotionally mature.
Empathy	
23	You get service whenever you need it.
24	The restaurants have opening and closing times that are convenient for all customers.
25	The restaurants were able to communicate effectively with you.
26	The restaurants gave customers individual attention.
27	The restaurants made you feel special.

A total of 10 measurement items were employed to appraise the marketing mix. Specifically, respondents were inquired about the degree of visited restaurants in applying the marketing mix, namely product and price. The measurement items were adapted from Ofosu (2016)) and Nguyen et al. (2019) and rated on a seven-point Likert

scale ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 7 as strongly agree (see Table 3.5). Meanwhile, gastronomy experience was evaluated in terms of vertical and horizontal aspects through items derived from Manthiou et al. (2014). Each aspect was appraised via eight items on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 7 as strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha value in previous studies was between 0.75 and 0.93 (Latif, 2018) (see Table 3.6). Satisfaction encapsulates cognitive and affective dimensions (Oliver, 1997), with overall satisfaction as a more accurate gauge of future repurchase behaviours (Jones & Suh, 2000). Three measurement items were adapted from Oliver (1996) and four from Castaldo et al. (2016) (see Table 3.5). The seven items were rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 7 as strongly agree. Gaddi (2022) demonstrated a reliability coefficient of 0.791.

Table 3.6
Measurement of Marketing Mix Dimensions

No.	Items
	Product
1	I think local food is tasty.
2	I think the taste of local food is unfamiliar to my routine eating.
3	I think there is a variety of local food choices.
4	Local food restaurants show price labels.
5	I think the quality of local food is consistent.
	Price
6	The restaurants offer discounts.
7	I think the local food is not overpriced.
8	I think the local food offers excellent prices.
9	I think the quality of the local food matches the price.
10	I think the local food is worth paying for in terms of quantity.

Source: Adapted from Ofosu (2016) and Nguyen et al. (2019)

Table 3.7

Measurement of Gastronomy Experience Dimension

No.	Items
Horizontal Gastronomy Experience	
1	The experience in gastronomy tourism has made me more knowledgeable.
2	The experience in gastronomy tourism made me learn a lot about food culture.
3	Gastronomy tourism stimulated my curiosity to learn new things.
4	My experience in gastronomy tourism was highly educational for me.
5	The activities in gastronomy tourism were amusing.
6	Watching others performing at the gastronomy tourism was captivating.
7	What others were doing at the gastronomy tourism made me enjoy watching.
8	Activities at the gastronomy tourism were entertaining.
Vertical Gastronomy Experience	
9	I was in a very good mood while experiencing gastronomy tourism.
10	Gastronomy tourism made me feel like I was living in a different time or place.
11	The experience in gastronomy allows me to see myself in a new way.
12	I completely escaped from my daily routine in gastronomy tourism.
13	I felt a real sense of harmony in gastronomy tourism.
14	The setting at the gastronomy tourism paid close attention to design details of design and decoration which made me feel part of the place.
15	It was pleasant just being here at gastronomy tourism.
16	The setting of gastronomy tourism was very attractive.

Table 3.8

Measurement of tourists 'satisfaction

No.	Items
Visitor Satisfaction	
1	My gastronomy tourism turned out better than I expected.
2	If I had another chance, I would revisit the restaurants.
3	This gastronomy tourism is exactly what I need.
4	I think I made the right decision to embrace gastronomy tourism.
5	I am satisfied with the value of the price I paid.
6	I am satisfied with my decision to embark on gastronomy tourism.
7	My gastronomy tourism experience made me happy.
8	Gastronomy tourism is a pleasant experience.
9	Overall, my gastronomy tourism experience was a delight.

Source: Adapted from Oliver (1996) and Castaldo et al. (2016)

3.8 Data Collection

Data collection was conducted by the researcher with support from trained data collectors. In total, 420 questionnaires were distributed to account for incomplete or unusable responses, and 387 valid cases were ultimately retained for the final analysis. Stratified sampling was applied using proportionate provincial quotas combined with time-based randomisation. Within each province, data were gathered during randomly selected time periods, including morning, afternoon, and evening sessions, across different days and designated locations such as local restaurants and old town areas. The main survey was carried out between January and March 2022, following the pilot study, to capture international visitors' dining experiences during their trip to Southern Thailand. This period covered both peak and shoulder travel seasons, which helped to minimise potential seasonal bias in satisfaction evaluations. Data were collected in gastronomy-related settings because these locations provided appropriate access to international tourists after they had engaged in local dining activities.

Questionnaire distribution was intentionally avoided during dining times to prevent disruption to restaurant operations and to ensure that respondents could complete the survey comfortably in a neutral environment. Importantly, participation was limited to visitors who had recently experienced dining at local restaurants, ensuring that responses reflected restaurant-based perceptions within the study context (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Local assistants played a limited role, primarily facilitating access to the data collection sites and supporting communication when necessary. To reduce potential interviewer bias, all data collectors followed a standardised protocol and were instructed not to explain, interpret, or influence respondents' answers. Questionnaires were completed independently by the participants. Respondent

selection was guided by predefined screening criteria, proportionate quotas, and randomly assigned time blocks rather than the personal judgement of data collectors. Only international visitors who had visited local restaurants in the old town prior to completing the survey were invited to take part. All participants provided informed consent and were informed that their participation was voluntary and anonymous, in line with Human Research Ethics principles.

3.9 Validity and Reliability of the Pilot Study

A pilot study was performed to determine the validity and reliability of the instrument before actual data collection while ensuring that the instrument was highly comprehensible and functional (Bryman, 2012).

3.9.1 Validity of the Pilot Study

While the measurement scales were adopted from and validated in previous research, content validity was required to be ascertained again to guarantee that the items accurately represented the content of the construct (Bryman, 2012) or appraised all aspects of a specific social construct (Lawshe, 1975). Content validity is defined as the subjective consensus among professionals that a scale precisely evaluates what it is intended to assess (Deakins & Dillon, 2005). Hence, the measurement scale will be perceived as valid when experts perceive that the measurement sufficiently delineates a specific concept (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Content validity is also recognised as logical validity (Lawshe, 1975). Two experts at the Universiti Utara Malaysia and Thaksin University, who were familiar with questionnaire development, and one expert on southern tourism in Thailand at the Thaksin University Thailand were requested by the current researcher to refine and validate the measurement scale of each construct in terms of simplicity, formats, wordings, clarity, and ambiguity (Prakash & Palapati, 2016). The experts were requested to provide comments on the

initial nine items of general information, 26 service quality measurement items, 10 marketing mix measurement items, 16 gastronomy experience measurement items, and nine visitor satisfaction measurement items. The feedback was primarily on the wording to ensure higher clarity, which was incorporated accordingly.

Furthermore, an on-site observation was performed with five foreign visitors to determine the existence of potential challenges in completing the questionnaire while enabling the researcher to identify the amount of time required for completion, which was approximately 10 minutes. Since the respondents of this study were international tourists, language clarity was treated as an important consideration in the instrument development process. The questionnaire was prepared in English as the primary survey language, and all measurement items were worded in simple and comprehensible terms to minimise misunderstanding among non-native speakers. In addition, the on-site observation with five foreign visitors prior to the main survey was conducted not only to assess questionnaire functionality, but also to ensure that respondents could clearly understand the wording and complete the survey without language difficulty. This procedure helped to reduce potential language bias and enhanced the suitability of the instrument for international visitors. No respondents encountered challenges and only offered minor feedback for wording clarity. Hence, the questionnaire was suitable for the pilot study.

3.9.2 Reliability of the Pilot Study

The reliability of a measurement scale demonstrates the level of bias- or error-free to guarantee consistent measurement across periods and items in the instrument. Specifically, internal consistency was evaluated to determine whether items gauged a similar concept or variable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The pilot test was performed using the same stratified intercept-based approach among 50 international visitors at

Krabi, Surat Thani, Phuket, and Phang Nga in November 2021 for a fortnight. A total of 30 out of 50 disseminated questionnaires were returned, with only 25 completed, which indicated a high response rate of 70% when the questionnaires were disseminated and gathered physically by the researcher according to the recommendations of Ali et al. (2021) that the average response rate for the general questionnaire at 70 % was positive. Perneger et al. (2015) also delineated that sample sizes of at least 30 are adequate for a pilot study. Collins (2007) explicated that Cronbach's alpha values were extensively employed to appraise the reliability of multiple-item measurement scales. In addition, Nunnally (1978) recommended that the instruments should achieve a reliability value of at least 0.70. Table 3.8 illustrates that all Cronbach's alpha values surpass 0.7, which posits that the items achieve sufficient internal consistency.

Table 3.8
Reliability Analysis of Measurement Items

Measurement Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (Pilot Study, N = 30)
Visitor Satisfaction	9	.953
Horizontal Gastronomy Experience	8	.953
Vertical Gastronomy Experience	8	.917
Tangibles	5	.837
Reliability	5	.869
Responsiveness	6	.921
Assurance	6	.929
Empathy	5	.905
Product	5	.709
Price	5	.880

3.10 Data Analysis

3.10.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics elucidate the c(Mahbobi & Tiemann, 2015)ation (Mahbobi & Tiemann, 2015). The present study utilised the frequency count, percentage, x-bar, and standard deviation to delineate the demographic characteristics of international visitors, visitor demeanours, and latent variables.

3.10.2 Partial Least Squares (PLS)

The current study employed SEM, which is a multivariate approach integrating factor analysis and multiple regression analysis, for both structural and measurement model assessments (Duarte & Roposo, 2010). Thakkar (2020) delineated that SEM could concurrently measure a sequence of interrelated relationships among the variables and between latent constructs. Werner and Schermelleh (2009) also recommended SEM should be employed as the primary analysis technique owing to the capability of simultaneously utilising several indicators under the same variable. The technique also accounts for measurement errors and incorporates measurement error variables reflecting the measurement error of the observed constructs while collectively scrutinising and corroborating intricate linkages in a framework compared to other methods. Additionally, numerous hypotheses can be evaluated due to the compatibility of complex data entry, with SEM also as a confirmatory technique to investigate multivariate data, particularly in psychology and social science research (Sekaran, 2000; Schmacker & Lomax, 2004).

The SEM can foster the observation of separate correlations of multiple independent variables with dependent variables, which ensures high efficiency in concurrently performing a sequence of various separate regression equations (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2005). The technique also allows for analysing

theoretical propositions and associations between concepts and the directionality of significant correlations. The present study conducted SmartPLS path modelling for structural and measurement model evaluations. The measurement model scrutinised the reliability and validity of the constructs, whereas the structural model involved multivariate correlation analysis to determine the correlations and relationship impacts among the study constructs. Moreover, the moderating role of gastronomy experience on the linkage between service quality, the marketing mix and visitor satisfaction was analysed vis SEM.

3.11 Chapter Summary

The current chapter has elucidated the research design, target population, unit of analysis, sample size, variable measurement and operationalisation, and data collection. The quantitative methodology, namely the survey questionnaire, was implemented in this study to garner information from international visitors in Phuket, Krabi, Surat Thani, and Phang Nga provinces in southern Thailand. The moderating role of gastronomy experience on the association between service quality, the marketing mix, and visitor satisfaction was also assessed.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The current chapter describes the analysis process and findings through both SPSS 21 and SmartPLS version 3 software. Specifically, the response rate was discussed before screening and preliminary analysis. The SPSS 21 software was employed for reporting respondents' demographic profiles and the descriptive findings of the latent constructs. Assessing reflective measurement models through the SmartPLS version 3 software encompassed four stages, namely analysing item reliability, evaluating internal consistency, appraising convergent validity, and investigating discriminant validity. The assessment results concentrated on the significance of path coefficients, namely R-squared (R^2) values, effect sizes (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). The moderating impact of visitor satisfaction on the structural model was also delineated.

4.2 Response Rate

A total of 420 survey questionnaires were disseminated to foreign tourists at Surat Thani, Krabi, Phuket, and Phang Nga who visited the old towns for local food. The questionnaires were either administered by the researcher or self-administered. The researcher collaborated with four expert teams with extensive experience in data collection in tourist research to attain a high response rate. Two of the experts were also tour guides in Surat Thani, Phuket, and Krabi, whereas the remaining two experts were consultants and managers in marketing and tourism. The study purpose and data collection, which were also at the beginning of the questionnaire, were adequately explicated to the respondents. After that, the respondents were given souvenirs as a token to complete the questionnaires, which could ensure and gain high cooperation

from the respondents. Zikmund et al. (2013) also suggested monetary or financial incentives to attain a high response rate. A total of 410 out of 420 disseminated questionnaires were returned, which demonstrated a high response rate of 98% (Berdie et al., 1986). Nevertheless, 19 questionnaires were unqualified at the screening criteria and certain questions were not answered or answers were incomplete. Thus, only 391 questionnaires were retained for data analysis (see Table 4.1). This final sample size of 391 valid responses is also consistent with the sample size justification discussed in Chapter Three. It exceeds the minimum requirement recommended for PLS-SEM analysis, and therefore provides adequate statistical power for structural model testing in this study. To minimise potential interviewer bias, respondents completed the questionnaires independently without any explanation or interpretation from the data collectors. The tour guides were strictly instructed not to influence participants' answers, and anonymity was clearly assured to encourage honest and voluntary responses.

Table 4.1
Survey Response Rate

Item	Number	%
Disseminated questionnaires	420	100
Collected questionnaires	410	98
Collected and usable questionnaires	391	93
Collected and unusable questionnaires	19	5

Note: A questionnaire response rate of 50 % is considered optimal, with a questionnaire response rate between 60 and 70 % as highly optimal (Berdie et al.,1986).

4.3 Screening and Preliminary Analysis

Screening is vital before multivariate data analysis (Chatfield C. & Collins A. J., 2013) to determine potential violations and offer an overview of the interaction among the study variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), which determines the selection of pertinent data analysis techniques (Byrne, 2010). Accordingly, the current study

appraised whether missing values, outliers, non-normality, and multicollinearity existed (Hair et al., 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). These screening procedures were conducted to ensure that the collected dataset was appropriate for subsequent SEM analysis.

4.3.1 Missing Data

Missing data would decrease the sample size available for data analysis. A total of 19 out of 410 collected questionnaires could not be utilised due to the unfulfilment of screening criteria, with certain responses incomplete. Hence, only 391 questionnaires were subjected to preliminary descriptive statistics to ascertain the presence of missing data. The results demonstrated the absence of missing data.

4.3.2 Outliers

An outlier exists when a data point is profoundly dissimilar or inconsistent with the remaining data points (Ramaswamy et al., 2000). Outliers could engender negative impacts, including assumption violations, obscuring data visualisations, biased results, and different signs of coefficients. Mahalanobis distance is one of the commonly employed techniques to appraise outliers in multivariate distributions (Filho et al., 2023) by evaluating the distance of each observation from the mean centre of all observations (Hair et al., 2009). The current investigation utilised the Mahalanobis distance to determine the existence of outliers by computing the chi-square value, which discovered four cases were high values of multivariate outliers. Serial Numbers 97, 141, 145, and 313 were omitted, with 387 responses retained for further analysis. In simple terms, although 391 questionnaires were initially usable after the screening stage, four cases were later identified as multivariate outliers and removed to avoid

distortion of the SEM results. Therefore, the final sample size used for SEM analysis was reduced to $N = 387$.

4.3.3 Normality

The evaluation of multivariate normality is necessary for multiple parametric multivariate statistical techniques (Korkmaz et al., 2014) as non-normal data distribution misrepresents the linkage between the constructs and the significance of the outcome (Hair et al., 2019). Particularly, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) is a non-parametric approach, which can account for non-normally distributed data despite the potential of biased bootstrap distributions and the adverse impact on the bootstrap confidence intervals for significance testing (Ringle et al., 2023). Data normality is generally appraised through skewness and kurtosis values before the model assessment to guarantee that highly non-normally distributed data would not result in misleading findings (Vaithilingam et al., 2024). Data normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis values. Although PLS-SEM can handle non-normal data, this step was still useful to ensure that the dataset does not contain extreme distributional issues. As shown in Table 4.2, all values fall within the acceptable range of -2 to $+2$ (Hair et al., 2022), suggesting that the data in this study are suitable for further SEM analysis.

Table 4.2
Skewness and Kurtosis

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
Visitor Satisfaction (SA)	- 0.852	0.991
Horizontal Gastronomy Experience (HO)	- 0.420	- 0.426
Vertical Gastronomy Experience (VE)	- 0.216	- 0.215
Tangibles (TA)	- 0.402	- 0.154
Reliability (REL)	- 1.106	0.733
Responsiveness (RES)	- 0.905	0.676
Assurance (AS)	- 1.083	1.331
Empathy (EM)	- 0.709	0.022
Product (PRO)	- 0.789	0.871
Price (PRI)	- 0.629	0.591

Note: Skewness and kurtosis values within the range of ± 2 suggest normal data distribution (Hair et al., 2022).

4.3.4 Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity occurs when interrelationships between the constructs are high in a multiple regression framework, which can lead to biased outcomes when determining the actual impact of each variable (Harrell, 2015). Hair et al. (2022) recommended that tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) are frequently employed approaches to detect the existence of multicollinearity in the PLS-SEM path. In this study, multicollinearity was examined using both the correlation matrix and VIF values. Multicollinearity among exogenous latent variables can also significantly misrepresent regression coefficients and statistical significance test results (Chatterjee & Hadi, 2006). The present study determined the presence of multicollinearity via the correlation matrix of the exogenous latent constructs, wherein a correlational value of at least 0.90 and above would suggest the presence of multicollinearity (Pallant, 2010). Table 4.3 portrays that the correlations between the exogenous latent constructs were below 0.90, indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern in this dataset (Pallant, 2010). Table 4.4 also demonstrates that all VIF values are below the threshold of 5 and tolerance values exceed the threshold of 0.20, which further confirms the absence

of multicollinearity among the exogenous constructs (Menard, 2001). Therefore, the data were suitable for subsequent structural model analysis.

Table 4. 3

Pearson Correlation Matrix of the Exogenous Latent Constructs

Construct	TA	REL	RES	AS	EM	HO	VE
TA	1						
REL	0.470**	1					
RES	0.563**	0.730**	1				
AS	0.549**	0.696**	0.797**	1			
EM	0.407**	0.631**	0.773**	0.723**	1		
HO	0.221**	0.492**	0.554**	0.464**	0.564**	1	
VE	0.240**	0.459**	0.559**	0.432**	0.480**	0.753**	1

** Significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Note: A correlational value of 0.90 posits multicollinearity between exogenous latent variables (Pallant, 2010).

Table 4. 4

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance Results

DV Value	IV Value	VIF	Tolerance
Tangibles (TA)	Reliability (REL)	2.420	0.413
	Responsiveness (RES)	4.285	0.233
	Assurance (AS)	3.195	0.313
	Empathy (EM)	3.059	0.327
	Product (PRO)	1.870	0.535
	Price (PRI)	1.981	0.505
	Horizontal Gastronomy Experience (HO)	2.695	0.371
	Vertical Gastronomy Experience (VE)	2.666	0.375
	Reliability (REL)	Tangibles (TA)	1.599
Responsiveness (RES)		4.286	0.233
Assurance (AS)		3.138	0.319
Empathy (EM)		3.083	0.324
Product (PRO)		1.852	0.540
Price (PRI)		1.987	0.503
Horizontal Gastronomy Experience (HO)		2.687	0.372
Vertical Gastronomy Experience (VE)		2.668	0.375
Responsiveness (RES)	Tangibles (TA)	1.507	0.663
	Reliability (REL)	2.282	0.438
	Assurance (AS)	2.918	0.343
	Empathy (EM)	2.665	0.375
	Product (PRO)	1.878	0.532
	Price (PRI)	2.023	0.494
	Horizontal Gastronomy Experience (HO)	2.724	0.367
	Vertical Gastronomy Experience (VE)	2.534	0.395

Table 4. 4 (Continued)

DV Value	IV Value	VIF	Tolerance
Assurance (AS)	Tangibles (TA)	1.556	0.643
	Reliability (REL)	2.313	0.432
	Responsiveness (RES)	4.040	0.248
	Empathy (EM)	2.906	0.344
	Product (PRO)	1.878	0.533
	Price (PRI)	2.023	0.494
	Horizontal Gastronomy Experience (HO)	2.724	0.367
	Vertical Gastronomy Experience (VE)	2.664	0.375
Empathy (EM)	Tangibles (TA)	1.593	0.628
	Reliability (REL)	2.430	0.412
	Responsiveness (RES)	3.945	0.253
	Assurance (AS)	3.108	0.322
	Product (PRO)	1.878	0.532
	Price (PRI)	1.945	0.514
	Horizontal Gastronomy Experience (HO)	2.618	0.382
	Vertical Gastronomy Experience (VE)	2.636	0.379
Product (PRO)	Tangibles (TA)	1.607	0.622
	Reliability (REL)	2.409	0.415
	Responsiveness (RES)	4.590	0.218
	Assurance (AS)	3.314	0.302
	Empathy (EM)	3.100	0.323
	Price (PRI)	1.440	0.695
	Horizontal Gastronomy Experience (HO)	2.713	0.369
	Vertical Gastronomy Experience (VE)	2.553	0.392
Price (PRI)	Tangibles (TA)	1.580	0.633
	Reliability (REL)	2.397	0.417
	Responsiveness (RES)	4.586	0.218
	Assurance (AS)	3.312	0.302
	Empathy (EM)	2.978	0.336
	Product (PRO)	1.336	0.749
	Horizontal Gastronomy Experience (HO)	2.675	0.374
	Vertical Gastronomy Experience (VE)	2.668	0.375

Note: VIF value ≤ 5 , Tolerance Value ≥ 0.20 (Menard, 2001).

4.4 Respondents' Demographic Profiles

Table 4.5 portrays respondents' demographic profiles, namely age, marital status, gender, education, and visitor demeanours. Specifically, 55.3% were males, followed by 39.3% as females and 5.4% unwilling to divulge. A total of 70.5% of the respondents were single, followed by 25.8% as married, 2.6% as divorced, and 0.3% as widowed. More than half possessed a Bachelor's Degree (52.6%), followed by a technical school or diploma (40.6%), graduate school (5.9%), and secondary school

(0.1%). Most respondents were aged between 26 and 35 years old (58.1%), followed by between 36 and 45 years old (23.0%), under 25 years old (10.1%), between 56 and 55 years old (10.0%), above 65 years old (10.0%), and between 46 and 55 years old (3.6%).

Table 4. 5
International Visitors' Demographic Profiles

Demographic	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	214	55.3
	Female	152	39.3
	Prefer not to say	21	5.4
Marital status	Single	273	70.5
	Married	103	25.8
	Widowed	1	0.3
	Divorced	10	2.6
Education	Technical school or diploma	157	40.6
	University	203	52.5
	Graduate school	23	5.9
	Secondary school	4	1.0
Age	Below 25 years old	39	10.1
	Between 26 and 35 years old	225	58.1
	Between 36 and 45 years old	89	23.0
	Between 46 and 55 years old	14	3.6
	Between 56 and 65 years old	10	2.6
	Above 65 years old	10	2.6

Note. The final sample size used for SEM analysis was **N = 387**, after removing **four** multivariate outliers identified using Mahalanobis distance from the initially usable **391** questionnaires.

Table 4.6 illustrates the number of foreign visitors visiting southern Thailand in the past three years, the frequency of visiting, the primary visiting objective, and the expenses of gastronomy tourism. Particularly, 37.2% of the visitors visited southern Thailand, whereas 62.8% had never visited in the past three years. More than half who visited southern Thailand was the first time (51.4%), with the remaining revisitors (48.6%). The primary objective was for local cuisines and food (58.4%), followed by sightseeing (49.9%), nightlife (39.3%), Muay Thai (26.89%), visiting friends or families (29.6%), and other purposes. Approximately half visited alone (49.6%). Most

visitors spent below 10,000 Baht per trip (41.3%), followed by between 10,001 and 20,000 Baht (37.2%), between 20,001 and 30,000 Baht (14.2%), between 30,001 and 40,000 Baht (3.9%), between 40,001 and 50,000 Baht (2.6%), and above 50,000 Baht (3.0%). It is important to clarify that a total of 391 questionnaires were initially retained after the screening stage, as reported in Table 4.1. However, during the subsequent data cleaning process, four responses were identified as multivariate outliers based on the Mahalanobis distance criterion and were therefore excluded from the SEM analysis. As a result, the final sample size used for the descriptive statistics and structural model assessment was reduced to 387 respondents. This explains why the total number of respondents presented in Table 4.6 differs slightly from the number of usable questionnaires reported earlier.



Table 4.6
Visitors' Demeanours in Southern Thailand

Visitor Demeanour	Frequency	%
Visited southern Thailand in the past three years		
Yes	144	37.2
No	243	62.8
Frequency of visiting southern Thailand		
First time	199	51.4
Revisiting	188	48.6
Primary visiting objective		
Local cuisine and food	161	58.4
Visiting friends or families	99	25.6
Shopping	36	9.3
Sightseeing	193	49.9
Attending a conference or business	46	11.9
Nightlife	152	39.3
Historic sites	40	10.3
Cultural experience	91	23.5
Muay Thai	104	26.9
Diving and surfing	22	5.7
Sports	12	3.1
Holiday	26	6.7
Health and wellness	4	1.0
Immerse in the lifestyle of another nation	7	1.8
Vlog	2	0.5
Sex	3	0.8
Cooking	1	0.3
Company		
Alone	192	49.6
Colleague (average three individuals)	6	1.6
Friend, family, or relative	189	48.9
Expense		
Below 10,000 Baht	160	41.3
Between 10,001 and 20,000 Baht	144	37.2
Between 20,001 and 30,000 Baht	55	14.2
Between 30,001 and 40,000 Baht	15	3.9
Between 40,001 and 50,000 Baht	10	2.6
Above 50,000 Baht	3	0.8

4.5 Descriptive Findings of Latent Constructs

The descriptive findings of all latent constructs comprised the mean (X-Bar or \bar{x}), minimum, maximum, and standard deviation (S.D.) of each latent construct. The measurement scale was the seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 7 as strongly agree. Table 4.7 demonstrates that the X-Bar values of all constructs are between 4.47 and 5.63, which surpasses the average score of 3.5 and

suggests that the respondents regard the construct at a relatively higher degree. An S.D. is defined as the distance of values surrounding the X-Bar, wherein a larger S.D value posits more widely distributed values surrounding the X-Bar (Andrade, 2020). Specifically, PRO attained the highest X-Bar value ($\bar{x} = 5.63$, S.D. = 0.902) while tangibles achieved the lowest ($\bar{x} = 4.77$, S.D. = 1.077).

Interpretatively, the relatively high mean score for product (PRO) suggests that visitors generally held favourable perceptions of the food-related offerings in Southern Thailand. In contrast, the lower score for tangibles indicates that physical service cues (e.g., cleanliness, ambience, and facility conditions) were evaluated less positively, implying potential areas for service improvement within the gastronomy tourism setting. Furthermore, the S.D. of responsiveness (1.168) demonstrated the highest value, which postulated the widest distribution of values surrounding the X-Bar. Contrastingly, the S.D. of the product (0.902) was the lowest, indicating the narrowest distribution of values surrounding the X-Bar. Overall, these descriptive results provide an initial indication of which experiential components may be perceived more strongly (product) versus those that may require closer attention (tangibles) in the gastronomy tourism context.

Table 4.7

Descriptive Findings of the Independent, Moderating, and Dependent Constructs (N = 387)

Latent Variable	Number of Items	\bar{x}	S.D.
SAT	9	5.36	1.005
HO	8	5.08	1.080
VE	8	5.08	1.030
TA	5	4.77	1.077
REL	5	5.41	1.083
RES	6	5.25	1.168
AS	6	5.61	1.068
EM	5	5.25	1.107
PRO	5	5.63	0.902
PRI	5	5.21	1.066

4.6 Measurement Model Assessment with the First-Order Constructs

The proposed model was a reflective-reflective framework with higher-order constructs. Hair et al. (2021) recommended four approaches to assess reflective measurement frameworks through PLS-SEM, namely indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, validity via average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity via the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio for a specific variable compared to other variables.

4.6.1 Indicator Reliability

Indicator loadings above 0.708 are acceptable due to the ability of the construct to explicate above 50% of the variance of an indicator. Generally, indicator loadings below the threshold value of 0.708 are obtained for measurement models in social science research, wherein loadings between 0.40 and 0.708 are omitted to enhance internal consistency reliability or convergent validity (Hair et al., 2021). This study eliminated eight out of 62 items owing to values below 0.708. The remaining 54 items achieved loadings between 0.708 and 0.943 (see Table 4.8 and Figure 4.1).

4.6.2 Internal Consistency

Internal consistency is the level of how similar a group of items appraises the same construct or is intercorrelated (Paulsen & BrckaLorenz, 2017). Both composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha were utilised in the present study to scrutinise internal consistency, in which composite reliability could alleviate existing limitations in Cronbach's alpha (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988), especially for PLS-SEM. Cronbach's alpha is limited by the tau-equivalence assumption, which presumes uniform reliability across indicators, with relevant endeavours to improve the value could reduce reliability (Raykov, 2007). The threshold values for composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha exceed 0.70 (Ali et al., 2018; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Table 4.8 depicts

that all composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values are between 0.777 and 0.953, which propounds sufficient internal consistency.



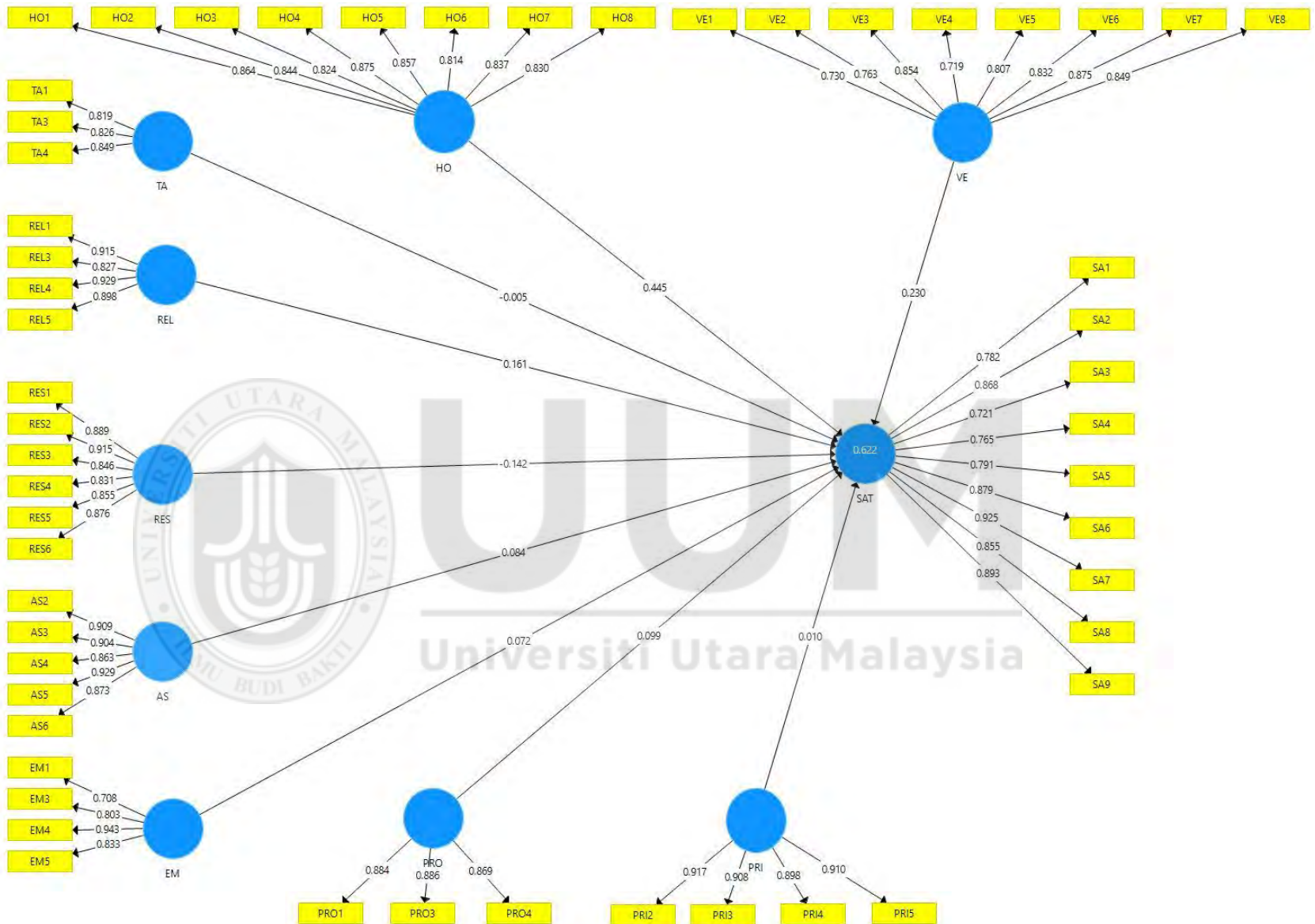


Figure 4. 1
Measurement Model Assessment

Table 4.8
Outer Loadings and Composite Reliability of the First-Order Constructs

Latent Variable	Indicator	Cronbach's Alpha	Outer Loading	Composite Reliability
Visitor Satisfaction		0.944		0.953
	SA1		0.782	
	SA2		0.868	
	SA3		0.721	
	SA4		0.765	
	SA5		0.791	
	SA6		0.879	
	SA7		0.925	
	SA8		0.855	
Horizontal Gastronomy Experience		0.942		0.952
	HO1		0.864	
	HO2		0.844	
	HO3		0.824	
	HO4		0.875	
	HO5		0.857	
	HO6		0.814	
	HO7		0.837	
	HO8		0.830	
Vertical Gastronomy Experience		0.922		0.936
	VE1		0.730	
	VE2		0.763	
	VE3		0.854	
	VE4		0.719	
	VE5		0.807	
	VE6		0.832	
	VE7		0.875	
	VE8		0.849	
Tangibles		0.777		0.871
	TA1		0.819	
	TA3		0.826	
Reliability	TA4		0.849	
		0.915		0.940
	REL1		0.915	
	REL3		0.827	
	REL4		0.929	
Responsiveness	REL5		0.898	
		0.935		0.949
	RES1		0.889	
	RES 2		0.915	
	RES 3		0.846	
	RES 4		0.831	
	RES 5		0.855	
Assurance	RES 6		0.876	
		0.939		0.953
	AS 2		0.909	
	AS 3		0.904	
	AS 4		0.863	
			0.929	

Table 4.8 (Continued)

Latent Variable	Indicator	Cronbach's Alpha	Outer Loading	Composite Reliability
Empathy	EM 1	0.841	0.708	0.895
	EM 3		0.803	
	EM 4		0.943	
	EM 5		0.833	
Product	PRO1	0.854	0.884	0.911
	PRO3		0.886	
	PRO4		0.869	
Price		0.930		0.950
	PRI 2		0.917	
	PRI 3		0.908	
	PRI 4		0.898	
	PRI 5		0.910	

Note: Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values ≥ 0.7 are considered acceptable (Ali et al., 2018); Outer loadings ≥ 0.7 suggest that the variance of the indicators explains above 50% of the variable (Sarstedt et al., 2014)

4.6.3 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is the level of convergence between variables. The AVE of all indicators on each variable was employed to measure convergent validity to explicate the variance of indicators (Hair et al., 2021). The AVE is the overall mean value of the squared loadings of all indicators for a particular construct (Ramayah et al., 2018), wherein the threshold value should be above 0.5 to explicate above half of the variance of measurement items (Hair et al., 2022). Table 4.9 portrays that the AVE values of all items range from 0.649 to 0.825, which corroborates convergent validity.

Table 4.9

Convergent Validity (AVE) of the First-Order Constructs

Latent Construct	AVE
Visitor Satisfaction	0.695
Horizontal Gastronomy Experience	0.711
Vertical Gastronomy Experience	0.649
Tangibles	0.692
Reliability	0.798
Responsiveness	0.755
Assurance	0.803
Empathy	0.682
Product	0.774
Price	0.825

Note: The acceptable AVE value of each indicator in a construct is at least 0.50 to explain at least 50% of the variance in each construct (Hair et al., 2022).

4.6.4 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity guarantees that a measurement accurately evaluates the intended variable without being influenced by other irrelevant variables. The Fornell-Larcker criterion, cross-loadings, and HTMT ratio were scrutinised to determine discriminant validity. The initial evaluation depended on cross-loadings, with the threshold of standardized loading estimates at least 0.7 (Vinzi et al., 2010). The Fornell-Larcker criterion was also appraised to affirm whether a latent variable explained more variance in respective indicators instead of the indicators in other variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), with the AVE square root values required to exceed the correlational values of each variable (Hair et al., 2016). Table 4.10 portrays the Fornell-Larcker criterion values for all first-order constructs diagonally, wherein all AVE square root values surpass the correlational values of other latent constructs. Meanwhile, Table 4.11 illustrates that the outer loadings of the indicators on respective variables surpass cross-loadings with other variables.

Table 4.10
Fornell-Larcker Criterion of the First-Order Constructs

	AS	EM	HO	PRI	PRO	REL	RES	SAT	TA	VE
AS	0.896									
EM	0.720	0.826								
HO	0.504	0.591	0.843							
PRI	0.488	0.431	0.414	0.908						
PRO	0.514	0.536	0.446	0.561	0.880					
REL	0.585	0.555	0.419	0.360	0.418	0.893				
RES	0.777	0.794	0.562	0.463	0.503	0.658	0.869			
SAT	0.512	0.550	0.739	0.399	0.492	0.476	0.519	0.834		
TA	0.590	0.477	0.284	0.272	0.259	0.500	0.648	0.295	0.832	
VE	0.482	0.531	0.758	0.373	0.488	0.389	0.568	0.679	0.315	0.806

Note: Bold values indicate the AVE square root values of each construct.

Table 4.11
Cross-Loadings of the First-Order Constructs

	AS	EM	HO	PRI	PRO	REL	RES	SAT	TA	VE
AS2	0.909	0.686	0.431	0.433	0.463	0.535	0.717	0.454	0.555	0.423
AS3	0.904	0.591	0.355	0.436	0.462	0.598	0.657	0.411	0.488	0.367
AS4	0.863	0.485	0.289	0.393	0.388	0.498	0.577	0.321	0.480	0.277
AS5	0.929	0.667	0.514	0.489	0.511	0.457	0.694	0.496	0.526	0.483
AS6	0.873	0.730	0.586	0.422	0.458	0.540	0.786	0.536	0.571	0.535
EM1	0.567	0.708	0.352	0.398	0.341	0.621	0.688	0.364	0.414	0.219
EM3	0.560	0.803	0.425	0.318	0.409	0.467	0.571	0.411	0.336	0.448
EM4	0.674	0.943	0.562	0.363	0.568	0.535	0.739	0.534	0.432	0.515
EM5	0.576	0.833	0.578	0.359	0.424	0.261	0.634	0.486	0.401	0.527
HO1	0.541	0.568	0.864	0.278	0.387	0.405	0.574	0.671	0.379	0.669
HO2	0.547	0.552	0.844	0.371	0.400	0.458	0.578	0.675	0.413	0.609
HO3	0.371	0.459	0.824	0.450	0.392	0.392	0.487	0.578	0.224	0.589
HO4	0.408	0.508	0.875	0.384	0.420	0.363	0.509	0.605	0.215	0.657
HO5	0.531	0.544	0.857	0.430	0.439	0.384	0.503	0.679	0.308	0.676
HO6	0.321	0.407	0.814	0.312	0.288	0.262	0.380	0.577	0.143	0.606
HO7	0.295	0.450	0.837	0.246	0.334	0.282	0.359	0.590	0.092	0.663
HO8	0.337	0.476	0.830	0.315	0.333	0.254	0.373	0.593	0.088	0.639
PRI2	0.421	0.369	0.351	0.917	0.518	0.290	0.381	0.309	0.200	0.301
PRI3	0.343	0.285	0.333	0.908	0.428	0.269	0.352	0.291	0.207	0.334
PRI4	0.466	0.425	0.382	0.898	0.489	0.383	0.478	0.394	0.309	0.362
PRI5	0.506	0.449	0.417	0.910	0.578	0.343	0.443	0.421	0.251	0.346
PRO1	0.488	0.481	0.391	0.519	0.884	0.342	0.441	0.461	0.190	0.421
PRO3	0.394	0.385	0.399	0.502	0.886	0.269	0.370	0.385	0.223	0.417
PRO4	0.465	0.536	0.387	0.458	0.869	0.478	0.506	0.446	0.270	0.447
REL1	0.568	0.571	0.386	0.278	0.355	0.915	0.671	0.475	0.543	0.355
REL3	0.538	0.446	0.389	0.475	0.425	0.827	0.482	0.438	0.375	0.347
REL4	0.518	0.495	0.346	0.260	0.388	0.929	0.581	0.384	0.403	0.317
REL5	0.449	0.456	0.367	0.261	0.318	0.898	0.605	0.386	0.448	0.366
RES1	0.682	0.690	0.450	0.443	0.489	0.690	0.889	0.438	0.529	0.397
RES2	0.725	0.725	0.560	0.433	0.492	0.590	0.915	0.501	0.575	0.524
RES3	0.704	0.762	0.581	0.405	0.479	0.402	0.846	0.480	0.515	0.547
RES4	0.582	0.660	0.512	0.350	0.350	0.513	0.831	0.453	0.581	0.586
RES5	0.677	0.622	0.377	0.424	0.389	0.629	0.855	0.404	0.620	0.424
RES6	0.675	0.664	0.421	0.354	0.410	0.628	0.876	0.416	0.563	0.466
SA1	0.469	0.521	0.595	0.441	0.352	0.395	0.512	0.782	0.318	0.481
SA2	0.450	0.529	0.649	0.285	0.380	0.514	0.538	0.868	0.333	0.619
SA3	0.251	0.401	0.585	0.157	0.261	0.257	0.354	0.721	0.234	0.605
SA4	0.298	0.299	0.488	0.291	0.286	0.485	0.351	0.765	0.197	0.453
SA5	0.342	0.335	0.624	0.465	0.431	0.292	0.323	0.791	0.096	0.517
SA6	0.444	0.442	0.629	0.308	0.460	0.384	0.394	0.879	0.224	0.589
SA7	0.516	0.543	0.683	0.337	0.497	0.460	0.506	0.925	0.308	0.642
SA8	0.535	0.531	0.629	0.325	0.527	0.367	0.451	0.855	0.237	0.567
SA9	0.460	0.486	0.642	0.383	0.454	0.410	0.443	0.893	0.250	0.597
TA1	0.560	0.429	0.188	0.222	0.232	0.423	0.589	0.237	0.819	0.189
TA3	0.495	0.401	0.192	0.173	0.243	0.495	0.498	0.238	0.826	0.229
TA4	0.424	0.365	0.321	0.279	0.175	0.337	0.531	0.260	0.849	0.359

Table 4.11(Continued)

	AS	EM	HO	PRI	PRO	REL	RES	SAT	TA	VE
VE1	0.650	0.554	0.589	0.387	0.577	0.309	0.542	0.573	0.358	0.730
VE2	0.398	0.429	0.540	0.385	0.401	0.195	0.375	0.478	0.219	0.763
VE3	0.279	0.426	0.644	0.187	0.379	0.349	0.486	0.546	0.239	0.854
VE4	0.153	0.310	0.540	0.261	0.312	0.295	0.367	0.439	0.102	0.719
VE5	0.216	0.344	0.617	0.269	0.269	0.327	0.442	0.496	0.218	0.807
VE6	0.216	0.348	0.595	0.219	0.252	0.333	0.413	0.518	0.205	0.832
VE7	0.537	0.490	0.671	0.352	0.448	0.348	0.508	0.652	0.326	0.875
VE8	0.534	0.475	0.662	0.327	0.455	0.332	0.489	0.620	0.305	0.849

The current study assessed the HTMT ratio to determine the correlations between the factors and ensure discriminant validity. The HTMT value should vary from 1 as the HTMT ratio estimates the correlation between variables. A correlational value of 1 between two variables suggests low discrimination (Henseler et al., 2015). Thus, a threshold value of 0.90 is generally employed (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019; Gold et al., 2001; Henseler et al., 2015). Table 4.12 depicts HTMT ratios below 0.90, which propounds adequate discriminant validity.

Table 4.12
The HTMT Ratio of the First-Order Constructs

Variable	AS	EM	HO	PRI	PRO	REL	RES	SAT	TA	VE
AS	-									
EM	0.796	-								
HO	0.508	0.651	-							
PRI	0.507	0.482	0.435	-						
PRO	0.564	0.619	0.495	0.620	-					
REL	0.627	0.648	0.445	0.379	0.465	-				
RES	0.816	0.899	0.588	0.487	0.555	0.714	-			
SAT	0.520	0.608	0.780	0.416	0.539	0.508	0.548	-		
TA	0.687	0.597	0.319	0.310	0.319	0.591	0.762	0.342	-	
VE	0.481	0.582	0.810	0.397	0.540	0.420	0.602	0.719	0.360	-

Note: The HTMT ratio is discriminant at < 0.90 (Gold et al., 2001).

4.7 Structural Model Assessment with First-Order Constructs

The PLS-SEM approach was performed in two stages, namely measurement model assessment and structural model assessment. The structural model evaluation through bootstrapping with 5,000 bootstrap subsamples and 387 cases to ascertain the significance of the path coefficients was performed after validating the measurement model (Hair Jr et al., 2014). Hair et al. (2011a) recommended the bootstrap algorithm to scrutinise the significance of the path coefficients with 5,000 bootstrap subsamples for hypothesis testing. The estimation of bootstrapped standard errors was based on *t*-values and *p*-values associated with the path coefficients, namely a one-tailed *t*-test of 1.645 (significance level = 0.05), 2.327 (significance level = 0.01), and 3.092 (significance level = 0.001) (Hair et al., 2017). Table 4.13 and Figure 4.2 illustrate that tangibles do not significantly influence visitor satisfaction ($\beta = -0.005, t = 0.103, p > 0.05$), which rejects H1.

Reliability profoundly and positively impacted visitor satisfaction, which supported H2 ($\beta = 0.161, t = 3.750, p < 0.001$). Responsiveness also substantially but adversely influenced visitor satisfaction, which only partially supported H3 ($\beta = -0.142, t = 1.913, p < 0.05$). The results demonstrated that assurance insignificantly impacted visitor satisfaction, which rejected H4 ($\beta = 0.084, t = 1.143, p > 0.05$). Empathy also did not produce a pronounced impact on visitor satisfaction, which rejected H5 ($\beta = 0.072, t = 1.011, p > 0.05$). Meanwhile, the product dimension of the marketing mix considerably and favourably influenced visitor satisfaction, which supported H6 ($\beta = 0.099, t = 1.785, p < 0.05$), whereas price insignificantly impacted visitor satisfaction, which rejected H7 ($\beta = 0.010, t = 0.237, p > 0.05$). Nonetheless, horizontal gastronomy experience profoundly and positively influenced visitor satisfaction, which supported H8 ($\beta = 0.445, t = 6.273, p < 0.001$). Vertical gastronomy

experience also substantially and favourably influenced visitor satisfaction, which supported H9 ($\beta = 0.230, t = 3.832, p < 0.001$).



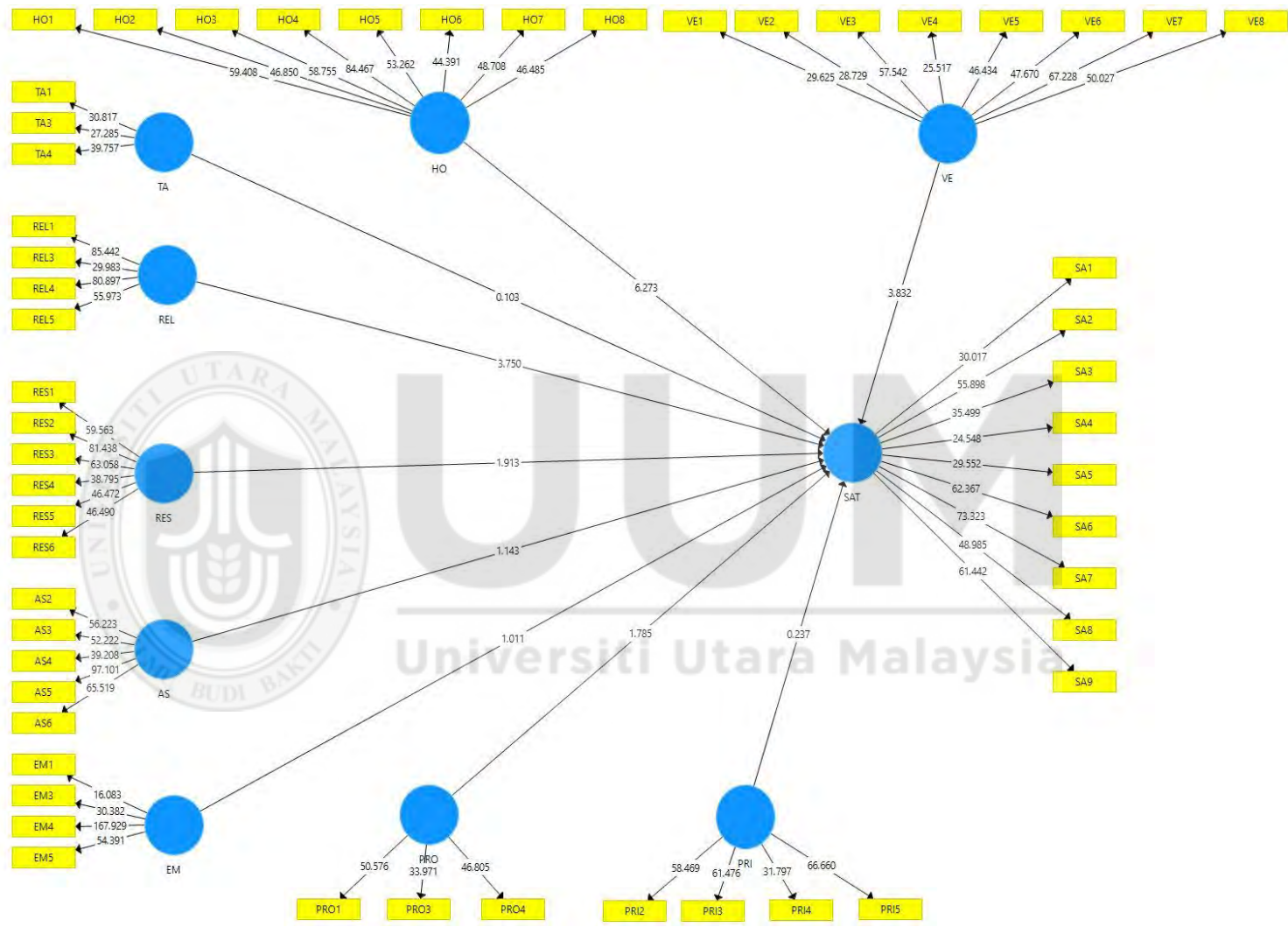


Figure 4.2
Structural Model Assessment

Table 4.13

Structural Model Assessment of the First-Order Constructs

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient	T	P	95 % Confidence Intervals	Significance ($p < 0.05$)	Decision
H1	TA → SAT	- 0.005	0.103	0.459	[- 0.086, 0.080]	No	Not Supported
H2	REL → SAT	0.161	3.750 ***	0.000	[0.089, 0.230]	Yes	Supported
H3	RES → SAT	- 0.142	1.913 *	0.028	[- 0.216, 0.016]	Yes	Not Supported
H4	AS → SAT	0.084	1.143	0.127	[- 0.035, 0.210]	No	Not Supported
H5	EM → SAT	0.072	1.011	0.156	[- 0.048, 0.186]	No	Not Supported
H6	PRO → SAT	0.099	1.785 *	0.037	[0.010, 0.194]	Yes	Supported
H7	PRI → SAT	0.010	0.237	0.406	[- 0.063, 0.081]	No	Not Supported
H8	HO → SAT	0.445	6.273 ***	0.000	[0.324, 0.559]	Yes	Supported
H9	VE → SAT	0.230	3.832 ***	0.000	[0.135, 0.333]	Yes	Supported

Note: * $p < 0.05$, $t > 1.645$, ** $p < 0.01$, $t > 2.327$, *** $p < 0.001$, $t > 3.092$ (one-tailed).

4.7.1 Coefficients of Determination (R^2)

The R^2 value in PLS-SEM is employed for structural model assessment (Ali et al., 2018), which explicates the variance in the endogenous construct by the exogenous variable and appraises the explanatory power of the model (Shmueli & Koppius, 2011). The R^2 value is a function of predictors in a model, in which a high value suggests a higher number of predictors and vice versa (Hair et al., 2018). Values of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 are regarded as weak, moderate, and considerable respectively (Hock & Ringle, 2010). Table 4.14 portrays that the R^2 value is 0.622 and the adjusted R^2 value is 0.613, which are perceived as moderate for the target variable.

Table 4.14

Coefficients of Determination (R^2)

Dependent Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
SAT	0.622	0.613

Note: The R^2 value of 0.25 is considered weak, 0.50 is considered medium, and 0.75 is considered substantial for the target constructs (Hock & Ringle, 2010).

4.7.2 Effect Size (f^2)

The f^2 value is estimated to ascertain the power and influence of a variable on the endogenous construct (Samartha & Kodikal, 2018) as the increase in R^2 values relative to the degree of variance in the endogenous construct that is unexplained. Cohen (1988) posited f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 as small, medium, and large respectively. Table 4.15 illustrates that the f^2 values of reliability and vertical gastronomy experience are large, with horizontal gastronomy experience producing a medium effect, and tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, product and price producing no effect.

Table 4.15
Effect Size (f^2) of the First-Order Constructs

Exogenous Variable	f^2	Effect Size
TA	0.000	No Effect
REL	0.037	Large Effect
RES	0.011	No Effect
AS	0.006	No Effect
EM	0.004	No Effect
PRO	0.014	No Effect
PRI	0.000	No Effect
HO	0.191	Medium Effect
VE	0.053	Large Effect

Note: A f^2 value below 0.02 posits no effect, 0.02 suggests a small effect, 0.15 postulates a medium effect, and 0.35 propounds a large effect (Cohen, 1988).

4.7.3 Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Blindfolding is a sample re-utilisation approach to methodologically remove certain data points and predict the original values or Q^2 . Chin (2010) highlighted that Q^2 can efficaciously scrutinise the predictive relevance of a conceptual framework by operationalising endogenous constructs only in the reflective measurement model. A value exceeding 0 suggests predictive relevance (Henseler et al., 2009). Hair et al. (2019) delineated that a Q^2 value of 0.02 accounts for small relevance, 0.15 for medium relevance, and 0.35 for large relevance of the exogenous variable respectively. Table 4.16 and Figure 4.3 demonstrate the Q^2 value is 0.424, which posits that the exogenous constructs exhibit medium predictive relevance for the proposed theoretical framework (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 4.16
Predictive Relevance (Q^2) of the First-Order Constructs

Variable	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (= 1 - SSE / SSO)$
AS	1935.000	1935.000	
EM	1548.000	1548.000	
HO	3096.000	3096.000	
PRI	1548.000	1548.000	
PRO	1161.000	1161.000	0.424
REL	1548.000	1548.000	
RES	2322.000	2322.000	
SAT	3483.000	2005.145	
TA	1161.000	1161.000	
VE	3096.000	3096.000	

Note: A Q^2 value above 0 propounds small predictive relevance, above 0.25 suggest medium predictive relevance, and above 0.5 postulates large predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2019).



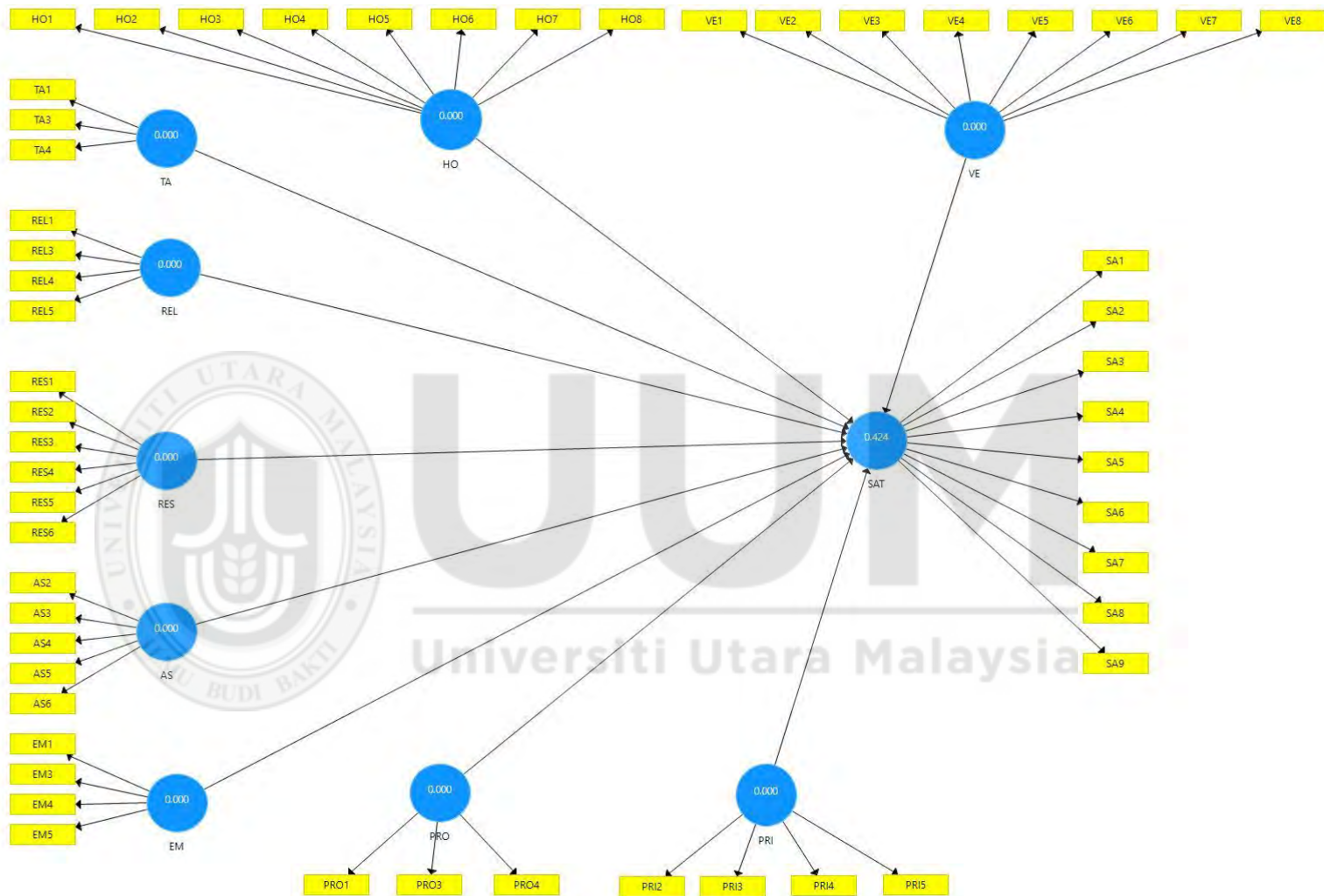


Figure 4.3
Q² Values

4.7.4 Effect Sizes (q^2)

The q^2 measures the relative predictive relevance of a predictor, with values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 suggesting small, medium, and large effect sizes respectively (Cohen, 1988) determined by applying the formula:

$$q^2 = (Q^2 \text{ included} - Q^2 \text{ excluded}) / (1 - Q^2 \text{ included})$$

Table 4.17 demonstrates that the q^2 values of exogenous constructs are small, except for horizontal gastronomy experience with a large q^2 value.

Table 4.17
Effect Sizes (q^2) of the First-Order Constructs

Exogenous Construct	Q^2 Included	Q^2 Excluded	q^2	Effect Size
TA	0.424	0.424	0.001	Small effect
REL	0.424	0.415	0.016	Small effect
RES	0.424	0.422	0.004	Small effect
AS	0.424	0.423	0.002	Small effect
EM	0.424	0.424	0.001	Small effect
PRO	0.424	0.421	0.006	Small effect
PRI	0.424	0.424	0.001	Small effect
HO	0.424	0.375	0.086	Large effect
VE	0.424	0.411	0.023	Small effect

4.8 Measurement Model Assessment with Second-Order Constructs

The measurement model assessment with second-order constructs encompassed service quality, the marketing mix, and gastronomy experience, which was a reflective measurement model and the same assessment procedures were employed as the measurement model with first-order constructs (Chin, 1998), namely indicator reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

4.8.1 Indicator Reliability

Table 4.18 depicts that all indicators of second-order constructs are between 0.722 and 0.942, which exceeds the threshold of 0.70 (Sarstedt et al., 2014).

4.8.2 Internal Consistency

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were investigated for internal consistency (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) at the threshold value of at least 0.70 to ensure sufficient internal consistency (Ali et al., 2018).

4.8.3 Convergent Validity

The convergent validity of the second-order constructs was appraised via the AVE at the threshold value of at least 0.5 to explain at least 50% variance of the variable (Hair et al., 2022). Table 4.18 portrays the AVE values of 0.716, 0.774, and 0.876 for service quality, the marketing mix, and gastronomy experience respectively, which surpass the threshold value and ascertain convergent validity.

Table 4.18

Outer Loadings and Composite Reliability for Second-Order Constructs

Latent Variable	Indicator	Cronbach's Alpha	Outer Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE
Service Quality		0.900		0.926	0.716
	Tangibles		0.722		
	Reliability		0.798		
	Responsiveness		0.932		
	Assurance		0.898		
	Empathy		0.865		
Marketing Mix		0.712		0.873	0.774
	Product		0.908		
	Price		0.851		
Gastronomy Experience		0.859		0.934	0.876
	Horizontal Gastronomy Experience		0.942		
	Vertical Gastronomy Experience		0.930		

Note: Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values ≥ 0.7 are considered acceptable (Ali et al., 2018); Outer loadings ≥ 0.7 suggest that the variance of the indicator explains above 50% of the variable (Sarstedt et al., 2014).

4.8.4 Discriminant Validity

Wilson and Henseler (2007) recommended applying the same approach as the first-order constructs for second-order constructs to corroborate discriminant validity through the following three criteria:

Criteria 1: Table 4.19 demonstrates that the AVE square root values of all variables surpass the highest correlational values with other variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Criteria 2: Table 4.20 depicts that all indicator loadings of respective variables surpass cross-loadings of other constructs, with all factor loadings above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2011b).

Criteria 3: Table 4.21 portrays that the HTMT ratio does not surpass 0.90 (Gold et al., 2001), which ensures adequate discriminant validity.

Table 4.19
Fornell-Larcker Criterion of Second-Order Constructs

Latent Variable	EXP	MK	SAT	SQ
EXP	0.936			
MK	0.517	0.880		
SA	0.750	0.504	0.833	
SQ	0.579	0.573	0.566	0.846

Note: Bold values reflect the AVE square root value of each construct.

Table 4.20
Cross-Loadings of Second-Order Constructs

Latent Construct	SQ	EXP	MK	SAT
TA	0.722	0.298	0.298	0.295
REL	0.798	0.425	0.430	0.470
RES	0.932	0.594	0.544	0.519
AS	0.898	0.480	0.542	0.503
EM	0.865	0.585	0.546	0.548
HO	0.556	0.942	0.484	0.733
VE	0.528	0.930	0.483	0.667
PRI	0.473	0.414	0.851	0.389
PRO	0.531	0.490	0.908	0.489
SA1	0.544	0.570	0.437	0.785
SA2	0.566	0.671	0.377	0.870
SA3	0.350	0.635	0.239	0.725
SA4	0.407	0.505	0.322	0.765
SA5	0.338	0.613	0.503	0.789
SA6	0.449	0.638	0.438	0.877
SA7	0.558	0.697	0.476	0.924
SA8	0.509	0.623	0.488	0.853
SA9	0.492	0.648	0.473	0.892

Table 4.5
The HTMT Ratio of Second-Order Constructs

Variable	EXP	MK	SAT	SQ
EXP	-	-	-	-
MK	0.655	-	-	-
SAT	0.829	0.606	-	-
SQ	0.640	0.695	0.596	-

Note: The HTMT ratio is discriminant at < 0.90 (Gold et al., 2001).

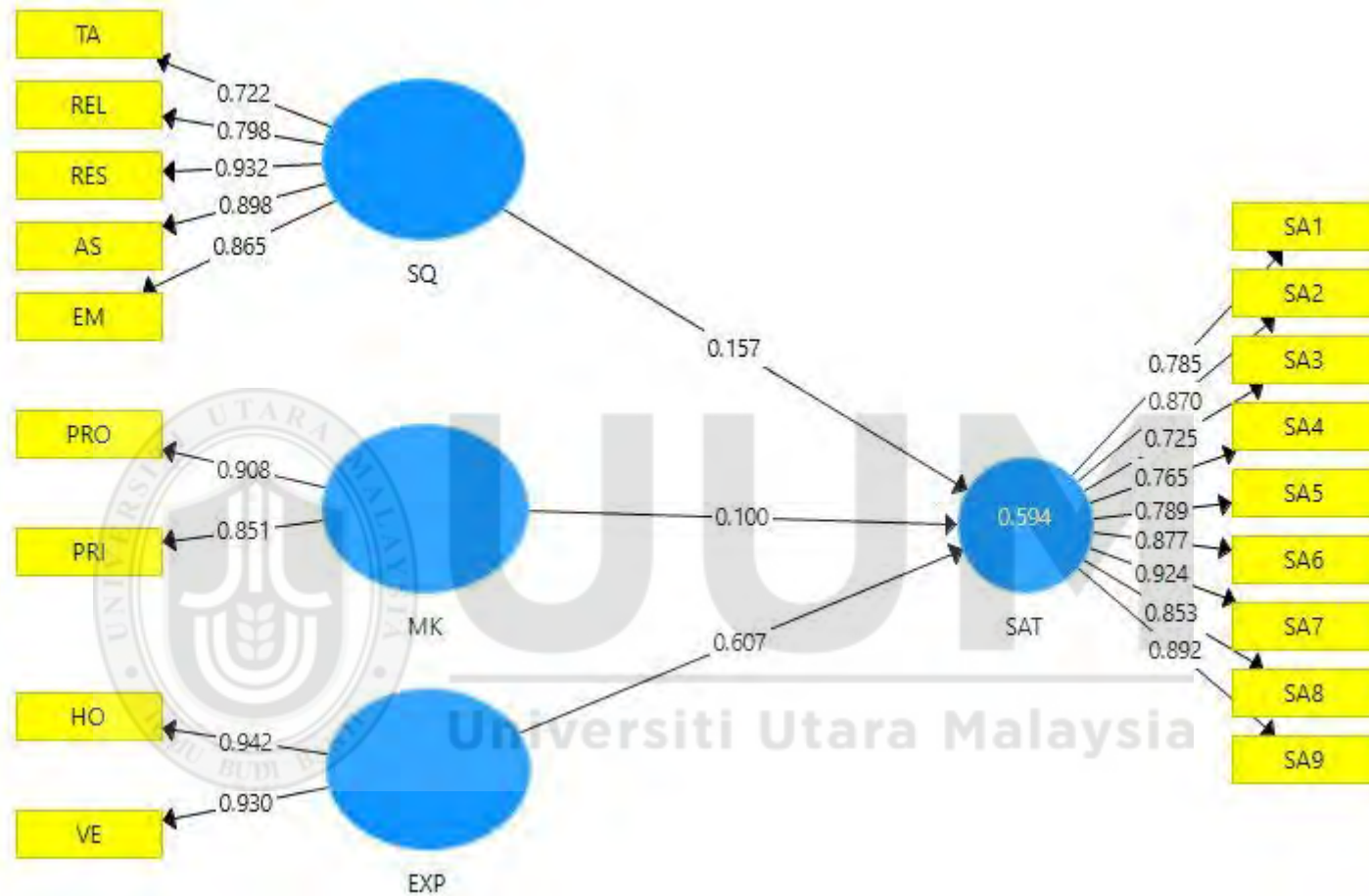


Figure 4.4
Measurement Model Assessment with Second-Order Constructs

4.9 Structural Model Assessment with Second-Order Constructs

Overall, this study proposed fourteen hypotheses (H1–H14) based on the conceptual framework. To ensure clarity in the analysis, the hypotheses were assessed in two stages. The first stage (H1–H9) examined the direct effects of the key dimensions of service quality, marketing mix, and gastronomy experience on visitor satisfaction. The second stage (H10–H14) then evaluated the model at the second-order construct level, including the proposed moderating effects of gastronomy experience within the overall structural relationships.

Hypothesis testing was performed by second-order constructs through structural model assessment after evaluating the measurement model with second-order constructs. Hair et al. (2017) recommended a six-stage approach:

- 1) Collinearity evaluation
- 2) Significance of path coefficients
- 3) R^2
- 4) Q^2
- 5) f^2
- 6) q^2

4.9.1 Collinearity Evaluation

The presence of collinearity was assessed due to a sequence of regression equations. The point estimates and standard errors might demonstrate biased results (Hair et al., 2021). The VIF was appraised for all predictors in the structural model. Critical collinearity issues will be discovered when the VIF value is at least 5, whereas non-critical VIF issues can be determined when the value is between 3 and 5. The collinearity issue will not exist when the VIF value is 3 (Aguirre-Urreta & Rönkkö,

2018; Hair et al., 2022). Table 4.22 depicts that the internal VIF values do not surpass 5 (1.660 to 3.970), which postulates a non-critical issue.

Table 4.22
Inner VIF Results

Variable	EXP	MK * EXP	EXP * SQ	MK	SAT	SQ
EXP					1.658	
EXP*MK					3.056	
EXP*SQ					3.749	
MK					1.812	
SAT						
SQ						2.443

Note: Critical collinearity issues would happen when $VIF \geq 5$; Collinearity issues are generally uncritical when the VIF is between 3 and 5; Collinearity is not an issue when $VIF < 3$ (Hair et al., 2022).

4.9.2 Significance of Path Coefficients (Hypothesis Testing)

The significance of the path coefficients was ascertained by bootstrapping 5,000 subsamples to examine the proposed hypotheses (see Table 4.23). The bootstrapped standard errors were estimated through t-values and p-values associated with the path coefficients, namely a one-tailed t-test of 1.645 (significance level = 0.05), 2.327 (significance level = 0.01), and 3.092 (significance level = 0.001) (Hair et al., 2017). Table 4.23 and Figure 4.5 illustrate the associations among the constructs. Particularly, Service quality did not significantly influence visitor satisfaction ($\beta = 0.073$, $t = 1.323$, $p > 0.05$); therefore, H10 was not supported.. Nonetheless, the marketing mix insignificantly influenced visitor satisfaction, which rejected H11 ($\beta = 0.082$, $t = 1.349$, $p > 0.05$). Gastronomy experience considerably and positively impacted visitor satisfaction, which supported H12 ($\beta = 0.588$, $t = 13.181$, $p < 0.001$). Although the interaction term was statistically significant, the moderating effect was negative and weak, which does not align with the expected moderating direction. Therefore, H13 was not supported ($\beta = -0.106$, $t = 1.987$, $p = 0.023$). Gastronomy experience did not significantly moderate the relationship between marketing mix and visitor satisfaction;

therefore, H14 was rejected ($\beta = - 0.009, t = 0.197, p > 0.05$). It should be noted that H1–H9 were tested at the first-order construct level, whereas H10–H14 represent the higher-order structural model and moderating hypotheses. It is important to note that several hypotheses were not statistically supported. This is not uncommon in tourism satisfaction research, where visitor evaluations are shaped by complex contextual factors such as cultural diversity, trip purpose, and experiential expectations. Therefore, the non-significant paths do not invalidate the model but instead highlight that certain service or marketing attributes may play a weaker role in the Southern Thailand gastronomy context. Further interpretation is elaborated in Chapter Five



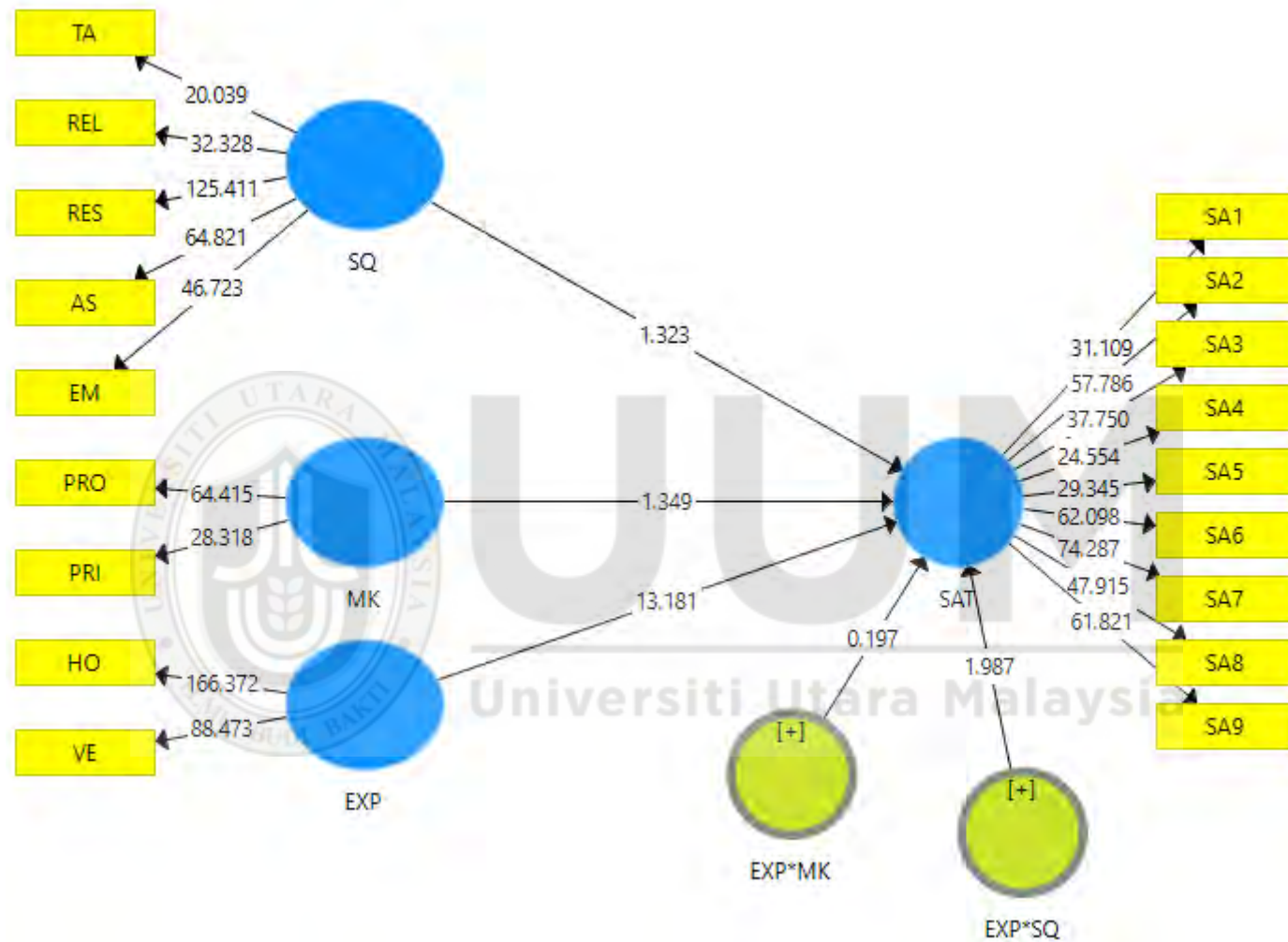


Figure 4. 5
 Structural Model Assessment with Second-Order Constructs

4.9.2 Hypothesis Testing

Table 4.23
Structural Model Assessment with Second-Order Constructs

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% Confidence Intervals	Significance (<i>p</i> < 0.05)	Decision
H10	SQ → SAT	0.073	1.323	0.093	[- 0.019, 0.165]	No	Not Supported
H11	MK → SAT	0.082	1.349	0.089	[- 0.010, 0.190]	No	Not Supported
H12	EXP → SAT	0.588	13.181 ***	0.000	[0.508, 0.655]	Yes	Supported
H13	EXP*SQ → SAT	- 0.106	1.987 *	0.023	[- 0.195, - 0.019]	Yes	Not Supported
H14	EXP*MK → SAT	- 0.009	0.197	0.422	[- 0.086, 0.073]	No	Not Supported

Note: * $p < 0.05$, $t > 1.645$, ** $p < 0.01$, $t > 2.327$, *** $p < 0.001$, $t > 3.092$ (one-tailed).

4.9.3 R^2

The predictive accuracy of the model with second-order constructs was assessed through R^2 . Hair et al. (2011a) elucidated that a suitable R^2 value should surpass 0.25, with values of 0.25 considered poor, 0.50 medium, and 0.75 considerable. Table 4.24 demonstrates that the R^2 value is 0.612 and the adjusted R^2 value is 0.606, which are regarded as medium.

Table 4.24

R^2

Dependent Variable	R Square	R Square
Adjusted		
SAT	0.612	0.606

Note: A R^2 value of 0.25 is perceived as weak, 0.50 as medium, and 0.75 as substantial for the target variable (Hair et al., 2011a).

4.9.4 f^2

A f^2 value reveals the usability of each variable for model calibration, which is computed by discerning the alteration in R^2 when a specific variable is eliminated from the framework (Chin, 1998). Table 4.25 depicts the f^2 values of the exogenous constructs, which propounds that gastronomy experience generates a large effect, whereas no effect exists in the moderating role of gastronomy experience in the interaction between service quality, the marketing mix, and visitor satisfaction.

Table 4.25

 f^2

Exogenous Construct	f^2	Effect Size
EXP	0.537	Large Effect
EXP* MK	0.000	No Effect
EXP*SQ	0.017	No Effect
MK	0.009	No Effect
SQ	0.006	No Effect

Note: A f^2 value below 0.02 suggests no effect, 0.02 posits a small effect, 0.15 postulates a moderate effect, and 0.35 propounds a large effect (Hair et al., 2017).

4.9.5 Q^2

The predictive power of the structural model with second-order constructs was determined via cross-validated redundancy (Q^2) by implementing the sample re-utilisation process to remove certain data points in calculating the model parameters and predicting the removed proportion through blindfolding. A smaller variation between predictive and original values would yield higher Q^2 values and predictive accuracy. A Q^2 or blindfolding value exceeding 0 propounds that the framework comprises predictive relevance for an endogenous variable, whereas values of 0 or less postulate low predictive relevance (Henseler et al., 2009). Values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are perceived as small, medium, and large respectively (Hair Jr et al., 2014). Table 4.26 and Figure 4.6 illustrate the Q^2 value of 0.416, which posits medium predictive relevance.

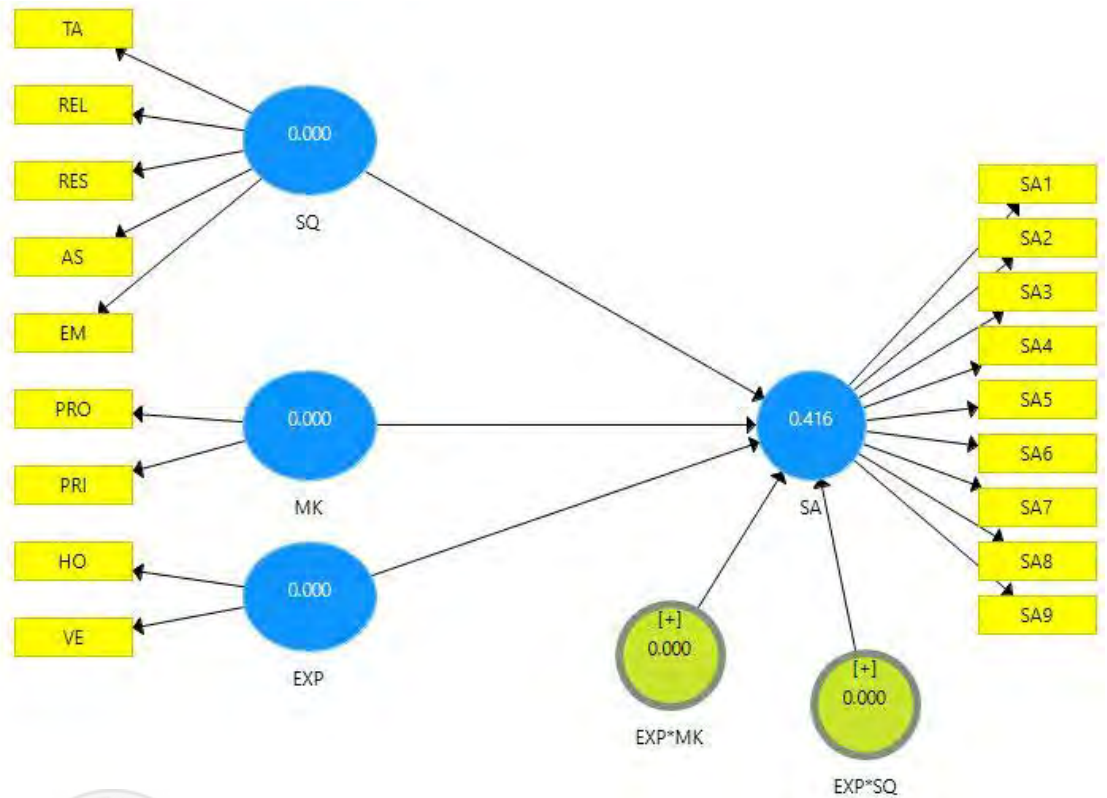


Figure 4.6
 Q^2

Table 4.26
 Q^2

Construct	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
EXP	774.000	774.000	
MK*EXP	387.000	387.000	
MK*SQ	387.000	387.000	
MK	774.000	774.000	
SAT	3483.000	2035.407	0.416
SQ	1935.000	1935.000	

Note: A Q^2 value exceeding 0 suggests small predictive relevance, above 0.25 posits moderate predictive relevance, and above 0.5 postulates large predictive relevance (Hair Jr et al., 2014).

4.9.6 q^2

While R^2 indicates the in-sample predictive power of a framework, the out-of-sample predictive power is not reflected. The Q^2 value can only provide a partial indication of the out-of-sample predictive power (Ali et al., 2018). Hence, q^2 was assessed to

determine the relative predictive relevance of the variables through the following formula:

$$q^2 = (Q^2 \text{ included} - Q^2 \text{ excluded}) / (1 - Q^2 \text{ included})$$

Table 4.27 demonstrates the q^2 values of the exogenous constructs, which underscores a large effect size of service quality and the marketing mix while gastronomy experience attains a small effect. A q^2 value of 0.02 suggests a small effect, 0.15 posits a medium effect, and 0.35 highlights a large effect (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 4.27
 q^2

Exogenous Variable	Q^2 Included	Q^2 Excluded	q^2	Effect Size
SQ	0.416	0.220	0.336	Large effect
MK	0.416	0.174	0.414	Large effect
EXP	0.416	0.384	0.055	Small effect

4.10 Result Summary

Table 4.28
Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

	Hypothesis	Decision
H1:	A positive linkage exists between tangibles and visitor satisfaction.	Not Supported
H2:	A positive linkage exists between reliability and visitor satisfaction.	Supported
H3:	A positive linkage exists between responsiveness and visitor satisfaction.	Not Supported
H4:	A positive linkage exists between assurance and visitor satisfaction.	Not Supported

Table 4.28 (Continued)

	Hypothesis	Decision
H5:	A positive linkage exists between empathy and visitor satisfaction.	Not Supported
H6:	A positive linkage exists between products and visitor satisfaction.	Supported
H7:	A positive linkage exists between price and visitor satisfaction.	Not Supported
H8:	A positive linkage exists between horizontal gastronomy experiences and visitor satisfaction.	Supported
H9:	A positive linkage exists between vertical gastronomy experiences and visitor satisfaction.	Supported
H10:	A positive linkage exists between service quality and visitor satisfaction.	Not Supported
H11:	A positive linkage exists between the marketing mix and visitor satisfaction.	Not Supported
H12:	A positive linkage exists between gastronomy experiences and visitor satisfaction.	Supported
H13:	Gastronomy experience moderates the linkage between service quality and visitor satisfaction.	Not Supported
H14:	Gastronomy experience moderates the linkage between the marketing mix and visitor satisfaction.	Not Supported

Although gastronomy experience was proposed as a moderating factor in this study, the results show that its moderating effects were not strongly supported. In simple terms, this suggests that gastronomy experience may play a more important role in

shaping visitor satisfaction directly, rather than consistently changing the strength of the relationships between service quality, marketing mix, and satisfaction.

It should be noted that although one moderating path (H13) appeared statistically significant, the effect was very small and weak in practical terms. This moderating relationship was initially hypothesised based on Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) and Social Exchange Theory (SET), which suggest that visitors’ prior experiences may condition how service quality and marketing-related attributes translate into satisfaction. Thus, gastronomy experience was expected to alter the strength or direction of these relationships rather than operate only as a direct predictor. Therefore, gastronomy experience does not provide a meaningful moderating influence overall within this study context. In the Southern Thailand context, international tourists may evaluate their satisfaction mainly through their overall dining and cultural experience. This means that even if service performance or marketing-related attributes differ slightly, the gastronomy experience itself remains a key driver of how satisfied visitors feel. Therefore, the main contribution of gastronomy experience in this study lies in its strong direct impact, rather than its moderating function. It should also be noted that several hypotheses were not statistically significant. However, this does not necessarily mean that the conceptual model is wrong. Instead, it reflects the complex and context-specific nature of tourist satisfaction in gastronomy tourism. Visitor satisfaction is often influenced by multiple factors at the same time, and international tourists also bring diverse cultural backgrounds and expectations, which may lead to less consistent response patterns. In addition, some service quality dimensions may overlap, meaning that their effects are shared rather than appearing as independent significant predictors. Overall, these unsupported relationships should be understood as part of the complexity of

satisfaction formation in this setting, rather than as a failure of the theoretical framework. A more detailed interpretation of these findings is provided in Chapter 5.

4.11 Interaction Plot of the Moderating Impact

The findings uncovered that the interaction term was statistically detectable; however, the moderating effect was negative and weak, which does not align with the expected moderating direction. Therefore, H13 was not supported ($\beta = -0.106$, $t = 1.987$, $p = 0.023$). Hair et al., (2021) suggested a slope to visualise the bidirectional interaction to gain a deeper comprehension of the moderating impact. Figure 4.7 depicts three lines symbolising the correlation between service quality (SQ) and visitor satisfaction (SAT), with the middle line as the average moderating influence degree of gastronomy experience (EXP). The upper line symbolises the linkage between SQ and SAT at a higher moderating degree (EXP + 1 S.D.) while the lower line represents a lower moderating degree (EXP - 1 S.D.). The slope of the upper line (EXP + 1 S.D.) gradually declines, whereas the slope of the lower line (EXP - 1 S.D.) gradually increases. Therefore, the trend propounded an inverse interaction (Hair et al., 2022), in which a higher EXP influence would result in a dwindling linkage between SQ and SAT while a lower EXP impact would lead to a more robust correlation between SQ and SAT (see Figure 4.7). The findings uncovered that gastronomy experience showed a statistically detectable moderating effect on the relationship between service quality and visitor satisfaction. However, the interaction effect was negative and weak, which does not align with the expected moderating direction. Therefore, H13 was not supported ($\beta = -0.106$, $t = 1.987$, $p = 0.023$).

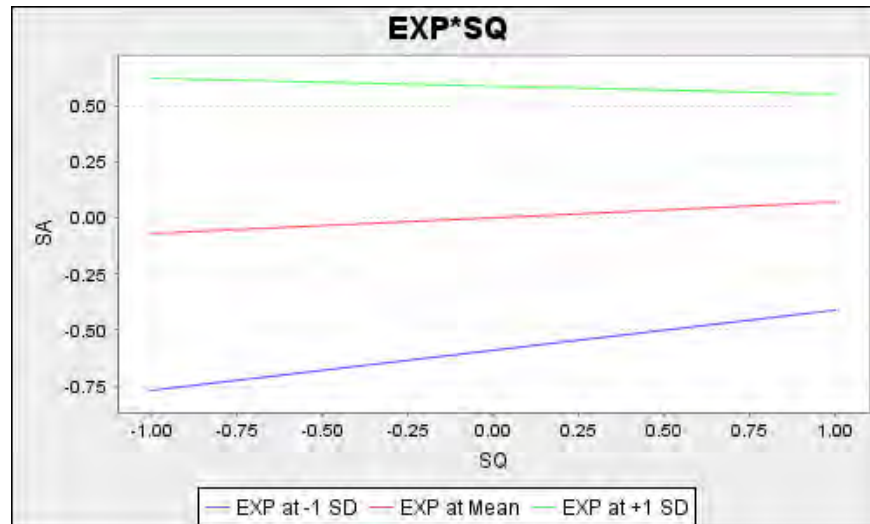


Figure 4.7
Interaction Plot of the EXP Impact on the Association between SQ and SAT

Figure 4.8 portrays the simple slope regarding how EXP moderates the association between the marketing mix (MK) and SAT, with the middle line symbolising the average EXP influence degree. The upper line denotes a higher moderating degree (EXP + 1 S.D.) while the lower line represents a lower moderating degree (EXP - 1 S.D.) The upper line exhibits a gradually increasing slope, which suggests a higher EXP influence would lead to a diminished linkage between the MK and SAT. Conversely, a lower EXP influence would result in a reinforced association between the MK and SAT. The interaction effect was not significant ($t = 0.197$, $p = 0.422$); therefore, H14 was not supported. Therefore, the moderation effect of gastronomy experience on the relationship between marketing mix and visitor satisfaction was not statistically meaningful in this study.

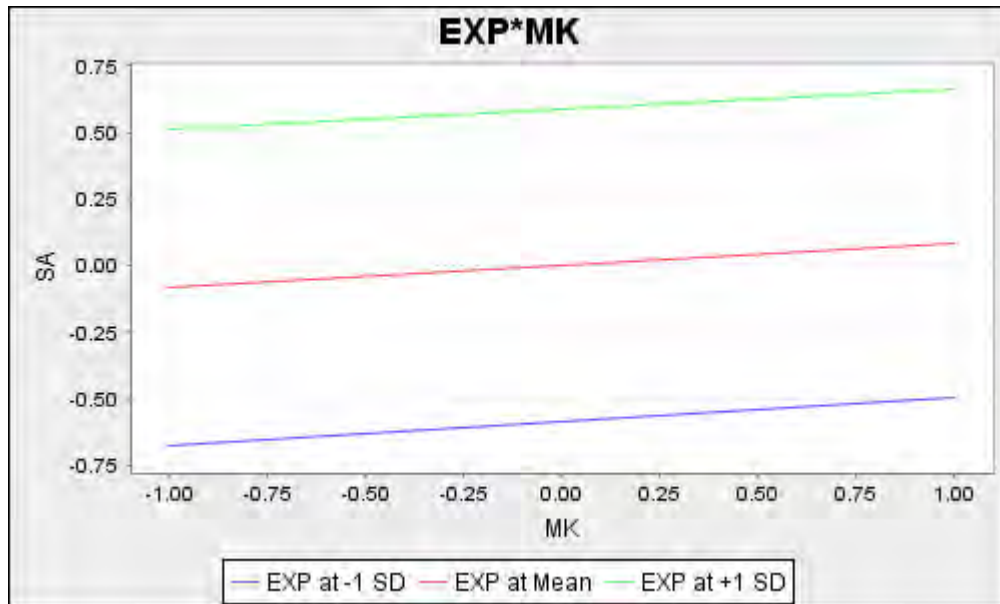


Figure 4. 8
Interaction Plot of the EXP Impact on the Correlation between the Marketing Mix and SAT

4.12 Chapter Summary

The current chapter has performed model assessment through both SPSS version 21 and SmartPLS version 3 software and demonstrated a high response rate and respondents' demographic profile. Specifically, the measurement model assessment, the significance of the path coefficients, and the results have been discussed. The structural model assessment of first-order constructs has also demonstrated that vertical gastronomy experiences significantly and positively impact visitor satisfaction. In addition, the structural model assessment of second-order constructs has discovered that gastronomy experiences negatively moderate the linkage between service quality and visitor satisfaction. The next chapter will elucidate the results, theoretical and practical implications, and study limitations.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The current chapter elucidates the primary findings by referring to both SET and EDT and prior results. The SET posits that visitor demeanours are impacted by personal perceptions and anticipations, which will encourage visitors to exhibit specific demeanours and engagement levels in different events or activities. The EDT scrutinises post-purchase behavioural patterns and consumer satisfaction and determines the factors contributing to usage after post-purchase evaluations of received products and services. Both theories also explicate the moderating role of gastronomy tourism in the interplay between service quality, the marketing mix, and visitor satisfaction. The present chapter encapsulates a recapitulation of this study with result discussions, theoretical and practical implications, study limitations, and future directions before the conclusion.

5.2 Study Recapitulation

The current study aimed to appraise the impacts of service quality and the marketing mix on visitor satisfaction moderated by gastronomy experience:

1. To examine the impact of food service quality on visitor satisfaction.
2. To assess the influence of the marketing mix on visitor satisfaction.
3. To evaluate whether gastronomy experience moderates the relationship between food service quality and visitor satisfaction.
4. To evaluate whether gastronomy experience moderates the relationship between the marketing mix and visitor satisfaction.

The study objectives can assist in answering the following RQs:

1. Does service quality significantly impact visitor satisfaction?
2. Does the marketing mix significantly impact visitor satisfaction?
3. Does gastronomy experience moderate the relationship between food service quality and visitor satisfaction?
4. Does gastronomy experience moderate the relationship between the marketing mix and visitor satisfaction?

The findings demonstrated that only one out of the six hypotheses regarding the first RQ was supported, in which reliability was profoundly and positively associated with visitor satisfaction. Conversely, responsiveness was substantially and inversely associated with visitor satisfaction, whereas empathy, assurance, tangibles, and overall service quality produced non-significant influences on visitor satisfaction. The results also revealed that only one out of the three hypotheses regarding the second RQ was supported, wherein the product dimension of the marketing mix was considerably and favourably linked with visitor satisfaction. Meanwhile, price and the overall marketing mix did not profoundly influence visitor satisfaction. All three hypotheses related to the third RQ were supported, in which horizontal gastronomy experience, vertical gastronomy experience, and overall gastronomy experience significantly influenced visitor satisfaction. Nonetheless, gastronomy experience insignificantly moderated the linkage between the marketing mix and visitor experience, whereas gastronomy experience negatively moderated the correlation between service quality and visitor satisfaction rather than positively.

5.3 Discussion

5.3.1 Service Quality and Visitor Satisfaction

The first RO includes H1 to H5 and H10 related to overall service quality and relevant dimensions.

5.3.1.1 Tangibles and visitor satisfaction

Tangibles were discovered to profoundly and inversely impact visitor satisfaction, which did not support H1 and contradicted past findings (Omar et al., 2016; Thi et al., 2020). The low ubiquity of attractive amenities and the inadequate tidiness and hygiene degrees of restaurant attendants in southern Thailand might have contributed to the current results. Fakharyan et al., (2014), Giao et al., (2020), and Khunwanich and Tarnittanakorn (2017) delineated that visitors emphasise reliability in food taste, service quality, and gastronomy experiences. Moreover, food visitors yearn for alternative experiences in various food cultures to acquire more knowledge regarding the identity of local cuisine, establish relationships with local communities, experience local food, and comprehend unique food traditions. Petchduang et al.(2023) also discovered that tangibles insignificantly impacted visitor satisfaction as other factors, including food taste and trip experiences, played more significant roles. Su et al. (2020) explicated that social interactions, local traditions, food appeal, cultural experiences, and local destinations significantly contributed to food visitors.

5.3.1.2 Reliability and visitor satisfaction

This study uncovered that reliability substantially and positively influenced visitor satisfaction; which supported H2 despite a small effect (Al-Tit, 2015; Gumussoy & Koseoglu, 2016; Siregar et al., 2019; Zafar et al., 2012). The findings posited that restaurants dedicated to food tourism in southern Thailand could effectively offer consistent food tastes that fulfilled visitors' anticipations. Restaurant staff also focused

on numerous details of offered services to ensure that visitor requirements were fulfilled. Premkumar and Bhattacharjee (2008) developed the EDT and propounded that consumers are satisfied according to the levels of trust delivered and anticipations fulfilled.

5.3.1.3 Responsiveness and visitor satisfaction

The present study demonstrated that responsiveness substantially but negatively influenced visitor satisfaction, which did not support H3 and was inconsistent with prior scholars (Qin & Prybutok, 2008; Saad Andaleeb & Conway, 2006). The findings postulated that southern Thai restaurants frequently did not promptly respond to customer needs, which led to longer waiting periods despite visitors remaining satisfied with distinctive food experiences and flavours. Yin et al. (2023) uncovered that visitors were satisfied with engaging in routine activities, including queuing, waiting, walking, and photographs, due to distinctive experiences. Pestana et al. (2020) and Chi and Qu (2008) also delineated that satisfaction is a subjective evaluation of the tourism experience at the tourist destination impacted by both positive and negative sentiments experienced during the trip. Gregana and Ylagan (2024) revealed that high-quality cuisines could enhance diverse dining characteristics, such as service quality and the overall ambience, which contributed to higher satisfaction.

5.3.1.4 Assurance and visitor satisfaction

The current findings demonstrated an insignificant influence of assurance on visitor satisfaction, which did not support H4 and contradicted past findings (Almohaimmed, 2017; Surapranata & Iskandar, 2013; Tat et al., 2011). The results suggested that assurance might not be an influential element in visitor satisfaction when visiting southern Thailand for food owing to small businesses, which were primarily

restaurants, constantly regulating expenses, particularly offering staff training to promote customer assurance through enhanced courtesy, knowledge, and capabilities to instil trust and confidence. For instance, billing errors were frequently observed. Ru-zhe et al. (2019) also uncovered that international food visitors in Nakhon Si Thammarat and Suratthani provinces in Thailand were continuously concerned with restaurant bills before payments when visitors also preferred small restaurants that were highly accessible surrounding visitor destinations instead of highly focusing on restaurant staff services. Ibrahim and Ismail (2015) also demonstrated that assurance was regarded as a secondary factor and might not necessarily lead to higher visitor satisfaction.

5.3.1.5 Empathy and visitor satisfaction

Empathy was revealed to not profoundly influence visitor satisfaction, which did not support H5 a (Al-Tit, 2015; Aunalal et al., 2017; Gumussoy & Koseoglu, 2016; Ibrahim & Ismail, 2015; Thi et al., 2020) (Ismail, 2015; Thi et al., 2020). The results postulated that empathy might not be the primary factor contributing to food visitor satisfaction in southern Thailand. Restaurant staff might also not offer a high degree of individual attention, service, and effective communication when required by consumers. Communication is the first step in generating satisfaction before influencing purchasing decisions, repeat purchases, and WoM. Communication between service providers and consumers also impacts visitor satisfaction (Wongphan, 2018; Webster & Sundaram, 2009).

5.3.1.6 Overall service quality and visitor satisfaction

The findings demonstrated that service quality did not considerably influence visitor satisfaction, which did not support H10 and align with prior results (Maestro et al., 2007; Rajaratnam et al., 2014b). The findings suggested that visitors regarded that the received service quality did not correspond to anticipations, which engendered a mismatch when a majority of southern Thai restaurants did not provide high service quality, on top of insufficient amenities, unique cuisines in restaurant menus, individual attention from restaurant staff, and effective communication. Suwandoko et al. (2024) and Kotler and Gary (2008) explicated that sufficient services are the minimum degree anticipated by consumers, wherein consumers will be satisfied when personal anticipations are effectively fulfilled or surpassed. Conversely, consumers will be dissatisfied or disappointed when anticipations are not fulfilled or delivered partially. Hence, consumer satisfaction refers to the consistency between perceived product or service performance and expectations.

5.3.2 Marketing Mix and Visitor Satisfaction

The second RO is to gauge the linkage between the marketing mix and visitors through H6, H7, and H11.

5.3.2.1 Product and visitor satisfaction

The findings revealed that the product dimension substantially and positively impacted visitor satisfaction, supporting H6. The results suggest that perceived local food flavours and variety can fulfil visitors' needs and expectations, resulting in higher satisfaction. The findings are aligned with previous studies showing that product-related attributes influence visitor satisfaction and loyalty. In particular, food authenticity, quality, and local uniqueness have been identified as key drivers of

positive visitor evaluations in tourism settings (Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Kim et al., 2011). Thus, the ‘product’ dimension in gastronomy tourism functions as a core experiential offering rather than a tangible good alone. This also reflects EDT, where satisfaction emerges when actual food experiences meet or exceed tourists’ expectations.

5.3.2.2 Price and visitor satisfaction

The findings highlighted that price did not substantially impact visitor satisfaction, which did not support H7 and correspond to prior researchers (Abdullah Kadhim et al., 2016; Ketut et al., 2021; Luekveerawattana, 2016; Teas, 1993; Zardi et al., 2019). Nonetheless, Hui et al. (2007) discovered that price did not produce a pronounced effect on overall visitor satisfaction. Akdag et al. (2018) demonstrated that food variety, types, sensory attributes, and quality considerably contributed to visitor satisfaction rather than price in the Mediterranean region. The current findings suggested that price might play a secondary role in southern Thailand owing to most tourists being prepared for a higher budget when visiting another nation to be completely immersed in the trip experience and concentrate more on food quality. Mattila (2001) explicated that visitors generally prioritise food quality over the restaurant ambience, cleanliness, convenience, price, and value. Hui et al. (2007) also delineated that the trip budget will be established before embarking on a trip, and visitors will tend to focus more on other aspects rather than price.

5.3.2.3 Overall marketing mix and visitor satisfaction

The current study uncovered that the marketing mix did not produce a substantial impact on visitor satisfaction, which did not support H11 and was not aligned with past academicians (Juniardi et al., 2018; Kewas et al., 2020; Mulyana & Sugeng, 2018; Verma & Singh, 2017). The findings posited that the marketing mix did not play a

pivotal function in visitor satisfaction when visiting southern Thailand for local food as the marketing mix elements might not adequately fulfil visitors' needs and anticipations, which engendered a mismatch between anticipations and experiences and visitor dissatisfaction. Specifically, the two elements, namely the product and pricing, were ineffectively addressed. The findings corresponded to Mulyati et al. (2024). (Nuseir & Madanat, 2015) , and Jahmani et al. (2024) who elucidated that the inefficacious combination of multiple marketing mix components would lead to lower visitor satisfaction.

5.3.3 Gastronomy Experience and Visitor Satisfaction

The third RO is related to how gastronomy experience influences visitor satisfaction via H8, H9, and H12.

5.3.3.1 Horizontal gastronomy experience and visitor satisfaction

The findings demonstrated that horizontal gastronomy experience profoundly and favourably influenced visitor satisfaction, which supported H8. A medium effect size was also observed, which postulated that active or passive gastronomy participation would significantly predict visitor satisfaction as food tourism could elevate visitors' knowledge and insights into food culture while increasing curiosity to acquire alternative knowledge. Furthermore, food tourism activities were entertaining and enjoyable, which resulted in higher visitor satisfaction. Zhang et al. (2022) also underscored the significance of entertainment as a vital element of visitor satisfaction. In addition, Vo Thanh and Kirova (2018) emphasised the significance of essential services when visiting wineries, including institutional information, local history, traditions, and the wine-making process. Schmitt (1999, p.60) also delineated that "experience is often the result from direct observation and participation in the event, whether the event is real, dreamlike, or virtual".

5.3.3.2 Vertical gastronomic experience and visitor satisfaction

This study indicated that vertical gastronomy experience substantially and positively influenced visitor satisfaction, which supported H9 despite a small effect size. The results posited that vertical gastronomy experience (absorption and immersion) played a critical function in southern Thai visitor satisfaction. A full immersion can result in a higher sense of self-reflection and a perception of situating in a distinctive period or location. Additionally, visitors would be fully immersed in the food trip when experiencing authentic harmony and pleasure. The food tourism context was also appealing when a high degree of close attention was offered to the details of restaurant design and decoration, which led to a high feeling of belongingness and participation. Björk et al. (2020) demonstrated that experiences acquired via absorption and immersion in local food events boosted Finnish visitors' food experiences. Visitors who have observed a food event would absorb the experience while visitors who have lived the event through five sensory senses would be immersed in the event. Pine II and Gilmore (1999) also delineated absorption and immersion as a spectrum, with absorption at one end while immersion at the other end. The relational and physical aspects offer absorption and immersion at varying connection levels with individuals and objects.

5.3.3.3 Overall gastronomy experience and visitor satisfaction

The findings revealed that gastronomy experience substantially and positively impacted visitor satisfaction, which supported H12 through a large effect size. The results postulated that food tourists' participation and connection in food events could increase knowledge regarding food culture, positive affection, enjoyment, the capability to perceive personal lives through different perspectives, an authentic sense of harmony, and pleasure in culinary tourism. Hosany and Witham (2010) also

elucidated that visitors acquired more experiences when being passively absorbed in specific events, such as watching films. Comparatively, active absorption occurs when visitors actively engage in acquiring alternative knowledge and performing interactive activities, including visiting a museum, which enables visitors to deepen cultural knowledge. Visitors also acquire experiences when being passively immersed in the environment, in which visitors can enjoy the aesthetics of monuments and sights during a city tour or actively participate in relevant tour activities. In addition, visitors are immersed in escapist experiences when relaxing in parks or public spaces by absorbing multisensory elements from the environment. Visitors' experiences can be classified into behavioural or perceptual, cognitive or emotional, or expressed or implied (Oh et al., 2007), which can generate unique memories and satisfaction (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013; Kim et al., 2011), Agyeiwaah et al. (2019) also revealed that the food visitors' experiences were positively correlated to both gastronomy satisfaction and loyalty (Hendijani, 2016; Ullah et al., 2022; Yoo et al., 2022).

5.3.4 Moderating Role of Gastronomy Experience on the Linkage between Service Quality, the Marketing Mix, and Visitor Satisfaction

The fourth RO is regarding the moderating impact of gastronomy experience on the association between service quality, the marketing mix, and visitor satisfaction (H13 and H14). While the findings demonstrated that gastronomy experience significantly moderated the linkage between service quality and visitor satisfaction, the moderating impact was negative and did not support H13. The findings posited that gastronomy tourism in southern Thailand appealed to numerous foreign visitors to enjoy scrumptious local food, relax, and seek pleasure, which led to positive experiences and alleviated the adverse experience of substandard service quality on visitor satisfaction. While reliability positively contributed to visitor satisfaction, responsiveness produced

an adverse impact. As such, visitors remained queuing in front of restaurants despite a lack of responsiveness owing to being highly satisfied with restaurants delivering scrumptious food tastes that could effectively fulfil visitors' anticipations, which resulted in the feeling of being untreated but satisfied. The adverse impact was not aggravated among visitors receiving satisfactory food experiences in southern Thailand. Yin et al. (2023) propounded that visitors who were exhausted owing to waiting, walking, queuing, and photographing could garner a distinctive experience from food, which led to higher trip satisfaction. Wu et al. (2018) also posited that high visitor experience quality could mitigate the negative experience of other factors.

The findings uncovered an insignificant moderating impact of gastronomy experience on the association between the marketing mix and visitor satisfaction, which suggested that the marketing mix did not effectively fulfil visitors' needs and anticipations after receiving the offered product or service. Therefore, higher visitor dissatisfaction was observed and visitors would focus more on food experiences instead of marketing mix elements, such as pricing or the product. Visitors had developed travel budgets before embarking on the trip and were inclined to pay more for local and traditional cuisine or unique experiences. Söderström (2022) revealed that visitor destinations were more impacted by the availability of local cuisines as visitors emphasised more food experiences and were predisposed to pay a higher price for local cuisines (Pyo et al., 1991) or unique experiences distinctive from daily routine. Therefore, local cuisines are crucial to fulfilling visitors' food desires (Freire & Gertner, 2021) and enjoyment or indulgence (Du & Heath, 2006). Generally, visitors prioritise trip experiences at a specific travel destination and will deliberately decide on the most suitable restaurants or food based on personal needs and preferences (Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Summarily, the findings on the moderating

role of gastronomy experience did not support the two hypotheses, wherein gastronomy experience produced a negative influence on the association between service quality and visitor satisfaction and insignificantly impacted the linkage between the marketing mix and visitor satisfaction. This unexpected moderation outcome provides an important theoretical refinement. Rather than functioning as a contextual moderator, gastronomy experience appears to operate primarily as a direct experiential driver of satisfaction. This suggests that in Southern Thailand, tourists evaluate satisfaction holistically through their dining experience, regardless of variations in service quality or marketing attributes.

5.4 Theoretical Implications

A gap was revealed in the current knowledge corpus regarding the interplay between service quality (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy), marketing mix elements (product and price), gastronomy experience (horizontal participation and vertical connection), and visitor satisfaction. Moreover, the usage of both SET and EDT in the current topic was scarce. Accordingly, the current investigation contributed additional insights into food tourism in Southern Thailand by incorporating both SET and EDT, through which these key elements can be integrated to develop a future conceptual model to improve gastronomy tourism in the region. Building upon this theoretical gap, the present study extends both Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) within the gastronomy tourism context. From a SET perspective, the findings indicate that international visitors assess restaurant service encounters through an exchange process, where perceived benefits such as reliability, food quality, and experiential enjoyment contribute to overall satisfaction. At the same time, the application of EDT

suggests that visitor satisfaction is closely linked to the extent to which experiential expectations are confirmed during dining experiences, rather than being shaped solely by operational service performance.

By integrating SET and EDT within a single framework, this research offers a more complete understanding of visitor satisfaction in Southern Thailand. It shows that satisfaction is influenced not only by exchange-based value evaluations, but also by the confirmation of expectations formed through gastronomy experiences. In doing so, the study strengthens the relevance of these underpinning theories within an underexplored international gastronomy tourism destination. This theoretical contribution is significant because it reinforces that visitor satisfaction in gastronomy tourism cannot be fully understood from one perspective alone. Instead, SET provides insight into how service benefits and perceived value shape satisfaction, while EDT complements this view by emphasising the importance of expectation confirmation through experiential dining encounters. Hence, combining these two perspectives enhances the explanatory power of the proposed framework in the Southern Thailand gastronomy tourism context.

1. Reliability: The factor was discovered to produce a profound and positive influence on visitor satisfaction. The findings also empirically supported the reliability dimension of the SET, in which individuals would learn from one another and develop favourability and confidence in other individuals while being inclined to embrace risks in relationship building (Schoorman et al., 2007). Reliability is a pivotal element influencing knowledge transfer intentions and relationship maintenance among entrepreneurs (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

2. Responsiveness: The factor was demonstrated to generate an adverse influence on visitor satisfaction. While the results contradicted the postulations of the SET, the interaction between individuals in a specific community could be appraised via cost-benefit analysis or a comparison with different benefits (Liu et al., 2016). Meanwhile, the EDT postulates that customers develop initial anticipations for a specific product before performing relevant purchases. The customers would generate pertinent knowledge regarding the performance of the product after a consumption period, which leads to the evaluation of the subjective gap (disconfirmation) between personal anticipations and actual product performance (Bhattacharjee, 2001). The incapability of entrepreneurs to promptly respond to visitors' needs or anticipations would also lead to dissatisfaction.

3. Product: The product dimension of the marketing mix was uncovered to substantially and positively contribute to visitor satisfaction, which corresponded to the postulations of both EDT and SET that visitors' perceived benefits played a vital function in social exchanges (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) and satisfaction (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

4. Gastronomy Experience: The gastronomy experience was demonstrated to negatively moderate the association between service quality and visitor satisfaction, which was consistent with the SET that the interactions between entrepreneurs and consumers (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002) encompassed the feelings of discovering knowledge from diverse cultures and values (Homans, 1958).

Overall, SET and EDT complement each other by showing that visitor satisfaction in gastronomy tourism is shaped through both perceived exchange value and the confirmation of dining expectations.

5.5 Practical Implications

Practically, the findings provide implications for restaurant operators and tourism marketers:

1. Improve reliability and service quality by ensuring consistent food quality, accurate orders, and dependable service delivery, as reliability is a key driver of visitor satisfaction. These results are fundamental for the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), food tourism agencies, and other stakeholders in Southern Thailand to strengthen competitiveness.
2. Strengthen the 'product' offering by emphasising authenticity, local uniqueness, and variety of Southern Thai food experiences. Restaurants and tourism agencies can apply differentiation strategies tailored to food tourists' needs and expectations in order to enhance satisfaction based on actual dining experiences.
3. Adopt value-based pricing communication by focusing on fairness and transparency rather than competing mainly on low prices. This approach can help tourism operators position Southern Thailand as a high-quality gastronomy destination.
4. Leverage experiential marketing and online promotion, where the TAT and food tourism agencies can support destination managers by advertising local cuisine, food events, and cultural dining moments through social media platforms to attract international visitors seeking unique gastronomic experiences.
5. Develop distinctive and memorable gastronomy experiences as unique selling points for Southern Thai tourism, including special local cuisines and high-quality food-related activities that create lasting visitor impressions.

5.6 Limitations and Future Directions

Several study limitations exist:

1. The constraints in terms of accessibility, time, and the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic might have led to a higher perception of lower service quality and restaurant staff in southern Thailand when data collection was performed during the period of opening of Thai borders after the pandemic lockdown measures. Future researchers can examine the present topic to determine the same impacts of the investigated variables.
2. The present study only investigated several factors while other factors, such as social-media-based communication, visitors' emotions, and restaurant ambience, could be further investigated in-depth by future scholars.
3. The applicability of the proposed conceptual framework in different settings remained uncertain. Future academicians can apply the framework in different contexts to ascertain the applicability of the framework or whether modifications are required.

5.7 Chapter Summary

The present examination on food visitor satisfaction in southern Thailand significantly contributed to the current literature while expanding both SET and EDT by incorporating service quality and the marketing mix as exogenous constructs, with gastronomy experience as a proposed moderating construct. All RQs and ROs were answered by offering valuable insights into the TAT or food tourism agencies and restaurants in southern Thailand. Nevertheless, the results could be confounded as data collection was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Further investigations on the current topic can be conducted to resolve existing limitations.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE



QUESTIONNAIRES

Dear valued respondents,

We are conducting a survey as part of the requirements for the PhD research entitled “Service Quality and Marketing Mix of Gastronomy Tourism Effect on Tourist Satisfaction in Southern of Thailand”. The survey aims to investigate the factors affecting gastronomy experience and tourist satisfaction in gastronomy tourism. The researchers believe that the outcome of this research will benefit and improve the gastronomy tourism in Thailand.

This survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes, and your effort to answer the questionnaire sincerely will be highly appreciated. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. The data will be aggregated and used for academic purposes only.

The questionnaire consists of 6 (Six) sections. Please read the items carefully to provide your sincere responses as the responses will determine the success of this study.

Thank you in advance for your kindly cooperation.

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SECTION A: Term Definition

Gastronomy tourism is defined as visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of specialist food produced or cooked by locals are the primary motivations for travel.

Gastronomic experience means trying food based on aspects of the taste, the price and the atmosphere of the establishment including the professionalism in the service received.

SECTION B: General Information

Make a tick ✓ on the box according to your information or, write the specific information in the space provided.

No.	Data
1	Have you ever travelled to the South of Thailand for the last 3 years? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2	Number of travelling times to the South of Thailand <input type="checkbox"/> First-time visitor <input type="checkbox"/> Returning visitor; including this trip _____ times
3	Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
4	Marital status <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced
5	Education: <input type="checkbox"/> Technical school/ Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> University <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate school <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
6	Age: years old
7	The main purpose of the visit (You can choose more than 1 answer.) <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoying food and cuisine <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting friend/family <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping <input type="checkbox"/> Sightseeing <input type="checkbox"/> Attending a conference/ business <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoying nightlife

	<input type="checkbox"/> Visiting historic sites <input type="checkbox"/> Joining cultural experience <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____
8	How many accompanying person(s) are travelling with you? <input type="checkbox"/> 1) Alone <input type="checkbox"/> 2) Family / Relative / Friend, total _____ person(s)* <input type="checkbox"/> 3) Colleague (s), total _____ person(s)* <input type="checkbox"/> 4) Others, please specify _____, total _____ person(s)* *including you.
9	How much do you usually spend on food tourism? _____ bath (per 1 person ; per trip)



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Universiti Utara Malaysia

SECTION C: Information on Service Quality

Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement to the following statements by ticking a box on the scale that best reflects your opinion.

1= Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat Disagree; 4 = Undecided;

5 = Somewhat Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree

No.	Subjects	Level						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Tangible								
1	The physical facilities of the restaurant are visually appealing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	The menus of the restaurants reflect gastronomy tourism.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	The restaurant attendants/staff were neat and clean in appearance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	The materials and utensils of restaurants are appealing and interesting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	The restaurants are decorated to reflect the traditional locality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reliability								
6	The restaurants provided service as promised.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	The restaurants paid attention to details of services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	The taste of the menu items served met the customers' expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	The restaurants billed you accurately and correctly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	The restaurants were consistent in services provision.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION C: Information on Service Quality,

Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement to the following statements by ticking a box on the scale that best reflects your opinion.

1= Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat Disagree; 4 = Undecided;
5 = Somewhat Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree

No.	Subjects	Level						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Responsiveness								
11	The restaurants provided prompt service for you.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	The restaurants were always willing to help you.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	The restaurants provided extra service to meet customer special request.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	The restaurants responded to the complaint in time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	Services are provided on time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	The service timing was well-managed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Assurance								
17	The restaurants have expertise in the food ingredients and preparation methods for menu item.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	The attendants/staff displayed politeness and courtesy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	You felt safe while receiving service from the restaurant attendants/staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	You felt secured when making payment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	The attendants/staff had patience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22	The attendants/staff were emotionally matured.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION C: Information on Service Quality,

Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement to the following statements by ticking a box on the scale that best reflects your opinion.

1= Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat Disagree; 4 = Undecided;
5 = Somewhat Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree

No.	Subjects	Level						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Empathy								
23	You got service whenever you need it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24	The restaurants have opening and closing times that are convenient for all customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25	The restaurants were able to communicate effectively with you.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26	The restaurants gave customers individual attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	The restaurants made you feel special.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION D: Information of Marketing Mix

Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement to the following statements by ticking a box on the scale that best reflects your opinion.

1= Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat Disagree; 4 = Undecided; 5 = Somewhat Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree

No.	Subjects	Level						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Product								
1	I think local food is tasty.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I think the taste of local food is unfamiliar to my routine eating.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I think there is a variety of local food choices.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Local food restaurants show price labels.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I think quality of local food is consistent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Price								
1	The restaurants offer discount.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I think the local food is not overpriced.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I think the local food offers excellent prices.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I think the quality of the local food matches the price.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I think the local food is worth paying for in terms of quantity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION E: Information of Gastronomy Experience

Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement to the following statement by ticking a box on the scale that best reflects your opinion.

1= Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat Disagree; 4 = Undecided; 5 = Somewhat Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree

No.	Subjects	Level						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Horizontal Tourists' Gastronomy Experience (Definition: tourist participation, the level to which tourists affect the performance.)								
1	The experience at gastronomy tourism has made me more knowledgeable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	The experience at gastronomy tourism made me learned a lot of food culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Gastronomy tourism stimulated my curiosity to learn new things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	My experience in gastronomy tourism was highly educational for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	The activities at gastronomy tourism were amusing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Watching others performing at the gastronomy tourism was captivating.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	What others were doing at the gastronomy tourism made me enjoy watching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Activities at the gastronomy tourism were entertaining.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION E: Information of Gastronomy Experience

Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement to the following statement by ticking a box on the scale that best reflects your opinion.

1= Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat Disagree; 4 = Undecided;
5 = Somewhat Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree

No.	Subjects	Level						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Vertical Tourists' Gastronomy Experience (Definition: the level of environmental relationship that unites tourists with the event or performance)								
1	I was in a very good mood while experiencing gastronomy tourism.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Gastronomy tourism made me feel like I was living in a different time or place.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	The experience in gastronomy allows me to see myself in a new way.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I completely escaped from my daily routine at gastronomy tourism.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I felt a real sense of harmony in the gastronomy tourism.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	The setting at the gastronomy tourism paid close attention to design details of design and decoration which made me feel part of the place.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	It was pleasant just being here at gastronomy tourism.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	The setting of gastronomy tourism was very attractive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION F: Information on Tourists' Satisfaction

Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement to the following statement by ticking a box on the scale that best reflects your opinion.

1= Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat Disagree; 4 = Undecided; 5 = Somewhat Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree

No.	Subjects	Level						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	My gastronomy tourism turned out better than I expected.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	If I had another chance, I would re-visit the restaurants again.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	This gastronomy tourism is exactly what I need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I think I made the right decision to embrace gastronomy tourism.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I am satisfied with the value of the price I paid.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I am satisfied with my decision to embark on gastronomy tourism.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	My gastronomy tourism experience made me happy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Gastronomy tourism is a pleasant experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	Overall, my gastronomy tourism experience was a delight.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix B: Reliability for Pilot test (N=30)

Tourists' Satisfaction

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	30	100.0
Cases Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.953	9

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SA1	49.23	33.909	.796	.949
SA2	49.03	35.413	.799	.948
SA3	49.23	34.530	.813	.947
SA4	49.23	32.323	.850	.946
SA5	49.13	35.775	.707	.953
SA6	49.20	34.924	.750	.951
SA7	49.03	34.447	.861	.945
SA8	49.03	34.033	.910	.943
SA9	49.00	34.897	.848	.946

Horizontal Tourists' Gastronomy Experience

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Valid		30	100.0
Cases Excluded ^a		0	.0
Total		30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.953	8

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
HO1	40.80	34.717	.783	.949
HO2	40.70	34.907	.769	.950
HO3	40.70	34.217	.764	.950
HO4	40.97	32.102	.858	.944
HO5	40.87	33.154	.810	.948
HO6	40.90	33.472	.841	.945
HO7	40.77	33.357	.861	.944
HO8	40.73	32.616	.914	.941

Vertical Tourists' Gastronomy Experience

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	30	100.0
Cases Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.917	8

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
VE1	40.07	32.892	.668	.911
VE2	40.33	30.023	.865	.895
VE3	40.67	27.816	.801	.900
VE4	40.60	29.145	.657	.915
VE5	40.30	29.666	.767	.902
VE6	40.40	30.386	.846	.897
VE7	40.10	32.162	.688	.909
VE8	40.23	31.702	.610	.915

Service Quality

Tangible

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	30	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.837	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
TA1	23.57	10.806	.756	.770
TA2	23.53	11.016	.765	.768
TA3	23.53	12.120	.531	.835
TA4	23.60	11.834	.693	.791
TA5	23.77	12.737	.475	.848

Reliability

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	30	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.869	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
REL1	24.30	10.838	.780	.821
REL2	24.50	10.879	.630	.862
REL3	24.47	10.189	.761	.825
REL4	24.23	12.875	.570	.870
REL5	24.50	11.224	.761	.827

Responsiveness

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	30	100.0
Cases Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.921	6

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
RES1	29.73	20.823	.758	.910
RES2	29.67	20.437	.783	.907
RES3	29.80	19.821	.713	.915
RES4	30.23	18.185	.799	.905
RES5	29.83	19.592	.756	.909
RES6	29.90	18.507	.866	.894

Assurance

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	30	100.0
Cases Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.929	6

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
AS1	31.03	17.344	.789	.917
AS2	30.80	16.993	.720	.929
AS3	30.43	18.461	.798	.916
AS4	30.47	19.016	.762	.921
AS5	30.77	17.220	.833	.911
AS6	30.83	16.971	.904	.901

Empathy

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	30	100.0
Cases Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.905	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
EM1	23.10	17.266	.629	.910
EM2	23.43	14.530	.823	.871
EM3	23.47	15.844	.618	.916
EM4	23.40	13.352	.914	.849
EM5	23.40	15.007	.857	.865

Marketing Mix

Product

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	30	100.0
Cases Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.709	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
PRO1	24.33	6.023	.362	.701
PRO2	24.60	5.214	.555	.622
PRO3	24.47	4.947	.565	.616
PRO4	24.53	5.361	.557	.623
PRO5	24.47	6.533	.298	.720

Price

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	30	100.0
Cases Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.880	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
PRI1	24.47	9.499	.427	.935
PRI2	23.83	8.971	.782	.839
PRI3	23.87	8.671	.881	.818
PRI4	23.87	8.395	.749	.845
PRI5	23.83	8.902	.859	.825

Appendix C: Demographic Statistic

Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	214	55.3	55.3	55.3
Valid Female	152	39.3	39.3	94.6
Valid Prefer not to say	21	5.4	5.4	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Single	273	70.5	70.5	70.5
Valid Married	103	26.6	26.6	97.2
Valid Widowed	1	.3	.3	97.4
Valid Divorced	9	2.3	2.3	99.7
Valid Prefer not to say	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18	1	.3	.3	.3
Valid 19	1	.3	.3	.5
Valid 20	4	1.0	1.0	1.6
Valid 21	2	.5	.5	2.1
Valid 22	7	1.8	1.8	3.9
Valid 23	4	1.0	1.0	4.9
Valid 24	7	1.8	1.8	6.7
Valid 25	13	3.4	3.4	10.1
Valid 26	18	4.7	4.7	14.7
Valid 27	17	4.4	4.4	19.1
Valid 28	34	8.8	8.8	27.9
Valid 29	20	5.2	5.2	33.1
Valid 30	35	9.0	9.0	42.1
Valid 31	22	5.7	5.7	47.8
Valid 32	21	5.4	5.4	53.2

33	28	7.2	7.2	60.5
34	14	3.6	3.6	64.1
35	16	4.1	4.1	68.2
36	14	3.6	3.6	71.8
37	12	3.1	3.1	74.9
38	12	3.1	3.1	78.0
39	6	1.6	1.6	79.6
40	12	3.1	3.1	82.7
41	7	1.8	1.8	84.5
42	7	1.8	1.8	86.3
43	7	1.8	1.8	88.1
44	3	.8	.8	88.9
45	9	2.3	2.3	91.2
46	2	.5	.5	91.7
48	2	.5	.5	92.2
49	2	.5	.5	92.8
50	1	.3	.3	93.0
51	3	.8	.8	93.8
52	2	.5	.5	94.3
53	1	.3	.3	94.6
54	1	.3	.3	94.8
56	1	.3	.3	95.1
58	2	.5	.5	95.6
59	4	1.0	1.0	96.6
60	1	.3	.3	96.9
62	1	.3	.3	97.2
65	1	.3	.3	97.4
66	2	.5	.5	97.9
68	5	1.3	1.3	99.2
70	2	.5	.5	99.7
80	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Appendix D: Tourist behavior

G1

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid No	243	62.8	62.8	62.8
Valid Yes	144	37.2	37.2	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

G2

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid First-time visitor	199	51.4	51.4	51.4
Valid Returning visitor	188	48.6	48.6	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

The main purpose of the visit

Food

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid no choose	226	58.4	58.4	58.4
Valid choose	161	41.6	41.6	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Friend

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid no choose	288	74.4	74.4	74.4
Valid choose	99	25.6	25.6	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Shopping

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
no choose	351	90.7	90.7	90.7
Valid choose	36	9.3	9.3	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Business

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
no choose	341	88.1	88.1	88.1
Valid choose	46	11.9	11.9	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Nightlife

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
no choose	235	60.7	60.7	60.7
Valid choose	152	39.3	39.3	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Historic

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
no choose	347	89.7	89.7	89.7
Valid choose	40	10.3	10.3	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Cultural Experience

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
no choose	296	76.5	76.5	76.5
Valid choose	91	23.5	23.5	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

others

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
no choose	206	53.2	53.2	53.2
Valid choose	181	46.8	46.8	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

How many accompanying person(s) are traveling with you?

G8

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Alone	192	49.6	49.6	49.6
Family / Relative / Friend	186	48.1	48.1	97.7
Valid Colleague	6	1.6	1.6	99.2
Others	3	.8	.8	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

How much do you usually spend on food tourism?

G9

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1000	4	1.0	1.0	1.0
1500	4	1.0	1.0	2.1
2000	6	1.6	1.6	3.6
2500	1	.3	.3	3.9
3000	10	2.6	2.6	6.5
4000	6	1.6	1.6	8.0
5000	30	7.8	7.8	15.8
5500	1	.3	.3	16.0
Valid 6000	11	2.8	2.8	18.9
7000	7	1.8	1.8	20.7
8000	18	4.7	4.7	25.3
9000	2	.5	.5	25.8
10000	60	15.5	15.5	41.3
12000	26	6.7	6.7	48.1
13000	3	.8	.8	48.8
14000	2	.5	.5	49.4
15000	55	14.2	14.2	63.6
16000	1	.3	.3	63.8

17000	6	1.6	1.6	65.4
18000	16	4.1	4.1	69.5
20000	35	9.0	9.0	78.6
21000	2	.5	.5	79.1
22000	9	2.3	2.3	81.4
23000	2	.5	.5	81.9
24000	3	.8	.8	82.7
25000	19	4.9	4.9	87.6
27000	2	.5	.5	88.1
28000	3	.8	.8	88.9
29000	1	.3	.3	89.1
30000	14	3.6	3.6	92.8
32000	2	.5	.5	93.3
35000	4	1.0	1.0	94.3
36000	1	.3	.3	94.6
38000	1	.3	.3	94.8
40000	7	1.8	1.8	96.6
45000	1	.3	.3	96.9
50000	9	2.3	2.3	99.2
72000	1	.3	.3	99.5
150000	1	.3	.3	99.7
300000	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	387	100.0	100.0	

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
M_SA	387	2	7	5.36	1.005
M_HO	387	2	7	5.08	1.080
M_VE	387	2	7	5.08	1.030
M_TA	387	2	7	4.77	1.077
M_REL	387	2	7	5.41	1.083
M_RES	387	1	7	5.25	1.168
M_AS	387	2	7	5.61	1.068
M_EM	387	1	7	5.25	1.107
M_PRO	387	3	7	5.63	.902
M PRI	387	1	7	5.21	1.066
Valid N (listwise)	387				

Appendix E: Min, Max, Mean, Std. Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis

Residuals Statistics^a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	23.57	62.30	48.24	6.628	393
Std. Predicted Value	-3.721	2.122	.000	1.000	393
Standard Error of Predicted Value	.376	2.007	.861	.238	393
Adjusted Predicted Value	23.96	62.64	48.25	6.629	393
Residual	-26.159	21.611	.000	5.537	393
Std. Residual	-4.670	3.858	.000	.988	393
Stud. Residual	-4.807	3.985	-.001	1.007	393
Deleted Residual	-27.722	23.053	-.010	5.745	393
Stud. Deleted Residual	-4.953	4.065	-.002	1.014	393
Mahal. Distance	.764	49.322	8.977	6.181	393
Cook's Distance	.000	.138	.004	.014	393
Centered Leverage Value	.002	.126	.023	.016	393

a. Dependent Variable: SA

Statistics

		TA	REL	RES	AS	EM	PRO	PRI	HO	VE	SA
N	Valid	387	387	387	387	387	387	387	387	387	387
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skewness		-.420	-1.106	-.905	-1.083	-.709	-.789	-.629	-.420	-.216	-.852
Std. Error of Skewness		.124	.124	.124	.124	.124	.124	.124	.124	.124	.124
Kurtosis		-.154	.733	.676	1.331	.022	.871	.591	-.426	-.215	.991
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.247	.247	.247	.247	.247	.247	.247	.247	.247	.247

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	8.945	1.635		5.470	.000		
REL	.119	.063	.119	1.897	.059	.413	2.420
RES	.334	.064	.434	5.184	.000	.233	4.285
AS	.229	.061	.273	3.771	.000	.313	3.195
EM	-.157	.069	-.161	-2.272	.024	.327	3.059
PRO	-.088	.066	-.074	-1.328	.185	.535	1.870
PRI	.166	.058	.164	2.877	.004	.505	1.981
HO	-.083	.041	-.133	-1.994	.047	.371	2.695
VE	-.023	.043	-.034	-.521	.603	.375	2.666

a. Dependent Variable: TA

Coefficients ^a								
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	3.453	1.377		2.508	.013		
	TA	.079	.042	.079	1.897	.059	.625	1.599
	RES	.272	.053	.353	5.175	.000	.233	4.286
	AS	.228	.049	.269	4.620	.000	.319	3.138
	EM	.082	.057	.084	1.448	.148	.324	3.083
	PRO	.125	.054	.104	2.323	.021	.540	1.852
	PRI	-.127	.047	-.125	-2.700	.007	.503	1.987
	HO	.077	.034	.123	2.273	.024	.372	2.687
	VE	-.001	.035	-.001	-.024	.981	.375	2.668

a. Dependent Variable: REL

Coefficients ^a								
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	-6.176	1.272		-4.856	.000		
	TA	.199	.038	.153	5.184	.000	.663	1.507
	REL	.243	.047	.188	5.175	.000	.438	2.282
	AS	.322	.045	.294	7.175	.000	.343	2.918
	EM	.390	.050	.308	7.862	.000	.375	2.665
	PRO	.007	.051	.005	.143	.886	.532	1.878
	PRI	-.027	.045	-.021	-.610	.542	.494	2.023
	HO	-.003	.032	-.004	-.106	.916	.367	2.724
	VE	.145	.033	.171	4.474	.000	.395	2.534

a. Dependent Variable: RES

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF	
								(Constant)
1	TA	.158	.042	.133	3.771	.000	.643	1.556
	REL	.235	.051	.198	4.620	.000	.432	2.313
	RES	.372	.052	.407	7.175	.000	.248	4.040
	EM	.280	.056	.242	5.025	.000	.344	2.906
	PRO	-.024	.055	-.017	-.430	.667	.533	1.878
	PRI	.029	.048	.024	.606	.545	.494	2.023
	HO	-.002	.035	-.003	-.054	.957	.367	2.724
	VE	-.027	.036	-.035	-.761	.447	.375	2.664

a. Dependent Variable: AS

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF	
								(Constant)
1	TA	-.086	.038	-.084	-2.272	.024	.628	1.593
	REL	.067	.047	.066	1.448	.148	.412	2.430
	RES	.360	.046	.456	7.862	.000	.253	3.945
	AS	.223	.044	.259	5.025	.000	.322	3.108
	PRO	-.008	.049	-.007	-.164	.870	.532	1.878
	PRI	.167	.042	.161	3.942	.000	.514	1.945
	HO	.119	.030	.185	3.914	.000	.382	2.618
	VE	-.068	.032	-.102	-2.148	.032	.379	2.636

a. Dependent Variable: EM

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	10.851	1.194		9.085	.000		
TA	-.053	.040	-.063	-1.328	.185	.622	1.607
REL	.113	.048	.135	2.323	.021	.415	2.409
RES	.007	.052	.012	.143	.886	.218	4.590
AS	-.021	.048	-.029	-.430	.667	.302	3.314
EM	-.009	.054	-.011	-.164	.870	.323	3.100
PRI	.472	.038	.558	12.396	.000	.695	1.440
HO	-.039	.032	-.075	-1.217	.224	.369	2.713
VE	.135	.033	.247	4.127	.000	.392	2.553

a. Dependent Variable: PRO



Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	-.300	1.500		-.200	.841		
TA	.129	.045	.131	2.877	.004	.633	1.580
REL	-.149	.055	-.151	-2.700	.007	.417	2.397
RES	-.036	.059	-.047	-.610	.542	.218	4.586
AS	.033	.055	.040	.606	.545	.302	3.312
EM	.237	.060	.246	3.942	.000	.336	2.978
PRO	.612	.049	.518	12.396	.000	.749	1.336
HO	.096	.036	.155	2.619	.009	.374	2.675
VE	.000	.038	-.001	-.013	.990	.375	2.668

a. Dependent Variable: PRI

Correlations

		TA	REL	RES	AS	EM	PRO	PRI
TA	Pearson Correlation	1	.470**	.563**	.549**	.407**	.189**	.287**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	387	387	387	387	387	387	387
REL	Pearson Correlation	.470**	1	.730**	.696**	.631**	.335**	.308**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	387	387	387	387	387	387	387
RES	Pearson Correlation	.563**	.730**	1	.797**	.773**	.372**	.416**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	387	387	387	387	387	387	387
AS	Pearson Correlation	.549**	.696**	.797**	1	.723**	.317**	.382**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	387	387	387	387	387	387	387
EM	Pearson Correlation	.407**	.631**	.773**	.723**	1	.381**	.480**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	387	387	387	387	387	387	387
PRO	Pearson Correlation	.189**	.335**	.372**	.317**	.381**	1	.642**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	387	387	387	387	387	387	387
PRI	Pearson Correlation	.287**	.308**	.416**	.382**	.480**	.642**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	387	387	387	387	387	387	387

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		TA	REL	RES	AS	EM	HO	VE
TA	Pearson Correlation	1	.470**	.563**	.549**	.407**	.221**	.240**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	387	387	387	387	387	387	387
REL	Pearson Correlation	.470**	1	.730**	.696**	.631**	.492**	.459**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	387	387	387	387	387	387	387
RES	Pearson Correlation	.563**	.730**	1	.797**	.773**	.554**	.559**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	387	387	387	387	387	387	387
AS	Pearson Correlation	.549**	.696**	.797**	1	.723**	.464**	.432**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	387	387	387	387	387	387	387
EM	Pearson Correlation	.407**	.631**	.773**	.723**	1	.564**	.480**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	387	387	387	387	387	387	387
HO	Pearson Correlation	.221**	.492**	.554**	.464**	.564**	1	.753**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	387	387	387	387	387	387	387
VE	Pearson Correlation	.240**	.459**	.559**	.432**	.480**	.753**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	387	387	387	387	387	387	387

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
M_SA	387	2	7	5.36	1.005
M_HO	387	2	7	5.08	1.080
M_VE	387	2	7	5.08	1.030
M_TA	387	2	7	4.77	1.077
M_REL	387	2	7	5.41	1.083
M_RES	387	1	7	5.25	1.168
M_AS	387	2	7	5.61	1.068
M_EM	387	1	7	5.25	1.107
M_PRO	387	3	7	5.63	.902
M_PRI	387	1	7	5.21	1.066
Valid N (listwise)	387				

Appendix F: Composite Reliability (First-Order Construct)

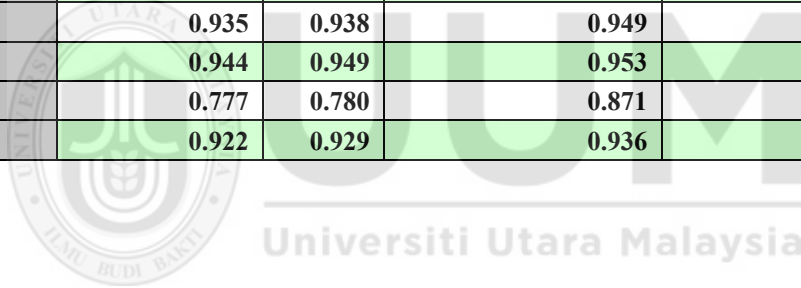
Outer loadings

	AS	EM	HO	PRI	PRO	REL	RES	SAT	TA	VE
AS2	0.909									
AS3	0.904									
AS4	0.863									
AS5	0.929									
AS6	0.873									
EM1		0.708								
EM3		0.803								
EM4		0.943								
EM5		0.833								
HO1			0.864							
HO2			0.844							
HO3			0.824							
HO4			0.875							
HO5			0.857							
HO6			0.814							
HO7			0.837							
HO8			0.830							
PRI2				0.917						
PRI3				0.908						
PRI4				0.898						
PRI5				0.910						
PRO1					0.884					
PRO3					0.886					
PRO4					0.869					
REL1						0.915				
REL3						0.827				
REL4						0.929				
REL5						0.898				
RES1							0.889			
RES2							0.915			
RES3							0.846			
RES4							0.831			
RES5							0.855			
RES6							0.876			
SA1								0.782		
SA2								0.868		
SA3								0.721		
SA4								0.765		
SA5								0.791		
SA6								0.879		
SA7								0.925		
SA8								0.855		
SA9								0.893		
TA1									0.819	
TA3									0.826	

TA4										0.849
VE1										0.730
VE2										0.763
VE3										0.854
VE4										0.719
VE5										0.807
VE6										0.832
VE7										0.875
VE8										0.849

Cronbach's Alpha, rho A, Composite Reliability and AVE

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
AS	0.939	0.954	0.953	0.803
EM	0.841	0.867	0.895	0.682
HO	0.942	0.944	0.952	0.711
PRI	0.930	0.949	0.950	0.825
PRO	0.854	0.859	0.911	0.774
REL	0.915	0.921	0.940	0.798
RES	0.935	0.938	0.949	0.755
SAT	0.944	0.949	0.953	0.695
TA	0.777	0.780	0.871	0.692
VE	0.922	0.929	0.936	0.649



Appendix G: Discriminant Validity (First-Order Construct)

Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	AS	EM	HO	PRI	PRO	REL	RES	SAT	TA	VE
AS	0.896									
EM	0.720	0.826								
HO	0.504	0.591	0.843							
PRI	0.488	0.431	0.414	0.908						
PRO	0.514	0.536	0.446	0.561	0.880					
REL	0.585	0.555	0.419	0.360	0.418	0.893				
RES	0.777	0.794	0.562	0.463	0.503	0.658	0.869			
SAT	0.508	0.550	0.739	0.399	0.492	0.476	0.519	0.834		
TA	0.590	0.477	0.284	0.272	0.259	0.500	0.648	0.295	0.832	
VE	0.482	0.531	0.758	0.373	0.488	0.389	0.568	0.679	0.315	0.806

Cross Loadings

	AS	EM	HO	PRI	PRO	REL	RES	SAT	TA	VE
AS2	0.909	0.686	0.431	0.433	0.463	0.535	0.717	0.454	0.555	0.423
AS3	0.904	0.591	0.355	0.436	0.462	0.598	0.657	0.411	0.488	0.367
AS4	0.863	0.485	0.289	0.393	0.388	0.498	0.577	0.321	0.480	0.277
AS5	0.929	0.667	0.514	0.489	0.511	0.457	0.694	0.496	0.526	0.483
AS6	0.873	0.730	0.586	0.422	0.458	0.540	0.786	0.536	0.571	0.535
EM1	0.567	0.708	0.352	0.398	0.341	0.621	0.688	0.364	0.414	0.219
EM3	0.560	0.803	0.425	0.318	0.409	0.467	0.571	0.411	0.336	0.448
EM4	0.674	0.943	0.562	0.363	0.568	0.535	0.739	0.534	0.432	0.515
EM5	0.576	0.833	0.578	0.359	0.424	0.261	0.634	0.486	0.401	0.527
HO1	0.541	0.568	0.864	0.278	0.387	0.405	0.574	0.671	0.379	0.669
HO2	0.547	0.552	0.844	0.371	0.400	0.458	0.578	0.675	0.413	0.609
HO3	0.371	0.459	0.824	0.450	0.392	0.392	0.487	0.578	0.224	0.589
HO4	0.408	0.508	0.875	0.384	0.420	0.363	0.509	0.605	0.215	0.657
HO5	0.531	0.544	0.857	0.430	0.439	0.384	0.503	0.679	0.308	0.676
HO6	0.321	0.407	0.814	0.312	0.288	0.262	0.380	0.577	0.143	0.606
HO7	0.295	0.450	0.837	0.246	0.334	0.282	0.359	0.590	0.092	0.663
HO8	0.337	0.476	0.830	0.315	0.333	0.254	0.373	0.593	0.088	0.639
PRI2	0.421	0.369	0.351	0.917	0.518	0.290	0.381	0.309	0.200	0.301
PRI3	0.343	0.285	0.333	0.908	0.428	0.269	0.352	0.291	0.207	0.334
PRI4	0.466	0.425	0.382	0.898	0.489	0.383	0.478	0.394	0.309	0.362
PRI5	0.506	0.449	0.417	0.910	0.578	0.343	0.443	0.421	0.251	0.346
PRO1	0.488	0.481	0.391	0.519	0.884	0.342	0.441	0.461	0.190	0.421
PRO3	0.394	0.385	0.399	0.502	0.886	0.269	0.370	0.385	0.223	0.417
PRO4	0.465	0.536	0.387	0.458	0.869	0.478	0.506	0.446	0.270	0.447
REL1	0.568	0.571	0.386	0.278	0.355	0.915	0.671	0.475	0.543	0.355
REL3	0.538	0.446	0.389	0.475	0.425	0.827	0.482	0.438	0.375	0.347
REL4	0.518	0.495	0.346	0.260	0.388	0.929	0.581	0.384	0.403	0.317
REL5	0.449	0.456	0.367	0.261	0.318	0.898	0.605	0.386	0.448	0.366
RES1	0.682	0.690	0.450	0.443	0.489	0.690	0.889	0.438	0.529	0.397

RES2	0.725	0.725	0.560	0.433	0.492	0.590	0.915	0.501	0.575	0.524
RES3	0.704	0.762	0.581	0.405	0.479	0.402	0.846	0.480	0.515	0.547
RES4	0.582	0.660	0.512	0.350	0.350	0.513	0.831	0.453	0.581	0.586
RES5	0.677	0.622	0.377	0.424	0.389	0.629	0.855	0.404	0.620	0.424
RES6	0.675	0.664	0.421	0.354	0.410	0.628	0.876	0.416	0.563	0.466
SA1	0.469	0.521	0.595	0.441	0.352	0.395	0.512	0.782	0.318	0.481
SA2	0.450	0.529	0.649	0.285	0.380	0.514	0.538	0.868	0.333	0.619
SA3	0.251	0.401	0.585	0.157	0.261	0.257	0.354	0.721	0.234	0.605
SA4	0.298	0.299	0.488	0.291	0.286	0.485	0.351	0.765	0.197	0.453
SA5	0.342	0.335	0.624	0.465	0.431	0.292	0.323	0.791	0.096	0.517
SA6	0.444	0.442	0.629	0.308	0.460	0.384	0.394	0.879	0.224	0.589
SA7	0.516	0.543	0.683	0.337	0.497	0.460	0.506	0.925	0.308	0.642
SA8	0.535	0.531	0.629	0.325	0.527	0.367	0.451	0.855	0.237	0.567
SA9	0.460	0.486	0.642	0.383	0.454	0.410	0.443	0.893	0.250	0.597
TA1	0.560	0.429	0.188	0.222	0.232	0.423	0.589	0.237	0.819	0.189
TA3	0.495	0.401	0.192	0.173	0.243	0.495	0.498	0.238	0.826	0.229
TA4	0.424	0.365	0.321	0.279	0.175	0.337	0.531	0.260	0.849	0.359
VE1	0.650	0.554	0.589	0.387	0.577	0.309	0.542	0.573	0.358	0.730
VE2	0.398	0.429	0.540	0.385	0.401	0.195	0.375	0.478	0.219	0.763
VE3	0.279	0.426	0.644	0.187	0.379	0.349	0.486	0.546	0.239	0.854
VE4	0.153	0.310	0.540	0.261	0.312	0.295	0.367	0.439	0.102	0.719
VE5	0.216	0.344	0.617	0.269	0.269	0.327	0.442	0.496	0.218	0.807
VE6	0.216	0.348	0.595	0.219	0.252	0.333	0.413	0.518	0.205	0.832
VE7	0.537	0.490	0.671	0.352	0.448	0.348	0.508	0.652	0.326	0.875
VE8	0.534	0.475	0.662	0.327	0.455	0.332	0.489	0.620	0.305	0.849

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	AS	EM	HO	PRI	PRO	REL	RES	SAT	TA	VE
AS										
EM	0.796									
HO	0.508	0.651								
PRI	0.507	0.482	0.435							
PRO	0.564	0.619	0.495	0.620						
REL	0.627	0.648	0.445	0.379	0.465					
RES	0.816	0.899	0.588	0.487	0.555	0.714				
SAT	0.520	0.608	0.780	0.416	0.539	0.508	0.548			
TA	0.687	0.597	0.319	0.310	0.319	0.591	0.762	0.342		
VE	0.481	0.582	0.810	0.397	0.540	0.420	0.602	0.719	0.360	

Appendix H: Path Coefficient

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
AS -> SAT	0.084	0.084	0.073	1.143	0.127
EM -> SAT	0.072	0.070	0.071	1.011	0.156
HO -> SAT	0.445	0.445	0.071	6.273	0.000
PRI -> SAT	0.010	0.008	0.044	0.237	0.406
PRO -> SAT	0.099	0.101	0.056	1.785	0.037
REL -> SAT	0.161	0.159	0.043	3.750	0.000
RES -> SAT	-0.142	-0.142	0.074	1.913	0.028
TA -> SAT	-0.005	-0.002	0.050	0.103	0.459
VE -> SAT	0.230	0.233	0.060	3.832	0.000

Confidence Intervals

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	5.0%	95.0%
AS -> SAT	0.084	0.084	-0.035	0.210
EM -> SAT	0.072	0.070	-0.048	0.186
HO -> SAT	0.445	0.445	0.324	0.559
PRI -> SAT	0.010	0.008	-0.063	0.081
PRO -> SAT	0.099	0.101	0.010	0.194
REL -> SAT	0.161	0.159	0.089	0.230
RES -> SAT	-0.142	-0.142	-0.261	-0.016
TA -> SAT	-0.005	-0.002	-0.086	0.080
VE -> SAT	0.230	0.233	0.135	0.333

Confidence Intervals Bias Corrected

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Bias	5.0%	95.0%
AS -> SAT	0.084	0.084	0.000	-0.031	0.214
EM -> SAT	0.072	0.070	-0.002	-0.047	0.187
HO -> SAT	0.445	0.445	0.000	0.320	0.555
PRI -> SAT	0.010	0.008	-0.002	-0.058	0.087
PRO -> SAT	0.099	0.101	0.001	0.009	0.191
REL -> SAT	0.161	0.159	-0.002	0.091	0.233
RES -> SAT	-0.142	-0.142	0.000	-0.259	-0.014
TA -> SAT	-0.005	-0.002	0.003	-0.095	0.072
VE -> SAT	0.230	0.233	0.002	0.132	0.329

Appendix I: R², f², Q² (First-Order Construct)

R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
SAT	0.622	0.613

f Square

	AS	EM	HO	PRI	PRO	REL	RES	SAT	TA	VE
AS								0.006		
EM								0.004		
HO								0.191		
PRI								0.000		
PRO								0.014		
REL								0.037		
RES								0.011		
SAT										
TA								0.000		
VE								0.053		

Appendix P: Composit Reliability (Second-Order Construct)

Outer Loadings

	EXP	MK	SA	SQ
AS				0.898
EM				0.865
HO	0.942			
PRI		0.851		
PRO		0.908		
REL				0.798
RES				0.932
SA1			0.785	
SA2			0.870	
SA3			0.725	
SA4			0.765	
SA5			0.789	
SA6			0.877	
SA7			0.924	
SA8			0.853	
SA9			0.892	
TA				0.722
VE	0.930			

Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, Composite Reliability and AVE

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
EXP	0.859	0.864	0.934	0.876
MK	0.712	0.737	0.873	0.774
SA	0.944	0.948	0.953	0.695
SQ	0.900	0.921	0.926	0.716

Appendix J: Discriminant Validity (Second-Order Construct)

Fornell-Larcker
Criterion

	EXP	MK	SA	SQ
EXP	0.936			
MK	0.517	0.880		
SA	0.750	0.504	0.833	
SQ	0.579	0.573	0.566	0.846

Cross Loadings

	EXP	MK	SA	SQ
AS	0.480	0.542	0.503	0.898
EM	0.585	0.546	0.548	0.865
HO	0.942	0.484	0.733	0.556
PRI	0.414	0.851	0.389	0.473
PRO	0.490	0.908	0.489	0.531
REL	0.425	0.430	0.470	0.798
RES	0.594	0.544	0.519	0.932
SA1	0.570	0.437	0.785	0.544
SA2	0.671	0.377	0.870	0.566
SA3	0.635	0.239	0.725	0.350
SA4	0.505	0.322	0.765	0.407
SA5	0.613	0.503	0.789	0.338
SA6	0.638	0.438	0.877	0.449
SA7	0.697	0.476	0.924	0.558
SA8	0.623	0.488	0.853	0.509
SA9	0.648	0.473	0.892	0.492
TA	0.298	0.298	0.295	0.722
VE	0.930	0.483	0.667	0.528

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio
(HTMT)

Construct	EXP	MK	SA	SQ
EXP				
MK	0.655			
SA	0.829	0.606		
SQ	0.640	0.695	0.596	

Appendix K: Collinearity (Structural Model)

Inner VIF Values

	EXP	EXP*MK	EXP*SQ	MK	SAT	SQ
EXP					1.658	
EXP*MK					3.056	
EXP*SQ					3.749	
MK					1.812	
SAT						
SQ					2.443	

Path Coefficients

Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P-Values

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
EXP -> SAT	0.588	0.589	0.045	13.181	0.000
EXP*MK -> SAT	-0.009	-0.010	0.048	0.197	0.422
EXP*SQ -> SAT	-0.106	-0.106	0.053	1.987	0.023
MK -> SAT	0.082	0.079	0.060	1.349	0.089
SQ -> SAT	0.073	0.075	0.055	1.323	0.093

Confidence Intervals

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	5.0%	95.0%
EXP -> SAT	0.588	0.589	0.513	0.661
EXP*MK -> SAT	-0.009	-0.010	-0.087	0.072
EXP*SQ -> SAT	-0.106	-0.106	-0.196	-0.019
MK -> SAT	0.082	0.079	-0.018	0.181
SQ -> SAT	0.073	0.075	-0.016	0.166

Confidence Intervals Bias Corrected

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Bias	5.0%	95.0%
EXP -> SAT	0.588	0.589	0.001	0.508	0.655
EXP*MK -> SAT	-0.009	-0.010	0.000	-0.086	0.073
EXP*SQ -> SAT	-0.106	-0.106	0.000	-0.195	-0.019
MK -> SAT	0.082	0.079	-0.002	-0.010	0.190
SQ -> SAT	0.073	0.075	0.002	-0.019	0.165

Appendix L: R², f², Q² (Second-Order Construct)

R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
SA	0.612	0.606

f Square

	EXP	EXP*MK	EXP*SQ	MK	SA	SQ
EXP					0.537	
EXP*MK					0.000	
EXP*SQ					0.017	
MK					0.009	
SA						
SQ					0.006	

Q²

	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
EXP	774.000	774.000	
EXP*MK	387.000	387.000	
EXP*SQ	387.000	387.000	
MK	774.000	774.000	
SA	3483.000	2035.407	0.416
SQ	1935.000	1935.000	