

**Presentation of cultural content of Thai television dramas and satisfaction
in traveling in the footsteps of cultural television drama series
in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand**

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Received: 08/01/2024

Revised: 17/05/2024

Accepted: 19/05/2024

Abstract

This research aimed to study the presentation of cultural content of Thai television drama series for the promotion of Thai tourism and to study the satisfaction of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television drama series in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand. The research design was mixed method consisting of 2 phases. The first phase was qualitative research. The technique used was in-depth interviews with a group of people involved in the production of television drama and a group of 18 experts/academics. The second phase was quantitative research conducted with cultural tourists in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province who had watched at least 1 Thai cultural television drama. Statistics used in research were mean, S.D., and T-test results. Study results revealed that 1) cultural content was presented in 3 ways: through components of television drama, lifestyle in the storyline of

television dramas and television drama filming techniques 2) the overall tourist satisfaction of traveling in the footsteps of cultural television drama was at a high level. When considering satisfaction in each aspect, it was found that the tourists were also highly satisfied, mostly with cultural attractions and least with access to tourist attractions 3) data analysis found that, overall and in each aspect, differences of satisfaction level between that of Thai and foreign tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television drama in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya were not significant.

Keywords: Presentation of cultural content, cultural television drama, Thai cultural tourism, tourism in the footsteps of cultural television drama

1. Introduction

Thai television dramas have been an entertainment program for Thai society since 1956, with the first Thai television drama being "Suyani refuses to get married", which was on air on Channel 4, Bang Khun Phrom television station and since then, Thai television dramas have developed continuously. Consequently, Thai television dramas have played an important role as a type of product with creative content, harmoniously reflecting the culture, beliefs, values and way of life of people in Thai society (Jiarananon et al., 2019).

The use of culture hidden in Thai television dramas is in accordance with the concept of commercial exploitation of culture by combining cultural content and creativity to create something new, by looking at culture as a highlight in making a difference in the competitiveness of today's world economy, which can increase the value of products without using more resources and create a continuous creative industry, media, movie, television drama industry, and art in various related fields (Hartley, 2015; Kusumawalee, 2015). This allows Thailand to keep pace with economic competition in the digital age (Puncreobutr et al., 2022). Presentation of cultural content hidden harmoniously in Thai television dramas, together with other factors such as the quality of shooting, filming, scripts, camera angles, music, characters, filming locations, drama scenes that emphasize emotions, feelings, naturalness of the story that can be felt, as well as having good lessons for life in each drama (Ngamsilstian, 2020). Thailand is able to deliver cultural television dramas by selling copyrights and broadcasting abroad such as China (Xu and Yenjabok, 2015), Cambodia, Vietnam and Burma, generating a large amount of revenue back into the country (Jiarananon et al., 2019). In addition, subtitles have been translated into various languages in many countries (Ngamsilstian, 2020).

After various Thai cultural television dramas like *The Angel War*, *The Chutathep Gentlemen*, and *Love Destiny* have spread to foreign countries continuously, it caused an increase in the trend of learning Thai culture, such as architecture, how people dress, food, values, music, language, and character traits. Such learning in turn gives rise to important influences, such as cross-cultural comparison, and interest in experiencing Thai culture themselves (Hou, 2010; Chen, 2011; Deng, 2013; Xu and Yenjabok, 2015; Shi, 2020).

With the increased distribution of Thai cultural television dramas to foreign countries, Thailand has therefore moved fast to promote tourism, capitalizing on television dramas to attract foreign tourists to travel to the places appearing in television dramas (Ngamsilstian, 2021) branding it as 'tourism following the TV series trails'. This is to increase the number of tourists traveling to ancient sites that appear in various dramas such as Chaiwatthanaram

Temple, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province. As a result, there has been a trend of wearing Thai costumes and traveling in various tourist attractions (Ngamsilstian, 2020).

Such successes have become an interesting phenomenon, and universities which are part of society, in learning important phenomena and finding best practices from the success to create new body of knowledge for society (Watanasan and Puncreobutr, 2021) and applying the knowledge to the development of modern university curricula, to keep up with the changes in the world (Puncreobutr, 2021). It is therefore extremely necessary to study presentation of cultural content hidden in Thai television dramas that leads to tourism following the TV series trails and the trend of wearing Thai costumes traveling to various tourist attractions.

Therefore, the researchers deemed it essential to investigate the presentation of cultural content of Thai television dramas that effected the satisfaction of cultural tourism in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand. Research results would be beneficial, both directly and indirectly, to the policy level executives related to the media industry, television drama production, culture, cultural tourism, institutions of higher education that produce graduates in communication arts, performing arts, drama and film, cultural tourism and all those involved in integrating the storyline, Thai television dramas, culture and tourism, to stimulate the country's economy rapidly and build confidence among tourists in Thailand.

2. Research Objectives

2.1 To investigate the presentation of cultural content of Thai television dramas to promote Thai cultural tourism.

2.2 To analyze the satisfaction of tourists who come to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand.

3. Methodology

This research used a mixed method research design consisting of 2 phases as follows:

Phase 1 Studying the presentation of cultural content of Thai television dramas to promote Thai cultural tourism

Phase 1 was qualitative research to study the presentation of cultural content of Thai television dramas to promote cultural tourism. The researchers conducted a study with a group of people involved in the production, including producers, screenwriter and directors of television dramas, and a group of experts including television drama academics in the faculty of communication arts, and cultural tourism academics in the faculty of business administration or tourism and hospitality major.

The researchers collected data from in-depth interviews with a group of 10 production-related people and another group of 8 experts on television drama and cultural tourism, totaling 18 key informants. The snowball technique was used to obtain the samples. Data was triangulated and further analyzed on selection of cultural content of Thai television dramas for tourism promotion.

Phase 2 Studying the satisfaction of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand

Phase 2 was quantitative research.

The population was 1200 tourists who had watched Thai cultural television dramas and then came to travel and follow the footsteps of cultural television dramas in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand on Loy Krathong Day, November 2023. Using the Krejcie and Morgan tables and stratified random sampling, with type of tourist as the criterion for stratification, a sample group of 291 tourists was randomly selected from the population who had watched at least one Thai cultural television drama.

Variables used in the study

Two types of variables were used in the study as follows:

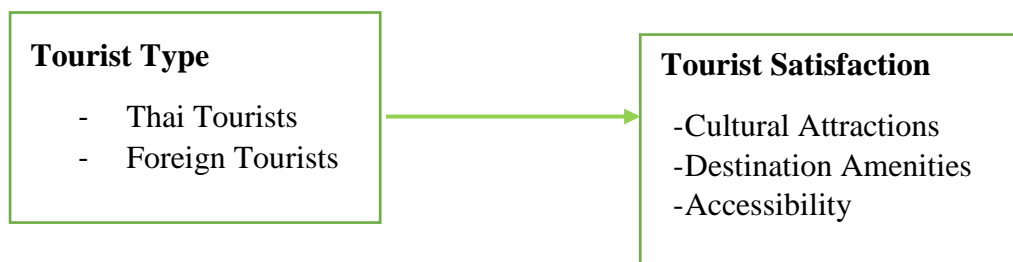
1) The independent variable was the type of tourist, divided into 2 types: Thai tourists and foreign tourists.

2) The dependent variable was the satisfaction of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand. The researcher applied the 3A's tourism component theory of Collier & Harraway (1997) and the study results of Kamolsin and Kerdjan (2020) as the framework for the study, consisting of attractions, amenities and accessibility (access to tourist attractions).

Data collection instrument was a questionnaire created by the researchers. It had a discrimination power of .315 - .826 and a reliability of .81. The statistics used in the research were mean, standard deviation (S.D.) and t-test.

The duration of study for both phases: October 2023– December 2023.

Conceptual Framework



4. Research Results

4.1 Presentation of cultural content of Thai television dramas to promote Thai cultural tourism

The study of the presentation of cultural content of Thai television dramas to promote Thai cultural tourism with groups of people involved in the production, including producers, screenwriters and directors of television dramas, and a group of experts including academics in the field of television dramas and academics in cultural tourism, revealed that the selection of cultural content of Thai television dramas was done in three ways: through components of television drama, lifestyle in the storyline of television dramas and television drama filming techniques. Details are as follows:

4.1.1 Use of television drama components

Study of the presentation of cultural content through components of television drama found at least 3 important components which were implemented: plot, characteristics of the characters, and the content of the story or main theme as follows:

1) The plot focuses on presenting Thai society and culture in the past, which was peaceful, and the country was prosperous. It presented a new style of Thai history that created interest in new perspectives for the viewers, creating satisfaction for viewing in terms of natural environment, arts, culture, way of life of people in the past and creating a feeling of fun in watching the drama through the compatibility of the characters.

2) For characteristics of each character, including protagonist, antagonist and related characters, images of arts and culture that were consistent with the storyline were presented. Furthermore, they were able to perform appropriately according to the script.

3) Content of the story or theme presented an image of arts and culture, which is a positive viewpoint. It was a historical romantic drama taking place in the ideal past image of Ayutthaya showcasing ancient houses, temples, palaces, city walls, city gates and canals, all of these reflected prosperity in the past. Moreover, there was a connection between real historical and present-day places. It was also related to various historical events such as trading with foreigners, embracing foreign culture and blending it into Thai ways, like creating Thai food and desserts, etc.

4.1.2 Lifestyle in the storyline of television dramas

Study of the presentation of cultural content through lifestyle in the storyline of television dramas show that there were at least 4 important components: costume, food, language use and customs, as follows:

1) Costume is the presentation of images of arts and culture through everything that actors or characters wear, such as clothing, inner and outer outfits with single or multiple layers, accessories both general and those that express social classes, residence that were obtained from historical evidence such as ancient paintings, paintings in both Thai and foreign archives or those derived from the imagination based on traces of evidence in literature or various chronicles as well as incorporating some new design that can actually be used today, enticing the viewers to wear them when visiting tourist attractions.

2) Food is a presentation of images of arts and culture through ancient food that was mentioned in literature, food that no one had seen before or not many people know about and food that actually exists today. Presentation was in the form of Thai food plating that was beautiful appetizing, for instance using various leaves as placemats, a dish with decorative fruit carving, use of various ancient kitchenware, and the step-by-step presentation of making each type of food in an interesting perspective. Presentation of the origin of each type of food linked to history as well as the use of food to create humor or fun, which charmed tourists to follow the dramas' footsteps, and lead to food production to serve tourists in those tourist attractions.

3) Use of language is a presentation of images of arts and culture through words used in the dramas, titles, names of various characters and dialogues that complemented the characters' expressions. There was an art of using certain ancient words from literature or chronicles and blend them with the language of modern era using imagination. It reflected

character traits, thoughts, emotions, tastes and place of residence, leading to differentiation of each character and as a result, creating more understanding of the characters amongst the viewers. There was also emphasis on the use of certain words that are easy to remember which an interesting selling point became for both local and foreign viewers.

4) Use of customs is a presentation of images of arts and culture through culture, traditions and lifestyle of people in the Ayutthaya period, through characters, Thais were represented as peace-loving people, cheerful, welcoming guests with gentle, polite manners, with a variety of interesting arts, culture, traditions and festivals from different regions; which are all worth visiting.

4.1.3 Use of filming techniques for television dramas

Results of the study of the presentation of cultural content through filming techniques for television dramas found that at least 2 important elements were implemented: spectacle and scene, as follows:

1) Spectacles were a presentation of images of arts and culture through all that the viewer perceived, giving rise to viewer imagination going back to the days in the past. It stimulated the emotions of being part of the past with the actors.

2) Scenes in the drama were a presentation of images of arts and culture through various scenes used in the filming, light and shadow, various props that created a perception of the meaning of the representation in the context of the past that is still tangible in the present.

4.2 Satisfaction of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand

This is a study of satisfaction of tourists who had watched Thai cultural television dramas and then came to travel and in the footsteps of cultural television dramas in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand, during Loy Krathong Day in November 2023, by applying Collier & Harraway's (1997) 3A's tourism component theory as a framework for studying satisfaction.

The results of the study are as follows:

4.2.1 Satisfaction level of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas

Study results of the satisfaction of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand, are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Satisfaction of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas (N=291)

Aspect	Mean	S.D.	Level of Satisfaction
Cultural Attractions	4.29	.511	High
Destination Amenities	4.26	.526	High
Accessibility	4.23	.522	High
Overall Satisfaction with Tourism	4.26	.479	High

Table 1 shows that the overall satisfaction of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas was at a high level at 4.26. When considering satisfaction in each aspect, it is found that the tourists were satisfied at a high level as well, with cultural attractions at 4.29, followed by destination amenities at 4.26 and accessibility at 4.23, respectively.

Further analysis of satisfaction level of each aspect reveals interesting results as follows.

In terms of cultural attractions, the tourists were highly satisfied with the architecture, fine arts from ancient sites, antiques, and rooms displaying historical stories linked to television dramas. They also enjoyed various activities during their stay like dressing in Thai costumes following the drama's footsteps and Thai cooking linked to television dramas.

Regarding destination amenities, the tourists were highly satisfied with comfortable basic services such as sufficient and suitable accommodations, restaurants and souvenir shops. Modern technology was used for tour guild commentaries at important tourist spots, parking space and restrooms were adequate and clean, various types of car rentals were available to serve tourists at each tourist spot. Moreover, there were travel service companies/staff recommending tourist attractions linked to the television drama as well as providing ancillary services such as foreign currency exchange booths, banks, hospitals, police stations, etc.

As regards the accessibility of tourist attractions, the tourists were highly satisfied with the transportation condition to tourist attractions. It was convenient to travel by private car and public transport, road signs were clearly displayed, and there were many exits and entrance to highways. Travel expenses were reasonable; there was no obstacle or obstruction to the journey. In addition, access to information on tourist attractions linked to television dramas was easy and fast.

4.2.2 Comparison of satisfaction levels of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas

The comparative study of the satisfaction of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand, is classified by type of tourists: Thai tourists and foreign tourists, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Comparison of satisfaction of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas, by type of tourists (N=291)

Aspect	Thai Tourists (180)		Foreign Tourists (111)		t	p
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Cultural Attractions	4.30	.526	4.29	.486	.147	.884
Destination Amenities	4.27	.526	4.24	.528	.499	.618
Accessibility	4.25	.526	4.20	.517	.843	.400
Overall Satisfaction with Tourism	4.28	.486	4.25	.469	.541	.589

* p< .05 ** p< .01

Table 2 show the results of the comparison of satisfaction of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province. Overall, Thai tourists were more satisfied than foreign tourists, but it was not statistically significant.

A further analysis of each aspect revealed that in terms of cultural attractions, Thai tourists were more satisfied than foreign tourists, but it was not statistically significant.

Regarding destination amenities, the Thai tourists were more satisfied than their counterparts but once again it was not statistically significant.

Regarding accessibility, the Thai tourists were likewise more satisfied than foreign tourists, but it was not statistically significant.

5. Summary of Results

Results of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.1 Presentation of the cultural content of Thai television dramas to promote Thai cultural tourism

Analysis of the presentation of cultural content of Thai television dramas to promote Thai cultural tourism found that the group of people involved in the production, including producers, screenwriters and directors of television dramas, and the group of experts on television dramas and cultural tourism had the same opinion that the presentation of cultural content in Thai television dramas was implemented in 3 ways: through television drama components, lifestyle in the storyline of television dramas, and filming techniques of television dramas.

1) With reference to presentation of cultural content through components of television dramas, the producers presented cultural content with at least 3 important components: plot, character and theme.

2) Regarding presentation of cultural content through lifestyle in the storyline of television dramas, the producers presented at least 4 important components: costume, food, language use, and customs and traditions.

3) For the presentation of cultural content through filming techniques of television dramas, the producers presented at least two important components: spectacle and scene.

5.2 Satisfaction of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas Analysis of the satisfaction of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand, revealed the following results.

1) Overall satisfaction of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of Thai cultural television dramas was at a high level. When considering satisfaction in each aspect, tourists were satisfied of all 3 aspects at a high level, with cultural attractions ranking first and accessibility to cultural attractions ranking last.

2) Comparison of tourist satisfaction of Thai and foreign tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of cultural television dramas in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province found that, overall, both groups were satisfied with the travel and the differences in satisfaction level between the two groups were not significant. Besides, it was found that they were satisfied with every aspect, that is artistic and cultural attractions, facilities at tourist attractions and accessibility of the cultural tourist attractions. Likewise, the differences in satisfaction level of Thai and Foreign tourists were not significant.

6. Discussion

Based on the analysis of tourist satisfaction of Thais and foreigners who came to travel following the footsteps of Thai cultural television dramas, differences between the two groups were not significant. This may be due to the fact that producers of Thai cultural television dramas were able to present cultural content hidden in Thai television dramas in a realistic way harmonizing space, architecture, costume, food, value, music, language and character traits, together with other factors such as the quality of filming, script, camera angles, music, characters, filming locations, drama scenes that emphasized the emotions, feelings and nature of the storyline that could truly be felt. These findings are in accordance with Ngamsilstian (2020), Xu and Yenjabok (2015). Therefore, when they came to experience the Thai culture following in the footsteps of the television dramas themselves, both local and foreign tourists imagined the past. At the same time, this was quite enticing: they felt like part of the past with the actors and understood the meaning of the representation of the past, like scenes that are seen today.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Recommendations for applying research results

1) From the study it was found that presentation of cultural content of Thai television dramas to promote cultural tourism was done in three ways: via components of television dramas, lifestyle in the storyline of television dramas and filming techniques. Therefore, the executives involved in the media industry and television drama production should maintain the quality of cultural content hidden in television dramas continuously. Moreover, television drama producers should be encouraged to raise the quality of their production to be ready for future competition. In addition, based on the research findings, those responsible for academic programs and curricula that produce graduates majoring in communication arts, performing arts, drama, film and cultural tourism, as well as universities, should accelerate the development of curricula to be in line with the techniques for presenting cultural content in Thai television dramas.

2) From the study, it was found that overall, satisfaction of tourists who came to travel in the footsteps of Thai cultural television dramas was at a high level. But when considering satisfaction in each aspect, it was found that the tourists were least satisfied with accessibility of cultural tourist attractions. Therefore, executives involved in culture, cultural tourism, tourism industry and administrators of various local government organizations in charge of cultural tourist attractions should work together to formulate plans and implement them urgently. This is to improve the quality of access to each cultural tourist attraction, which in turn will build confidence among tourists and stimulate the local and country's economy as a result.

7.2 Recommendations for further research

From the study, it was found that Thai and foreign tourists were satisfied with traveling following the footsteps of Thai cultural television dramas and the differences of satisfaction between the two groups were not significant. This may be because this study was done on only those tourists in one location, that is, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province. Therefore, in order to have full confidence in the study results, there should be additional investigation on tourist satisfaction following the footsteps of cultural television dramas in other provinces as well.

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