



Understanding international tourists' attitude towards street food;
a case study of Phuket, Thailand

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ชื่อวิทยานิพนธ์	ปัจจัยแรงดึงดูดและแรงผลักดันที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการเดินทางมาตลาดชุมชน ของนักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติ กรณีศึกษาในจังหวัดภูเก็ต
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บทคัดย่อ

อาหารริมบาทวิถีมีอยู่มากมายทั่วภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ และมีความสำคัญในฐานะสิ่งดึงดูดในหลักสำหรับการท่องเที่ยวของประเทศไทย เช่นเดียวกับแหล่งท่องเที่ยวอื่น จังหวัดภูเก็ตมีอาหารที่น่าเสนอให้นักท่องเที่ยวเลือกสรรตามความชอบของตนเองและสามารถนำมาใช้เพื่อพัฒนาให้เป็นสิ่งดึงดูดใจสำหรับการท่องเที่ยวได้ อย่างไรก็ตาม ก่อนการพัฒนาภูเก็ตจำเป็นต้องมีการพัฒนารูปแบบอาหารริมบาทวิถีให้สอดคล้องกับความต้องการของนักท่องเที่ยวนานาชาติ งานวิจัยนี้จึงมีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อศึกษาทัศนคติของนักท่องเที่ยวนานาชาติที่มีต่ออาหารและเพื่อวิเคราะห์ปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการกลับมาท่องเที่ยวหรือบอกต่อเกี่ยวกับอาหารริมบาทวิถีในจังหวัดภูเก็ต งานวิจัยนี้ได้รวบรวมความคิดเห็นจากนักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติจำนวน 294 คน ในช่วงฤดูกาลท่องเที่ยว จากการวิเคราะห์ถดถอยพหุคูณ พบว่า ในจำนวนตัวแปรสำคัญ 6 ด้าน คือ สุขอนามัย ความชื่นชอบ คุณภาพอาหาร คุณภาพการบริการ ความพึงพอใจและความคุ้มค่า ตัวแปรความชอบเป็นตัวชี้วัดสำคัญที่สุดที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการพฤติกรรมนักท่องเที่ยวที่มีต่อการอาหารริมบาทวิถีในจังหวัดภูเก็ต

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ABSTRACT

Street food is present in all South East Asia, and it represents a major tourist attraction in Thailand. Phuket, like other destinations, offers an array of different specialties to choose from. This could be exploited as a visitor attraction, but certain factors need to be improved for the street food offer to be more agreeable to international tourists visiting the island. The focus of this research was to describe the general attitude international tourists have towards street food in Phuket, as well as to identify what factors are most important in predicting their behavioral intentions. This study surveyed 294 international tourists visiting Phuket during the peak season, and identified through a multiple regression model that amongst hygiene, affection, food quality, service quality, satisfaction and value; affection is the most important predictor of tourist's behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket.

Key Words: Attitude, Behavioral Intentions, Phuket, Street Food, Thailand, Tourism

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Luis Carlos Torres Chavarria

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Tourism is one of the most important industries in Thailand. According to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand (2015), the country welcomed over 24.80 million tourists in 2014, and gained more than 1.20 trillion THB in direct revenue, which is equivalent to around 11% of Thailand's total gross domestic product. Thai government recognizes the importance of this industry and it has implemented a variety of marketing campaigns to promote the image of Thailand as a tourist destination. These campaigns have helped position the country as one of the 10 most visited countries in the world (World Tourism Organization, 2014).

Some of these campaigns focus on Thai food as a statement of strong cultural identity. The uniqueness of the local culinary offer helps attracts visitors in search of new experiences. Campaigns such as "Amazing Thai food" or the "Thai street food festival in 2014" showcase authentic local delicacies that help build up a better reputation of the food served on the streets all over the kingdom (TAT, 2015). Food is inevitably linked to tourism; it constitutes a basic need for everyone, and therefore, tourists are forced to participate in the local food offer while travelling (Okumus *et al.*, 2005; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009).

Moreover, food offers the tourists an insight of the local culture and it can sometimes be described as the most memorable experience of the journey (Jeou-Shyan & Chen-Tsang, 2010). Some studies have concluded that food offer and availability are some of the most important factors for tourists to decide whether they want to visit or revisit a specific destination (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Quan & Wang, 2004; Mak *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, if the food experience is pleasant, it could work as an attraction that help improve the destination's image, and as a consequence, bringing more visitors interested in Thai street food. On the other hand, if the experience is bad, it could affect not only the vendor that served the meal, but also the overall image of a destination (Hohgi, Nagai & Iriyama, 2014).

Some studies have shown that the strongest motivators for international tourists to visit Thailand include Thai food and traditional Thai markets. Visitors want to experience the food in the way locals would eat it. Street food and food hawkers are perceived as a more authentic option, because the food they prepare is not modified in any way to please foreigner's palates, but rather cooked in a traditional way to please the locals. Nevertheless, not all tourists would buy street food, because some consider it to be risky due to low standards of food sanitation or simply unappealing (Howard, 2008; Henderson, Yun, Poon *et al.*, 2012; Lertputtarak, 2013; Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2014; Sirigunna 2015).

In Thailand the street food plays a very important role; it offers the opportunity for individuals that otherwise would not have mean of sustaining themselves, a way to open their own business and provide an income for their families. There are food stalls and hawkers in any major urban development and they are the most convenient food offer for daily food consumption, because they are cheap, delicious and spread out through all of Thailand. For this reason, the Thai government initiated a program to inform the owners of street food establishments about basic rules of food sanitation and other safety measures when cooking in the street. This initiative is called the "clean food good taste project", which has the goal of protecting the consumers, and promoting food tourism in Thailand (Kongchuntuk, 2012).

Phuket is one of the most important tourist destinations in Thailand, and visitors are attracted to the paradise island from all over the world. Almost a third of all Thailand's visitors arrive to the country through Phuket. According to TAT in 2013, Phuket received 8,395,921 international tourists that generated a revenue of more than 233 billion baht. These statistics are predicted to increase in the following years.

To cope with the increment of visitors, the Thai government has started a major expansion project of the international airport of Phuket, which include the construction of a second terminal, expansion of the parking space, and renovation of the existent infrastructure. When the project is concluded in 2016, the total arrival capacity will be more than 12 million visitors a year, and according to

the latest calculations, it will already be operating at its full capacity by the time the constructions is done (TAT, 2015; AOT, 2015).

Phuket has close to 1,300 restaurants, including stand-alone restaurants and in-hotel operation restaurants. Nevertheless, street food and the food served in markets and other fairs constitute a very important part of the culinary culture of the island, because most of the food served in restaurants tend to be several times more expensive than eating local food in a street hawker (Ministry of Health in Phuket, 2015).

Although there are several studies that explore the experience of tourists with Thai food from several points of view (Pullphothong & Sopha, 2012; Choovanichchannon, 2015; Yiamjanya & Wonglee, 2014; Lertputtarak, 2013; Sirigunna, 2015; Hohgi *et al.*, 2014), little attention has been paid to understanding the experience of international tourists when eating street food in Thailand. As such, this study attempted to explore the characteristics and behavior of international travelers who are interested in experiencing street food in Phuket, paying attention to their attitude towards the food, and its effect in their behavioral intentions.

1.2 Research Aim and Objectives

1.2.1 Research Aim

The aim of this research was to gain an understanding into international tourists' attitude towards street food in Phuket and how it affects their behavioral intentions.

1.2.2 Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this research were as follows:

- 1) To explore the characteristics and traveling behavior of international tourists who are interested in street food in Phuket.
- 2) To investigate the attitude of international tourists towards street food of Phuket.
- 3) To assess how tourists' attitude towards street food in Phuket affects their behavioral intentions.
- 4) To assess how tourists perceived behavioral control affects their behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket.

5) To assess how subjective norm affects tourists' behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket.

1.3 Research Questions

Considering the objectives enlisted above, the research questions of this study were as follows:

1) What are the characteristics and traveling behavior of international tourists who are interested in street food in Phuket?

2) What is international tourist's attitude towards street food of Phuket?

3) What is the impact of international tourist's attitude towards street food in Phuket on their behavioral intentions?

4) How does tourists' perceived behavioral control affects their behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket?

5) What is the impact of subjective norm in tourists' behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket?

1.4 Significance of this Study

Understanding the factors that affect international tourist's attitude towards street food in Phuket would help the tourism authorities to implement new marketing campaigns to improve the image of food in the island, and the overall image of Thai food. Furthermore, they could update the existent "clean food good taste" project or create new projects to address the specific factors affecting tourists' attitude, achieving higher level of competitiveness as a destination.

Also, the findings of this research could be used as a reference for future research that further explain the applications of the theory of planned behavior in a context involving food, tourism and consumer behavior. Lastly, all the information collected throughout this research could be used as a discussion and learning material in hospitality and tourism academic institutions.

1.5 Scope of the Study

1.5.1 Scope of research Area

This research identified the characteristics of international tourists that are interested in experiencing street food while travelling to Phuket, as well as their attitudes towards street food and the factors affecting their experience.

1.5.2 Scope of Time

The research was conducted at the beginning of the high season in Phuket, from October to December 2015, with the objective of obtaining a bigger variety of nationalities of respondents.

1.5.3 Scope of Demography

International tourists who have eaten or have the intention to eat with street food vendors or hawkers during their stay in Phuket were included in this research.

1.5.4 Scope of Geography

The questionnaire was distributed in several touristic attractions around Phuket to ensure sample representativeness.

1.6 Definition of Operational Terms

Food Tourism: Activities of tourists and visitors who plan their trips partially or totally in order to taste the cuisine of the place or to carry out activities related to gastronomy (Kururatchaikul, 2014)

Street Food: Street foods are ready-to-eating food and beverages prepared and sold by vendors or hawkers at the side of the road and other similar places, from a temporary and often mobile food stall, cart or establishment (Privitera & Nesci, 2014; Henderson *et al.*, 2012).

Travel Behavior: Is a set of actions, patterns and habits that characterizes each different person's way of traveling, and an important factor in determining future behavior (Hosany & Prayang, 2013)

Attitude: Is a predisposition of an individual in a motivational, emotional, cognitive and perceptual level to react in a predictable manner towards specific stimuli (Evans *et al.*, 2006), In the case of food, it is related to the factors that compose the eating experience; such as: service quality, food quality, hygiene of

the establishment and surroundings, perceived value, satisfaction, and preexisting affection towards that specific stimuli (Mak *et al.*, 2012; Kim *et al.*, 2011; Chen & Tsai, 2006; Bhuyan, 2011).

Subjective norm: Refers to a persons' perception of weather his or her close social circle would accept or value certain behaviors, and it sometimes acts as a moderator of behavior (Kim *et al.*, 2011; Chen & Tsai, 2006).

Perceived Behavioral Control: Is the perception a consumer has about the degree in which he or she can affect or control a future behavior (Evans *et al.*, 2006; Kim *et al.*, 2013).

Behavioral Intention: Consumer perception of the likeliness to revisit or recommend a destination or product (Chen & Tsai, 2006).

1.7 Hypotheses and Proposed Model

The model presented in Figure 1 was develop for this research based on literature review of different models that explain behavioral intention as a consequence of attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and past experiences (Namkung & Jang, 2007; Kim, Kim, & Goh, 2010; Bhuyan, 2010; Heung & Gu, 2012; Ryu, Lee, & Kim, 2012; Lee, 2009; Bagozzi, Wong, Abe, & Bergami, 2000; Ajzen, 1991).

H_{group1} : There is a relationship between the sociodemographic characteristics of international tourists and their attitude towards street food of Phuket.

H_{1-a0} : There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female international tourists towards street food of Phuket.

H_{1-a} : There is a significant difference in the attitude of male and female international tourists towards street food of Phuket.

H_{1-b0} : There is no significant difference in the attitude of different age groups of international tourists towards street food of Phuket.

H_{1-b} : There is a significant difference in the attitude of different age groups of international tourists towards street food of Phuket.

H_{1-c0} : There is no significant difference in the attitude of international tourists from different parts of the world towards street food of Phuket.

H_{1-c}: There is a significant difference in the attitude of international tourists from different parts of the world towards street food of Phuket.

H_{group2}: There is a relationship between the travel behavior of international tourists and their attitude towards street food in Phuket

H_{2-a0}: There is no a significant difference in the attitude of international tourists that had visit Phuket in the past and those that had not towards street food of Phuket.

H_{2-a}: There is a significant difference in the attitude of international tourists that had visit Phuket in the past and those that had not towards street food of Phuket.

H_{2-b0}: There is no significant difference in the attitude of international tourists that travel often and those that seldom travel towards street food of Phuket.

H_{2-b}: There is a significant difference in the attitude of international tourists that travel often and those that seldom travel towards street food of Phuket.

H_{2-c0}: There is no significant difference in the attitude of international tourists that had previous experience with street food and those that did not have towards street food of Phuket.

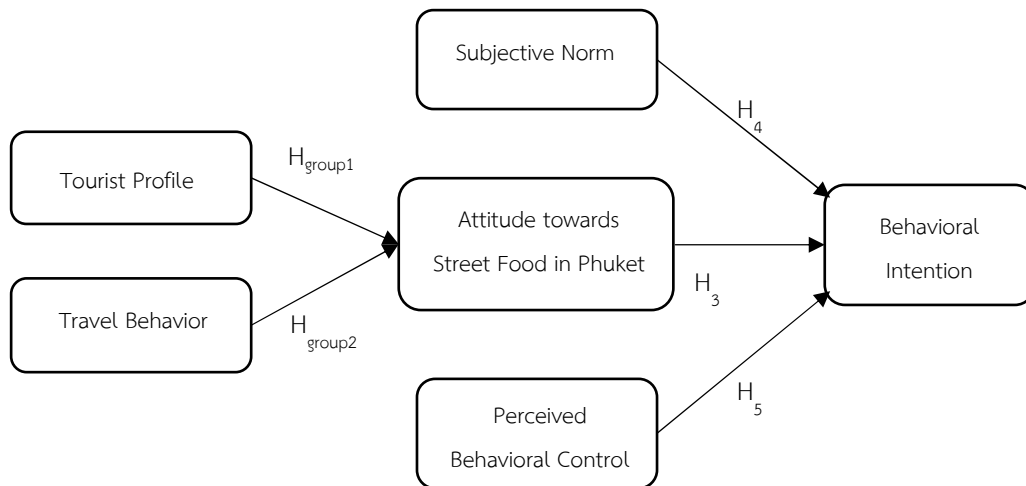
H_{2-c}: There is a significant difference in the attitude of international tourists that had previous experience with street food and those that did not have towards street food of Phuket.

H₃: There is a relationship between the attitude towards street food in Phuket international tourists have and their behavioral intentions.

H₄: There is a positive relationship between subjective norm and behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket.

H₅: There is a positive relationship between perceived behavioral control and behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket.

Figure1 Conceptual framework of this research adapted from the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991).



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Role of Food in Tourism

Food is one of the most basic human needs. It is necessary for everyone to consume food to get the nutrients and energy required for all biological functions to sustain life. Also, food has a role in the social identity of every individual, thus everyone selects their food influenced by factors such as culture or religion, socio-demographic factors, personal motivation, previous food experience, food related personality traits and other psychological factors (Cruwys, Bevelander, & Hermnas, 2014; Mak et al., 2012 and 2013).

It is due to this factors that every individual has different tastes and perceives food in a different way, forming an idea of a preferred “normal diet”, which is consumed in a regular manner when the individual is located in its normal environment. However, when tourists go abroad they are outside of their normal routine and are forced to participate in the local culinary offer (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Mak et al., 2012).

At this moment, depending on the characteristics and motivations of each tourist, food can adopt different roles; in some cases, food can become an extension of the daily routine. This happens when tourists are very attached to their normal diet, and prefer to restrain their food consumption to what they perceive to be free of risk. This normally means consuming food that resembles what they would normally eat at home (Mkono *et al*, 2012). Tourists who are interested in trying Thai cuisine that is milder or westernized are still part of this category, because even they are searching for a novel experience, in their case, variety seeking happens as an isolated or sporadic event and the food they consume still retains certain familiarity, which makes them feel much more comfortable (Quan & Wang, 2003).

In other cases, food has a supporting role in tourism since eating is obligatory for everyone. Even tourists who do not consider food as the most important aspect of their journey can still be influenced by a positive food experience, which improve the perceptions of other attractions (Mak et al., 2013).

Such cases happen when tourist visits a location motivated for reasons different from food like in the case of Zimbabwe, where one of the major motivators to visit Victoria Falls include the biodiversity of the region and the fauna that surrounds the area. Tourists go there to experience the safaris and the African culture, regularly they are not very familiar with the local cuisine prior to arrival, yet, when they get the chance to experience the food with the locals, food becomes a connection with the host culture, enhancing the cultural experience and the charm of the destination (Mkono et al., 2013).

Likewise, there are cases when tourists can perceive food as the peak experience of their journey. This is particularly common for tourists who have previous knowledge and motivation towards the food in their selected destinations; however, it can also happen to tourists who were not familiar with the food of their destination and took part in an exceptionally satisfactory food experience (Ab Karim & Geng- Qing Chi, 2010; Quan & Wang, 2004).

Thailand enjoys of good reputation for its unique cuisine. This uniqueness however implies that while visiting Thailand, international tourists might find it difficult to follow their normal diet. As it has been mentioned in this chapter, for some tourists this situation could represent an opportunity to get to know new kinds of food, and make contact with the local culture, but for less adventurous tourists, this situation could be uncomfortable and bring a sense of uncertainty about the food that is consumed during their visits, possibly affecting their travel experience, perception of a destination, and even their revisiting intentions (Lee, 2014; Ab Karim & Geng-Qing Chi, 2010).

2.1.1 Food as a Tourist Attraction

The importance of food as a tourists' attraction has been studied with great extent, some of the researches have concluded that for countries that enjoy the benefits of having a famous cuisine such as Italy, France or Thailand, food constitutes one of the most important pull motivational factors in the tourist travel decision making (Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2014; Horng & Tsai, 2009; Lee, 2014). For countries like these, food image is stronger than other touristic attractions, participating of the local culinary offer is often regarded as an increase of cultural

knowledge by the visitors. This is the case of Thailand's north east boarder where food is known to be very exotic and peculiar, some of the dishes they offer include live jumping shrimp salad or tadpoles seasoned with fermented fish. The impact and peculiarity of the ingredients in these dishes can create an unforgettable experience (Hohgi et al., 2014; Tan et al., 2015).

For other destinations, it is not just the peculiarity and uniqueness of the food ingredients that attracts the tourists, but also the perceived food quality offered in the region. Such is the case of Hong Kong where a large amount of restaurants offer fresh and delicious local and international food from all around the world, and even though Hong Kong is perceived largely as a shopping destination and not as a culinary destination, the quality of their culinary offer serves as a supporting attraction for people looking for food variety and high quality standards (Okumus, Okumus & Mckercher, 2005).

Culinary tourism is increasingly gaining importance in destination marketing. Governments and tourism authorities from all over the world are using local food to improve the uniqueness of their destinations and strengthen their cultural identity (Jalis et al., 2014; Lee, 2014; Horng & Tsai, 2010). These sort of strategies create a sense of place in the destination and help establish images of specific specialties that can represent the territory or region they come from. By doing this, marketers help tourists to feel more motivated to travel to that destination with the main purpose of tasting those dishes (Karim & Geng- Qing Chi, 2010).

This kind of strategy has proven to be very useful for Thailand, since Thai food is one of the most famous cuisines in the world, constitutes one of the most important motivators for tourists to visit this country (Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2014). The tourism authority of Thailand (TAT) recognizes the importance of Thai food as a tool in creating a strong cultural identity which could attract more international travelers. For this reason, they have created some tourist campaigns to improve and promote the image of local food; these campaigns include "Thai dish make me hungry" in which visitors have to post the name of the best dish they have tried in Thailand and tag TAT for the opportunity of winning a free dinner at a

traditional restaurant in Bangkok, or “Street Food Festival in 2014” where visitors were able to sample street food from all the regions of Thailand (TAT 2015).

Other campaigns are important because they help educate visitors about the cultural and historical value of food with the purpose of reducing the barrier of unfamiliarity towards experiencing local food (Jalis et al., 2014; Seo et al., 2013). The Thai government has also created a campaign with this purpose. “Discover Thainess” presents the historical facts behind Thai food, it points out where the traditions come from, and what is the role of food in Thai society. It also provides information about where to find Thai cooking schools around the country and how to contact some of them (TAT, 2013, 2015).

2.1.2 Food as a Cultural Experience

Food is related to the culture of the country; state or region it comes from. It reflects the produce available in that territory and the technics passed down by older generations of people to create their own local cuisine (Jalis et al., 2014). In this sense, the food provides not only a way to satisfy a basic need, but also gives the tourists a historical context of the destination’s identity, becoming one of many forms of cultural tourism (Horng and Tsai, 2009).

Studies suggest that some of the major motivations for people to travel include “acquiring new knowledge”, “getting experience in a foreign country” or “learning about a different culture”. Local cuisine represents cultural knowledge that adds value to the image of the destination. Since culinary tradition is considered an intangible heritage passed from one generation to another, it is impossible to participate in a truly authentic food experience without visiting the specific region and interacting with the locals that gave origin to that food (Okumus et al., 2005; Pullphothong & Sopha, 2013; Kim et al., 2009).

Tourists that want to experience the traditions of the place they are visiting, seek for authentic culinary specialties. Doing this allow them to have an insight of the local’s way of life. It creates an emotional connection with their hosts and a very memorable experience, contributing to the overall tourist satisfaction (Mynttinen et al., 2015; Mason & Paggiaro, 2012), specially to those tourists who perceive food as the peak experience of the journey. Since they are seeking for

novelty, authenticity and quality on their food, a positive experience could easily become the highlight of their trip (Mkono et al, 2013; Mak et all 2013; Quan & Wang 2003).

Unfortunately, a natural consequence of high volume tourism is the adaptation of local cuisine to the palates of tourists. This phenomenon occurs when food establishments compete to appeal a greater number of tourists, and authenticity is lost to provide the tourists with a more familiar taste. Although this might be a good strategy to attract tourists searching for their normal diet, it could result in a bad experience for those searching for authentic local food (Molz, 2004; Mynttinen et al, 2015; Cohen &Avieli, 2004).

2.1.3 Food Perception at a Destination

Cohen and Avieli (2004) stated in their research that even though food can be an important touristic attraction, for a great number of tourists it is also one of the major impediments to visit certain destinations. This is explained by the duality of the perceptions of unfamiliar food. Since food in the destination is different form the one consumed at home, it could result in a very interesting experience; conversely, it is also this strangeness that makes it a risk to the consumers' health.

The perceived risk could be grater if the visitors are coming from a more developed country since the standards of sanitation followed in countries like America or Canada surpass by far the ones followed by developing countries (Leikas et al., 2007; Al-Shawaf et al., 2014). Health problems associated with food consumption and/or unpleasant food experiences are one of the most common threats tourist identify when eating food at their chosen destination. This observation is probably due to the perception that time spent in vacation is exceptional, and health related problems would be a barrier to enjoy of recreational or other planned activities (Hobden & Pliner, 1995).

Intentional or unintentional food adulteration, contamination, and adverse health effects to tourists after consuming food in Thailand have been of great concern for the Thai government. In the past year, there has been some cases of inbound tourists suffering from food poisoning. It is not surprising that most of the

cases happen from food consumed at street vendors, if this pattern continues to occur, it could affect the image of Thai street food (Sirigunna, 2015). Similarly, in another study conducted in Bangkok's famous destination, Khao San Road, tourists perceived Thai food sold in restaurants and other locations generally to be safe, nevertheless it was described that street food was significantly riskier (Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2013), contrary to what had been stipulated in previously mentioned studies. Howard (2009) found that food poisoning was not one of the main hazards reported by tourists traveling to Thailand.

The discrepancy between the findings of the previously mentioned studies could be explained by the fact that the information available for international tourists for consultation about the risks of consuming local food is often overstated. This is a common measure to ensure that visitors will pay due consideration when choosing where to eat, yet since there is scarce information from other sources, they will most likely make food consumption decisions based on the misconception that food is in fact riskier than what it is (Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2013). This could be an important consideration for Thai government to advocate for the image of Thai street food since the misperceptions of the consumers could cause significant losses to all stakeholders of Thailand's food industry (Sirigunna, 2015).

2.2 Consumer Behavior in Tourism

Consumer behavior refers to the activities people carry out when obtaining, consuming and disposing of goods and services (Blackwell et al., 2006). In the tourism context, it includes pre-visit decisions, on destination experience, assessment of the consumed goods, and intentions and future behaviors (Chen & Tsai, 2007). The focus of consumer behavior studies is to identify the needs and motivations of the customer and create products or services that have the corresponding benefits and characteristics to match with those needs (Evans et al., 2006).

Generally, consumers follow a structured process that resembles a funnel in which they assess their purchasing options and then narrow them down to few alternatives that comply with their needs. The destination selection, and the

services and products bought at the destinations are usually a sequential decision that occurs just after all other options have been discarded (Okumus et al., 2007). This means that destination image and the perceptions of tourists towards services offered in a destination can affect their future consumer behavior (Chen & Tsai, 2007).

Consumers attitude towards a product, service or destination in conjunction with socially imposed norms have a great impact on how humans behave (Bhuyan, 2010; Sheats *et al.* 2013). In the next section, the effect of attitude in future behavior was analyzed more deeply.

2.2.1 Motivations

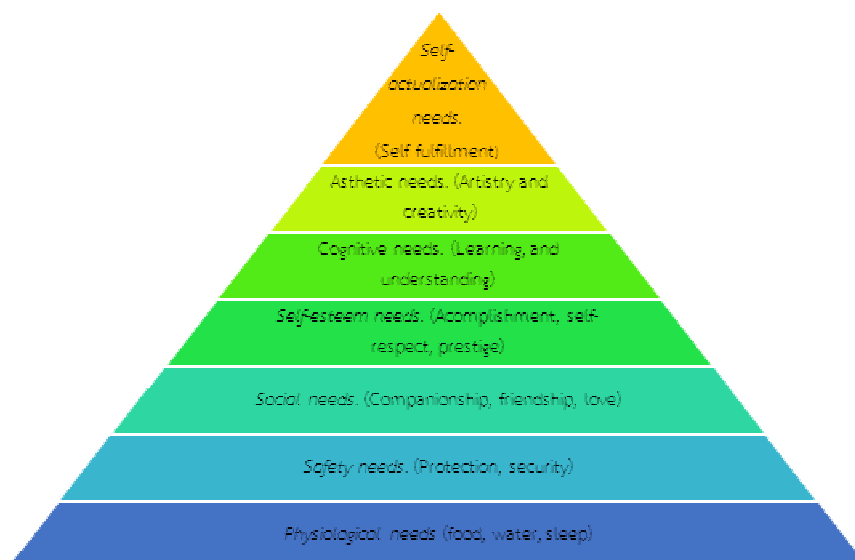
Consumer motivations are related to the initiative of every individual to participate in actions that help fulfill different types of needs (positive motivation) or avoiding unwanted situations (negative motivation). Motivation has different sources of drive, which can vary from one individual to another, but as a general rule studies conclude, three main categories exist: biogenic, psychogenic and social drives (Evans et al., 2006).

Motivation has been the subject to many studies in psychology, marketing and other disciplines, some of the most relevant in the context of the present research include Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the psychoanalytic theory or Freudian theory of motivation (Evans et al., 2006; Blackwell et al., 2006).

According to Lee (2009) tourist's needs are usually associated with the higher levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this could be because tourism is not a basic need, and participating in indulging activities while travelling have a predominating social and psychogenic drive (see figure 2 Maslow's hierarchy of needs).

Other studies have concluded that the motivation for food and beverages consumption on a touristic destination include four categories: physical, cultural, interpersonal and prestige (Kim et al., 2011). In this case, the motivational drive corresponds to both high and lower level of needs, especially for tourists that see eating at a destination as a basic need rather than an indulging experience.

Figure 2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Blackwell et al., 2006; Evans et al., 2006)



In a different study, the authors suggested that motivation to eat food at a destination might include cultural, psychological, social and sensory acceptance of the food attributes, as well as the environmental characteristic of the destination (Mak et al., 2012). This might be a concept difficult to appreciate by comparing it with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, nevertheless if analyzed using the Freudian theory of motivation it might become clearer.

The Freudian theory of motivation distinguishes three arrangements of cognizance; the first and most basic construct is called the "Id", this part of the mind is an unconscious source of compulsion, it represents an internal motivator and includes the most basic human instincts and the search of immediate pleasure. The second part of the mind is called the "superego", which represents morality and the values of people important to us. It functions as an external motivator and involves a conscious control of our behaviors with the purpose of fitting with the social norms, and it can sometimes be in conflict with the Id. The third part of the mind is called the "ego", which is a subconscious element that serves as a mediator, looking to fulfill the impulses of the Id while complying with the norms perceived by the "superego" (Evans et al., 2006).

Having in consideration the Freudian theory of motivation, it is possible to explain how some consumers report to be aware about the healthy properties of organic food, and nevertheless keep consuming food that is not organic

but fits more with what their social environment dictates (Liu et al., 2013), or why consumers that normally would not eat in fast food restaurants decide to eat this kind of food when going out with their friends (Bagozzi et al., 2000). In these cases, the attitude of consumers is modeled to fit what the “superego” perceives as the subjective norm, the result is the suppression of their own cravings in order to follow what society dictates as acceptable.

2.2.2 Attitude

Attitude is formed based on previous experiences and/or information gathered in a learning process by the consumers; it refers to a predisposition of liking or disliking a specific stimulus, which includes actions, ideas and physical or social objects. Attitude is constituted by three components: beliefs (cognitive) which involve the knowledge an individual has about the object of attitude. Beliefs might be disparate from reality, but they are nevertheless important because they represent the perception of the consumer about that object. Emotions (affective), which can be negative or positive, consist of the feelings of individuals towards a stimuli and are based on their beliefs; and the last component is Intentions (conative) which refers to how individuals are likely to respond towards an object based on their emotions and beliefs (Lee, 2009; Evans et al., 2006; Blackwell et al., 2006).

Attitude can fluctuate across diverse scales, it can be a negative or a positive value, but it also can vary in intensity, for example a consumer can have a positive attitude towards Starbucks coffee and also have a positive attitude about McDonalds coffee, but the difference in the intensity of these attitudes might be the determinant as to which of the brands the individual is more likely to patronize (Blackwell et al., 2006). This is consistent with the idea expressed by Lee (2009) where he affirms that “*attitudes predispose a person to act or perform in a certain manner*”.

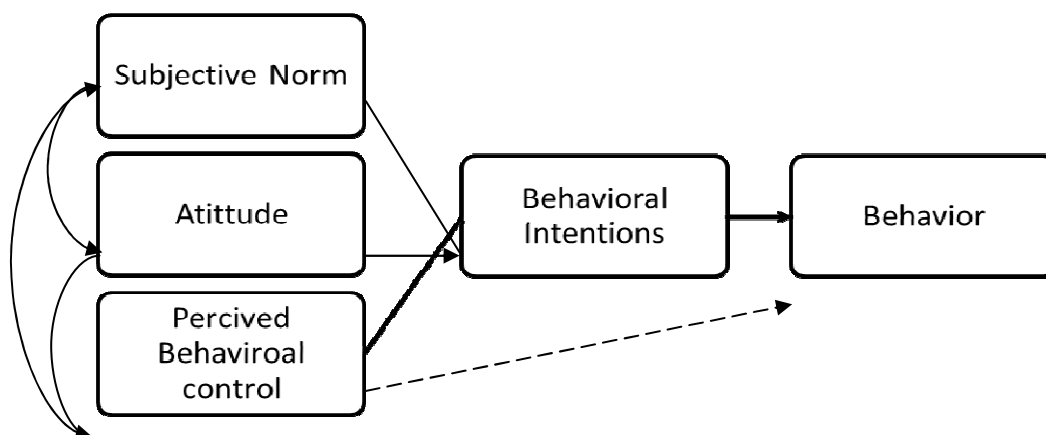
Although the tri-component approach of attitude has clear and valuable uses, there has been criticism as to whether the conative component (intentions) is actually an element of consumer’s attitudes or not. Evans *et al.* (2006) suggested that beliefs and emotions could be the basic components of attitude

while intentions might be a result of consumers' attitude towards an object. Attitude is not a fixed value, the cognitive and affective image of food in the destination is affected by previous experiences, and a bad experience can change a positive attitude into negative, at the same time if tourists have eaten at their destination before, or if they are familiar with the local food from previous consumption in an ethnic restaurant in their country of origin, their attitude and willingness to try the food at the destination could be significantly better (Seo et al., 2013).

To measure attitude towards a product or a service is necessary to understand what consumers consider to be the appropriate attributes for the specific object. Performing an evaluation of consumers' beliefs about how well they think a product or service is complying with the desired attributes, can be achieved better by using semantic differential or Likert scales questions about each one of the attributes (Blackwell et al., 2006; Evans et al., 2006).

Studies suggest that consumer's attitude is only one of the components in predicting consumers' future behavior. Most of these studies follow a research structure using a model called the theory of reasoned action and its more current versions the theory of planned behavior (see figure 3 Theory of planned behavior) and the reasoned action approach. In these constructs it is explained how behavioral intentions are determined by a person's attitude, perceived behavioral control and subjective norm towards an act or an object (Ajzen, 1991; Kim et al., 2013; Sheats et al., 2013; Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015). The current research adopted a similar approach but included variables that take into consideration the profile and travel behavior of the tourists, focusing mainly in the attitude of the visitors towards street food in Phuket.

Figure 3 Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991)



2.2.3 Subjective Norm

Subjective norm is a psychological concept that is based in the individual perception of whether his/her close social circle would accept or value certain behaviors. In other words, it is the perception of consumers about how people important to them might react and advise if they were to consume certain products or services, measured against the motivation to comply with these social pressures (Kim et al., 2013; Bagozzi et al., 2000; Sheats et al., 2013).

Subjective norm does not affect everyone's behavior with the same level of intensity, it has been reported to have a greater impact on the behavioral intention of individuals with cultural backgrounds from countries that value collectivism than for those that come from countries that value individualism (Bagozzi et al., 2000). Moreover, when individuals are outside of their normal social environment, the effects of subjective norm diminish. For example, tourists travelling with a cultural restricted diet like Halal or Kosher could relax their diet specifications if the destination offers few options to maintain them, or simply because the social pressure dissipates outside of their own country (Sheats et al., 2013; Khalek, 2012; Bagozzi et al., 2000). Since the current study evaluates consumer behavioral intentions outside their normal environment it focused on attitude as the major predictor of intentions.

2.2.4 Perceived Behavioral Control

Another important variable in the theory of planned behavior is the perceived behavioral control. This can be defined as the degree in which a consumer can affect or control a future behavior, since measuring the actual resources and opportunities an individual has to perform an expected behavior is difficult, this variable actually measures the belief of control the consumer has (Evans et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2013).

Control factors can be categorized into two main groups: internal which include determination, capabilities, compulsion, etcetera; and external which include opportunities, and time or dependence in other people. For example, people with an unhealthy diet trying to lose weight report to have a good attitude towards losing weight. Their families and friends support that behavior, but the lack of self-discipline and giving up to inner cravings makes the intentions differ from the actual future behavior. In a similar way, an individual could report having a negative attitude towards firing an employee. Friends and colleagues would not approve this behavior and thus, external pressures and other circumstances might coerce his/her final behavior (Kim et al., 2013; Bhuyan, 2010; Bagozzi et al., 2000; Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015). The present study did not investigate the specific control factors about tourists' behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket, but rather focused only on whether consumers perceive to have control to revisit Phuket and eat street food at the island or not.

2.2.5 Behavioral Intentions

Intentions are determined by the attitude of a consumer towards a specific behavior, certain post-consumption behaviors are of particular interests to companies and tourist destinations, because they determine the likelihood of future consumption and the increment of demand towards their products. These behaviors include saying positive things about the product, company or destination to others, recommending the service to friends and family, remaining loyal/revisiting intentions and spreading good word of mouth and word of mouse (Blackwell et al., 2006; Namkung & Jang, 2007).

Services and activities tourists involve themselves in while visiting a destination are perceived as sub products of that destination, therefore the experience the consumer has with these services can affect the image of the destination and its tourists' intentions towards it (Lee, 2015). Although intentions to consume a product or use a service will not always be fulfilled, studies have shown that intentions are the most important predictors of actual future behaviors (Bhuyan, 2010; Blackwell et al., 2006).

Positive experiences during the visit lead to tourists' customer satisfaction, a better attitude and the inclination to revisit a particular destination or to recommend it and spreading a positive word of mouth (Mosavi & Gheaedi, 2012; Jariyachamsit, 2015; Choovanichchannon, 2015). Some studies have suggested that behavioral intentions are predicted better when perceived value, quality of the product, and quality of service are taken into account (Parasuraman & Zeithaml, 1994; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Namkung & Jang, 2007; Su et al., 2016), this study will consider all these variables to understand the attitude of tourists towards street food while visiting Phuket in a cohesive manner.

By understanding how a destination is perceived by its visitors, managers and government authorities can identify its strengths and weaknesses and make predictions about the future behavior of tourists. This is critical for the correct management and future development of a touristic attraction (Lee, 2009). In general, the literature suggests that attitude is an important antecedent of consumer behavioral intentions, however few studies have explored if there is a relationship between the attitude towards a specific kind of food and tourists revisiting intentions towards the destination offering that food.

2.3 Street Food in Thailand

Street food provides around 40% of the food offer in Thailand. There are more than 20,000 street vendors in Bangkok alone and their consumers include locals and visitors alike (thefoodpeople.com, 2015). Eating out is rather common in Thailand, this might be related to the cultural role that food has in Thai society. Thais do not only eat out in special occasions, but also as a way of satisfying their nutritional needs in a regular basis. Some authors have described eating street food

in Thailand as the best culinary experience in the country (Conway, 2015). In a sense, this affirmation might be very close to reality, after all practice makes perfection, and street food vendors which only handle small menus get to practice the same dishes several times in a day of work.

Street food started blooming in Thailand in the late 1960s, perhaps as a result of big groups of people moving from their homes and farms to look for an opportunity in big cities like Bangkok (Thompson, 2009), it most likely started as means for a quick snack for people going to work or as a fast alternative for parents who needed to buy dinner on their way back home, at the beginning the options probably included Chinese-influenced specialties and noodles, as the majority of street vendors were Chinese (Conway, 2015). In the present, Thai street food is rather diverse, it includes 4 main establishment categories, the first one is the mobile units with none or just a few tables around them and specialized mainly in take away orders. The second group includes made to order food shops or aharn tham sung, this kind of establishments operate in a fixed location and will often have a medium sized menu with a couple of specialties and customizable orders. The third group includes the shop house vendors; this kind of establishments is usually the most formal type of street food. It is not rare to find vendors that now own a shop house that started with a mobile unit and later decided to fix their location, nevertheless most of their cooking is done outside of the shop house from a makeshift kitchen in front of the guests. This shops have the most extended menus and can customize most of their dishes to your taste. The last group is the rice and curry shops or khao raad gaeng in this kind of shops the vendor has a selection of already made curries, stews and stir-fried dishes displayed at the front of the house, the menu varies from day to day, but the vendors regularly have one or two dishes they are famous for and will prepare this dishes almost every day. Guests can select one or several kinds of preparations to be served on top of steamed rice and the prices vary according to the number of selected dishes (Nualkhair, 2014; Thompson, 2009; Conway, 2015).

The street food industry has become one of the most important in Thailand. In 2012, it reported earnings near to 250 billion baht. There are approximately 90,000 street food outlets across the country, these establishments

benefit self-employed or commissioned vendors and their families that otherwise would not have a stable source of income (Euromonitor International, 2015). In the same year, street vending had the highest per capita spending of the food industry in Thailand with a total of 6 billion transactions and an average spending of 34 baht per transaction approximately. According to a statistical report prepared by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, it is expected that the street food industry will continue expanding with a compound annual growth rate of 0.3% in the following years (2014), even though more formalized types of food service establishments are presenting a bigger and more stable growth than street food, street vending will remain attractive as a business option due to the small amount of required capital of investment and the relative freedom self-employment represents (Nirathorn, 2006).

For the tourists, street food represents a way of interacting with the host culture. It offers the opportunity to understand the Thai way of life and a richer and more meaningful holiday experience. Eating out on the street is more convenient than going to a restaurant; most of the time is cheaper and the flavor of the food is, in many occasions, better than more formalized food offers. Moreover, street food is available at any time of the day and there is a wide range of variety to select from (Kururatchaikul et al., 2014;). Street food is made with ingredients regularly sourced from local markets and recipes vary from vendor to vendor, tourists that are familiar with street food from Bangkok could be less familiar with street food from Chiang Mai or Phuket. Differences in the local culture and geography across Thailand make street food unique in every region, it is not clear whether these differences could be a motivation for tourists that are familiar with Thai street food to revisit Thailand and experience the food of different regions.

2.3.1 Street Food in Phuket

The local governments mediate the Street food offer in Phuket. Even though Phuket province has tourism strategies and coordinates efforts among municipalities to standardize the rules and regulations, the ultimate decision lays upon each of the nine district offices independently. The information presented in this section of the research was gathered by interviewing government representatives of the nine municipalities in Phuket.

The representative from Karon municipality reported that there are 88 restaurants in their area, all of them are part of the 'clean food good taste' (CFGT) program. Mobile food carts are not allowed and therefore, there are not registered street cart vendors, nevertheless they have knowledge of around 30 unregistered carts operating in the area. The most common areas for street vendors are Nagog market (see figure 5), Chalong temple, and the vicinities around the five ways intersection roundabout. Fixed street food stalls are permitted but owners have to register in a food-handling program and pass a sanitary inspection with the same standards that are required from full service restaurants.

Figure 4 Curry Shop and Nagog market



Patong's representative stated that there are around 300 restaurants and 192 street vendors in their municipality. They do not have any designated area for street vendors, and they do not allow street vending directly on the beach. The officer also indicated that the area close to Kalim beach is reserved for local vendors and their families. All street vendors are requested to participate in two evaluations; the first evaluates standard procedures in accordance with the CFGT program, the second one is a random clinical test of food, ice, equipment or hand scraping sample to determine whether the food is safe for consumption or not. Although all vendors go through this evaluation, only around 50 establishments are accredited with the CFGT sign.

The deputy from Ratsada expressed that there are 104 restaurants but only 16 registered street food vendors in their municipality. Authorities are aware of several unregistered vendors but it is difficult to keep track of all of them because normally they do not stay open for long. New vendors attempt opening their own businesses constantly without registering, and only if they have success they would consider registering, and establishing their own company. Ratsada encourages food vendors to attend food-handling classes, and makes a yearly inspection to assess the sanitation of the establishments. In this municipality, it is compulsory to go through the CFGT program inspection but only 25 venues have been granted with the distinctive badge, they encourage new vendors to start operations in monkey point, around the dormitories in moo 7 and at Sriray bay.

The agent from Rawai explained that they do not encourage street vending in their municipality. There are approximately 223 restaurants but the municipality do not keep records of any unregistered food vendors, there are nevertheless some registered street food stalls that have been granted the status of open-air restaurants in the areas of Naihan and Promtape cape, the CFGT program is not compulsory and only 3 restaurants have been granted the sign.

The representative of Wichit district accepted that not much information is kept about street food vendors in their municipality. There are 145 restaurants and 120 have been granted CFGT accreditation. Even though there are not registered street food vendors, it appears there are two main areas where street food vending occurs regularly in this district, the night market close to Suan Luang and around Panwa beach area.

The representative from Choeng Thale stated that there are 87 registered restaurants, 40 of them have been awarded with the CFGT sign. There are 39 registered street vendors, and they are encouraged to participate in the CFGT program, but only 20 of them have been awarded with the distinctive badge. As part of the registration process, all food establishments in this municipality are required to attend a food handlings classes. Special emphasis is made to keep the standards of the CFGT awardees, and an annual revalidation needs to be made, if the standards are not met or there are any complaints from the community about a particular

establishment, the license could be revoked and suspended. Common places for street food vending include the night market close to the temple by Nayang beach (see figure 6) and the area around the airport.

Figure 5 Yum Style Salads at Nayang Night Market



The information provided by Kathu officer appears to be far from the observable number of restaurants in their district, this could be due to the rise of unregistered food vendors or the lack of law enforcement against restaurants and vendors operating without a permit. According to them, there are 74 restaurants in their district and curiously, there are presumably 74 street vendors as well. There are no designated areas for street vending, and only around 48 establishments have been granted the CFGT sign.

The information received by Thep Krasattri municipality stated that there are only 30 registered restaurants in their district and only 17 of them have the CFGT distinctive badge. There are no registered street food vendors in this district but clearly, there are street food stalls around Ao Por Pier and in the main street close to the Heroines monument.

According to the information provided by Phuket Town municipality, there is a total of 234 restaurants in the area, all of them are part of CFGT program, and all of them have to undergo a yearly inspection to renovate their licenses. In the same way than other municipalities, they do not keep track of the number of street vendors, nevertheless they mentioned that there could be around 40 – 60 vendors

in the area. They encouraged street vending in the markets at Talat Nuea and the walking street weekend market in Thalang road (see figure 6), as well as in Sapan hin and alongside Phuket road (See figure 7).

Figure 6 Phuket Style Spring Rolls at the Walking Street Market



Figure 7 Coconut Batter Pancakes at Sapan Hin



Although previous research has shown that food is considered one of the major attractions in Thailand (Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2014; Lertputtarak, 2012), the information discussed in this section illustrates that it could also represent a major obstacle for some tourists as there is great inconsistencies on hygiene regulations from one municipality to another. It is not clear if all municipalities enforce the standards described by the CFGT program, or if there is any formal inspection of the street food vendors that operate in Phuket. The next section

describes the CFGT program in detail, further evidencing the inconsistencies between the standards set by it and the actual operation of street vendors in Phuket.

2.3.2 The “Clean Food Good Taste Project”

In 1989 the Ministry of Public Health along with the Tourism Authority of Thailand and the Ministry of Interior launched a project aiming to reduce the risk of foodborne illness in restaurants, cafeterias and street food vendors, as well as promote food hygiene, food quality and support local authorities to safeguard food safety under their jurisdictional areas (WHO, 2015). Now almost 26 years after its creation, over 85 000 street vendors and 50 000 restaurants are part of this project based in 4 basic principles; partnership and co-ownership, quality assurance, sustainability and public awareness and involvement (FAO-WHO, 2002).

The project outlines 30 standard operational procedures for cafeterias, 15 for restaurants and 12 for street food, the following are food standards for street food vendors (WHO, 2015):

1. Food stall surface must be made from material that is easy to clean and must be in good condition so as to permit easy and adequate cleaning. All food preparation or cooking area must be elevated to at least 60 cm above ground.
2. Cooked food must be covered or stored in clean containers to prevent contamination from insects or other pests.
3. Food additives used must be those that have been approved by authorized office such as FDA.
4. Drinking water must be clean and fit for human consumption. It must be kept or stored in clean and covered container with spout or draining valve.
5. Beverage must be stored in clean and covered container with spout or draining valve. Long handle ladle may be used.
6. Ice must be clean and fit for human consumption. It must be kept in clean and closed container that is elevated to at least 60 cm above ground. Long handle ladle is to be used to draw the ice and nothing shall be cooled, or stored in this ice.

7. Wash utensils with dish-washing detergent and rinse well under running water or twice in two water basins. This operation must also be elevated to at least 60 cm above ground.

8. Spoons, forks, and chopsticks must be stored in open containers with good circulation with the handles up. This container must also be elevated to at least 60 cm above ground.

9. Food waste and trash must be collected and removed.

10. Food handlers must wear clean cloth and the shirt must have sleeves. The cook must wear an apron and also a hat or hair net.

11. Always use clean utensil to pick up or serve food.

12. Any wound or cut on food handler's hands must be covered and protected with water-proof covering to prevent transmission of disease.

The project has evolved in a positive manner. There are many restaurants and vendors involved in it, but a simple glimpse to the local offer in Phuket will bring up the question of whether the vendors are really aware of the standards of not. Most of street food vendors do not follow the 12 points established by the program, and nevertheless many of them have been awarded with the distinctive. It is imperative to develop into a more comprehensive program, a program that not only sets the standards but actually enforces them and provides education for vendors to understand why is it important to follow the standards, and what are the benefits of portraying the “Clean Food Good Taste” distinctive sign.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The primary aim of this study was to understand the attitude of international tourists towards street food in Phuket. Since attitude involves the perception, affection and intentions of people towards different subjects, using empirical evidence derived from the tourists own sensorial experiences will render a result closer to the truth (Bryman, 2008).

The most convenient and accurate way to collect empirical data in social research is through observation and direct communication with the observed population, therefore a self-applied survey was the optimal approach to gather the information necessary to identify the characteristics of international tourists who visit Phuket, and the factors that affect their attitude towards street food in the island (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

This is a cross sectional research, which considered data collected in a single survey process. Researchers did not have control over the variables and have limited their involvement in the study to generating hypotheses, analyzing the collected data through mathematical and statistical methods, testing the generated hypotheses and drawing general deductions and conclusions (Henn et al., 2006; Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

3.2 Population and Sample

It is difficult to determine an exact number of population for this research, although Tourism Authority of Thailand has a very precise figure of the international tourists visiting Phuket every year, some of them might not be interested in trying street food while visiting the island, nevertheless, considering that some studies have determined food as one of the most important motivators for tourists to visit Thailand (Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2014; Horng & Tsai, 2009; Lee, 2014), all international tourists visiting Phuket were considered as part of the population, this way, it can be certain that the sample size is big enough to account

for any percentage of the international tourists that are interested or have tried street food while visiting Phuket.

Due to budget and time limitations, this research followed a non-probabilistic convenience sampling. Interviewees were chosen through direct interception in different locations of Phuket, to avoid over representation of a specific type of tourists. Special attention was paid to include male and female respondents equally, and to incorporate tourists from a variety of nationalities to increase the representativeness of the population (Bryman, 2008; Gray 2009).

Since the most complete statistical report released by TAT is the one from 2013, this research considered 8,395,921 international tourists per year as the population size. The survey included questions searching for both means and proportions, both formulas were applied and the results were very similar; the higher result was taken as the needed sample size (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 p(1-p)}{e^2}$$

Where:

n_0 = Necessary sample size

Z = Confidence level (which is a constant value determined by the desired percentage of confidence, in this case 95%) = 1.96

p = Standard error of the proportion (in this case 50% was considered as it is expected that population will give answers with a normal distribution)

e = Margin of expected error (since the study is looking for a 95% of confidence, the expected error is only 5%)

$$\frac{(1.96)^2 \times .5(.5)}{(.05)^2} = \frac{(3.8416 \times .25)}{.0025} = \frac{0.9604}{.0025} = 384.16$$

Applying this formula shows that 384.16 or rounding up 400 questionnaires was conducted, to ensure that the sample represents with a 95% level of confidence and just a 5% margin of error the total population of international tourists visiting Phuket. Since the obtained sample size was less than 5% of the total 8,395,921 international tourists, it was not necessary to apply the finite population correction factor (Cooper & Schindler, 2014; Smith, 2015).

3.3 Research Instrument

In order to understand International tourists' attitude towards street food in Phuket, a five parts self-administered survey was designed. Most of the variables were adopted from previous studies and modified to fit the scope of this research, some other variables were added as a recommendation of the research committee of the faculty of hospitality and tourism of Prince of Songkla University. The final questionnaire structure is as follows:

Part 1: Attitude towards street food in Phuket.

Food and beverage consumers evaluate restaurants and vendors based on three major elements; physical environment, food quality and service quality (Ryu et al., 2012; Cousins et al., 2011), following this premise, the present study evaluates the attitude of tourists towards street food in Phuket considering all the elements. Food quality dimensions include taste, smell, freshness, food variety, appealing presentation, texture, juiciness, serving temperature and healthiness (Mosavi & Ghaedi 2012; Sulaiman & Haron, 2013; Ryu et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2013). When evaluating service, the attributes consumers look for include quickness and efficiency of the service staff, as well as friendliness and disposition to help (Ryu et al., 2012). The physical environment perception includes the cleanliness of the establishment and the staff (Juric & Worsley, 1998; Ryu et al., 2012) as well as the physical settings and atmospherics (Sulaiman & Haron, 2013). Finally, other studies have suggested price and value are other important determinants of consumer's attitude towards food (Liu et al., 2013; Karim et al., 2009).

This part of the questionnaire includes 2 projective questions about street food in Phuket and the top concern tourists might have when eating on the street. It also includes 27 variables in a Likert scale format that measure the attitude of international tourists towards the street food in Phuket. The first item measures affection towards street food, then statement 2-13 measure the attitude towards different attributes considered necessary for food quality, such as hygiene, freshness of the ingredients, if the food is free of additives, good taste, good smell, easy to eat, healthy, visually attractive, if the food is served at the right temperature,

if it is perceived as a unique or exotic offer by the respondents, the variety of offered street food in Phuket and the cultural value of the street food.

Variables 14-22 measure the attitude towards the vendors and their establishments, evaluating the cleanliness of the premises, personal hygiene of the hawkers, convenience of location, speed of the service, whether or not the vendors are friendly, if the food is easy to order, the reputation of vendors in Phuket and the perceived value of money. Questions 23 and 24 evaluate the overall satisfaction with the food quality and the service quality of street food vendors in Phuket. Questions 25 and 26 evaluate emotional satisfaction, and the last question of part one evaluates how different is the food in Phuket from the food tourists are used to eat back in their home countries. Table 1 indicates other studies that have used some of these variables to measure the attitude of respondents towards different kinds of food.

Table 1 List of common attitude variables used in previous studies

Attitude Measuring Variables	References
Affection towards a kind of food	S. Seo et al.(2013); Lee (2008); Mak <i>et al.</i> (2013).
Hygienic Food	S. Seo et al.(2013); Bhuyan (2010); Chen & Tsai (2007); Josiam & Henry (2014); Lertputtarak (2012); Yiamjanya & Wongleedee (2013).
Fresh ingredients	S. Seo et al.(2013); Mosavi & Ghaedi (2012); Lertputtarak (2012); Yiamjanya & Wongleedee (2013); Sirigunna (2015); Kim et al. (2013).
Natural/ free of additives	S. Seo et al. (2013); Sirigunna (2015); Kim et al. (2013).
Good taste	S. Seo et al.(2013); Namkung & Jang (2007); Bhuyan (2010); Mosavi & Ghaedi (2012); Josiam & Henry (2014); Henderson <i>et al.</i> (2012).
Good smell	S. Seo et al. (2013); Ryu et al. (2010), Karim et al., 2009).
Easy to eat	S. Seo et al. (2013); Mak et al. (2013).
Healthy	S. Seo et al (2013); Namkung & Jang (2007); Mosavi & Ghaedi (2012); Lertputtarak (2012); Sirigunna (2015); Kim et al. (2013).
Visually attractive food	Namkung & Jang (2007); Mosavi & Ghaedi (2012); Mason & Paggiaro (2012); Lertputtarak (2012); Su et al. (2015); Ryu et al. (2010).
Temperature of Food	Namkung & Jang (2007); Yiamjanya & Wongleedee (2013).

Table 1 continued

Attitude Measuring Variables	References
Exotic/ Unique offers	Chen & Tsai (2007); Lertputtarak (2012); Henderson <i>et al.</i> (2012); Mak et al (2013).
Authenticity/ Cultural Value	Lertputtarak (2012); Henderson et al (2012); Ryu <i>et al.</i> (2010); Mak et al (2013).
Variety of offers	S. Seo et al (2013); Namkung & Jang (2007); Bhuyan (2010); Chen & Tsai (2007); Lertputtarak (2012); Ryu et al (2010); Karim et al (2009).
Personal Hygiene of Vendor	Yiamjanya & Wongleedee (2013); Ryu et al (2010).
Clean Establishment	Mason & Paggiaro (2012); Yiamjanya & Wongleedee (2013); Choovanichchannon (2015); Henderson et al (2012); Ryu et al. (2010);
Convenience of location	Bhuyan (2010); Mason & Paggiaro (2012); Josiam & Henry (2014); Yiamjanya & Wongleedee (2013); Henderson et al. (2012); Mak et al. (2013).
Quick service	Ryu et al. (2010); Henderson et al. (2012).
Easy to order	Mosavi & Ghaedi (2012); Henderson et al. (2012); Ryu et al. (2010); Kim et al. (2011).
Friendly Service	Chen & Tsai (2007); Mosavi & Ghaedi (2012); Josiam & Henry (2014); Henderson et al. (2012); Ryu et al. (2010);
Good Price/ Value for money	Bhuyan (2010); Chen & Tsai (2007); Josiam & Henry (2014); Lertputtarak (2012); Choovanichchannon (2015); Henderson et al. (2012).
Prestige and Reputation	Kim et al. (2011); Hueng & Gu (2012).
Emotional satisfaction	Mason & Paggiaro (2012); Karim et al. (2009).
Overall satisfaction with food	Namkung & Jang (2007); Lee (2008); Mason & Paggiaro (2012); Choovanichchannon (2015); Su et al. (2015); Kim et al. (2013).
Overall satisfaction with service	Bhuyan (2010); Mosavi & Ghaedi (2012); Mason & Paggiaro (2012); Josiam & Henry (2014); Choovanichchannon (2015); Lee (2008).

Part 2: Past Travel behavior, Behavioral intentions, perceived behavioral control and Subjective norm

This part is composed of 36 questions, the firsts 18 questions evaluate the travel behavior of the respondents including variables that measure length of stay in Phuket, purpose of the visit, numbers of times a respondent ate street food in Phuket, average expense(s) per person, food expenses, past experience in the destination, how much subjects knew about street food before they traveled to Thailand, who do respondents normally eat out with, and how many people are travelling with them while visiting Phuket. These variables evaluate the travel behavior of respondents to determine if different travel behaviors generate a different attitude towards street food in Phuket. Table 2 shows a list of other researchers that have used these variables in their studies.

Table 2 List of common past travel behaviors variables used in previous studies

Travel Behavior Variables	References
Length of stay	S. Seo et al. (2013); Lertputtarak (2012); Tse & Crofts (2005).
Purpose of visit	S. Seo et al. (2013); Choovanichchannon (2015).
Number of times eating out	S. Seo et al. (2013); Bhuyan (2010).
Average of expense when eating out	S. Seo et al. (2013).
Average daily expense in destination	Zoltan & Masiero (2012).
Previous visits to Destination	S. Seo et al. (2013); Chen & Tsai (2007); Zoltan & Masiero (2012); Lertputtarak (2012); Yiamjanya & Wongleedee (2013); Sirigunna (2015).
Numbers of times eating a kind of food in a period of time	Bhuyan (2010); Bagozzi et al. (2000); Yiamjanya & Wongleedee (2013); Sirigunna (2015).
Who do you eat out with?	Bhuyan (2010); Bagozzi et al. (2000).
Size of travelling group	Chen & Tsai (2007); Zoltan & Masiero (2012).

The second section of this part includes 9 questions organized in a chart following a Likert format. Questions in this chart are divided into three different groups, group number one includes questions one to three measures the level in which the respondents are influenced by subjective norm, Table 3 enlists different studies that have used the same variables as part of their research.

Table 3 List of common subjective norm variables used in previous studies.

Subjective Norm Variables	References
I believe my family and friends would appreciate if I try....	Bhuyan (2010); Sheats et al. (2013); Yozdanpanah & Forouzani (2015); S. Seo <i>et al.</i> (2013); Tse & Crotts (2005).
I believe my family and friends would like to try....	Choovanichchannon (2015). Bhuyan (2010); Sheats et al. (2013); Kim et al. (2011).
People whose opinions regarding food are important to me think that I should try...	Mak et al. (2012); Bhuyan (2010); Sheats et al. (2013); Yozdanpanah & Forouzani, (2015); Kim et al. (2011).

Questions four and five evaluate the perceived behavioral control respondents have towards eating street food in Phuket, both this section and the previous section related to subjective norm where adapted from previous studies that followed the theory of planned behavior, Table 4 enlists different studies that have used the same variables as part of their research.

Table4 List of common percived behavioral control varbales used in previous studies

Percived Behavioral control Variables	References
If I wanted to, I could buy other food instead of...	Kim et al. (2011); Bhuyan (2010); Sheats et al. (2013); Yozdanpanah & Forouzani (2015).
It is mostly up to me whether or not to buy...	Kim et al. (2011); Bhuyan (2010); Mak et al. (2012); Chen & Tsai (2007); Karim et al. (2009)

The last group is composed of 4 different statements that measure the likeliness of the respondents to recommend Phuket and its street food to family and friends, to revisits Phuket and to eat street food at this destination in the future as well as their willingness to spread good word of mouth about Phuket as a destination, and the street food they have encountered in the island. Table 5 enlists different studies that have used the same variables as part of their research.

Table 5 List of common behavioral intentions variables used in previous studies

Behavioral Intention Variables	References
To recommend the destination/ food	Namkung & Jang (2007); Howard (2009); Mason & Paggiaro (2012); Lee (2008); Su et al. (2015); Ryu et al. (2010).
To say positive things about the food/ destination	Namkung & Jang (2007); Mosavi & Ghaedi (2012); Mason & Paggiaro (2012); Lee (2008); Ryu et al. (2010); Altunel & Erkut (2015).
To revisit the destination	Chen & Tsai (2007); Howard (2009); Mason & Paggiaro (2012); Lee (2008); Su et al. (2015); Kim et al. (2013).
To eat a similar kind of food in the future	S. Seo et al. (2013); Mosavi & Ghaedi (2012); Lee (2008)

Part 3: Socio-demographic profile.

The last part frames are the respondent's socio-demographic characteristics. In total, 10 different variables were included: gender, age, nationality, staple food of the respondents, religion, marital status, education level, monthly income, occupation and household size, as well as including extra space for further comments from the respondents, or from observations made by the interviewer. Table 6 makes reference to previous studies that use these variables as part of their research.

Table 6 List of common socio-demographic variables used in previous studies

Profile Variables	References
Gender	S. Seo <i>et al.</i> (2013); Bhuyan (2010); Chen & Tsai (2007); Zoltan & Masiero (2012); Mosavi & Ghaedi (2012); Hsieh & Chang (2006).
Age	S. Seo <i>et al.</i> (2013); Namkung & Jang (2007); Bhuyan (2010); Chen & Tsai (2007); Zoltan & Masiero (2012); Mosavi & Ghaedi (2012).
Nationality	S. Seo <i>et al.</i> (2013); Howard (2009); Bagozzi <i>et al.</i> (2000); Tse & Crotts (2005); Mak <i>et al.</i> (2013); Heung & Gu (2012).
Religion	S. Seo <i>et al.</i> (2013); Bhuyan (2010); Josiam & Henry (2014).
Marital status	S. Seo <i>et al.</i> (2013); Bhuyan (2010); Hsieh & Chang (2006); Josiam & Henry (2014); Lee (2008); Mak <i>et al.</i> (2013).
Education Level	S. Seo <i>et al.</i> (2013); Namkung & Jang (2007); Bhuyan (2010); Chen & Tsai (2007); Mosavi & Ghaedi (2012); Josiam & Henry (2014).

Table 6 Continued

Profile Variables	References
Monthly income	S. Seo <i>et al.</i> (2013); Namkung & Jang (2007); Bhuyan (2010); Chen & Tsai (2007); Josiam & Henry (2014); Choovanichchannon (2015).
Occupation	S. Seo <i>et al.</i> (2013); Chen & Tsai (2007); Hsieh & Chang (2006); Lertputtarak (2012); Choovanichchannon (2015); Mak <i>et al.</i> (2013).
Household size	Bhuyan (2010); Josiam & Henry (2014); Sheats <i>et al.</i> (2013);

3.4 Instrument Pilot Test

Before applying a pilot test, the instrument was reviewed by a research committee formed by three professors from the faculty of hospitality and Tourism of Prince of Songkla University, Phuket. All their feedback was taken into account and the revised version of the questionnaire was used for the pilot test. A sample of 40 questionnaires was applied, the respondents were selected by convenience sampling, and the results were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 22. Aside from the reliability test presented in the next section, the pilot test evaluated the amount of time required for the respondents to complete the questionnaire. The average time spent was around 9 minutes, and special attention was paid to ensure that respondents understood all the questions. Questions number 4, 5 and 11 of part 2 presented an interpretation problem as some respondents did not give an exact number of times they had been to Thailand, Phuket or ate street food, but instead gave answers like “many times” or “a lot of times”, or gave answers involving a parameter of times like “5-10 times” or “more than 10 times. These questions had to be reformulated into close ended questions to avoid misinterpretation. In questions 8, 9 and 10 in part 2, the scales were rearranged to follow an ascendant order in value.

Question 16 and 17 had similar answers in most of the cases. Question 15 has a negative inclination and could influence the respondent to give a negative answer, therefore they were reformulated to a neutral tone. Question 4 of part 3 was restructured to be a closed ended question, which allows easier interpretation of the relationship between this variable and the attitude towards

street food in Phuket. Adjusting some scales, reformulating some questions and disregarding redundant variables helped simplify the data collection.

Reliability of Scale

The first part of the questionnaire aimed to assess the attitude of international tourists towards street food in Phuket. It includes 27 items that evaluate different attributes of food, three items assessed the affection of respondents towards street food in Phuket. A reliability test was performed and the result showed a Cronbach's alpha value of .747. Four items evaluated the overall impression of tourists towards the hygiene of street food in Phuket, for this scale the Cronbach's alpha value was .766. Eight items evaluated food quality attributes such as flavor and smell, this scale had a Cronbach's alpha value of .775. Seven items measured different aspects related to service quality, the result for the reliability of scale showed a value of .70. Two items measured overall satisfaction with street food in Phuket, they showed a Cronbach's alpha value of .713. Other questions measured value for money, familiarity with the offered food and sufficiency in the amount of information about street food in Phuket. These six factors measured as a scale to evaluate attitude towards street food in Phuket present a Cronbach's alpha value of .779. See Table 7 for detailed information about these scales.

Table 7 Factors measuring attitude towards street food

Factor	Item	Cronbach's Alpha
Affection	Street food in Phuket makes me feel good	0.747
	Thinking about street food in Phuket makes me happy	
	I feel trying street food in Phuket is a fun experience	
Hygiene	Street food in Phuket is Hygienic	0.766
	I am not afraid of getting sick from street food in Phuket	
	Street vendors in Phuket are well groomed and clean	
	Food stands and carts in Phuket are clean and organized	
Food Quality	Street vendors in Phuket use fresh ingredients	0.775
	Street food in Phuket is natural and free of additives	
	Street food in Phuket has good taste	
	The smell of street food in Phuket is appealing	
	It is easy for me to eat street food in Phuket	

Table 7 Continued

Factor	Item	Cronbach's Alpha
	Street food in Phuket is healthy and nutritious	
	Street food in Phuket is visually attractive	
	Street food in Phuket is served at a right temperature	
Service	Street food in Phuket is unique and exotic	0.706
Quality	Street food in Phuket represents an authentic local culture	
	There is a big variety of street food options in Phuket	
	Food venues are conveniently located around Phuket	
	Street food venues in Phuket provide a fast service	
	It is easy to order my meal at street food venues in Phuket	
	Street food vendors in Phuket are friendly	
Satisfaction	I am satisfied with the street food quality in Phuket	0.713
	I am satisfied with street food service in Phuket	
Value	Street food in Phuket has good value for money	-
Total		0.779

The last section of part two in the questionnaire contains a list of 18 Likert scale questions. From those items, 3 were measuring tourist's subjective norm towards street food consumption in Phuket, see Table 8 for the reliability test result. Four items were measuring behavioral intentions, table 9 reports the results of the reliability of this scale.

Table 8 Reliability of the subjective norm measuring scale

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.766	.767	3

Table 9 Reliability of the behavioral intentions measuring scale

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.802	.803	4

The scale measuring perceived behavioral control had a Cronbach's alpha value under the recommended value of .7. This is often the case when a scale is formed by few items, nevertheless this scale could be used if the inter-item correlation matrix shows a value above .3 (Pallant, 2013). Table 10 shows the inter-item correlation value of this scale.

Table 10 Inter-item correlation matrix for perceived behavioral control measuring scale

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix		
	I could buy other food instead of street food while visiting Phuket	It is mostly up to me whether or not to buy street food while visiting Phuket
I could buy other food instead of street food while visiting Phuket	1.000	.446
It is mostly up to me whether or not to buy street food while visiting Phuket	.446	1.000

3.5 Data Collection Method

The data was collected by way of convenience sampling, potential respondents were intercepted in different public location throughout Phuket and asked if they would like to participate in the research project. Locations include shopping malls, markets, touristic points, public beaches, and the departure hall of Phuket's international airport. When participants agreed in contributing, two screening questions were queried verbally to confirm prospects qualified as part of the targeted sample. If both questions were answered positively, a copy of the self-administered questionnaire was handed to them to fill up. After 10- 15 minutes had passed, the researcher came back and collected the answered format, then read through the answers one time to minimize missing data. The researcher then asked if participants were using the services of a travel agency in their current visit to Phuket, and wrote down any extra comments obtained verbally from respondents. Afterwards, the researcher proceeded to express gratitude and continue to intercept other potential subjects.

Data collection was challenging; one reason could involve that prospective respondents were defensive towards people approaching them on public places due to a bad reputation of Phuket related to tourists being scammed. Most of the intercepted people would not even want to establish conversation, and often would wave their hands in sign of disapproval. Others would start answering the questionnaire but leave without completing it. A quick estimation gathered from the researcher's notes indicates that only 2 from every 10 people that were approached provided usable data or be willing to participate. To help hasten the data collection process, questionnaires were distributed by several collaborators, measures were taken to achieve a standardized practice.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation Methods

The information gathered from close-ended questions was analyzed quantitatively using IBM SPSS version 23. Material obtained with open-ended questions was treated as qualitative data and was evaluated using Microsoft Excel. In the next chapter, results from open and close-ended questions were presented separately, starting with close-ended questions - a descriptive analysis that condenses respondents' demographic characteristics, followed by a synthesis of the travel behavior of participants. Afterwards, a general description of the attitude of international tourists towards the most significant attributes of street food in Phuket paired with a multiple regression analysis that indicates what attributes of food can predict tourists' behavioral intentions to a greater extent. Subsequently, open-ended questions were explored to explain other factors that could affect tourist's attitude towards street food in Phuket, and to determine what are the most popular dishes of street food in Phuket among international tourists.

A total of 412 questionnaires were collected. After a preliminary screening, 26 were discarded due to missing data, 21 more were not considered in the statistical analysis as they presented a very small standard deviation in their Likert scale items values, this is at times characteristic of disengaged respondents, and it was considered that the information obtained from these questionnaires would not help in the construction of a reliable model. The remaining 365 were processed for constructing a standard multiple regression model. A total of 72

questionnaires were deleted while refining the model as they presented a Mahalanobis distance, exceeding the critical value of 24.322 suggested for a model with 7 variables, or a Cook's distance with a value larger than 1 (Pallant, 2013).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Close Ended Questions Analysis

4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics

Descriptive statistics were run to obtain the frequency of response regarding demographic variables. The results showed that 153 respondents were males and 141 were females; 148 participants were younger than 30 years, 104 were from 30 to 49 years old, and 42 were 50 years or older. It is difficult to determine if these figures are representative of the population because TAT does not keep a public record of the age groups of tourists visiting Phuket. It nevertheless has been observed that in recent years there has been an important increment of young adults traveling abroad, and that millennials are one of the fastest growing tourist age groups (Machado, 2014). Two hundred twenty-eight participants were westerners, and 66 were from Asia. One hundred eighty-four respondents stated being affiliated to Christianity, this does not come as a surprise since most of the respondents were from Europe, 15 to Islam, 8 to Hinduism, 30 to Buddhism and 57 reported they had other religious beliefs or no particular beliefs.

In relation to their marital status, 144 people indicated being single, 136 married, 10 divorced or separated, and 4 being widowed. Concerning their highest level of education, 194 reported having a university degree or equivalent, 52 college diploma, 27 secondary certificate, and 21 mentioned they possessed other qualifications. A total of 84 participants were private company employees, 74 were students, see table 11 for more details. On the subject of income, 83 reported they earned between 1,001 to 3,000 USD, and 67 earned less than 1,000 USD per month. Household size of 144 subjects were 1 or 2 persons, 110 indicated they live with 3 or 4 persons, 38 said 5 persons or more, and 2 persons did not answer this question.

Table 11 Demographic Characteristics

Attributes	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	153	52.0%
Female	141	48.0%
Age		
Less than 30 years	148	50.3%
30-49 years old	104	35.4%
50 and above	42	14.3%
Region of Origin		
Westerner	228	77.6%
Asian	66	22.4%
Religion		
Christianity	184	62.6%
Others	57	19.4%
Buddhism	30	10.2%
Islam	15	5.1%
Hinduism	8	2.7%
Marital Status		
Single	144	49.0%
Married/ living together	136	46.3%
Separated/ Divorced	10	3.4%
Widowed	4	1.4%
Highest Level of Education		
University Degree (BSc, BA, MSc, MBA,	194	66.0%
College Diploma (NVQ/ SVQ,	52	17.7%
Secondary Certificate (GCSE, SCE)	27	9.2%
Other Qualifications	21	7.1%
Occupation		
Private Company Employees	84	28.6%
Students	74	25.2%
Self-employed	67	22.8%
Government Employees	32	10.9%
Retired	25	8.5%
Others	7	2.4%
Unemployed	5	1.7%

Table 11 Continued

Attributes	Frequency	Percentage
Monthly Income in USD		
\$1,001 - \$3,000	83	28.2%
\$3,001 - \$5,000	70	23.8%
Less than \$1,000	67	22.8%
\$5,001 - \$7,000	30	10.2%
More than \$9,000	20	6.8%
\$7,001 - \$9,000	16	5.4%
Missing Data	8	2.7%
Household Size		
1-2 Persons	144	49.0%
3-4 Persons	110	37.4%
More than 4 Persons	38	12.9%
Missing Data	2	0.7%

Based on all 26 items in the questionnaire measuring different attributes of street food, a global value for attitude was computed to compare it among different demographic groups. These results refer to Hypothesis group one.

Previous studies have shown that gender is an important factor in tourists' food consumption. Kim *et al* (2009) suggested that "*women were especially interested in tasting local food and excited about local food on their holidays*", nonetheless different disciplines studies have found that men demonstrate risk taking behavior more often than women (Jianakoplos & Bernasek, 1998; Stark & Ewa, 2015; Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2013), and consumption of local food could be described as an adventurous risk taking behavior, especially if the destination is located in an unfamiliar country (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). This information suggests that there could be a difference in the attitude towards street food in Phuket between man and woman. To corroborate this inference, an independent sample T-test was applied. Levene's test of equality result indicated that equal variances could be assumed; t value was 1.341 with a degree of freedom of 292. It was found that the significance level (2-tailed) was 0.181, consequently the null hypothesis can be

confirmed, H_{1-a0} : *There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female international tourists towards street food of Phuket.*

Mak *et al.* (2012) suggested that age is an important factor in food consumption, and that older people have different food preferences due to loss of sensorial capacities and health concerns. This suggests that there could be variances in the attitude of young and older tourists towards street food in Phuket. To validate this suggestion, a One-way ANOVA was used to compare the difference among different groups of age. A non-parametric Levene's test was performed to assess the homogeneity of variances; the p value was 0.057, therefore it can be assumed that variances were homogeneous. The ANOVA test had a significance level of 0.405 indicating that there is no statistical difference among different groups of age, hence opposing the idea proposed by previous studies and confirming the null hypothesis, H_{1-b0} : *There is no significant difference in the attitude of different age groups of international tourists towards street food of Phuket.*

Cohen & Avieli (2004) suggested that people from different regions experience cuisines in different ways, in the sense that western countries have been exposed to cuisines from other parts of the world due to the effect of immigration, while Asian cuisines have not been subject to the same degree of influence by outsiders. It is expected then that a difference should exist between the attitudes of tourists from different regions of the world. To test this idea, an independent sample T- tests was performed. The test for equality of variances result was 0.707, meaning that equal variances could be assumed; t value was 0.896 with a degree of freedom of 292; the significance (2-tailed) value was 0.371, therefore the null hypothesis can be confirmed H_{1-c0} : *There is no significant difference in the attitude of international tourists from different parts of the world towards street food of Phuket.*

From the previous results, it can be concluded in a more global approach that the Hypothesis group one can be rejected as not strong evidence has been found that suggest a relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of international tourists and their attitude towards street food of Phuket.

4.1.2 Travel Behavior

Participants were asked several questions about their travel behavior, such as those related to purpose of visit, previous experience traveling to Thailand, length of stay, number and relationship to their travel companions, and how much in average they spent per day while staying in Phuket. Most of respondents (35%) reported they would or had stayed 15 days or more, 28.9% said they would be in Phuket for 4-7 days, 22.8% would stay for 8-14 days and 13.3% said they would stay only for 1-3 days. This could be related to the distance from home, since most of the respondents were Europeans. They possibly consider a long stay vacation is worth traveling a long distance to Thailand. Forty-two point five percent of tourists responded they were visiting Phuket for leisure, 17% were visiting friends or relatives, 10.5% were in a business trip, 10.2% were on Honeymoon, 9.5% came for educational purposes, 1.4% were in Phuket as an incentive or bonus trip from their companies, less than 1.4% was in Phuket for medical reasons, and 7.5% mentioned different reasons from the ones provided in the questionnaire. One hundred and eight persons responded they traveled as frequent as twice or more times per year, 106 reported they traveled once a year, 32 claimed to travel once every two years, and 18 answered they traveled once every three years or less often. In regard to their previous experience traveling to Thailand, 144 informed that they had been to Thailand 2-5 times already, 81 responded they were in Phuket for the first time, 44 had visited 10 or more times, and 25 between 6-9 times. Although the majority of respondents shared that they had been to Thailand before, 43.9% reported this was their first trip to Phuket, 39.1% replied they had been to Phuket 2-5 times, 15% had visited 10 times or more, and 8.5 % had visited between 6-9 times.

The majority of tourists (149) responded they were travelling with 1-2 companions, 72 informed they were accompanied by 3-4 persons, 38 were traveling alone, and 35 were traveling in a group bigger than 4 persons. To describe the relationship with their companions, 32.7% of respondents said they were traveling with friends, 30.3% were in Phuket with their couple or partner, 22.8% were traveling with family, 12.9 % were traveling alone, 6.1% with work colleagues, and 2% responded they were traveling with someone that does not fit any of the provided

classifications in the questionnaire. One hundred and thirty-five participant reported they had an average expense between 1,001- 3,000THB per day, 87 answered they had spent 1,000THB or less per day, 46 reported their expenses were 3,001 – 5,000THB every day, and 26 said they had spent more than 5,000THB on average per day while in Phuket, see table 12 for details about this information.

Table 12 Travel Behaviour

Attributes	Frequency	Percentage
Length of Visit		
15 days or more	103	35.0%
4-7 days	85	28.9%
8-14 days	67	22.8%
1-3 days	39	13.3%
Travel Frequency		
Twice or more times per year	138	46.9%
Once every year	106	36.1%
Once every two years	32	10.9%
Once every three years or less	18	6.1%
Purpose of the Visit		
Leisure	125	42.5%
Visiting relatives/ friends	50	17.0%
Business	31	10.5%
Honeymoon	30	10.2%
Education	28	9.5%
Other reasons	22	7.5%
Incentive/ Bonus	4	1.4%
Medical	4	1.4%
Visits to Thailand		
2-5 times	144	49.0%
1 time	81	27.6%
10 or more times	44	15.0%
6-9 times	25	8.5%

Table 12 Continued

Attributes	Frequency	Percentage
Visits to Phuket		
2-5 times	129	43.9%
1 time	115	39.1%
10 or more times	44	15.0%
6-9 times	25	8.5%
Number of companions		
1-2 persons	149	50.7%
3-4 persons	72	24.5%
Travelling alone	38	12.9%
5 or more persons	35	11.9%
Relationship to companions		
Friends	96	32.7%
Couple/ partner	89	30.3%
Family	67	22.8%
Travelling alone	38	12.9%
Work colleagues	18	6.1%
Others	6	2.0%
Average Expenses/ Day/ Person		
1,001- 3,000 THB	135	45.9%
1,000 THB or less	87	29.6%
3,001- 5,000THB	46	15.6%
More than 5,000THB	26	8.8%

Previous studies have suggested that factors like familiarity, past behavior and exposure effect can have an influence on the attitude of consumers towards food related behaviors (Kim et al., 2009; Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Bagozzi et al., 2000). Hypothesis group two compared the general attitude towards street food in Phuket of international tourists with different travel behaviors, the results in this section refer to these comparisons.

Two independent sample T-tests were run to determine if there is a difference in the attitude of tourists that had visited Phuket in the past and those that were visiting for the first time, as well as in the attitude of tourists that travel often and those that seldom travel abroad. For the first test, the Levene's test of

equality indicated a significance level of 0.717, equal variances were assumed, t value was -0.357 with a degree of freedom of 292, and the significance level (2-tailed) was 0.721, therefore the null hypothesis was confirmed, H_{2-a0} : *There is no a significant difference in the attitude of international tourists that had visit Phuket in the past and those that had not towards street food of Phuket.* For the second test, Levene's test of equality indicated a significance level of 0.296, equal variances were assumed, the value for t score was -0.164 with a degree of freedom of 292. The result of the t-test had a significance level (2-tailed) of 0.870, hence the null hypothesis could be confirmed, H_{2-b0} : *There is no significant difference in the attitude of international tourists that travel often and those that seldom travel towards street food of Phuket.*

Food Related Behavior

The survey included 5 different questions about food behavior. These questions established previous experience, frequency of consumption while in Phuket, average expenses, location of consumption and source of information about street food. A vast majority (74.5%) reported they had eaten street food before, 49% mentioned that they had eaten between 2-5 times while they were in Phuket, 24.1% said they had eaten more than 10 times, 17.3% from 6-9 times, 9.2% expressed that they had eaten just one time, and only 1 person said she had not eaten any street food in Phuket. Eighty-four participants answered they spent between 71 to 100THB on average per person every time they had eaten street food in Phuket, 81 said they consumed from 101 to 130THB, 66 reported they paid less than 70THB per time, and 62 affirmed they had spent more than 130THB in street food every time they had consumed. The most popular location of consumption were day and night markets with 65.6% of respondents reporting they had eaten there, followed by roadside establishments with 56.8%, next stalls or carts by the beach with 44.6%, then designated hawking centers with 7.8%, and around 3.8% mentioned locations different from those provided in the questionnaire. Forty-seven point six percent of tourists replied they had known about street food in Phuket form their own past experience, 41.5% said friends and family were their main source of information, 28.9% said internet, 16% mentioned tourism brochures, 14.6% said travel agencies,

8.5% magazines or newspapers, 6.5% television or radio, and 5.1% mentioned other sources of information, see table 13 for a synthesis of the previous information.

Table 13 Food Related Behaviors

Attributes	Frequency	Percentage
Previous Experience with Street Food		
Yes	219	74.5%
No	75	25.5%
Frequency of consumption while in Phuket		
2-5 times	144	49.0%
10 or more times	71	24.1%
6-9 times	51	17.3%
1 time	27	9.2%
Did not eat	1	0.3%
Average expense on street food/Time/Person		
71-100 THB	84	28.6%
101- 130THB	81	27.6%
70 THB or less	66	22.4%
More than 130THB	62	21.1%
Did not eat	1	0.3%
Location of street food consumption		
Day/ night markets	193	65.6%
Roadside	167	56.8%
Beach	131	44.6%
Designated hawking centers	23	7.8%
Others	10	3.4%
Did not eat	1	0.3%
Source of Information		
Past experience	140	47.6%
Friends or family	122	41.5%
Internet	85	28.9%
Tourism brochures	47	16.0%
Travel agency	43	14.6%
Magazines/ newspapers	25	8.5%
Tv or radio	19	6.5%
Others	15	5.1%

Mak et al. (2012) pointed out that “*past experience can significantly affect food consumption behavior*”, and that previous exposure to a kind of food could create “*food memories*” and thus improving consumer’s attitude towards it. To weigh this concept, an independent sample T-test was run to determine if there is a difference in the attitude of tourists that had tried street food before coming to Phuket and those that had never tried it before. Levene’s test of equality indicated a significance level of .125, equal variances were assumed, the t value was - 0.717 with a degree of freedom of 292, the t-test for equality of means produced a significance level (2-tailed) of 0.474, with this result the null hypothesis can be confirmed, H_{2-c0} : *There is no significant difference in the attitude of international tourists that had previous experience with street food and those that did not towards street food of Phuket.*

With this test resolved, it can be concluded in a general manner that the global hypothesis for group two can be rejected, as there is no sufficient evidence that supports there is a relationship between the travel behavior of international tourists and their attitude towards street food in Phuket.

4.1.3 Street Food Attitude

A Descriptive analysis was used to prepare observations about the attitude of tourists towards each one of the attributes of street food in Phuket. Means for each one of the components in the scale were calculated, table 14 illustrates the obtained data. Results display an overall slight positive inclination, signifying that there is a good attitude towards most of the attributes related to street food in Phuket.

Table 14 Descriptive analysis of street food variables

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Factor	Factor Mean	Factor Std. Deviation
Street food in Phuket makes me feel good	3.90	0.728	Affection	3.92	0.598
Thinking about street food in Phuket makes me	3.76	0.810			
I feel trying street food in Phuket is a fun	4.10	0.780			
Street food in Phuket is Hygienic	3.13	0.887	Hygiene	3.20	0.685
I am not afraid of getting sick from street food in	3.38	1.014			
Street vendors in Phuket are well groomed and	3.19	0.899			
Food stands and carts in Phuket are clean and	3.13	0.902			
Street vendors in Phuket use fresh ingredients	3.66	0.762	Food	3.70	0.493
Street food in Phuket is natural and free of	3.54	0.914	Quality		
Street food in Phuket has good taste	4.12	0.770			
The smell of street food in Phuket is appealing	3.79	0.880			
It is easy for me to eat street food in Phuket	4.01	0.828			
Street food in Phuket is healthy and nutritious	3.43	0.851			
Street food in Phuket is visually attractive	3.60	0.895			
Street food in Phuket is served at a right	3.46	0.933			
Street food in Phuket is unique and exotic	3.88	0.870	Service	3.96	0.494
Street food in Phuket represents an authentic	4.05	0.853	Quality		
There is a big variety of street food options in	4.01	0.866			
Food venues are conveniently located around	3.78	0.782			
Street food venues in Phuket provide a fast	3.99	0.792			
It is easy to order my meal at street food venues	3.96	0.817			
Street food vendors in Phuket are friendly	4.05	0.824			
I am satisfied with the street food quality in	3.76	0.810	Satisfacti	3.80	0.682
I am satisfied with street food service in Phuket	3.84	0.774			
Street food in Phuket has good value for money	4.07	0.867	Value	4.07	0.867

Means of over 4 points were achieved in the items measuring street food taste, variety, easiness to eat, friendliness of street vendors, value for money, street food as a fun experience and as an experience that represents local culture. An interpretation of these scores would suggest that tourists perceive street food in Phuket as an easy and fun way of food consumption that allows them to interact

with the friendly locals, and sample a big variety of authentic, delicious and inexpensive dishes. These findings support previous studies that suggested that local food is regarded as a mean of interaction with the host culture and its authentic cuisine (Sengel et al., 2015; Okumus et al., 2005; Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Quan & Wang, 2003).

On the other hand, it is noticeable that the lowest values were attributed to items measuring hygiene. This result indicates that there is still a general concern of tourists about hygiene and sanitation standards of street food vendors in Phuket. Such concern could be accredited to the deficiencies of the government programs that regulate the street food offer, such is the case of the “clean food good taste” project which appears to be unnoticed by tourists. Furthermore, most of street food vendors do not abide to these government regulations, and they are not required to subscribe to the program to be allowed to sell on the street.

To further discard significant differences in the attitude of different groups towards street food in Phuket, independent tests were run for each one of the factors that comprise attitude. Table 15 presents the results of the independent sample t- tests of all factors comprising attitude using gender as the grouping variable.

Table 15 T-tests Attitude Factors and Gender

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Affection	.012	.914	-.127	292	.899	-.00885	.06996
Hygiene	3.436	.065	-.834	292	.405	-.06672	.08000
Food Quality	.002	.967	.404	292	.687	.02329	.05766
Service Quality	2.547	.112	1.023	292	.307	.05896	.05765
Value for money	.678	.411	-1.017	292	.310	-.10291	.10123
Satisfaction	3.696	.056	-.165	292	.869	-.01314	.07973

The results of the T- tests help to further confirm that there is not significant difference in the mean values in all factors of food attitude between males and females; this corresponds to the previous result obtained with the global value of attitude.

ANOVA tests were run for each one of the factors of street food attitude to test if there was a difference between different groups of age. Table 16 summarizes these results.

Table16 ANOVA Tests Attitude Factors and Age

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Affection	Between Groups	2.839	2	1.419	4.048	.018
	Within Groups	102.034	291	.351		
	Total	104.873	293			
Hygiene	Between Groups	.253	2	.127	.269	.765
	Within Groups	137.212	291	.472		
	Total	137.465	293			
Food Quality	Between Groups	.043	2	.021	.087	.916
	Within Groups	71.235	291	.245		
	Total	71.278	293			
Service Quality	Between Groups	.036	2	.018	.072	.930
	Within Groups	71.434	291	.245		
	Total	71.469	293			
Satisfaction	Between Groups	1.828	2	.914	1.979	.140
	Within Groups	134.380	291	.462		
	Total	136.208	293			
Value for money	Between Groups	1.169	2	.585	.776	.461
	Within Groups	219.184	291	.753		
	Total	220.354	293			

The results from these tests serve as supplementary data, and help reassuring. There is no significant difference in the attitude of different age groups of international tourists towards street food of Phuket.

In addition, an Independent sample t- tests was run to compare the mean values of the factors composing attitude and confirm if there was a significant

difference between tourists from Asia and westerners. Table 17 presents the results from this test.

Table 17 T- Tests Attitude Factors and Region of Origin

	Levene's Test for		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Affection	.043	.835	.394	292	.694	.03296	.08374
Hygiene	1.752	.187	-2.728	292	.007	-.25837	.09471
Food Quality	.126	.723	-.764	292	.445	-.05273	.06899
Service Quality	.674	.412	1.098	292	.273	.07576	.06901
Value for money	.988	.321	1.281	292	.201	.15510	.12108
Satisfaction	1.238	.267	-1.202	292	.230	-.11443	.09523

These results indicate there is no significant differences in any of the factors comprising attitude towards street food between Asians and westerners and add evidence to further confirming the null hypothesis H_{1-c0} .

The three items measuring subjective norm, and two items measuring Perceived behavioral control were computed into summarized values to be used in the multiple regression modeling. Mean values and standard deviation of the computed variables are presented in table 18.

Table 18 Mean value of subjective norm and perceived behavioral control

Descriptive Statistics			
		Subjective norm	Perceived behavioral control
N	Valid	294	294
	Missing	0	0
Mean		3.7664	3.8418
Std. Deviation		.62669	.66583

4.1.4 Multiple Regression

The model summary shows an adjusted R square value of .618, which means that the construct can explain 61.8% of variance in tourists' behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket using the selected predictors. The Durbin-Watson test had a value of 1.871, displaying a significant difference between the dependent and independent variables. To further discard any possibilities of autocorrelation, a visual inspection of the Pearson correlation table was done to corroborate that none of the values among the construct was bigger than 0.7. The F value was equals to $(8, 285) = 60.331$, with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This result demonstrates that the independent variables are good predictors for behavioral intentions. Table 19 presents each one of the predictors of behavioral intentions, their standardized Beta coefficients, level of significance and collinearity statistics.

Table 19 Coefficients of street food factors

Variable	Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Affection	.312		.000	.578	1.730
Hygiene	.006		.881	.705	1.419
Food quality	.019		.708	.484	2.067
Service quality	.188		.000	.544	1.839
Satisfaction	.171		.001	.544	1.837
Subjective norm	.248		.000	.746	1.340
Perceived behavioral control	.178		.000	.802	1.248
Value for money	-.016		.703	.764	1.309

The model suggests that affection, subjective norm, service quality, satisfaction, and perceived behavioral control are all significant predictors of the dependent variable. It also indicates that hygiene, food quality and value for money do not contribute in a significant level to predict behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket. The predictor with the highest beta value was affection (0.312), which is a similar outcome to the one encountered by Mosavi and Ghaedi (2012), which indicated that positive emotions have a positive relationship with behavioral

intentions. This finding could be explained as a result of the inclusive nature of emotions as a global factor that encompasses all other factors. If respondents consider any of the attributes in street food does not please their expectations, it will most certainly lead to a change of the overall affection of the individual towards street food. Service quality (0.188) and satisfaction (0.171) had a mild influence in predicting tourist's behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket. These results support previous studies that linked service quality and satisfaction with future consumer behavior (Ryu et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2011; Namkung & Jang, 2007). In addition, since affection, satisfaction and perceived service quality form part of the attitude of tourists towards street food in Phuket, these findings support H_3 : *There is a relationship between the attitude towards street food in Phuket international tourists have and their behavioral intentions*, although it is important to mention that not all attributes in the dimension of street food attitude have the same predicting capabilities.

Likewise, results from the linear regression indicate that subjective norm (0.248) and perceived behavioral control (0.178) play an important role in predicting behavioral intentions. These results support previous studies that used the theory of planned behavior as a research framework (Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015; Kim et al., 2013; Bhuyan, 2010), and support H_4 : *There is a positive relationship between subjective norm and behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket* and H_5 : *There is a positive relationship between perceived behavioral control and behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket*.

4.2 Open Ended Questions Analysis

All open ended questions were coded in order to deparate and group respondents' answers into more meaningful data. Subsequently, report charts were generated to determine the frequency of every answer. Russian (35), Chinese (31), British (23) and American (21) were the groups with more representation in the sample, table 20 shows the respondents' nationalities.

Table 20 Nationality of Respondants

Nationality	Frequency	Nationality	Frequency	Nationality	Frequency
Argentina	3	Germany	19	Russia	35
Australia	18	Hungary	3	Singapore	5
Austria	3	India	5	Slovenia	1
Belarus	1	Iran	1	South Africa	2
Belgium	7	Israel	3	Spain	3
Brazil	2	Italy	7	Sweden	9
Bulgaria	1	Japan	6	Switzerland	2
Canada	12	Korea	7	Taiwan	1
Chile	1	Laos	1	Tanzania	1
China	31	Malaysia	10	Turkey	2
Colombia	1	Malta	2	Ukraine	3
Croatia	2	Mexico	2	United	23
Czech	1	Morocco	1	USA	21
Denmark	7	New	1	Uzbekistan	1
Egypt	1	Norway	2		
Finland	8	Philippines	5		
France	7	Portugal	4	Total	294

Respondents were asked about their favorite street food in Phuket, and the answers were very diverse, the data was interpreted to fit into a specific category. The most mentioned dish was Roti (or Thai pancake), followed by fruit, fried rice, pad Thai and then barbecue. The reason these dishes were preferred by international tourists could be related to the level of familiarity these options present. Even though they are Thai dishes in their composition, the ingredients they are made with are very recognizable, and available all over the world. For this reason, they present a good level of novelty to tourists who are excited to taste new things, but at the same time, they convey a smaller perception of risk than other dishes like Curry or Som tum which include ingredients that are more indigenous to the Thai diet, but are rare or unavailable in other countries (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Mak et al., 2012). Table 21 offers more detailed information about international tourist's favorite street food dish.

Table 21 Favorite street food dish

Favorite Dish	Frequency
Thai pancake (Roti)	42
Prepared Fruit	36
Fried rice	27
Pad thai	27
Barbecue	26
Skewers	24
Fried chicken	19
Noodles (Kuaytaew)	19
Papaya salad (Som tum)	18
Seafood	17
Spicy seafood soup (Tom yum)	14
Crepes	7
Ice cream	7
Juice	7
Thai sweets	7
Mango and sticky rice	6
Sticky rice	6
Rice with chicken (Khao man gai)	5
Curry	4
Grilled meat balls	4
Satay	4
Steamed corn	4
Chicken with cashewnuts	3
Fried noodles	3
Local tea	3
Steamed buns (Dim Sum)	2
Fish cakes	2
Fried pork	2
Kebab	2
Mango salad	2
Spicy chicken	2
Spicy salad (Yum)	2
Spring rolls	2

The first part of the survey included two projective questions, in the first one, respondents were asked to state the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about “street food in Phuket”. Most of the answers had a positive connotation, 77 respondents used all sorts of adjectives to describe how delicious the street food was, 62 of them mentioned thinking of their favorite dish of street food when the idea is prompted into their heads, 53 of them mentioned that food was cheap. Among the negative comments, 33 mentioned something related to the lack of hygiene, 10 said the food was of average or low quality and 4 stated that there were clear problems with the organization of vendors. Table 22 presents the most frequent responses to this question.

Table 22 First impression on street food in Phuket

First Impression on street food in Phuket	Frequency
Delicious food	77
Favorite dish	62
Affordable price	53
Lack of hygiene	34
Good quality	17
Variety	15
Spicy	14
Thai food	13
Convenient	11
Cultural value	10
Average or low quality	10
Fast service	8
Unique food	7
Location	6
Fresh food	5
Lack of options	5
Intense flavor	4
Organization problems	4
Visually attractive	3
Not healthy	3
Expensive price	2

The second question asked specifically about any concerns that people might have when eating street food in Phuket. Contrary to the previous question, the wording in this question encouraged more negative feedback, 152 respondents stated that their major concern was the hygiene of the food, 48 mentioned vendors had poor knowledge of food production standards, and 43 stated that they were concerned mostly about the nutritional value of their meals. Table 23 presents most mentioned concerns when eating street food in Phuket.

Table 23 Top concern when eating street food in Phuket

Top concern	Frequency
Hygiene	152
Production standards	48
Nutritional value	43
Price	28
Freshness	24
Flavor	23
No concerns	15
Spiciness	13
Food quality	8
Organization problems	6
Authenticity	5
Convenience	5
Fast service	4
Aroma	3
Variety	3
Lack of menu options	2
Location	2
Scams	2

A quick look on the previous two tables rises a couple of interesting contradictions. First in Table number one, only 34 participants mentioned that they were concerned about the lack of hygiene of street food in Phuket. Nonetheless in the second table, an alarming number of 152 respondents stated that they were wary of the hygiene of street food. This difference may exist because respondents

trust their own capacity of discerning from a potentially risky venue with low hygiene standards, and cleaner venues which they would likely buy from. In a sense, consumers trust they have acquired enough information to keep them safe when consuming street food, even when their general perception about hygiene in Phuket is bad. Another big contradiction is in the way people reported flavor in both questions. While in question one 77 gave an answer related to the flavor of the food, in question two only 23 mentioned their top concern was flavor. In this case, the discrepancy may be related to how the different components of attitude relate to each other. While question number one encourages an emotional answer, question two inquires for a more rationalized answer, and as such it reveals that flavor might not be as important when using a reasoned approach (Blackwell et al., 2006; Evans et al., 2006).

In the second part of the questionnaire two more open questions were included, the first one asked for the city and country in which respondents preferred street food the most, and what is the reason behind their preference. Unsurprisingly, the most popular answer was Thailand. Since respondents were asked while visiting Phuket; this could have had a big influence in the way they responded. Other important street food destinations were China (13) and Japan (11) as shown in Table . From the 81 participants that mentioned Thailand as the country with their favorite street food, Phuket was the most popular city as presented in Table . This, however, could also have been the result of the study performed in Phuket. If the same survey is applied in Chiang Mai, respondents might have a tendency of favoring their current or most recent destination.

Table 24 Favorite street food by country

Favorite street food by country	Frequency
Thailand	81
China	13
Japan	11
Singapore	7
India	6
USA	6
Turkey	5
Italy	4
Malaysia	4
Mexico	4
France	3
Korea	3
Germany	2
Russia	2
Taiwan	2
Other countries	19

Table 25 Favorite street food by city in Thailand

Favorite street food by city in Thailand	Frequency
Phuket	44
Bangkok	20
Chiang Mai	12
Other	3
Pattaya	2

Perhaps more important than where respondents like to eat street food is the reasons they have when choosing a favorite street food destination. In regards to this aspect, most of the respondents, no matter what their chosen destination was, reported that flavor, food variety, affordable price and hygiene are the most important factors to make such decision. Table 26 presents the most popular reasons participants had when choosing their favorite street food destination.

Table 26 Reasons to choose favorite street food destination

Reason for selecting their favorite street food destination	Frequency
Flavor	66
Variety	55
Affordable price	22
Hygiene	22
Familiarity	20
Quality	12
Cultural value	6
Haven't tried others	4
Spicy	4
Uniqueness	4
Aroma	3
Reputation	3
Convenient	2
Nutritional value	2
Value for money	2
Dietary restrictions	2

The second question asked participants how would they describe their experiences with street food in Phuket to others. Most of the answers focused on flavor, although some described how food was very affordable and unique, the most important adjectives used to describe the experience with street food in Phuket are presented in table 27.

Table 27 How respondents would describe street food in Phuket

Experience with street food in Phuket	Frequency
Delicious	64
Affordable	32
Average experience	20
Big variety of food to choose from	20
Unique	15
Worth trying	13
Interesting	9
Bad experience	8
Excellent	8
Very fresh food	6
Spicy	6
Authentic	5
Worse than other destinations in Thailand	5
Exciting	4
Healthy	4
Dirty	3
Expensive	3
Fast	3
Not authentic	3
Not many options	3
Too spicy	3
Clean	2
Fun	2
Not healthy	2

The final part of the survey included an open section for additional comments, these are some of the most relevant remarks participants provided:

“The food by the beach is very good, but the fresh markets are not very clean”.

“Street food is clean, but streets could have more garbage bins”.

“I love street food, but having been around Thailand, I find street food in Phuket much more expensive compared to mainland”.

“Papaya salad is healthy, but other dishes contain deep fried sugar and MSG, not very healthy”.

“I feel very addicted to Thai food, I will miss all I have learned and experienced in Thailand. I just wish they didn’t use so much MSG”.

“I believe vendors of street food have a very poor understanding of hygiene. They take money and serve food with the same hand, always use dirty towels, there are insects around the food all the time, also they use palm oil for frying and a lot of MSG, is very unhealthy”

“The fruit close to Patong is not very fresh”

“Food is so sweet; I would recommend less sugar. Also, vendors should wash their hands more often. And use chillers for the meat”.

“Street food should be more hygienic and served at the right temperature”.

“Every bit of space is used in the street; vendors would take sidewalks, handicap spaces and even the road”.

“It would be better if there is more information about the food”.

“Street food is part of Thailand, but Thai people are careless with hygiene. You could be sick if you are not vigilant in where you eat”.

“Some of the food is quite good, but is always an experience to eat it, because most of the time I don’t know what I am eating”.

Most of these comments are suggestions of what problems should Phuket address to improve tourists’ street food experience. The great majority of respondents did not provide any additional comments, the survey was quite long, and most of them did not elaborate a lot when responding the open ended questions. And as such, those who did comment and took some time to give their recommendations ought to be considered. The major problems these comments highlighted are related to hygiene, food production standards, the use of flavor enhancers and lack of information about food ingredients.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary and Discussion of Key Findings

Street food is a very important resource for the tourism industry in Thailand, and as such, it is necessary to understand how it is perceived by the consumers, in order to solve any possible issues, update and strengthen the service, and address tourists concerns. This research was contrived in response to that need, and aimed at attaining a comprehensive understanding of international tourists' attitude towards the street food sold in Phuket. Also, it explored how tourists' attitude related to street food affects their behavioral intentions, such as recommending friends and family to try street food in Phuket, or revisiting the Island to eat street food. Specifically, this research had four main objectives. First, it sought to explore the characteristics of international tourists whom showed interest in trying, or had tried street food in Phuket during their visit, this observation was made in two major areas, including their demographic profile and their past travel behavior. Secondly, this study had an objective of investigating international tourists' attitude towards street food in Phuket, this was with by means of a self-administered survey, in which all the major factors, based on previous studies were included. Third, the present study intended to explore which of the factors composing the street food experience have a greater effect in the attitude of international tourists towards it. And lastly, it anticipated to assess how the attitude of international tourists towards street food in Phuket affects their behavioral intentions, this was measured for both behavioral intentions for street food, and for the destination as a whole.

In order to fulfill these objectives, a three-part self-administered survey was designed, the first draft of the questionnaire was constructed based on previous studies, including studies about service in the food and beverage industry, street food, consumer behavior, food quality, service quality, among others, the items were then modified to fit the scope of the present research (Pullphoththong & Sopha, 2013; Heung & Gu, 2012; Ryu, Lee & Kim, 2012; Bhuyan, 2010; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Lee, 2009; Kim et al., 2009; Okumus et al., 2005). This first draft was applied to

a pilot sample of 40 international tourists. Based on their answers, and on the counsel of a tourism research board, some modifications were done to the instrument. The first part of the questionnaire was focused on objective number two, on it, participants were asked to rate in a five Likert scale, the six major elements of street food experience, including food quality, physical environment hygiene, service quality, affection, satisfaction and value for money (Liu et al., 2013; Karim et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2009; Okumus et al., 2005). The second and third part of the questionnaire were dedicated at obtaining information related to the objective one of this research. A big section of the second part, is composed of questions which aimed at getting information about tourists past travel behavior, while in the third part most of the questions involved data about the demographic profile of respondents (Yozdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015; Sheats et al., 2013; Bhuyan, 2010; S. Seo et al., 2013; Zoltan & Masiero, 2012; Chen & Tsai, 2007). To accomplish objectives three and four the obtained data was processed into a linear multiple regression analysis, and several correlation analyses.

This study took place in Phuket, Thailand. It considered tourists of various nationalities whom visited the island during the period of December 2015 to January 2016. The sampling method utilized was non- probabilistic, and the questionnaire was distributed through direct interception of the respondents in the most visited tourists' attractions of Phuket. From a total of 400 distributed questionnaires, 294 were used for the multiple regression analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participants' demographic profile, general attitude towards street food in Phuket and to explore the most important attributes of street food. Then, a multiple regression analysis was employed to determine which attributes of food are best predictors of tourist's behavioral intentions. The scale used to measure attitude towards street food in Phuket included 25 items that evaluated diverse attributes of food.

5.1.1 Findings and Discussion Related to Objective One: To explore the characteristics and traveling behavior of international tourists who are interested in street food in Phuket

These findings suggested that the demographic characteristics and travelling behavior of international tourists who are interested in street food in Phuket are numerous. More specifically, this study opposes findings of previous studies that found gender is an important determinant of attitude towards food (Kim et al., 2009; Jianakoplos & Bernasek, 1998; Stark & Ewa, 2015; Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2013; Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Findings in the present study suggest that attitude towards street food is equally distributed in both genders, there is not predisposition nor a significant difference of preference for street food from neither of the gender groups. Moreover, both groups seem to report similar evaluation of most of the food related variables. Additionally, in contrast to what previous studies suggest (Kim et al., 2009; Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Bagozzi et al., 2000), the present study did not find evidence that people with previous experience or people that were familiar with street food in Phuket had a better attitude towards it. This might be explained by the differentiation consumers make from one vendor to another, for example a consumer with previous experience eating pad Thai, might find that the taste or quality are very different between two vendors, and therefore his/her previous experience might not constitute a reliable source of information when it comes to his/her attitude towards street food. Furthermore, opposing to previous studies that suggested that age is a significant factor (Mak et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2009; Cohen & Avieli, 2004), the present study found only a slight difference in the way people from an older age would assess some of the food variables, especially those related to hygiene. Nevertheless, the difference is not a general occurrence and it cannot be considered a determinant factor on attitude towards food. These findings indicate that street food in Phuket is a service which is not particular to a specific market segment, and therefore it could be used to attract a wide range of tourists.

5.1.2 Findings and Discussion Related to Objective Two: To investigate the attitude of international tourists towards street food of Phuket

These findings indicate that in general International tourists have a positive attitude towards street food in Phuket, all 8 factors reported means above the neutral threshold with a tendency into positive results. The affection factor was measured using three variables; “It makes me feel happy”, “It makes me feel good” and “It is a fun experience” were the focus of the variables, the total mean score was 3.92 and remarkably the variable related to street food as a fun experience had a mean score of 4.10 making it the second highest score in all the model. This suggests that the majority of tourists believe partaking of the local street food is a fun activity. The hygiene factor was measured using four variables; “is hygienic”, “I am not afraid of getting sick”, “vendors are well groomed and clean” and “carts are clean and organized”, this factor presented the lowest mean score with only 3.20 in total, and two of the variables in the construct scored the lowest in all the model with a total mean score of 3.13, this result reflects that largely, International tourists have a neutral attitude towards the hygiene of street food in Phuket. From the open ended questions, it can be gathered that tourists have concerns about the cleanliness of street food, even when the answer in the close ended questions was neutral, most of participants (152) answered that hygiene is their biggest concern when eating street food in Phuket, and many suggestions offered by respondents are related to production standards and hygiene. The food quality factor was composed by eight variables; “freshness of the ingredients”, “free of additives”, “good taste”, “appealing smell”, “ease of consumption”, “nutritional value”, “visually attractiveness” and “food temperature” were the focus of those variables, food taste scored a mean value of 4.12 the highest value among all variables in the model. This indicates that most of tourists consider that street food in Phuket has a good flavor. Also, in the open ended questions, people used words like delicious, good quality, unique and intense flavor to describe the what comes to their minds when they hear the phrase “street food in Phuket”. This gives an idea that people is aware of the quality and flavor of the food, and they developed an image that is favorable to the street food vendors. If addressed properly this image could be

promoted to a better defined product, and exploited as a tourist attraction. The service quality factor included seven items; “uniqueness”, “authenticity”, “variety”, “convenience”, “quickness of the service”, “ease of order” and “friendliness of vendors” were the core qualities measured by these variables. All variables in this construct scored means above 3.70, and those measuring authenticity and variety scored 4.05 and 4.01 respectively. Tourists see local street food as an authentic option, and they place cultural value to the experience of trying this kind of food. Satisfaction was measured by two items measuring food quality and service quality satisfaction independently, the average mean score was 3.80 and both of the items scored above 3.70. Lastly, value for money was measured only by one variable and it scored 4.07, being the highest score for a factor in the model. This result is supported by the outcome in the open questions where 53 participants reported the first thing that came to their minds when thinking about street food was its affordable price.

5.1.3 Findings and Discussion Related to Objective Three, Four and Five: To Assess How Tourists’ Attitude, Subjective Norm and Perceived Behavioral Control Affect Their Behavioral Intentions Towards Street Food in Phuket

These findings were obtained by means of a multiple linear regression. Results show that affection, subjective norm, service quality, satisfaction and perceived behavioral control are all good predictors of international tourists’ behavioral intentions related to street food in Phuket. Affection scored the highest, this might be because this variable has an emotional connotation, and involves the evaluation of the whole food experience, rather than just a specific trait of it. Surprisingly subjective norm had the second highest score, an explanation for this result could be that street food is seen as an hedonic product that brings with it a prestige motivator, as mentioned by Mak *et al.* (2012), tourists might want to build their knowledge about local food delicacies by eating like natives do, and exploring new dishes that might not be available for their friends and family at home. Service quality, satisfaction and perceived behavioral control all presented similar standardized coefficients Beta (.170 - .190), these results were expected as previous studies that explored food from a different perspective reported these factors are

important predictors for food behavioral intentions (Mak et al., 2012; Henderson et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2011; Privitera & Nesci, 2016; Cousins et al., 2011). Food quality, hygiene and value for money are not good predictors of tourist's behavioral intentions, these findings oppose what previous studies found while exploring food in contexts different from street food (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Mak et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2011; Privitera & Nesci, 2016; Bhuyan, 2011). It is important to mention that while hygiene scored the lowest mean value among factors, this does not seem to have an effect on its ability to predict consumer behavioral intentions towards street food. This discrepancy could be related to consumer's previous knowledge of sanitation flaw, the general perception of street food in developing countries is that it has a poor hygiene, however consumers are still willing to consume it, revisit and recommend it to family and friends. A similar phenomenon could explain why value for money and food quality did not predicted any variance in consumer behavioral intentions. Even though both factors obtained high mean scores, these are attributes that are expected from street food, and therefore, an empirical confirmation of the predicted attribute does not constitute a decisive factor to determine their future behavior. These findings do not imply that vendors should focus only in delivering good service and disregard other aspects of the food experience, because the absence of the other attributes, might still affect the satisfaction and affection levels of the consumer, and therefore have an impact on their behavioral intentions.

5.2 Implications and Recommendations

As it has been previously explored by different authors, food is often regarded as a major trip motivator, and it can add value to the destination image (Okumus et al., 2007; Chen & Tsai, 2006; Jalis et al., 2014). And as such, a practical recommendation that can be drawn from findings related to objective one of this study could include the creation of a marketing program by the Tourism Authority of Thailand, in which local street food is used as a tourist attraction. Similar to what has been reported by Jalis *et al.* (2014) relevant government agencies could use a combination of carefully selected street food dishes, and promote those dishes to create a well-defined food identity. This would help differentiate Phuket local street food from other parts of Thailand, and other parts of south east Asia. By doing so,

tourists will have more information about the dishes that make Phuket street food unique, and it would create anticipation on what is to be expected from vendors across the island.

This study offers a clear understanding of how street food in Phuket is perceived by international tourists, it helps to clarify what are the major flaws in the industry. If respondents' suggestions are considered, it would be possible to offer a more competitive service that withholds international standards and safeguards the health of consumers. Street food is a very important industry in developing countries, it helps to provide means of revenue to individuals and families that otherwise would not have any income. It also supplies a large part of the food needs of the population. For some countries it can be a resource to attract tourists and develop a strong identity (Alimi, 2016; Henderson et al., 2012; Privitera & Nesci, 2016). Nonetheless, it has been reported that countries such as Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan that have addresses the problem of food production standardization, sanitation, and prevention of health hazards seem to enjoy a better reputation around their street food (Alimi, 2016; Henderson et al., 2012; Muhammad et al., 2016; Privitera & Nesci, 2016; Jalis et al., 2014; Sun et al., 2012; Malhotra, 2017). There could be an opportunity for all stakeholders in the street food industry of Phuket to improve their destination image as a gastronomical city. The development of a street vendor association could help to solve some of the reported issues. Such association would work with help of the Public health department, as well as the Tourism Authority of Thailand, its objective would be to register every food vendor, and making sure that before opening, every vendor gets basic training in food production, management, and sanitation. Helping with the development of the menu would also be advisable, in this way tourists will encounter an easy to read and understandable menu no matter where they eat, it would also standardize the language and images used in the menu, helping to create a stronger unique identity by selecting dishes that are indigenous to Phuket. A star rating could be at the core of the program, every vendor could participate and get certified according to international criteria, this would be a fair way to encourage vendors to make an extra effort in improving the food and service quality. At the same time, the members of the association

would take care of not allowing anyone without certification to operate in the designated areas, as well as monitoring operating vendors so they keep the standards they were awarded for throughout the year, at the end of the year, vendors would be visited by members of the association, and reevaluated to adjust the award rating if necessary.

A practical recommendation that can be drawn from findings related to objective four is the integration of fun activities related to street food to the marketing campaign, these will increase the affection level of the consumers and achieve higher revisit and recommendation rates. Activities that allow consumers to interact closely with the vendors and access a greater amount of information about the food they will consume, could be encouraged, programs like organized food safaris in which the tourists would be taken to famous places for street food around the island, sampling different dishes and interacting with vendors that can offer more information about how the food is made and where to get similar food. Other program could involve the organization of street food festivals, vendors from around Phuket could gather together and offer their product to a bigger audience, presenting cultural activities to accompany the festival, such as Thai dancing, theater or street performers.

In addition, the present study increases the body of knowledge in the field of consumer behavior, by confirming that the theory of planned behavior can be applied to consumers of street food. The model is able to forecast 61.8% of the variance of tourists' behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket by using attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control as predictors (Bhuyan, 2011; Kim et al., 2011; Ryu et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2013). This opens the possibility of using the theory of planned behavior in other areas related to food service and street food.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

There were some limitations in the present study that need consideration. First, the information in this research was obtained only during the peak season, reproduction of this investigation across seasons might produce more comprehensive data. Second, due to a language barrier, it was difficult to achieve a

proportional number of respondents that match with the tourist population in Phuket. Further research, may consider using quota sampling and include higher number of Chinese and other Asian participants. Third, the present research only focuses on tourists visiting Phuket, consequently, generalization of the results would require replication of similar studies in other destinations. Lastly, during the statistical analysis of this research, all attributes of street food were considered to have the same weight in the way they affect consumer's attitude. A scale that combines multiple rating and Likert scale could reflect more accurately the specific importance of each attribute and the impact they have in the overall attitude towards street food.

Despite the previously described limitations, this study helps to describe what is the attitude of international tourists towards street food in Phuket, it gives background knowledge of how street food is perceived by participants and helped to identify what factors are most important in predicting consumer's behavioral intentions related to street food in Phuket. As such, this study serves as a platform for future research concerning street food in other destinations and adds information to the existing body of studies related to consumer behavior.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Questionnaire Number _____

International Tourists Attitude Towards Street Food in Phuket, Thailand

This questionnaire aims to investigate the attitude of tourists towards food and beverages sold in public places in Phuket. The results will be included in a dissertation submitted as a requirement for obtaining an MBA degree at Prince of Songkla University. All your answers are confidential and will be used only for research purposes. For more information, please contact Mr. Luis Torres at (+66) 0901707704 or luis.toch@gmail.com

**Part 1**

1. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think about "Street food in Phuket"?

2. What is your top concern when eating street food in Phuket and why?

How much do you agree with each of the following statements?	Level of Agreement				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Street food in Phuket makes me feel good	5	4	3	2	1
Street food in Phuket is hygienic	5	4	3	2	1
I am not afraid of getting sick from street food in Phuket	5	4	3	2	1
Street vendors in Phuket use fresh ingredients	5	4	3	2	1
Street food in Phuket is natural and free of additives	5	4	3	2	1
Street food in Phuket has good taste	5	4	3	2	1
The smell of street food in Phuket is appealing	5	4	3	2	1
It is easy for me to eat street food in Phuket	5	4	3	2	1
Street food in Phuket is healthy and nutritious	5	4	3	2	1
Street food in Phuket is visually attractive	5	4	3	2	1
Street food in Phuket is served at a right temperature	5	4	3	2	1
Street food in Phuket is unique and exotic	5	4	3	2	1
Street food in Phuket represents an authentic local culture	5	4	3	2	1
There is a big variety of street food options in Phuket	5	4	3	2	1
Street food vendors in Phuket are well groomed and clean	5	4	3	2	1
Food stands and carts in Phuket are clean and organized	5	4	3	2	1
Food venues are conveniently located around Phuket	5	4	3	2	1
Street food venues in Phuket provide a fast service	5	4	3	2	1
It is easy to order my meal at street food venues in Phuket	5	4	3	2	1
Street food vendors in Phuket are friendly	5	4	3	2	1
Street food in Phuket has good value for money	5	4	3	2	1
There is enough information about street food in Phuket	5	4	3	2	1
I am satisfied with the street food quality in Phuket	5	4	3	2	1
I am satisfied with street food service in Phuket	5	4	3	2	1
Thinking about street food in Phuket makes me happy	5	4	3	2	1
I feel trying street food in Phuket is a fun experience	5	4	3	2	1
Street food in Phuket is very different from food that I normally have at my country	5	4	3	2	1

Part 2

1. How many days do you stay in Phuket during this visit?
 1-3 days 4-7 days 8-14 days 15 days or more
 2. How often do you travel outside of your home country?
 Twice or more times per year Once every two years
 Once every Year Once every three years or less
 3. What is the main purpose of your visit to Phuket? (mark only one)
 Business Medical Honeymoon Visiting relatives / friends
 Leisure Education Incentive/ bonus Others (please specify) _____
 4. How many times have you visited Thailand? (Including this time)
 1 time 2-5 times 6-9 times 10 or more times
 5. How many times have you visited Phuket? (Including this time)
 1 time 2-5 times 6-9 times 10 or more times
 6. How many people are travelling with you this time?
 I am alone 1-2 persons 3-4 persons 5 or more persons
 7. Who are you traveling with? (mark as many as it applies)
 Alone Work Colleagues Friends
 Couple/ Partner Family Other (please specify) _____
 8. On average, how much did you spend per day while travelling in Phuket? (per person)
 1,000 THB or less 3,001- 5,000 THB
 1,001 - 3,000 THB More than 5,000 THB
 9. On average, how much did you spend when eating out in a restaurant in Phuket? (per person)
 200 THB or less 401- 600 THB
 201- 400 THB More than 600 THB
 10. How much was your average expense when eating street food in Phuket? (per person)
 70 THB or less 101- 130 THB I did not eat street food in Phuket
 71- 100 THB More than 130 THB
 11. How many times did you eat street food while you were in Phuket?
 1 time 6-9 times I did not eat street food in Phuket
 2-5 times 10 or more times
 12. Have you ever had street food elsewhere before visiting Thailand?
 Yes No
 13. What kind of street food do you like the most in Phuket?
-

14. Where did you eat street food while you were in Phuket? (mark as many as applies)

- By the roadside Day/ night markets I did not eat street food in Phuket
 Designated hawking centers By the beach Others (please specify) _____

15. How did you know about street food in Phuket? (mark as many as it applies)

- Personal past experience Travel agents TV and radio
 Friends or family Tourism brochures Others (please specify) _____
 Internet Magazines/ newspapers

16. In which country/city street food is most attractive to you and why?

17. How would you explain your food experience in Phuket to others?

18. Complete the following statements with one adjective that best describes the following food attributes:

- a. Price of street food in Phuket is _____
- b. Taste of street food in Phuket is _____
- c. Hygiene of street food in Phuket is _____
- d. In General street food in Phuket is _____

How much do you agree with each of the following statements about your preferences when travelling?	Level of Agreement				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I believe my family and friends would appreciate if I try street food in Phuket.	5	4	3	2	1
I believe my family and friends would like to try street food in Phuket	5	4	3	2	1
People whose opinions regarding food are important to me think that I should try street food wherever I travel.	5	4	3	2	1
If I wanted to, I could buy other food instead of street food while visiting Phuket	5	4	3	2	1
It is mostly up to me whether or not to buy street food in Phuket	5	4	3	2	1
I would like to come back to eat street food in Phuket	5	4	3	2	1
I would recommend street food in Phuket to friends and others	5	4	3	2	1
Based on my experience with street food In Phuket I would like to come back in the future	5	4	3	2	1
Based on my experience with street food in Phuket I would recommend it as a destination for friends and family	5	4	3	2	1

Questionnaire Number _____

Part 3

1. Gender
 Female Male
2. Age
 Less than 20 30-39 50-59
 20-29 40-49 60 and above
3. Nationality _____
4. What is your regular staple food? (mark only one)
 Rice Wheat/ bread Others (please specify)
 Corn/ maize Potato/ yam _____
5. Religion
 Christianity Hinduism Others (please specify)
 Islam Buddhism _____
6. Marital status
 Single Separated/ divorced
 Married / living together Widowed
7. Highest level of education
 College diploma (NVQ/ SVQ, HND/HNC) Secondary certificate (GCSE, SCE)
 University degree (BSc, BA, MSc, MBA, PhD, PGCE) Other qualifications
8. Occupation
 Student Self- employed Others (please specify)
 Government Employee Retired _____
 Private Company Employee Unemployed
9. Monthly total income in USD
 Less than \$1,000 \$3,001- \$5,000 \$7,001- \$9,000
 \$1,001- \$3,000 \$5,001- \$7,000 More than \$9,000
10. Number of people in your household including yourself _____

Additional comments

Thank you very much for your time.

Appendix B

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Research note

Understanding international tourists' attitudes towards street food in Phuket, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Street food is present throughout South East Asia, and represents a major tourist attraction in Thailand. Phuket, like other destinations, offers an array of different specialties from which to choose. This could be exploited as a visitor attraction, but certain factors need to be improved for the street food to be more attractive to international tourists visiting the island. The aim of this research was to describe the general attitude of international tourists towards street food in Phuket, as well as to identify what dimensions are most important in predicting their behavioral intentions. This study surveyed 294 international tourists, and using a multiple regression model, identified that out of hygiene, affection, food quality, service quality, satisfaction and value, affection is the most important predictor of tourist's behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket.

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1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the most important industries in Thailand. According to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand (2015), Thailand received nearly 25 million tourists in 2014, and earned > 1.20 trillion THB in direct revenue, which is equivalent to > 11% of Thailand's total gross domestic product (GDP). Thailand is 11th in the most visited countries ranking of the world, and 6th in the countries with most revenue from tourism receipts (UNWTO, n.d.). Thai food plays an important part in the image of Thailand as a destination. Campaigns such as "Amazing Thai/food" or the "Thai street food festival in 2014" showcase authentic local dishes that have helped building a better reputation for the gastronomic offer throughout the kingdom (TAT, n.d.). Studies have concluded that food is one of the most important factors for tourists in deciding whether they want to visit or revisit a particular destination (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2013; Quan & Wang, 2004), and it constitutes an important motivator for tourists to visit Thailand (Kunrasakul, 2014; Yamjanya & Wongleedee, 2014).

In Thailand, the street food industry plays a very important role. There are approximately 90,000 street food outlets across the country (Street Stalls/Kiosks in Thailand, n.d.). In 2012, it was reported that annual earnings from the sale of street food amounted to nearly 250 billion THB. In the same year, street vending was responsible for the highest per capita spending in the food industry in Thailand with a total of six

billion transactions, and an average outlay of approximately 34 THB per transaction. In addition, according to a statistical report by Jalis, Che, and Markwell (2014), it is expected that the street food industry in Thailand will continue to expand with a compound annual growth rate of 0.3% in coming years (Nirathron, 2006).

Phuket is the second most important tourist destination in Thailand after Bangkok, almost one third of all Thailand's visitors arrive through Phuket. According to TAT statistics, in 2013, Phuket received 8,395,921 international tourists who produced revenue of > 233 billion THB. These figures are predicted to increase in the coming years. Recently, Phuket local government have joined the UNESCO's creative cities network, and Phuket has been granted with the title of "creative city of gastronomy". Phuket is the only city in South-East Asia to have such title, this could serve as a competitive advantage for Phuket, to distinct their destination from other cities in the region that also use local gastronomy as a selling point (Phuket, n.d.). However, some studies have found that not all tourists are interested in street food in Thailand, due to the low standards of food sanitation or because they simply find it unappealing (Sirigunna, 2015; Yamjanya & Wongleedee, 2014; Lertputtarak, 2012; Henderson, Yun, Poon, & Biew, 2012; Howard, 2009).

Although a number of studies have examined the experience of tourists with food in Thailand (Choovanichchannon, 2015; Sirigunna, 2015; Yamjanya & Wongleedee, 2014, 2013; Lertputtarak, 2012; Pullphochong & Sopha, 2012), little attention has been paid to explore the attitude of tourists towards local street food. As such, this is the first study that attempts to gain an understanding on international tourists' attitudes towards street food in Phuket, Thailand. All information

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obtained in this research was gathered by using a model based on previous studies, which explored and explained food related behaviors by using the theory of planned behavior (see Fig. 1).

This study is one of the first attempts to apply this model to street food. Information was gathered by applying a self-administered survey to international tourists visiting Phuket, it had three major purposes: first, to explore the characteristics of international tourists visiting Phuket; second, to investigate their attitude towards street food in Phuket. And third, to assess how their attitudes towards street food affect their behavioral intentions.

2. Literature review

2.1. Street food

Street food is an essential industry in many countries, it provides families that otherwise would not have any source of income with a significant revenue, with no tax payment and a very low capital investment is an option worth considering for a great number of vendors. In Southeast Asia street food or hawking is considered an important part of the social, cultural and economic organization (Toh & Birchenough, 2000). In countries like Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia street food is even considered as a touristic resource and authorities encourage the diversity of offers because it brings color and life to the destination landscape (Henderson et al., 2012; Jalis et al., 2014; Ramli et al., 2016; Muhammad, Zahan, Shariff, & Abdullah, 2016).

As famous chef Thompson and Carter (2009) said in Thailand "It's all about the food" (page 27), a walk around the streets of big cities such as Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Pattaya or Phuket can confirm this statement. The streets are full with food of all kinds, from market stalls and ambulant vendors, to Michelin starred restaurants and five-star hotels, food plays a central role in Thai society. For example, sharing food precedes most of the business dealings, and treating or inviting friends and family to dine out is signal of social accomplishment (Walker & Yasmeen, 1996). This trend goes from locals to visitors, as several studies have found, food is one of the most important motivations for tourists to visit Thailand (Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2014; Kururatchaikul, 2014; Lettputtakit, 2012), this does not come as a surprise, Thai food is so unique, that is considered one of the best cuisines of the world (CNN, 2015).

The street food sector offers ready-to-eat food and beverages prepared partially or entirely in public areas. As such, it relies in fresh locally sourced ingredients that allow little or no storage time. In this way, local street food helps the consumers understanding the relationship between food and territory, and shortens the distance between producers and final consumers (Sengel et al., 2015). Furthermore, street food represents a way of interacting with the host culture, it offers the opportunity to understand the local way of life, and a richer and more meaningful holiday experience. Eating out on the street is more convenient than going to a restaurant. Usually, food is cheaper and better than more formalized food offers. Moreover, street food is available at any time of the day and there is a wide range of variety to select from.

Normally, street food is made with ingredients sourced from local markets and the recipes vary from vendor to vendor. Because of this tourists who are familiar with street food from Kuala Lumpur or Bangkok could be less familiar with street food from Penang or Phuket. Differences in the local culture and geography across South-East Asia make street food unique in every region. These differences could therefore be a motivation for tourists that are familiar with Thai street food to revisit Thailand, and experience food of different regions (Kururatchaikul, 2014; Privitera & Nesci, 2015).

Unfortunately, in Thailand the economic benefits of street food are suppressed by health and social problems. Previous studies have identified several problems related to this industry such as limited knowledge of the vendors about food hygiene, food handling standards, and personal hygiene. Additional challenges include bad design of food stalls and carts, poor management, inappropriate location of hawkers, lack of law enforcement, and the tendency to illegality and bribery. These problems cannot be solved easily, but a possible solution could involve changing the status of informality of street food vendors. In countries such as Malaysia or Singapore street food has evolved into a micro industry in which the government sets standards and provides education for vendors to regulate the food handling process. These measures have proved to be effective in improving the quality of the offered food and the image tourists have towards those countries' street food (Henderson et al., 2012; Proietti, Prazzoli, & Mantovani, 2014; Toh & Birchenough, 2000).

2.2. Food and tourism

Food has a role in the social identity of every individual; thus, everyone selects food influenced by different factors such as culture or religion, socio-demographic factors, personal motivation, previous food experience, food related personality traits and other psychological factors (Cruwys, Bevelander, & Hermans, 2015; Mak, Lumbers, & Eves, 2012; Mak et al., 2013). However, when individuals go abroad they are outside of their routine, they no longer can procure their normal diet, and are forced to participate in the local culinary supply (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2012).

Previous studies have shown that gender is an important factor in tourists' food consumption, Kim, Eves, and Scarles (2009) suggested that "women were especially interested in tasting local food and excited about local food on their holidays" (Page 429). Nonetheless, studies in other disciplines have found that men show risk taking behavior more often than women (Stark & Zawojcka, 2015; Yiamjanya & Wongleedee, 2013; Janakoplos & Bernasek, 1998), and the consumption of local food could be described as an adventurous risk taking behavior, particularly if the destination is located in an unfamiliar country (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). It could be expected then, to find a significant difference in the attitude of male and female international tourists towards street food in Phuket. Mak, Lumbers, and Eves (2012) suggested that age is an important factor in food consumption, and that older people have different food preferences due to loss of sensorial capacities and health concerns, it would be likely then, that tourists of different age groups have a different attitude towards street food in Phuket.

Cohen and Avieli (2004) suggested that people from different regions experience cuisines in different ways. People from western countries have been exposed to cuisines from other parts of the world due to the effect of immigration, while Asian cuisines have not been subject to the same degree of influence by outsiders. Mak, Lumbers, Eves et al. (2012) pointed out that "past experience can significantly affect food consumption behavior" (Page 929) and that previous exposure to a kind of food could create food memories and thereby improve the consumer's attitude towards it. In this sense, there could be a significant difference in the attitude towards street food in Phuket between tourists who have visited Phuket in the past and those who have not. Other studies have suggested that factors like familiarity and exposure effect can have an influence in the attitude of consumers towards food related behaviors (Bagozzi, Wong, Abe, & Bergami, 2000; Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Kim et al., 2008).

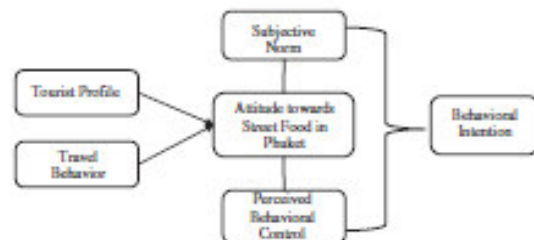


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework of this research adapted from the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Studies suggest that some of the major motivations for people to travel include "acquiring new knowledge", "getting experience in a foreign country" or "learning about a different culture", local cuisine represents cultural knowledge that adds value to the image of the destination, since culinary tradition is considered an intangible heritage passed on from one generation to another, it is impossible to participate in a truly authentic food experience without visiting the specific region and interacting with the locals that gave origin to that food, in this sense, the food provides the tourists with a historical context of the destination's identity becoming one of many forms of cultural tourism (Okumus, Okumus, & McKercher, 2007; Pullphothong & Sopha, 2013; Kim et al., 2009; Hong & Tsai, 2010; Ramil et al., 2016; Muhammad et al., 2016; Knudsen, Rickly, & Vilon, 2016).

2.3. Conceptual background

This study was developed based on previous research using the theory of planned behavior. It considers behavioral intention to be a consequence of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and past experiences [Heung & Gu, 2012; Ryu, Lee, & Kim, 2012; Bhuyan, 2010; Kim, Kim & Goh, 2011; Lee, 2009; Namkung & Jang, 2007; Bagozzi et al., 2000; Ajzen, 1991]. Attitude is considered to have a major role in the consumer behavior of tourists, it is formed based on previous experiences; it refers to a predisposition for liking or disliking specific stimuli, which include actions, ideas and objects. Attitude is comprised of three components; beliefs (cognitive), which involve the knowledge an individual has about the object of attitude; emotions (affective) which consist of the feelings of individuals towards a stimuli and are based on their beliefs; and finally, intentions (conative) which refers to how individuals are likely to respond towards an object based on their emotions and beliefs (Lee, 2009; Evans, Jamal, & Foxall, 2006; Blackwell, Miniard, & Engel, 2001). The subjective norm is a psychological concept based on each individual's perception, about how people that are important to them might react if they behave in a certain way, for instance by consuming certain products or services, measured against the motivation to comply with the social pressures created by other people's expected reactions (Bagozzi et al., 2000; Shears, Middlestadt, Ora, Juarez, & Kolbe, 2013). Perceived behavioral control can be defined as the degree to which a consumer can affect or control a future behavior. Since measuring the actual resources and opportunities an individual has to perform an expected behavior is difficult, this variable actually measures the belief of control the consumer has (Evans et al., 2006; Kim, Han, Yang and Choi, 2013a).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research instrument

A three-part self-administered survey was employed in this study, which was designed to examine international tourists' attitude towards street food in Phuket. Most of the items in the survey questionnaire were adopted from previous studies and modified to fit the scope of this research (Pullphothong & Sopha, 2013; Heung & Gu, 2012; Ryu et al., 2012; Bhuyan, 2010; Kim et al., 2011; Hong & Tsai, 2010; Lee, 2009; Kim et al., 2009; Namkung & Jang, 2007; Okumus et al., 2007). Additional variables were added to the revised version based on feedback from five tourism experts and the results of a pilot study of 40 international tourists. The first part of the questionnaire aimed to gather information about tourists' attitudes towards street food in Phuket, and was constructed to measure six major elements: physical environment hygiene, food quality and service quality, affection, satisfaction, and price and value (Ab Karim, Lia, Aman, Okhman, & Salleh, 2011; Liu, Pestiak, & Verbeke, 2013). The food quality dimensions included taste, smell, freshness, food variety, appealing presentation, texture, juiciness, serving temperature and healthiness (Mosavi & Ghazali, 2013). The service quality dimensions included the speed and efficiency of the service

staff, their friendliness and disposition to help (Ryu et al., 2012) and the respondent's perception of the hygiene of the physical environment including the cleanliness of the establishment and the staff (Junic & Worsley, 1998; Sulaiman & Haron, 2013). The second part of the questionnaire was designed to obtain information about past travel behavior and experience, future behavioral intentions, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015; Shears et al., 2013; Bhuyan, 2010). The last part covered the respondent's socio-demographic characteristics (S. Seo, Kim, Oh, & Yun, 2013; Zoltan & Masiero, 2012; Chen & Tsai, 2007).

3.2. Population sample and data collection

This study was implemented on Phuket Island, one of the most important tourist destinations of Thailand, from December 2015 until January 2016. The population was considered to be all international tourists over the age of 18 years visiting Phuket. The population sample (the respondents) was selected using a non-probabilistic convenience sampling technique through direct interception in different locations in Phuket. To avoid over representation of any one group of people, special care was taken to include male and female respondents equally, and to incorporate tourists from a variety of nationalities in order to increase the representativeness of sample to the population (Gray, 2009; Bryman, 2008). In total, 400 questionnaires were distributed. After data collection and preparation for multiple regression modeling, the final sample consisted of 204 respondents.

3.3. Respondents' profiles

The demographic profile of the respondents is summarized in Table 3. 52% of the respondents were males and 48% females. 50.3% of the participants were younger than 30 years, 35.4% were from 30 to 49 years old, and 14.3% were 50 years or older. 77.6% of the participants were westerners, while 22.4% were from Asia. 62.6% of the respondents stated that they were Christians, 5.1% were Muslims, 2.7% were Hindus, 10.2% were Buddhists and 18.4% reported having other or no particular religious beliefs. 49% of the respondents indicated being single, 46.3% married, 3.4% divorced or separated, and 1.4% were widowed. 60% reported having a university degree or equivalent, 17.7% a college diploma, 9.2% a secondary certificate, and 7.1% said they had other qualifications. A total of 28.6% of the participants were private company employees, 25.2% were students, 22.8% were self-employed, 10.9% worked for a government organization, 8.5% were retired, 1.7% were unemployed and 2.4% reported having other occupations. 22.8% reported earning less than USD 1000 per month while 28.2% reported that they had a total monthly income of between USD 1001 and 3000, 23.8% had incomes of between USD 3001 and 5000, 10.2% had incomes of between USD 5000 and 7000, 5.4% earned between USD 7001 and 9000 and 6.8% reported earning more than USD 9000 per month, while 2.7% preferred not to disclose their personal income. 49% reported that their household size was 1 or 2 persons, 37.4% indicated 3 or 4 persons, 12.9% said 5 persons or more, and 0.7% did not wish to reveal this information.

3.4. Data analysis and reliability of scale

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participants' general attitude towards street food in Phuket and to explore the most significant attributes of street food. Then, a multiple regression analysis was used to determine which attributes of food are the best predictors of tourist's behavioral intentions. The scale used to measure attitude towards street food in Phuket included 25 items that evaluated different attributes of food. Three items assessed respondent's affection towards street food in Phuket. A reliability test was performed and the result showed a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.747. Four items evaluated the overall impression of the tourists towards the hygiene of street food in Phuket and for this scale, the Cronbach's alpha value was 0.766. Eight

Items evaluated food quality attributes such as flavor and smell and this scale had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.775. Seven items measured different aspects related to service quality; the reliability of this scale showed a value of 0.705. Two items measured overall satisfaction with street food in Phuket and showed a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.713. Finally, one item measured value for money; these six factors measured as a scale to evaluate attitudes resulted in a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.775. Table 1 summarizes this information.

The second part of the questionnaire dealt with three main scales: three items measured the tourists' subjective norms towards street food consumption in Phuket; this scale had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.765. Four items measured behavioral intentions and had a 0.802 reliability coefficient. Two items measured perceived behavioral control and the reliability coefficient of this scale was below the threshold value of 0.7 as is often the case when a scale is constituted by only a few items. However, Pallant (2013) suggests that scales with a small number of items can be used as long as their internal item correlation matrix presents a value above 0.3, and in this case, the correlation was 0.495. Table 2 summarizes this information.

Table 1
Demographic profile of respondents.

Attributes	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	152	51.8%
Female	141	46.0%
Age		
<30 years	148	53.3%
30–49 years old	104	35.4%
50 and above	42	14.3%
Region of origin		
Westerner	220	71.8%
Asian	68	22.4%
Religion		
Christianity	164	62.6%
Buddhism	91	33.2%
Islam	15	5.3%
Hinduism	4	1.5%
Other or no religion	63	19.4%
Marital status		
Single	144	49.0%
Married/living together	154	49.5%
Separated/divorced	10	3.4%
Widowed	4	1.3%
Highest level of education		
University degree (BSc, BA, MSc, MBA, PhD, PGCE)	194	68.2%
College diploma (NVQ/SAQ, HND/HNC)	52	17.3%
Secondary certificate (GCSE, VCE)	33	10.7%
Other qualifications	21	7.1%
Occupation		
Private company employees	84	28.3%
Students	74	25.2%
Self-employed	67	22.8%
Government employees	33	10.9%
Retired	29	9.5%
Unemployed	5	1.7%
Other	7	2.4%
Yearly income in USD		
Less than \$1000	67	22.8%
\$1001–\$3000	83	28.2%
\$3001–\$5000	70	23.8%
\$5001–\$7000	20	6.8%
\$7001–\$9000	16	5.3%
More than \$9000	20	6.8%
Not reported	8	2.7%
Number of days		
1–2 persons	146	48.0%
3–4 persons	110	37.4%
4+ persons	38	12.8%
Not reported	2	0.7%

Table 2
Reliability of attitude measurement items.

Factor	Item	Cronbach's alpha
Affecting	Street food in Phuket makes me feel good	0.747
	Thinking about street food in Phuket makes me happy (that) trying street food in Phuket is a fun experience	
Hygiene	Street food in Phuket is hygienic	0.766
	I am not afraid of getting sick from street food in Phuket	
Food quality	Street vendors in Phuket are well-groomed and clean	0.775
	Food stands and carts in Phuket are clean and well-organized	
	Street vendors in Phuket use fresh ingredients	
	Street food in Phuket is natural and free of additives	
	Street food in Phuket has a good taste	
Service quality	The smell of street food in Phuket is appealing	0.706
	It is easy for me to see street food in Phuket	
	Street food in Phuket is healthy and nutritious	
	Street food in Phuket is visually attractive	
	Street food in Phuket is served at the right temperature	
Satisfaction	Street food in Phuket is unique and exotic	0.713
	Street food in Phuket represents an authentic local culture	
	There is a big variety of street food options in Phuket	
	Food vendors are conveniently located around Phuket	
	Street food vendors in Phuket provide a fast service	
Value	It is easy to order my meal at street food vendors in Phuket	-
	Street food vendors in Phuket are friendly	
Total	I am satisfied with the street food quality in Phuket I am satisfied with street food service in Phuket Street food in Phuket is good value for money	0.775

4. Results

4.1. Comparison of results

A general value for attitude was computed from 25 items measuring different attributes of street food in Phuket; this value was then compared among different demographic groups to discover if there was any difference among them. An independent sample *t*-test was used to establish if there were significant differences between the attitudes of males and females. Levene's test of equality indicated that equal variances could be assumed. A *t* value of 0.157 was established which with 292 degrees of freedom had a 2-tailed significance level of 0.876. Therefore, it was concluded that no significant difference exists between genders in regards to their attitude towards street food in Phuket. A one-way ANOVA was used to compare the differences among different age groups. A non-parametric Levene's test was performed to assess the homogeneity of the variances and the *p* value was 0.057. It could therefore be assumed that the variances were homogeneous. The ANOVA produced a significance level of 0.405 indicating that there were no statistically significant differences in attitudes towards street food in Phuket among different age groups. An independent sample *t*-test was performed to compare the mean attitude values of respondents from western countries and those from Asia. The test for equality of variance result was 0.707 meaning that equal variances could be assumed. The *t* value was 0.896 with 292 degrees of freedom and the 2-tailed significance was 0.371. Meaning that there is no significant difference in the attitude of Asian and Western travelers towards street food in Phuket.

Likewise, several comparisons were made to determine if international tourists with diverse travel behavior reported a significant difference in their attitude towards street food in Phuket. Three independent sample *t*-tests were used to determine if there were significant differences in the attitudes of tourists who had visited Phuket in the past and those who were visiting for the first time, as well as between tourists that travel often and those who seldom travel abroad, and between

Table 3
Reliability of scales measuring SN, PBC and BI.

Factor	Item	Scale value
Subjective norms	I believe my family and friends would appreciate it if I tried street food in Phuket	Cronbach's alpha 0.768
	I believe my family and friends would like to try street food in Phuket	
	People who are opinion leaders regarding food are important to me think that I should try street food whenever I travel	
Perceived behavioral control	If I wanted to, I could buy other food instead of street food while visiting Phuket	Item correlation: 0.446
	It is mostly up to me whether or not to buy street food in Phuket	
Behavioral intentions	I would like to come back to eat street food in Phuket	Cronbach's alpha 0.802
	I would recommend street food in Phuket to friends and others	
	Based on my experience with street food in Phuket I would like to come back in the future	
	Based on my experience with street food in Phuket I would recommend it as a destination for friends and family	

tourists that had tried street food before coming to Phuket and those that had never tried it before. For the first comparison, the Levene's test significance value was 0.717, so equal variances were assumed. The *t* value was -0.357 with 292 degrees of freedom of, and the 2-tailed significance level was 0.721, this suggests no significant difference exist between first time and repeated travelers. For the second test, Levene's test of equality indicated a significance level of 0.296 and equal variances were again assumed. The *t* value was -0.364 with 292 degrees of freedom and the 2-tailed significance value was 0.870, indicating that no difference exists between tourists that travel often and those ones that rarely travel. In the third analysis the equality of variance test had a value of 0.125 and in the paired sample *t*-test, the *t* value was -0.717 with 292 degrees of freedom that is a 2-tailed significance level of 0.474, this indicates there is no significant differences in the attitude of tourists that had tried street food before coming to Phuket and those that had not.

The respondents mean attitude scores towards street food in Phuket are summarized in Table 4.

The results show a positive inclination to most of the attributes, signifying that overall there is a good attitude towards street food in Phuket. Means of over 4 points were achieved in the items measuring street food taste, variety and ease of eating, the friendliness of the street vendors, value for money, street food as a fun experience and as an experience that represents local culture. Interpretation of these scores would suggest that tourists perceive street food in Phuket to be an easy and fun way of consuming food that allows them to interact with friendly locals, and try a wide variety of authentic, delicious and

inexpensive dishes. These findings support previous studies that suggested that local food is regarded as a means of interacting with the host culture and its authentic cuisine (Sengel et al., 2015; Okumus et al., 2007; Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Quan & Wang, 2004). On the other hand, it is noticeable that the lowest values were those for items measuring hygiene, this result indicates that there is still a general concern among tourists about the hygiene and sanitation standards of street food vendors in Phuket. Such concerns are a reflection of the failure of government programs to regulate street food, of which tourists do not appear to be aware of. Furthermore, most street food vendors do not abide by the government regulations, and no measures are taken to prevent vendors without a license selling food on the street.

4.2. Multiple regression

The regression model used in this study shows an adjusted R square value of 0.618, meaning that the model can explain 61.8% of the variance in tourists' behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket using the selected predictors. The dependent variable adopted was behavioral intentions as measured by the mean value of the four items in the scale. A Durbin-Watson test resulted in a value of 1.871 indicating a significant difference between the dependent and independent variables. To further rule out any possibility of autocorrelation, a visual inspection of the Pearson correlation table was conducted to confirm that none of the values among the construct exceeded 0.7. The *F* value was equal to 60.33 (df, 8, 285) with a significance level of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$). This result demonstrates that the independent variables were good predictors

Table 4
Mean values of attitudes towards street food in Phuket.

Item	Mean	Std. deviation	Factor	Factor mean	Factor std. deviation
I feel trying street food in Phuket is a fun experience	4.10	0.780	Affection	3.92	0.598
Street food in Phuket makes me feel good	3.90	0.728			
Thinking about street food in Phuket makes me happy	3.76	0.810			
I am not afraid of getting sick from street food in Phuket	3.38	1.014	Hygiene	3.20	0.685
Street vendors in Phuket are well groomed and clean	3.19	0.899			
Street food in Phuket is hygienic	3.13	0.887			
Food stands and carts in Phuket are clean and well-organized	3.13	0.902	Food quality	3.70	0.493
Street food in Phuket has a good taste	4.12	0.770			
It is easy for me to eat street food in Phuket	4.01	0.828			
The smell of street food in Phuket is appealing	3.79	0.880	Service quality	3.96	0.494
Street vendors in Phuket are friendly and polite	3.66	0.782			
Street food in Phuket is visually attractive	3.60	0.895			
Street food in Phuket is natural and free of additives	3.54	0.914	Satisfaction	3.80	0.682
Street food in Phuket is served at the right temperature	3.46	0.933			
Street food in Phuket is healthy and nutritious	3.43	0.851			
Street food vendors in Phuket represent authentic local culture	4.05	0.853	Value	4.07	0.867
Street food vendors in Phuket are friendly	4.05	0.824			
There is a big variety of street food options in Phuket	4.01	0.886			
Street food vendors in Phuket provide a fast service	3.99	0.792	Satisfaction	3.80	0.682
It is easy to order my meal at street food vendors in Phuket	3.96	0.817			
Street food in Phuket is unique and exotic	3.88	0.870			
Food vendors are conveniently located around Phuket	3.78	0.782	Value	4.07	0.867
I am satisfied with street food service in Phuket	3.84	0.774			
I am satisfied with the street food quality in Phuket	3.76	0.810			
Street food in Phuket has good value for money	4.07	0.867			

Table 5
Regression coefficients of factors relating to street food.

Variable	Standardized coefficients	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
			Tolerance	VIF
Affection	0.312	0.000	0.578	1.730
Hygiene	0.006	0.881	0.705	1.419
Food quality	0.019	0.708	0.484	2.067
Service quality	0.188	0.000	0.544	1.839
Satisfaction	0.171	0.001	0.544	1.837
Subjective norms	0.248	0.000	0.746	1.340
Perceived behavioral control	0.178	0.000	0.802	1.248
Value for money	-0.016	0.703	0.764	1.309

for behavioral intentions. Table 5 presents each of the predictors of behavioral intentions, their standardized Beta coefficients, and the significance and collinearity statistics.

The model suggests that affection, subjective norms, service quality, satisfaction, and perceived behavioral control are all significant predictors of the dependent variable. It also indicates that hygiene, food quality and value for money do not contribute to a significant level in predicting behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket. The predictor with the highest beta value was affection (0.312), which is a similar outcome to the results by Mosavi and Ghaderi (2013), which indicates that positive feelings have a positive relationship with behavioral intentions. This finding could be the result of the inclusive nature of feelings as a global factor that encompasses all other factors. If respondents consider that any of the attributes in street food do not meet their expectations, it will almost certainly lead to a change in the overall feelings of the individual towards street food. Service quality (0.188) and satisfaction (0.171) were mildly predictive of tourist's behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket, these results support previous studies that linked service quality and satisfaction with future consumer behavior (Kim et al., 2011; Namkung & Jang, 2007; Ryu et al., 2012). It is important to mention that not all attributes in the dimension of attitudes towards street food have the same predictive capabilities. Likewise, results from the linear regression indicate that subjective norms (0.248) and perceived behavioral controls (0.178) play an important role in predicting behavioral intentions. These results support previous studies that adopted the theory of planned behavior as a research framework (Yazdanpanah & Fomuzani, 2015; Kim, Park, Kim and Ryu, 2013b; Bhuyan, 2010).

5. Discussion

In contrast to previous studies, in which authors have concluded that age, gender, nationality and previous experience had a strong influence in tourists' attitude towards food (Seo et al., 2013; Mak, Lumbers, Eves et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2009), this study did not find strong evidence that suggests any demographic group has a more favorable attitude towards street food in Phuket. Males and females report a favorable attitude towards street food. Furthermore, both groups seemed to score each of the attributes food in a very similar way, they are wary of hygiene, and consider food quality to be good in the same categories. It was expected to encounter a difference in the attitude of Western and Asian tourists, because food in Phuket may have been more familiar to travelers from Asian countries. However, in this research both groups reported similar attitude, this might be a result of globalization, availability of information, and an increasing presence of ethnic Thai restaurants in both Western and Asian countries (Lee, 2012; Privitera & Nesci, 2015). Previous studies pointed out that age significantly affects the attitude of consumers towards food (Bagozzi et al., 2000; Cohen & Arieli, 2004; Mak, Lumbers, Eves et al., 2012). Nonetheless, the three age groups considered for this study reported similar attitude towards

street food. Although a small difference existed in the way older people perceived hygiene of street food vendors, it was not found to be significant. Preceding studies pointed out that previous experience affected consumer attitude towards food (Kim et al., 2009; Quan & Wang, 2004; Cohen & Arieli, 2004), however, the present study found similar results in the attitude of tourists who had previous experience and those coming to Phuket for the first time.

The second part of this study explored the attitude of international tourists towards several attributes of street food in Phuket. The highest score by factor was achieved by "Service quality" and the lowest score was obtained by "Hygiene". It is worth mentioning that although hygiene presented the lowest mean value among the street food attributes, it was not found to predict or affect consumer behavioral intentions. This apparent contradiction could be related to consumers' previous knowledge of the attribute's flaw. Street food in developing countries is known to have poor sanitation (Privitera & Nesci, 2015; Proietti et al., 2014; Toh & Brchenough, 2000), yet tourists are still willing to consume it, revisit its source and recommend it to others. A similar situation could explain why value for money and food quality did not explain any variance in consumer behavioral intentions. Even though both values obtained very high mean scores, these are attributes that are anticipated in respect of street food by consumers, and therefore, they do not constitute a decisive factor in determining future behavior.

The final part of this study confirmed that the theory of planned behavior can be applied in the field of street food. The model was able to predict 61.8% of the variance of consumer's behavioral intentions towards street food in Phuket by using attitude (as measured by affection, perception of hygiene, food quality, service quality, satisfaction and value for money), subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Bhuyan, 2011; Kim et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2013a, b; Ryu et al., 2012). It also indicates that among the factors that constitute consumers' attitude towards street food, affection, perceived service quality and satisfaction have the highest predicting ability of tourists' future behavior. These findings do not imply that hygiene, value for money, and food quality, are not important, since a change in these attributes could still lead to a change in the overall attitude of tourists, but it serves as guidelines to understand why tourists might be more willing to revisit or recommend if expectations of service quality, satisfaction and affection are exceeded.

6. Conclusions

The information gathered in this study has practical implications for destination managers, including Phuket local authorities and the Tourism Authority of Thailand. The newly acquired "creative food of gastronomy" title implies that the food landscape has an important role in the marketing of Phuket as a tourist destination. Based on the findings of this research it is important to create a marketing campaign that emphasizes on the factors that are more significant for tourists; such as activities that create a strong affectional bond, highlight the cultural value of street food, and remind tourists of the good service, and street food vendors. These could reinforce the desire of tourists to revisit or recommend Phuket to others. In addition, it is necessary to change the perception of tourists on the hygiene of street food vendors in Phuket, by initiating a program to improve street food sanitation and production standards. Such program could include training for street food vendors, thorough sanitary control, and even a ranking system to identify which street vendors follow stricter food production standards. Recently, the Thai government has introduced a travel insurance scheme for all tourists known as the "Thailand Travel Shield" (Van-anupong & Jirakittikul, 2014), other recommendation to improve the image of food hygiene, could be, to include food related health problems in this program, as a guarantee to travelers that they would be covered in case of suffering from any foodborne illness.

6.1. Limitations and future research

There were a number of limitations in the present study that need to be taken into consideration. First, the information in this research was obtained during the peak season in Phuket, this could mean that tourists that are traveling during the low season could have been underrepresented in the sample of this study. Repetition of this investigation may consider sampling across seasons which would help to obtain more insightful data. Second, this survey was applied in English. Therefore, only English-speaking tourists were included in the sample. Since the most important markets for Phuket are Chinese, Russian and Australian tourists, future researchers may consider using translated versions of the survey to include a more randomized and representative number of these tourists. Third, during the statistical analysis of this research attributes of street food were considered equal in importance in the way they affect consumer's attitude, the use of different scales that combine multiple rating and Likert variables may reveal different results. Lastly, the present research only focuses on tourists visiting Phuket. Therefore, generalization of the results would require replication of similar studies in compatible destinations.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2016.11.005>.

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