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# he Analysis of Destination Experience Quality and Satisfaction towards Destination Loyalty for Cruise Passengers in Thailand

Suraporn Mulkunee<sup>1</sup> and Paithoon Monpanthong<sup>2,\*</sup>

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## Abstract

This research aims to analyze destination experience quality which affects satisfaction towards destination loyalty for cruise passengers in Thailand. The data were collected at Southern ports of Thailand, Phuket Port and Samui Port, from 440 foreign tourists who had experienced onshore excursions. The purposive sampling was used to identify the sample. A questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. The data analysis was performed by using confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation model analysis. The findings revealed that destination experience quality positively influenced on destination satisfaction and destination loyalty. Meanwhile, destination satisfaction positively influenced on destination loyalty. Consequently, destination managers should establish a higher destination satisfaction to create destination loyalty, by developing diverse attractions, improving tourism infrastructure, and enhancing the tourism environment such as the standard of hygiene and cleanliness at destinations. The practical implications may further enhance tourists' satisfaction, as well as their intention to revisit this destination as land-based tourists and to give positive recommendations to others.

**Keywords:** destination experience quality, destination loyalty, cruise tourism

<sup>1,2</sup> Graduate School of Tourism Management, National Institute of Development Administration

\* Corresponding author. E-mail: suraporn.mulk@stu.nida.ac.th



# การวิเคราะห์คุณภาพประสบการณ์ของ แหล่งท่องเที่ยวและความพึงพอใจที่ส่งผลต่อ ความภักดีของนักท่องเที่ยวเรือสำราญ ในประเทศไทย

สุรพร มุลกุลณี<sup>1</sup> และ ไพฑูรย์ มนต์พานทอง<sup>2\*</sup>

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## บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์คุณภาพประสบการณ์ของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวที่ส่งผลต่อความพึงพอใจและความภักดีของนักท่องเที่ยวเรือสำราญในประเทศไทย เก็บข้อมูลที่ท่าเรือสำราญในพื้นที่ภาคใต้ของประเทศไทยซึ่งประกอบด้วย ท่าเรือภูเก็ตและท่าเรือสมุย โดยมีกลุ่มตัวอย่างจำนวน 440 คน และใช้การสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบเฉพาะเจาะจง เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัย คือ แบบสอบถาม โดยการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้วยการวิเคราะห์องค์ประกอบเชิงยืนยัน (CFA) และการวิเคราะห์สมการเชิงโครงสร้าง (SEM) ทั้งนี้การวิเคราะห์สมการเชิงโครงสร้างใช้ในการวิเคราะห์อิทธิพลระหว่างปัจจัยด้านคุณภาพปลายทางของความพึงพอใจและความภักดี ผลการวิจัย พบว่า คุณภาพของประสบการณ์ของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวมีอิทธิพลทางบวกต่อความพึงพอใจและความภักดี ในขณะที่ความพึงพอใจต่อแหล่งท่องเที่ยวมีอิทธิพลในทางบวกต่อความภักดี ดังนั้น ผู้จัดการปลายทางควรสร้างความพึงพอใจของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวให้เพิ่มมากขึ้นเพื่อสร้างความภักดีต่อแหล่งท่องเที่ยว โดยการพัฒนาแหล่งท่องเที่ยวที่หลากหลาย ปรับปรุงโครงสร้างพื้นฐานด้านการท่องเที่ยว และปรับปรุงสภาพแวดล้อมการท่องเที่ยว เช่น มาตรฐานด้านสุขอนามัยและความสะอาดของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวเพื่อเพิ่มความพึงพอใจของนักท่องเที่ยวเรือสำราญ และความภักดีต่อจุดหมายปลายทางทั้งในมิติของการเดินทางมาท่องเที่ยวซ้ำในฐานะนักท่องเที่ยวทางบก รวมถึงการแนะนำเชิงบวกแก่ผู้อื่น

**คำสำคัญ:** คุณภาพประสบการณ์ ความภักดี การท่องเที่ยวเรือสำราญ

<sup>1,2</sup> คณะการจัดการการท่องเที่ยว สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์

\* Corresponding author. E-mail: suraporn.mulk@stu.nida.ac.th

## Introduction

Cruise tourism is expanding at a rapid rate in the leisure industry (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2010). The unique and differentiated characteristics from other forms of travel have led to a number of challenges involving demand and supply structures such as cruise lines, cruise passengers, cruise destinations, etc. Nowadays, the paradigm of the cruise market has shifted from a small size to a large size, and increasing multi-generation target groups. The quality of tourism products and services has become a magnet to attract them to the destination (Monpanthong, 2018).

In Thailand, cruise tourism was introduced more than 30 years ago. In the beginning, there were a few cruise ships targeting mainly elderly and high-end tourists to Phuket, Thailand, during the high season. After that Star Cruises deployed cruise ships for cruises and calling at Phuket as a weekly call. Moreover, this regional cruise line developed an itinerary cruising in the ASEAN region, starting from Singapore to Malaysia and Thailand, offering a short itinerary for family and young passengers (Monpanthong, 2018). Likewise, Thailand's ports demonstrated the strengths of Thailand with various tourist attractions, diverse activities, Thai hospitality, and unique travel experiences. According to the report and the comparison of the growth rate in Thailand, South East Asia, and Asia between 2014 to 2018, before the COVID-19 pandemic, Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) (2018b; 2020) indicated that Thailand has a higher proportion of growth more than Asia up to 152 percent, and higher than Southeast Asia up to 67 percent (CLIA, 2018). It showed that Thailand is considered as one of the potential destinations to serve cruise tourism.

Following the fast-growing experience economy, consumers including tourists and cruise passengers were looking for distinctive experiences that differ from their daily lives. The experience quality becomes one of the most significant factors for cruise passengers to evaluate their participation at the destination (Wu, Li & Li, 2018). Therefore, the experience quality that cruise passengers receive at the destination affects their information process, feeling about the destination including knowledge, and reaction or response to the destination. (Beerli & Martin, 2004).

In terms of cruise passengers, experiences at the destinations and itinerary are determined as the influence to decide to visit or buy the package. Therefore, many cruise lines select travel experiences at the destination into their itineraries owing to increasing interest in the destination and onshore activities. The quality of the destination and experience also plays a prominent role in the overall impression of emotional condition and creates the additional advantage of long-term customer relationships. Cruise passengers' positive experience quality may encourage them to

return as land-based tourists in the future (Brida, Pulina, Riaño & Zapata-Aguirre, 2012). Moreover, cruise tourism provides an important economic inducement to several destinations, in particular for cruise ports. It impacts the global economy by generating total output of up to 134 billion dollars and 1,108,676 jobs (CLIA, 2018b; Larsen, Marnburg & Øgaard, 2012).

Thailand is the most well-known destination for cruise passengers with a high value for money and hospitality. The destinations on shore excursion greatly affect the cruise passengers' experience, satisfaction, and loyalty (Monpanthong, 2018). Meanwhile, cruise passengers have experience at port and destination that they might perceive as associated with their experience quality during the process of their visit (Petrick, 2004). When cruise passengers perceived good experience quality, they are satisfied with the destination. Experience quality, therefore, strongly affects tourists' behavioral intentions; to revisit a destination or recommend to others (Meng, Liang & Yang, 2011). In view of all that has been mentioned so far, the quality of cruise passengers' experience is also crucial for destination development including future profitability and success in the tourism industry. Despite the important role of the tourist experience, which consists of various encounters in a certain destination, little research has articulated the relationships among tourist experience quality, satisfaction, and loyalty.

The destination onshore excursion toughly affects the cruise passenger's experience, satisfaction, and loyalty (Monpanthong, 2018). Meanwhile, cruise passengers have experiences at port and destination that they might perceive as the associated with their experience quality during the process of visitation (Petrick, 2004). When cruise passengers perceived good experience quality, they satisfy with the destination. It, therefore, strongest effects on tourists' behavioral intentions; revisit a destination or recommend to others (Meng et al., 2011). In view of all that has been mentioned so far, the quality of cruise passengers' experience is also crucial for destination development including future profitability and success in the tourism industry. Despite the important role of the tourist experience, which consists of various encounters in a certain destination, little research articulates the relationships between tourist experience quality, satisfaction, and loyalty. In Thailand, most of the relevant studies on cruise tourism has mainly focused on specific issues; for instance, cruise management. Studies have rarely focused on the factors of destination experience quality towards destination loyalty.

Due to the growth rate of cruise tourism and the most popular destinations in Thailand, Thailand has the potential to service cruise tourism with attractive tourist attractions, unique culture and traditions, a variety of activities, and various experiences. Most importantly, experience quality

is one of the essential destination competitiveness factors and the key factor driving cruise passengers to travel to and revisit the destinations. In this regard, it is necessary to clarify what the cruise passengers need in experience quality factors, leading to higher cruise passengers' satisfaction and loyalty both regarding revisiting the destination as a land-based tourist and recommending to others. Appropriately, therefore, this study aims to analyze destination experience quality which affects satisfaction towards destination loyalty for cruise passengers by focusing on two major ports in southern Thailand.

## Research Objective

To analyze destination experience quality which affects satisfaction towards destination loyalty for cruise passengers in Thailand

## Literature Review

### Destination Experience Quality

The definition of experience quality widely used is the result of evaluating the customer's experience after they participate in activities and consume services including service providers, customers' companions, and other components. Similarly, Cole and Scott (2004) described that the experience quality is the outcomes and benefits of a tourist's experience as an effect of visiting tourist attractions. Wu et al. (2018) also stated that experience quality is a conceptualization that involves both attributes provided by suppliers and performed by a tourist. Therefore, it is a priority of the business that measures a customer's experience with the core of the products or services in tourism. Moreover, the experience quality also plays a predictor of tourist loyalty (Maklan & Klaus, 2011).

The experience of tourists has been considered a key research concept since the 1960s and has become a popular issue in social science and marketing by the 1970s (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Currently, many scholars have studied the topic of the tourist experience. According to the five-phase model of Clawson and Knetsch (1996) as cited in Morgan, Lugosi, and Ritchie (2010), they developed a model of the tourist experience, involving five dimensions, starting with anticipation, travel to a site, on-site activity, return travel, and recollection. In order to obtain a better understanding of destination experience quality, previous studies are reviewed to derive the related factors associated with experience quality. As a result, there are a few studies relating to experience quality; nonetheless, they have been investigated in different dimensions.

Most studies in the field of tourism quality have only focused on service quality more than experience quality. In spite of service quality and the SERVQUAL scale, it does not effectively evaluate overall service experience, which is an affective and holistic factor.

Furthermore, many studies have revealed positive evidence to confirm the hypothesis of the relationship between experience quality and satisfaction. Experience quality of onshore excursion may affect satisfaction as the determinant of stimulating power for cruise passengers' loyalty (Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2016). In relation to the tourism literature review, the experience quality of cruise passengers was developed for the purpose of understanding tourist behaviors in this study which consists of four dimensions: immersion, surprise, participation, and fun (Jin, Lee & Lee, 2015; Kao, Huang & Wu, 2008).

Immersion reflects a tourist's experience. It refers to the involvement of cruise passengers thoroughly in activities when spending their time and money on services and activities (Feng, Chen & Lai, 2020; Jin et al., 2015; Kao et al., 2008).

Surprise identifies the freshness, uniqueness, and distinction of the cruise passengers' experience. When cruise passengers spend their time or money, they actually acquire a unique stimulus and extraordinary experience (Jin et al., 2015; Kao et al., 2008).

Participation defines the level of interaction between tourists and products, services, or surroundings during the consumption of the products and services. Participation is also an important component of forming a cruise passenger's experience (Feng et al., 2020; Jin et al., 2015; Kao et al., 2008).

Lastly, fun represents cruise passengers' playfulness, happiness, and enjoyment during using the products and services (Feng et al., 2020; Jin et al., 2015; Kao et al., 2008).

### **Destination Satisfaction**

Satisfaction is a more complex concept in the cruise industry than in other manufacturing industries due to the unique characteristic of its products and services. Particularly in the cruise tourism sector, the complexity and broadness of the elements create the all-inclusive vacation package and provide it to cruise passengers. Westbrook (1980) described it as the assessment of the several outcomes and experiences related to using or consuming the products, for the pleasure of the individual subjective. Correspondingly, Yeo, Thai & Roh (2015) observed that customer satisfaction is familiar as the outcome that occurs from positive service quality. The measurement

of cruise passengers' satisfaction is usually based on previous research which are on slightly different scales. Various concepts and theories have been attempted to construct the measurement which creates several different perspectives of satisfaction such as value for money, price of services, etc. (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Besides, Toudert and Bringas-Rábago (2016) presumed to measure cruise passengers' satisfaction by three dimensions, which are the relationship between price-quality, expectation versus satisfaction, and overall satisfaction.

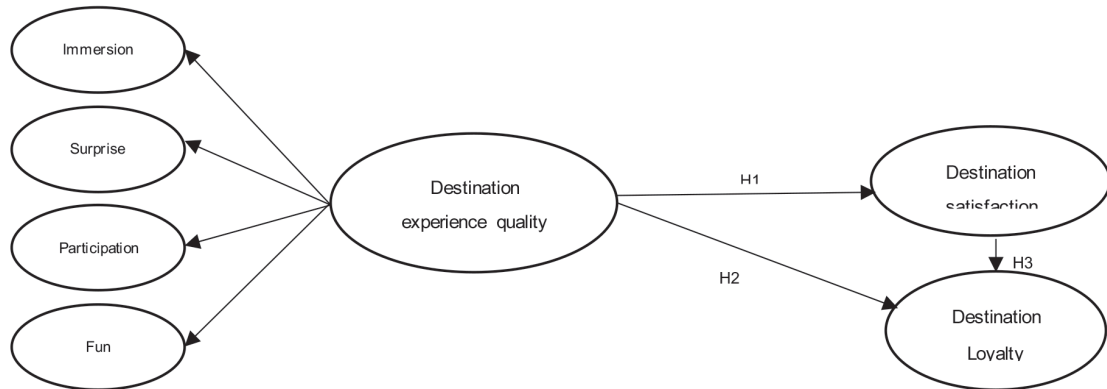
### **Destination Loyalty**

Destination loyalty has been the most widely used in several studies. Many scholars have applied indicators of destination loyalty to measure the behavioral intention of tourists. Keller (1993) defined loyalty as a customer's expression of an attitude that influences their satisfaction. When consumers are satisfied with the branding, their obvious intention is to repurchase.

Petrick (2004) proposed the type of tourist's loyalty, which consists of the branding loyalty of Backman and Crompton (1991), based on the theory of branding loyalty, attitude, and behavior. It can be classified into four categories. Firstly, high loyalty refers to the attitude of the tourists toward the destination. This category indicates that tourists have true loyalty and a high level of revisiting the destination. The tourists are satisfied with the destination, so they will probably revisit and recommend the destination to others as well. Secondly, latent loyalty is of the type of tourists that have a positive attitude and are satisfied with the destination. The tourists have a lower level to return to the destination; nonetheless, when they plan to travel, they also are reminded of the destination and still recommend it to others. Thirdly, spurious loyalty refers to the loyalty of tourists who do not have a positive attitude or commitment towards the destination, but they usually return and recommend the destination. The tourists who have spurious loyalty are often the persons in the communities who live near that destination. It is, therefore, extremely different from the other types.

In the tourism context, Chen and Chen (2010) stated that destination loyalty is the attitude or commitment level of tourists to revisit the same destination again or recommend the destination to others. Interestingly, customer loyalty is a valuable asset of destinations or organizations because when they revisit or recommend the destination to others, it helps destinations to save costs to promote to the new target group. For this study to create a competitive advantage in the destination market, the researchers apply the theory of destination loyalty into two classifications: revisiting and recommending sympathetic cruise passengers' future behavior.

## Hypothesis



**Figure 1** Conceptual Research Framework

From the conceptual research framework (Figure 1), the hypotheses for the study can be proposed as follows:

H1: Destination experience quality positively influences destination satisfaction.

H2: Destination experience quality positively influences destination loyalty.

H3: Destination satisfaction positively influences destination loyalty.

## Scope of Study

1) Scope of content: The study focuses on destination experience quality, satisfaction towards destination loyalty of cruise passengers.

2) Scope of area: The area of study is major cruise ports in Southern Thailand, which are Phuket Port and Samui Port.

3) Scope of population: The populations of this study are cruise passengers who have cruised, visited, and experienced Thailand's destinations.

4) Scope of time: The study was conducted from May 2020 until May 2021.

## Research Methodology

A quantitative research method was employed in this study which aims to analyze destination experience quality which affecting satisfaction towards destination loyalty for cruise passengers in Thailand. A Structure Equation Modeling is used for this research analysis. According to Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt (2011), the sample size in the minimum method is the ten-time rule, and



the questionnaire was designed to consist of 26 items. It, therefore, calculates the sample size for this study as 260 samples.

The data were collected at the Southern ports of Thailand, Phuket Port and Samui Port. The purposive sampling is a technique to select the suitable sample qualification of those foreign tourists who cruised to Thailand's port and had experience at the destination. A questionnaire was analytically designed to achieve data from cruise passengers, using a five-point Likert scale. Destination experience quality was developed from the literature review and previous studies; the questions were composed of 4 factors and 14 items. Satisfaction is employed to measure the level of agreement with satisfaction with four indicators; expectation-satisfaction, price-quality satisfaction, comparison with other places, and overall satisfaction which comprises 6 question items. Destination loyalty comprises revisit the destination and recommendation to others, 6 question items in total.

The questionnaire of this study was analyzed with regard to validity and reliability. The results of content validity were measured by the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), resulting in the score from 0.904 to 0.958. The reliability was tested with the experimental group of 30 samples, resulting an alpha coefficient between 0.894 to 0.958 definition which is greater than the standardized at 0.7. The data was finally analyzed by mean and standard deviation, Confirmatory factor analysis, and Structural Equation Model analysis.

## Research Results

A summary of the demographic of 260 respondents completed the questionnaire. Respondents were 68 percent females, aged between 36-40 years old, about 43.50 percent. The majority had a Bachelor's degree, equivalent to 72.80 percent. Additionally, the majority purpose to visit Thailand destination of respondents were leisure/holiday with 97.25 percent and visited Thailand less than 3 times, sharing a similar proportion at 60 percent.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a statistical technique used to prove the factor structure of a set of construct variables. There are construct variables according to measurement theory, and this study supposes 14 items of 4 factors to perform and confirm the measurement items' convergent and discriminant validity, reliability of the destination experience quality which affects satisfaction towards destination loyalty for cruise passengers in Thailand.

From the result in Table 1, the latent variable "Immersion" consisted of indicators or observed variables, and the weight factor was between 0.694-0.843. The latent variable "Surprise"

consisted of indicators or observed variables and the weight factor was between 0.759-0.778. The latent variable “Participation” consisted of indicators or observed variables and the weight factor was between 0.718-0.778. The latent variable “Fun” consisted of indicators or observed variables and the weight factor was between 0.506-0.831. All weight factors were greater than the criterion value of 0.4, demonstrating a good correlation between the items.

In terms of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which is an index that examines the observable variables in each component, it could correspondingly define latent variables reliably with the discriminant validity. The AVE value should be more than 0.50 and the composite reliability (CR) values for constructs in the model were above the verge value of 0.70. Concerning the result from the analysis was the AVE value between 0.550-0.646, which is interpreted as the reliability of the observable variables used to explain the first-order latent variable, while the result found the composite reliability ranged from 0.767-0.879 which is interpreted as the reliability of the observable variables. For the testing of the reliability of destination experience quality variables, the result showed the Cronbach’s Alpha rating between 0.862 to 0.901, which value was more than 0.70, greater than the standardized definition.

Furthermore, the result of the model consistency analysis by using the appropriate consistency index of the model under acceptance index values, it was found that the Chi-square/Degree of Freedom ( $\chi^2 / df$ ) was 2.777, which was less than 3 through the criteria set. When considering the index of CFI = 0.984, TLI = 0.979, RMSEA = 0.052, SRMR = 0.033 passed acceptable criteria. The acceptable fitness of the model comprises CFI = 0.97, TLI = 0.97, RMSEA = less than 0.05 but not more than 0.07, and SRMR = less than 0.05. However, the P-value at 0.000 could not determine the goodness of fit of the model and it was a result of the complexity of the model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

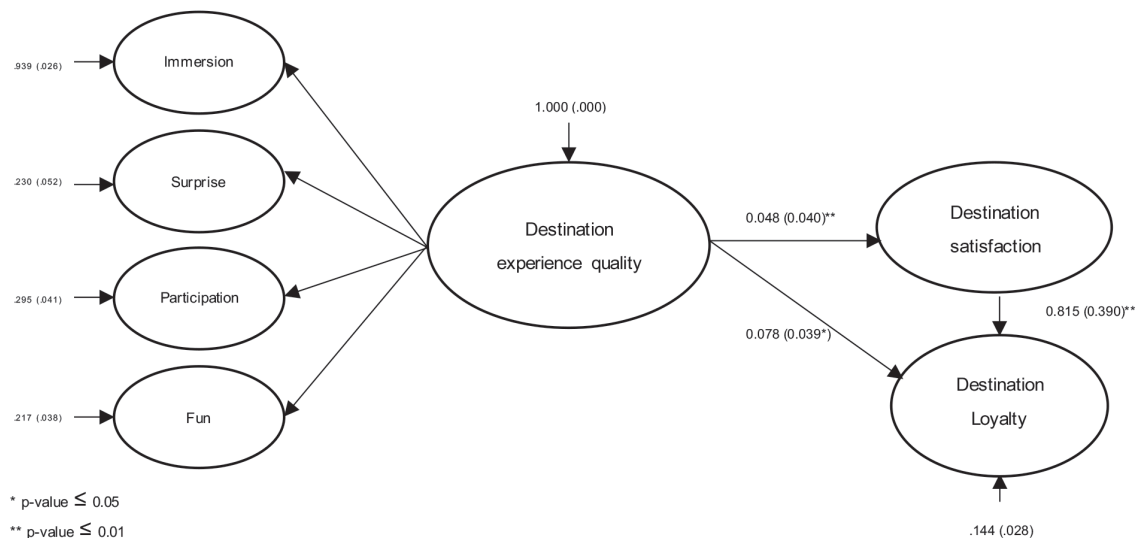
**Table 1** Analysis Statistic of Confirmatory Factor Analysis the Model of Destination Experience Quality of Cruise Passengers

Communities	Factor Loading	S.E.	CR	AVE	R <sup>2</sup>	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>Immersion</b>	0.762	0.032	0.550	0.829	0.527	0.878
1. Visiting Thailand's destinations by cruise release me from reality and help me truly enjoy myself.	0.723	0.028				
2. I become so involved when I cruise to visit Thailand's destination that I forget everything else.	0.843	0.023				
3. Visiting Thailand's destinations by cruise make me feel as if I am in another world.	0.695	0.031				
4. While I am visiting Thailand's destinations by cruise, I forget that time is passing.	0.694	0.031				
<b>Surprise</b>	0.934	0.019	0.587	0.810	0.872	0.862
5. Visiting Thailand's destinations by cruise are different from other destinations.	0.762	0.025				
6. There are some characteristics and unique destinations.	0.778	0.024				
7. The destinations in Thailand make me feel special.	0.759	0.025				
<b>Participation</b>	0.996	0.022	0.646	0.879	0.992	0.868
8. I have experienced all of Thailand's destinations or as many as possible by cruising.	0.778	0.020				
9. I prefer to participate in activities that the destination in Thailand provided.	0.824	0.026				
10. I really enjoy interacting with local people at the destinations.	0.718	0.025				
<b>Fun</b>	0.886	0.020	0.562	0.767	0.784	0.901

**Table 1** Analysis Statistic of Confirmatory Factor Analysis the Model of Destination Experience Quality of Cruise Passengers (cont.)

Communities	Factor Loading	S.E.	CR	AVE	R <sup>2</sup>	Cronbach's Alpha
11. I had fun while visiting Thailand's destinations by cruise.	0.831	0.021				
12. I felt excited while visiting Thailand's destinations by cruise.	0.779	0.023				
13. I had lots of amusing with Thailand's destinations by cruise.	0.506	0.039				
14. I really enjoyed Thailand's destinations by cruise.	0.543	0.038				

Regarding the result, the confirmatory factor analysis model for destination experience quality is shown in Figure 2. As it is assumed for the hypotheses, the results supported all hypotheses which are destination experience quality positively influences destination satisfaction (H1), destination experience quality positively influences destination loyalty (H2), and destination satisfaction positively influences destination loyalty (H3).



**Figure 2** Structural Model of Destination Experience, Destination Satisfaction, and Destination Loyalty of Cruise Passengers

Figure 2, showing the factor loading of variables within the measurement model, the structure model result of destination experience quality has a positive direct effect on destination satisfaction with the direct effect at 0.048, the indirect effect at 0.015, and the total effect at 0.423. Destination experience quality positively influences destination loyalty with the direct effect at 0.078, the indirect effect at 0.342, and the total effect at 0.421. Finally, destination satisfaction has a positive direct effect on destination loyalty with the total effect and direct effect at 0.815.

**Table 2** The Hypotheses Test Results

Hypothesis	Path	Standard Path Coefficient	p-value	Result
H1	Destination experience quality → satisfaction	0.408	0.000**	Accepted
H2	Destination experience quality → loyalty	0.078	0.043*	Accepted
H3	Satisfaction → loyalty	0.815	0.000**	Accepted

\* p-value ≤ 0.05

\*\* p-value ≤ 0.01

## Research Summary and Discussion

This study aimed to analyze destination experience quality which affects satisfaction towards destination loyalty for cruise passengers in Thailand to revisit as land-based tourists or recommend to others. According to the factor analysis, CFA, the component of the destination experience quality, destination satisfaction, and destination loyalty have been finalized. The four constructs of the destination experience quality, immersion, surprise, participation and fun, are latent constructs of experience destination quality demonstrated acceptable model fit indices with statistically significant standardized. Fun performed the highest factor loading as the study of Jin et al. (2015), who explored this relationship with first-time and repeated tourists in water park patrons. They indicated that fun is the strongest dimension to contribute to the experience at the destination.

The structural relations analysis of destination experience quality and destination satisfaction, which affect the destination loyalty of cruise passengers, indicates that destination experience quality appears to have the most important influence on destination satisfaction, which in turn, strongly affects destination loyalty. The empirical results are consistent with the study of Jin et al. (2015) who found that the experience quality has a positive effect on water park tourists'

satisfaction. The study of Chen and Chen (2010) also confirmed that the experience quality influence on satisfaction and the results appeared that direct effect on satisfaction. Meanwhile, destination experience quality influence on destination loyalty with an intensely indirect effect.

Additionally, the investigation of the hypothesis of destination satisfaction positively influences destination loyalty. The result is the same as that of Sanz Blas and Carvajal-Trujillo (2014), who tested the structural model relationship between satisfaction and destination loyalty in three items and found that cruise passengers' satisfaction with port-destination is positively influenced on port-destination loyalty. Furthermore, it is significant of the empirical studies of Chen and Chen (2010), Jin et al. (2015), Kao et al. (2008) and Ramseook-Munhurrin, Seebaluck and Naidoo (2015) all certified that satisfaction is a direct effect on destination loyalty. Moreover, a resilient relationship between satisfaction and destination loyalty supported previous studies in the literature (Chen & Chen, 2010; Jin et al., 2015; Kao et al., 2008; Ramseook-Munhurrin et al., 2015; Sanz Blas & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2014).

Findings further show that cruise passengers' satisfaction is a strong determinant of destination loyalty. Findings reveal that cruise passengers' satisfaction derives from positive experience quality which cruise passengers intend to revisit as land-based tourists and recommend a positive expression of the experience to others. The study also demonstrates that satisfaction has a significant mediator role in the relationship between destination experience quality and destination loyalty. In other words, satisfaction is an important motivator for customers to revisit as land-based tourists and to recommend a positive expression of the experience to others. These results indicate that destinations need to consider the experience quality factor on the means-end chain when the experience quality influences both direct and indirect cruise passengers' loyalty.

Hence, the outcomes of this study which proposed to analyze destination experience quality which affects satisfaction towards destination loyalty for cruise passengers in Thailand to revisit as land-based tourists or recommend to others will provide valuable information for policymakers, destination managers, and local governments to recognize the factors of destination experience quality affecting destination loyalty. These findings can also use to formulate and implement marketing strategies to enhance cruise experiences, especially destination experience quality, passengers and manage the tourism destination competitiveness development and competitive advantages against business competitors. As the link between the growth of cruise tourism and the paradigm has been shifted, the destination experience quality, especially

on onshore excursions, may affect satisfaction as the direct determinant of stimulating power for tourist loyalty (Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2016). Moreover, this research intends to contribute to the academic outcomes in that this study contributes to create a better understanding of cruise tourism and destination loyalty for cruise passengers in Thailand.

## Recommendations

### 1) Recommendations for implications

Based on the results of this study, it is possible to conclude that destination experience quality can directly promote the value from a tourism perspective, which has the potential to drive new strategies for encouraging cruise passengers who have experience at Thailand's port of call to return at the destination as land-based tourists or recommend to others. The empirical research of destination experience quality is made particularly clear by establishing characteristics and unique experience quality. According to the context of tourism, experience quality is defined as the outcome of psychological from the involvement in tourism activities which affect as former travel that plays as significant to be collected in long term memory (Chen & Chen, 2010).

Presently, the paradigm of cruise tourism has been shifted, leading to more varied and personalized service to respond to their desire. The evidence of this study of destination experience quality positively influences destination satisfaction. Considering the indicators of fun is the highest level of agreement, therefore, the relevant organizations, government sectors, and public sectors should hold a variety of special events (e.g., food festivals and family games) and activities of characteristics and unique around the port or destination throughout the year to entice new customers and provide memorable experiences.

These findings also provide important implications for destination managers to sustain this core travel experience as the major destination competitiveness factor by creating participation in activities with local people. Developing employee standards and staff training can produce positive travel experiences in the service sectors, while the local government and communities may work together to create attentiveness and campaigns for local people.

Additionally, to attract cruise passengers to revisit as land-based tourists, tourism strategies may be promoted by highlighting the characteristics and unique destinations such as quality of activities, destination (beach and nearby islands) as well as the quality of service providers in the southern ports of Thailand. Destination managers can derive usefulness by developing

a destination branding strategy to promote, especially the experience of activities at the destinations which tourists gain during visiting which are exciting, amusing, fun, and enjoyable that differ from those of other destinations. Moreover, destination managers have the opportunity to influence first-time tourists as well as potential return tourists. The characteristics and uniqueness may further enhance tourists' satisfaction, and hence their intention to revisit this destination as land-based tourists and to give positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

## 2) Limitations and recommendations for future research

The findings of this study mainly focused on investigating the sample population's post-trip perception. It did not measure the cruise passengers' pre-trip image. This made it impractical to measure the pre-visit image of the destination. In future studies, it would be advantageous to collect the longitudinal data including pre-trip, during the trip, and after the trip which affect destination loyalty of cruise passengers to more precisely measure change across time.

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