

# **TOURISTS' SHOPPING IN THAILAND: A STUDY TO INVESTIGATE JAPANESE TOURISTS' EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION ON PRICE AND PROMOTION ELEMENTS OF THAI PRODUCTS**

*Pakin Witchayakawin*

*Tourism and Hospitality Management, Assumption University of Thailand  
pakinw@hotmail.com*

## **Abstract**

*This research aims to identify the relationship between the prices of Thai merchandise and promotion elements, and Japanese tourists' expectations and perceptions. Japanese tourists were targeted sampling of this research. It focuses on inbound Japanese tourists, in general, to shop in Thailand, specifically in Bangkok. The independent variables of the research are age, gender, career orientation and educational level. The dependent variables include price, elements of promotion, expectation of product and service quality, as well as perception of product and service quality. The survey instrument for this research is only self-administered questionnaires in Japanese language. The questionnaires were distributed by tourist guides during tours, and by researcher of this research at the Grand Palace in Bangkok. The statistical analysis techniques of this research include One-way ANOVA, Independent Sample t-test and Pearson Correlation. This research, by One-way ANOVA, shows that Japanese tourists with different career orientations have different expectations of the elements of promotion and product quality, including different perceptions of service quality. In addition, through the independent sample t-test, it is learned that Japanese tourists of different gender have different expectations and perceptions of the elements of promotion. The relationship between the price of Thai merchandise and Japanese tourists' expectations and perceptions on beginning their shopping in Thailand is significant. From this research, merchandise and retail organizations should manage and develop products involved with service quality because Japanese tourists have a different view towards product and service quality according to diversity of career orientation. Future researchers should seek more information about tourists' expectations of tourism activities such as night safari and theme park. Insight into travelers' needs and their specific expectations and the perceptions of each particular unit of the visitor market should be explored more fully in order to learn marketing strategies to sustain competition amongst rivals.*

**Keywords :** *Shopping, Thailand, Japanese tourists*

## **INTRODUCTION**

As the world's biggest industry nowadays, tourism plays a major role as a source of currency movement essential to several industries in each country. Thus, a benefit of tourism and shopping will be greater revenue to the country. Shopping forms a vital strategy in the process of tourist product development. A strong supporter in the shopping activity for Thai tourist products is Japanese tourism

(Thanng, 2005). Thailand has been a popular destination for Japanese tourists for over two decades, since the campaign "Visit Thailand Year" in 1987. Under campaigns issued by Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the tourism products of Thailand carry an important appeal encouraging tourists to visit. The Amazing Thailand Campaign contributed to the promotion of the domestic tourism market, including Thai local products, culture and services as unique Thai tourism products. Shopping is an activity

or tourism product that is a preference of tourists' expenditure behaviors. Thailand shopping was an important activity for inbound tourists in 2007. It is presented by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) as a record; the average expenditure per person of inbound tourists for shopping is 22.49 percent, accommodation 28.43 percent, followed by food and beverage 16.45 percent, entertainment 14.51 percent, transportation 9.29 percent, sightseeing fee 5.42 percent and miscellaneous 3.41 percent. In comparison, in domestic tourism, shopping is also ranked second with 20.62 percent, the top rank expenditure for Thai tourists being entertainment at 25.78 percent (TAT, 2008).

The Thai shopping arena is under constant development to satisfy the Japanese tourist market. Japan outbound tourism grew most notably after the Tokyo Olympic Games, in 1964, when Japanese outbound holidays were liberalized. 128,000 overseas visits were taken. The Japanese government intervened to boost the number of Japanese traveling overseas to 19 million by the end of 1991 (Gilbert and Terrata, 2001). Japan fuelled the growth of Japan outbound tourism by better exchange rates and no fiscal restrictions were placed on outbound travel. Thailand receipts show Japanese tourists' arrivals at 1.27 million in 2007, second to Malaysia. The spending per person of the Japanese tourist is in second rank to Middle Eastern tourists. Therefore, the Japanese tourist is an indicator to point to the quality of Thai tourism (TAT, 2008).

According to the study of Reisinger and Turner (1999), the unique cultural characteristics of the behavior of Japanese tourists visiting the USA, examined by Ahmed and Krohn (1992), included belongingness, family influence, empathy, dependency (being loyal and devoted in exchange for security and protection), hierarchical acknowledgement, propensity to save, the concept of kinen (collecting evidence of travel to prestigious tourist destinations), tourist photography, passivity, and risk avoidance. A marketer's vision aims to develop a tourism product in line with these behaviors which imply group traveling and family packages. Japanese tourists

always travel with relatives or friends which means they prefer to accompany closely related persons. Family influence is an important factor which implies that if they do not travel with family, they always buy souvenirs for family members. Hence, Japanese tourists are always shopping for souvenirs for their families and friends. Japanese tourists would find every opportunity to shop for gifts to take home for their families. Price seems to pose no burden to Japanese tourists; quality matters and trust counts. From Thailand's perspective, price and elements of promotion form principal components in appealing to Japanese tourists, in addition to the issue of product and service quality. Thai shopping has been developed constantly to satisfy the Japanese tourist market. Instead of competing in marketing promotion, it is equally important to investigate exactly how do Thai merchandise and shopping environment – product quality and service quality - appeal to Japanese tourists. The tourists' decisions in buying or shopping should relate to their expectations and perceptions. By identifying the Japanese tourists' expectations and perceptions of products and services upon shopping, the tourism marketers will not only understand Japanese tourist awareness and behavior in shopping, but also learn to develop the host products and services suitable for this specific market.

The significant of the study in tourists' perception might lead to market planning and market implication—in response to several concerns (Hubbard and Vetter (1996), Hui and Triandis (1985), Irvine and Carroll (1980), Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998), Verhage, Yavas and Green (1990) examined the uni-versality of consumers' price perception measures with evidence of the psycho-metric properties—illustrated that consumers' price perception was multi-dimensional, reliable, and displayed convergent and discriminant validity across samples (Watchravesringkan, 2008).

### **Research Objective**

1. To investigate the Japanese tourists' expectations and perceptions of

- products and services during their shopping in Thailand.
2. To identify the relationship between prices of Thai merchandises and Japanese tourists' expectations and perceptions when shopping in Thailand.
  3. To provide suggestions for what shopping places should consider in products and services.

### **Demographics**

A consumer's level of knowledge about price and the price sensitivity of any given product or service may be influenced by his/her demographic background. The demographic variables of this study are presented as age, gender, career orientation and educational level.

### **Price and Elements of promotion**

According to the study of Watchravesringkan, Yan and Yurchisin (2008), price is a multidimensional cue that possesses two roles: positive and negative. Elements of promotion are the values that are contained in price. They might also contain benefits that customers receive such as promotion, including optional benefits, and/or special price (bargaining) and kinds of service.

### **Product and Service Quality**

The study about tourists' perception of shop service was discussed by Reisinger and Waryszak (1994); specifically Japanese tourists in Australia. The Japanese tourists perceived Australian shop assistants as friendly, polite, able to wrap purchased goods and not exploitative financially. Knight and Kim (2007)'s research demonstrated the Japanese tourists' perceptions of product and their uniqueness of consumption behavior. The need effects of brand perception and purchase intention, in a time of accelerating globalization, are rapidly changing retail environments and are fueled by increasing global competition and higher consumer expectations. Consumers' brand perceptions may be driven by their unique need and brand knowledge derived from personal experience ([8]).

## **METHODOLOGY**

According to records from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the present number of Japanese tourists, each year, is more than 1,000,000. The target population for this study is 166,666 Japanese tourists because questionnaires were distributed only from December 2008 until January 2009 (2 months). Japanese visitors were targeted for the questionnaire by a random sampling of in-bound Japanese male and female tourists, aged 20 and above. The target populations are groups from careers such as business owners, company employees, government employees, unemployed or retired persons and "others." The educational grouping of this selection is from high school certificate or diploma, bachelor and master's degree or above.

### **Survey Instrument**

Only self-administered questionnaires were used in this research. The questionnaires ranged over 2 pages. All questionnaires were translated into the Japanese language by Japanese native speakers (Ms. Oguni Sachie; and the staff of H.I.S. Tours Co., Ltd.).

### **Data Collection**

The questionnaires (120 copies) were distributed by H.I.S. Tours' staff and were returned to the inbound tour counter of H.I.S. Tours Company when Japanese tourists came into contact with the agent. 180 questionnaires were distributed to tourists and received back by the tourist guides of Ryujin Tours Co., Ltd. while traveling in Bangkok. 84 questionnaires were distributed to tourists and received back at the Grand Palace of Thailand by this researcher.

Table 1 demonstrates the results of the independent variable. Amongst the received questionnaires, 56.3 percent of the total respondents were female tourists. The largest group of respondents was aged from 20-34 years (51.3 percent of the total respondents) and 47.6 percent of the respondents were company employees, the largest grouping of career orientation. As also illustrated, in the educational level category, 60.2 percent of the total respondents expressed themselves as having obtained a bachelor's degree.

Table 1. Sample Description

		Frequency	%	N
Gender	Male	168	43.7	384
	Female	216	56.3	
Age	20-34	197	51.3	384
	35-49	114	29.7	
	50 and above	73	19.0	
Career orientation	Business owner	43	11.2	384
	Company employee	183	47.7	
	Government employee	29	7.6	
	Unemployed/Retired	43	11.2	
	Other	86	22.3	
Educational level	High school/Diploma	126	32.8	384
	Bachelor's	231	60.2	
	Master's and above	27	7	

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Table 2 shows each variable group: strongly disagrees, disagree, cannot decide, agree and strongly agree. For expectation on price, the majority cannot decide—47.9 percent. The majority response (51.9%) to evaluation of the expectation of elements of promotion falls into cannot decide. 41.9 percent of respondents chose agree on expectation on production, and to expectation of service quality 41.4 percent chose agree. In the last four categories, the majority of respondents chose cannot decide: perception of price, 51.6 percent; perception of elements of promotion, 51.8 percent;

perception of product quality, 47.4 percent; and perception of service quality, 47.1 percent.

**Hypotheses and Results**

This study provides 34 hypotheses in order to fulfill its objectives. Tables 3 to 13 demonstrate 34 hypotheses and their results analyzed by One-way ANOVA, *t*-test and Pearson Correlation.

**Hypotheses Test Results**

Table 3 to table 13 (table group 1-9) reveals 26 hypotheses are accepted  $H_0$  and 8 hypotheses are rejected  $H_0$ .

Table 2. Respondent of Expectation and Perception

Variables	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Cannot decide	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's alpha
	%	%	%	%	%				
Expectation of price	1.3	10.4	<b>47.9</b>	36.7	3.6	100.0	3.3125	.69948	.210
Expectation of elements of promotion	.5	13.3	<b>51.9</b>	38.0	6.3	100.0	3.0260	.72975	.426
Expectation of product quality	.5	2.6	17.4	<b>41.9</b>	37.5	100.0	3.3611	.75816	.655
Expectation of service quality	1.0	7.6	39.6	<b>41.4</b>	10.4	100.0	2.7639	.71645	.586
Perception of price	1.8	21.9	<b>51.6</b>	21.6	3.1	100.0	4.1146	.75725	.273
Perception of elements of promotion	31	32.8	<b>51.8</b>	10.2	2.1	100.0	3.3281	.70101	.514
Perception of product quality	1.3	10.2	<b>47.4</b>	36.7	4.4	100.0	3.5295	.75694	.638
Perception on service quality	1.6	22.9	<b>47.1</b>	24.7	3.6	100.0	3.0738	.76555	.555

Table 3. Hypotheses Group 1 (Hypothesis 1-4)

Hypotheses	Analyze	F	T	p	Result
H <sub>01</sub> : Japanese tourists of different age will not have a different expectation of price.	ANOVA	.111		.895	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>02</sub> : Japanese tourists of different gender will not have a different expectation of price.	t-test	.001	.858	.391	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>03</sub> : Japanese tourists with different career orientations will not have a different expectation of price.	ANOVA	1.975		.098	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>04</sub> : Japanese tourists with different educational levels will not have a different expectation of price.	ANOVA	.562		.570	Accept H <sub>0</sub>

Table 4. Hypotheses Group 2 (Hypothesis 5-8)

Hypotheses	Analyze	F	T	p	Result
H <sub>05</sub> : Japanese tourists of different age will not have a different perception of price.	ANOVA	2.903		.056	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>06</sub> : Japanese tourists of different genders will not have a different perception of price.	t-test	2.615	.698	.485	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>07</sub> : Japanese tourists with different career orientations will not have a different perception of price.	ANOVA	1.153		.331	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>08</sub> : Japanese tourists with different educational levels will not have a different perception of price.	ANOVA	1.350		.260	Accept H <sub>0</sub>

Table 5. Hypotheses Group 3 (Hypothesis 9-12)

Hypotheses	Analyze	F	T	p	Result
H <sub>09</sub> : Japanese tourists of different age will not have different expectations of elements of promotion.	ANOVA	.239		.787	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>010</sub> : Japanese tourists of different genders will not have different expectations of elements of promotion.	t-test	.000	-2.044	.042	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>011</sub> : Japanese tourists with different career orientations will not have different expectations of elements of promotion.	ANOVA	5.503		.000	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>012</sub> : Japanese tourists with different educational levels will not have different expectations of elements of promotion.	ANOVA	.159		.853	Accept H <sub>0</sub>

Post-hoc testing on hypothesis 11 demonstrates that Government employees are different from other career groupings, except business owners, in expectation of elements of promotion in the Table 6.

Post-hoc testing on hypothesis 19 demonstrates that government employees are different from other career groupings and business owner and private company

employee groupings are different from government employees in expectation of product quality in the Table 9.

Post-hoc testing on hypothesis 31 demonstrates that the business owner grouping is different from the career grouping, but not private company employee grouping, in perception of service quality in the Table 13.

Table 6. Post-Hoc Testing on Hypothesis 11

Career	Careers	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Business owner	Private company employee	-.24	.126	.053
	Government employee	.35	.178	.052
	Unemployed/retired	-.12	.160	.467
	Other	-.32*	.138	.021
Private company employee	Business owner	.24	.126	.053
	Government employee	.59*	.148	.000
	Unemployed/retired	.13	.126	.310
	Other	-.08	.097	.422
Government employee	Business owner	-.35	.178	.052
	Private company employee	-.59*	.148	.000
	Unemployed/retired	-.46*	.178	.010
	Other	-.67*	.159	.000
Unemployed/retired	Business owner	.12	.160	.467
	Private company employee	-.13	.126	.310
	Government employee	.46*	.178	.010
	Other	-.21	.138	.139
Other	Business owner	.32*	.138	.021
	Private company employee	.08	.097	.422
	Government employee	.67*	.159	.000
	Unemployed/retired	.21	.138	.139

Table 7. Hypotheses Group 4 (Hypothesis 13-16)

Hypotheses	Analyze	F	T	p	Result
H <sub>013</sub> : Japanese tourists of different age will not have different perceptions of elements of promotion.	ANOVA	.895		.809	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>014</sub> : Japanese tourists of different gender will not have different perceptions of elements of promotion.	t-test	.007	2.998	.003	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>015</sub> : Japanese tourists with different career orientations will not have different perceptions of elements of promotion.	ANOVA	2.068		.084	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>016</sub> : Japanese tourists with different educational levels will not have different perceptions of elements of promotion.	ANOVA	.260		.771	Accept H <sub>0</sub>

Table 8. Hypotheses Group 5 (Hypothesis 17-20)

Hypotheses	Analyze	F	T	p	Result
H <sub>017</sub> : Japanese tourists of different age will not have different expectations of product quality.	ANOVA	1.119		.328	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>018</sub> : Japanese tourists of different gender will not have different expectations of product quality.	t-test	.065	-.396	.692	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>019</sub> : Japanese tourists with different career orientations will not have different expectations of product quality.	ANOVA	6.694		.000	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>020</sub> : Japanese tourists with different educational levels will not have different expectations of product quality.	ANOVA	1.075		.342	Accept H <sub>0</sub>

Table 9. Post-Hoc Testing on Hypothesis 19

Career	Careers	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Business owner	Private company employee	-.1762	.12468	.158
	Government employee	.5330*	.17678	.003
	Unemployed/retired	.0620	.12468	.696
	Other	-.1744	.13741	.205
Private company employee	Business owner	.1762	.12468	.158
	Government employee	.7092*	.14704	.000
	Unemployed/retired	.2382	.12468	.057
	Other	.0018	.09618	.985
Government employee	Business owner	-.5330*	.17678	.003
	Private company employee	-.7092*	.14704	.000
	Unemployed/retired	-.4710*	.17678	.008
	Other	-.7074*	.15798	.000
Unemployed/retried	Business owner	-.0620	.15866	.696
	Private company employee	-.2382	.12468	.057
	Government employee	.4710*	.17678	.008
	Other	-.2364	.13741	.086
Other	Business owner	.1744	.13741	.205
	Private company employee	-.0018	.09618	.985
	Government employee	.7074*	.15798	.000
	Unemployed/retired	.2364	.13741	.086

Table 10. Hypotheses Group 6 (Hypothesis 21-24)

Hypotheses	Analyze	F	T	p	Result
H <sub>021</sub> : Japanese tourists of different age will not have different expectations of service quality.	ANOVA	2.101		.124	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>022</sub> : Japanese tourists of different gender will not have different expectations of service quality.	t-test	.298	.813	.417	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>023</sub> : Japanese tourists with different career orientations will not have different expectations of service quality.	ANOVA	.936		.443	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>024</sub> : Japanese tourists with different educational levels will not have different expectations of service quality.	ANOVA	.128		.880	Accept H <sub>0</sub>

Table 11. Hypotheses Group 7 (Hypothesis 25-28)

Hypotheses	Analyze	F	T	p	Result
H <sub>025</sub> : Japanese tourists of different age will not have different perceptions of product quality.	ANOVA	.121		.886	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>026</sub> : Japanese tourists of different gender will not have different perceptions of product quality.	t-test	.239	-1.264	.207	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>027</sub> : Japanese tourists with different career orientations will not have different perceptions of product quality.	ANOVA	1.752		.138	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>028</sub> : Japanese tourists with different educational levels will not have different perceptions of product quality.	ANOVA	.128		.880	Accept H <sub>0</sub>

Table 12. Hypotheses Group 8 (Hypothesis 29-32)

Hypotheses	Analyze	F	T	p	Result
H <sub>029</sub> : Japanese tourists of different age will not have different perceptions of service quality.	ANOVA	.255		.775	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>030</sub> : Japanese tourists of different gender will not have different perceptions of service quality.	t-test	.013	2.334	.020	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>031</sub> : Japanese tourists with different career orientations will not have different perceptions of service quality.	ANOVA	3.027		.018	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>032</sub> : Japanese tourists with different educational levels will not have different perceptions of service quality.	ANOVA	.051		.950	Accept H <sub>0</sub>

Table 13. Post-Hoc Testing on Hypothesis 31

Career	Careers	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Business owner	Private company employee	.24	.128	.060
	Government employee	.41*	.182	.025
	Unemployed/retired	.42*	.163	.011
	Other	.43*	.141	.002
Private company employee	Business owner	-.24	.128	.060
	Government employee	.17	.151	.268
	Unemployed/retired	.18	.128	.170
	Other	.19	.099	.054
Government employee	Business owner	-.41*	.182	.025
	Private company employee	-.17	.151	.268
	Unemployed/retired	.01	.182	.964
	Other	.02	.163	.884
Unemployed/retired	Business owner	-.42*	.163	.011
	Private company employee	-.18	.128	.170
	Government employee	-.01	.182	.964
	Other	.02	.141	.913
Other	Business owner	-.43*	.141	.002
	Private company employee	-.19	.099	.054
	Government employee	-.02	.163	.884
	Unemployed/retired	-.02	.141	.913

Table 14. Hypotheses Group 9 (Hypothesis 33-34)

Hypotheses	Analyze	p	Result
H <sub>033</sub> : There is no relationship between prices of Thai merchandise and Japanese tourists' expectations while shopping in Thailand.	Pearson	.000	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
H <sub>034</sub> : There is no relationship between prices of Thai merchandise and Japanese tourists' perceptions while shopping in Thailand.		.000	Reject H <sub>0</sub>

### Merchandises and Money planning

Table 15 presents the percentage of the major Thai products the respondents shopped for while visiting Thailand and amount of money planned for shopping. It seems that food, health food and sweets (39.3%) are the most popular group of products for respondents.

### Money Plan

The amount of money the respondents planned to spend was more than ¥30,000 (34.9%) as presented in the Table 16.



Table 15. Merchandise/Money Plan

<b>Kinds of Products Shopped by Japanese Tourists</b>	<b>%</b>
Textiles (Thai silk products, fabrics, and weaves)	35.4
Thai handicraft products (wooden products, lacquer wear and paper products)	12.8
Antique products (statues, China, and Thai wear)	7.8
Art objects (painting, jewelry and sculpture)	4.7
Food, health food and sweets	39.3

Table 16. Money Plan

<b>Planned amount of Shopping Money</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than ¥ 10,000	17.7
¥ 10,000 - ¥ 20,000	21.6
¥ 20,001 - ¥ 30,000	25.8
Above ¥ 30,000	34.9

### The Expectation

Table 17 gives information about respondents' expectations and the rank of expectation. Overall, the highest expect-

ation was concern about price. Evidence shows that the reasonable price of products (Rank 1; mean =15.6) is the highest expectation of respondents.

Table 17. Expectation of Shopping

<b>The expectation on shopping</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Polite service manners	302	5.2	
Effective store management	63	1.1	
Safe to walk around	362	6.3	
Reasonably priced goods	900	<b>15.6</b>	<b>1</b>
Good quality with cheap price	393	<b>6.8</b>	<b>5</b>
Friendly touch of Thai people	619	<b>10.7</b>	<b>4</b>
Joy in bargaining for merchandise	259	4.5	
Genuine product	291	5.1	
Unique service for Japanese	145	2.5	
Interesting array of food	182	3.2	
Convenient traveling	633	<b>11.0</b>	<b>3</b>
Nice environment	244	4.2	
Diverse kinds of merchandise	368	6.4	
Thai-ness; Thai style souvenirs	664	<b>11.5</b>	<b>2</b>
Pleasant communication	335	5.8	
Total	5,760	100.0	

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the results of the questionnaires, 197 people aged 20-34 (51.3%) were the biggest group among respondents. Of the total 384 tourists, 216 were female (56.3%). It seems that private company employees' group is the biggest group of respondents, 47.7 per-

cent of total respondents. The majority of respondents have completed a bachelor's degree (231 people or 60.2 percent). The major merchandise that Japanese tourists preferred in this study are food, health food and sweets, 39.3 percent of 384 people. The majority of tourist expectation to spend for shopping is more than 30,000 Japanese Yen per person

(34.9%)—effective for Thai merchandise because tourists still need to spend money in high expectation for shopping.

As shown, 47.9 percent of respondents choose cannot decide on expectation of price, and expectation on elements of promotion, 51.9 percent. 41.9 percent of respondents agreed with expectation of product quality and expectation on service quality, 41.4 percent. 51.6 percent of respondents cannot decide on perception of price, and 51.8 percent on perception on elements of promotion. Moreover, 47.4 percent of Japanese tourist respondents cannot decide on perception of product quality, and 47.1 percent on perception of service quality.

The hypotheses results show that the relationship between the independent variables and the differences of expectation and perception of the dependent variables is not significant, in general. However, gender, career, and education show a significant influence on certain areas of expectation and perception. Gender difference results show different expectations and perceptions in regard to the elements of promotion, as well as perception of service quality. Tourists with different career orientations show a significant difference of expectation concerning the elements of promotion while their different educational backgrounds bring different perception of product quality. More details are provided on the following section.

## **Discussion**

### **Age**

The independent variable of age is apparently the only variable that has no influence in making Japanese tourists' shopping behavior different. This sampling group shows more or less homogeneity of shopping behavior judged from the majority amongst the age groupings — those ranged from 20 to 40 years of age. People in this age range generally have similar trends in their behavior concerning dining, shopping, dressing, and traveling. Scholars found that teenagers value fashion, perhaps, more than any other age group ([10]). Japan tends to influence teenagers on fashion and shopping behaviors; there seems to be little doubt that Japan tends to have a

dress code. While older consumers may do little to modify the 'code', teenagers seem to find a way to express some individuality ([20]).

### **Gender**

Male and female shoppers may split their opinions when they encounter intangible matters regarding sale promotion, quality of service, or any contextual aspect of shopping. It is not strange that Japanese men and women have different expectations and perceptions of the elements of promotion that are involved with premiums, bargaining, points collection for discounting and shops' services during their shopping in Bangkok. According to the different gender roles of Japanese tourists, women are subservient to men, particularly in family matters. However, women rule the roost at home. They control the finances and make all important decisions in private. True, the men dominate in company settings, as that is considered to be the public face, but at home the men are like fish out of water. ([13]) Japanese men and women might have different thinking as is shown clearly by the different behavior roles between men and women. Hence, after marriage, Japanese men dedicate themselves to work, while women do not work outside the home. Women will be in charge in their role as house manager as well as taking care of the children and family members' hygiene and nutrition. In any case, a Japanese wife will control the money from her husband's salary because she does not earn income after get getting married and is more aware of the value of products, premiums, services and any benefits necessary for purchasing goods. Because of their life roles, Japanese women have more skill with shopping and purchasing than men. This cultural role covers the purchasing behavior of Japanese people from daily purchasing to their shopping behavior when they take a trip and go shopping.

Japanese tourists regard Thai service quality positively; their expectation of service quality, when judged according to career orientation, shows no difference. The good reputation of Thai shopping service quality seems to be recognized widely by the Japanese. Even though,

culturally and naturally speaking, they hold a positive expectation about service quality, there is no doubt that they are capable of holding different opinions. To the Japanese, the philosophy of service should be the same standard everywhere; no one of them would settle for less. The perception of service quality is different between men and women which means that Japanese genders hold a different view about service quality. The behaviors revealing their perception about service quality might have been influenced from gender role attitudes, related to the study of Dholakia (1999). There are three different constructs: sex, gender identities and gender role attitudes and these distinctions need to be kept clearly in mind ([3]); sex being understood to be the physical or biological characteristic of the respondent. Japanese men and women demonstrate quite different roles, as seen in the study of Sage (2002); Japanese women often satisfied with a trade-off which, in fact, is not really so great. In exchange for maintaining a circumspect home life, the Japanese woman has great freedom with her schedule and her money.

### **Career Orientation**

This factor shows its influence more in the expectations of the tourists, but less in the perceptions. As career orientation evolves from experience, it may vary between the stages of expectation and perception. As the dominant population, regarding career orientation under study here, are from private corporations—the hard-earned income segment—it shows the likelihood of Japanese tourists from private firms could form a shopping habit in which expectation may preoccupy their purchasing decision but such restriction becomes mellow upon their shopping experience. Being raised in a country where quality of product is of supreme concern, Japanese tourists have high expectations of product quality because of their subjective judgment relative to the experiences at home. It's possible that Japanese with different careers have different expectation elements of promotion because careers might determine shopping behavior. For example, business owners do not care about discounts because business owners always run their

business and always understand about product quality or service quality more than people from another career might. They may know that discounted products might be low quality products. From this research's results, Japanese tourists' career orientation shows the differences of their perception of service quality. Japanese people may care more about quality of product, genuine products and the worth of products because these might affect their country's ruling culture. Japan's governors are against importing artificial products into Japan even though tourists visiting Japan cannot bring fake products into the country. Their culture automatically conditions the Japanese people's consumption behavior and the perception about only genuine products. Consequently, they are always serious about genuine products and sensitive to the quality of unusual products and brand perception. Consistent with the education factor, Japanese tourists have strongly perceived attitudes towards the quality of products in Thailand because they always realize the reasonable price of the products. Therefore, quality and price should be relevant to each other.

### **Relationship between Price and Expectation**

It is no surprise to find the Japanese tourists have common expectations and perceptions of the prices for Thai merchandise. Because of the strength of their economy, the Japanese tourists have long held themselves in high esteem; they think that they are richer than any other Asian country. Hence, Thailand may appear to the Japanese as a country inferior to theirs in terms of economy. The prices of Thai products or merchandise may be known to the Japanese as modest or reasonable, through word-of-mouth communication. Therefore, the Japanese tourists' expectations and perceptions show no significant change, as they toured the country. According to Scarpi (2006), the 'economic shopper' is mainly concerned with buying at the lowest price. Thus, it is controversial whether price consciousness develops into utilitarianism, or not. It has been suggested that 'economic shoppers' reflect utilitarianism, whereas recreational shoppers reflect hedonism. However, a consumer could enjoy shopping even if

he/she is looking for the lowest price: cherry-picking and hunting for bargains can also be fun. Hence, common tourists also have expectations and perceptions about lowest price.

### **Relationship between Price and Japanese Tourists' Perception**

The results represent the relationship of price among Japanese tourists' perceptions of elements of promotion and service quality according to gender and career orientation; and their perception on product quality according to different educational levels. The relationship of price and Japanese tourists' perceptions reflects that Japanese tourists can accept the product price of Thai merchandise even if sometimes expensive because of quality. This study found that Japanese tourists' expectations and perceptions of price, while shopping in Thailand, vary according to the factors of gender, career orientation, and educational level. In addition, the expectations and perceptions of service quality also are varied according to the same factors. For example, Japanese men and women seem to have different views on prioritizing the elements of promotion. Their career orientation also makes them view the elements of promotion differently. The Japanese tourists' educational backgrounds could lead to their diverse perception of product quality. Career orientation also creates different views of expectation on product quality. This study has found that, during their traveling in Bangkok, the tourists' mainly shopped for food, health care and sweet products. The majority of Japanese tourists under this study expected to spend more than Yen 30,000. Their expectations of Thai merchandises ranked, respectively, from reasonable price, Thainess of the products, convenience in shopping, and friendliness of the service to the friendly touch of Thai people. The Japanese tourists under this study appeared to care for price while shopping in Thailand. Their perception of elements of promotion significantly differs according to gender and career orientation. The same condition, gender and career orientation, also leads to a different perception of service quality. If the price of products is high, Japanese tourists also expect and

perceive high quality of product and service quality.

### **Recommendations**

This research found that the relationship between the elements of promotion and the gender of the Japanese shoppers is significant. An in-depth study of career orientation vis-à-vis relationship to shoppers' perception should be conducted, so that a marketing strategy could be planned accordingly. The merchandise and retail organizations should manage and develop products involved with service quality based on these findings. Japanese tourists also have a different view towards product and service quality according to diversity of career orientation. Future researchers should seek more information about tourists' expectations of activity while in Thailand, specifically in Bangkok, in order to lessen tourist attrition. Moreover, researchers should study the expectations and perceptions of the price of the Thai tour package. Tour operators and travel agencies charge a different price for tour packages in the Japanese market while the contents of the tour package are not different. Therefore it is recommended that there be further research and investigation into the different price of tour packages or products in the different channels of marketing.

### **CONCLUSION**

Marketers should improve the conditions and activities for customers during their shopping experience in Thailand. Shopping promotions such as discount coupons, point's collection for discounted price levels, premiums from value of money spending, and the service by shop assistants are the elements of promotion that are strongly viewed by Japanese man and woman in different ways. The elements of promotion by premiums, point collection for discounts, bargaining, shop member applications, services offered by shop assistants might even be more important and interesting than the product or goods' prices because the elements of promotion are atmosphere elements creating an attractive shopping environment. If the department stores provide good incentives, such as pre-

miums, the shopping experience will promote the value of the goods as well as creating a shopping atmosphere which is diverse and full of enjoyment for the customers.

### Implications

The shopping center and retail industry in Thailand is placing increasing emphasis on leisure shopping and tourism. The results of this study suggest that Japanese tourists are interested in the component of promotion during their shopping experience. The shopping venues might more carefully take into account such tourist factors as gender and/or career because tourists of a different gender or from a different career are attracted by different of elements of promotion.

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