

Thai Public Expectations and Perceptions Toward Understanding in Thai Government's Entertainment Complex Business Bill, 2025

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Abstract

This study aimed to study the relationship between public expectations and perceptions regarding their understanding of the Entertainment Business Bill. The findings are intended to serve as a guideline for fostering public understanding. This research employed quantitative research. The study population consisted of a sample of 400 Thai citizens aged 20 years and older. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

The research results revealed that many respondents were male, currently studying or holding a bachelor's degree, employed in the private sector, and had an average monthly income of 20,001-25,000 Thai baht. Most respondents were aware of the Entertainment Complex Bill and agreed that its enactment would benefit the country's development. The relationship factors between the public's education level and income influenced their expectations, perceptions, and attitudes. Furthermore, the hypothesis testing confirmed that positive expectations and perceptions had an impact on the public's attitudes towards the Entertainment Complex Bill. This indicates that individuals with positive expectations and perceptions tend to have a favorable attitude towards this bill. Additionally, the public's attitude significantly influenced their understanding at a level of 1.0883, implying that those with a positive attitude are more likely to develop a more detailed understanding of the Entertainment Complex Bill. There should be incorporate effective public education initiatives that clearly communicate its underlying principles and rationale. Enhancing public understanding in this manner is essential to fostering positive attitudes, which in turn can lead to greater acceptance of the Entertainment Complex Bill, 2025.

Keywords: Expectations, Perceptions, Understanding, Thai Government's Entertainment Complex Bill

Background and Statement of the problem

The 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan for 2023-2027 (2022) sets the second key objective for Thailand to become a destination for quality and sustainable tourism. Since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Thailand has faced a severe contraction in its tourism economy. Despite government measures to stimulate tourism, such as the "We Travel Together" and "Moral Support" projects, these have not been sufficient for the recovery of the tourism sector. Sustainable Tourism Industry Development must consider both internal and external risk factors. Thailand faces challenges in achieving its goals, particularly in creating added value for tourism to attract higher tourist spending and promoting quality over quantity tourism, as well as enhancing the competitiveness of Thai tourism. The strategy includes promoting the development of high-value tourism activities, products, and services, and upgrading tourism services and management to meet internationally recognized standards. Thai economy in 2024 is projected to recover slowly, with key supporting factors including increased government spending and investment, the recovery of the tourism and related service sectors, good growth in domestic demand for consumption and investment, and the slow recovery of merchandise exports in line with the global trade recovery (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2024). Thailand's Tourism is on a continuous recovery trend. In 2024 (January-July), 20.60 million foreign tourists visited Thailand, an increase of 33% from the same period last year, potentially leading to a total of 36.5 million foreign tourists in 2024 (Krungthai Compass, 2024). The largest group of foreign tourists visiting Thailand is Chinese, accounting for 20.03% due to the visa exemption policy, followed

by Malaysians at 13.90% and Indians at 5.82%. Although the number of foreign tourists has increased, the spending of foreign tourists in Thailand in 2024 has decreased in almost all regions, except for America, where tourist spending increased by 5.27% from the previous year (Parliamentary Budget Office, Secretariat of the House of Representatives, 2024).

In the current situation, gambling has advanced through communication channels via the internet and various online media, encouraging widespread gambling. Despite government suppression measures, the number of online gambling activities cannot be reduced or eliminated. Illegal gambling results in significant government expenditure on law enforcement without the ability to collect fees or taxes from gambling activities. Meanwhile, many developed countries worldwide, including the United States of America, France, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Singapore, and ASEAN countries such as Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, and Myanmar, have legalized gambling in the form of entertainment complexes. This is because casinos attract investors and tourists, promote business development and growth, and generate substantial revenue for the country. Many countries have therefore established casinos as a business to generate national income. However, in Thailand, gambling is considered illegal and inconsistent with the lifestyle or preferences of the public, who widely engage in gambling. Additionally, high-income Thai citizens who enjoy gambling must travel across borders to gamble in neighboring countries and other countries where casinos and gambling are legal. This leads to many illegal gambling businesses operating clandestinely and provides opportunities for government officials to abuse their authority for personal gain (Academic Division, Secretariat of the House of Representatives, 2023). As resolved by the Cabinet on April 9, 2024, acknowledging the report on the study of opening comprehensive entertainment complexes to address illegal gambling and for the economic benefit of the country by the Extraordinary Committee to Study the Opening of Comprehensive Entertainment Complexes to Address Illegal Gambling and for the Economic Benefit of the Country, House of Representatives, the Ministry of Finance was assigned to receive the report along with the Extraordinary Committee's observations for consideration with relevant agencies. The Ministry of Finance has appointed a working group to draft the Act on the Operation of Comprehensive Entertainment Complex Businesses, in accordance with the Act on Principles for Drafting Laws and Evaluating the Effectiveness of Laws 2019 (B.E. 2562) (2019) (Thai PBS, 2024).

Thai citizens are stakeholders in the establishment of Entertainment Complex, which will have significant positive and negative impacts on many Thai people. However, there remains public opposition to the proposed Entertainment Complex Bill. Concerns have been raised regarding potential negative impacts that may arise from the operation of integrated entertainment complexes, such as financial problems and debt, criminal activities, and money laundering. Moreover, the inclusion of casinos as a component of such complexes is viewed by some as being contrary to the moral values upheld by Buddhist communities. Therefore, studying the expectations and perceptions of the public regarding their understanding of the Entertainment Complex Bill is crucial. This will provide insights into the attitudes, perspectives, and genuine needs of the public regarding the enforcement of this law. This information will be highly beneficial for relevant agencies in developing effective and socially responsive law enforcement guidelines, as well as fostering mutual understanding between the government, operators, and the public, ultimately leading to effective and widely accepted law enforcement. The aim is to utilize the research findings to develop and improve law enforcement to be efficient and truly responsive to the needs of society.

Objective

To study the expectations and perceptions of the Thai public toward the Entertainment Complex Bill and their influence on the public's understanding of this draft legislation.

Expected benefits

To understand the relationship between public expectations and perceptions regarding their understanding of the Entertainment Complex Bill, serving as a guideline for enhancing public awareness.

Conceptual Framework

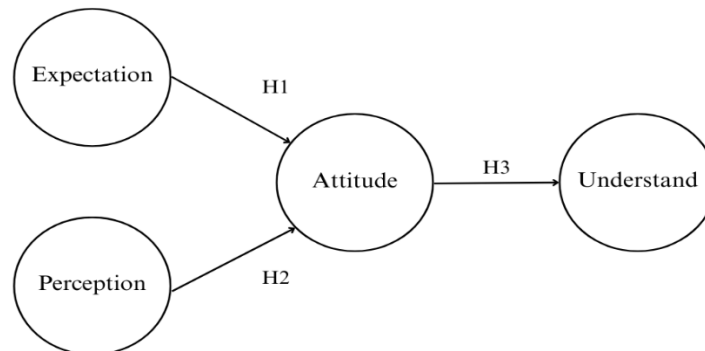


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

- H1: Positive expectations influence public attitudes toward the Entertainment Complex Bill.
- H2: Positive perceptions influence public attitudes toward the Entertainment Complex Bill.
- H3: Positive attitudes influence the understanding of the Entertainment Complex Bill.

Research Methodology

1. Population and Sample Group

1.1 Population

The population consists of Thai citizens aged 20 years and older, as individuals in this age group have reached legal adulthood according to section 19 of the Civil and Commercial Code (page 8). Based on the age-specific population report from the Bureau of Registration Administration, Department of Provincial Administration, as of December 2024, Thailand had a population of 51,402,381 people aged 20 years and older (Department of Provincial Administration, 2025).

1.2 Sample Group

According to Section 16 of the Service Establishment Act 1966 (B.E. 2509) (1966), "It is prohibited for the licensee to allow individuals under the age of 20 to enter the establishment during operating hours" (Service Establishment Act 1966, B.E. 2509). Therefore, the sample group was selected using a purposive sampling method, consisting of 400 Thai citizens aged 20 and older residing in Bangkok. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie & Morgan formula (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970).

2. Data Collection

This study employed quantitative research methods. The research instrument was a questionnaire, whose quality was verified by three experts to assess content validity. The Index of Item Congruence (IOC) was calculated at 0.88. The questionnaire was then pretested on a group of 30 individuals like the target sample to determine its reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded a value of 0.91, meeting the required threshold. The assessment criteria followed a five-point rating scale based on Likert's method (Srisa-ard, 1995).

3. Data Analysis

The research team analyzed the data using statistical methods: Descriptive Statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to describe the general characteristics of the variables. Inferential Statistics, including correlation analysis, were used to examine relationships between variables. Path analysis was conducted under Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypotheses. The study also examined path coefficients and statistical significance (p-value) to validate research hypothesis H1, H2, and H3.

Research Results

The findings revealed the following demographic characteristics of the respondents as Gender group 57% were male, and 43% were female. The age group majority were aged 31-40 years (64%). Education Level the highest level of education attained was bachelor's degree (72%). Occupation most respondents were private sector employees (66%). Average Monthly Income the majority earned between 20,001-25,000 THB (68%).

Regarding public attitudes toward the Entertainment Complex Bill 82% of respondents were aware of businesses related to this Bill 69% had at least some knowledge of the bill and 74% believed that the enactment of this law would benefit national development and the public.

Table 1 research results

Variable	Total	Degree				Income				
		Bachelor		Upper Bachelor		Low		High		
<u>Attitude</u>										
Expectation	0.4727	***	0.3799	***	0.5638	***	0.5578	***	0.4504	***
Perception	0.4749	***	0.4716	***	0.4300	***	0.3873	***	0.4957	***
<u>Understand</u>										
Attitude	1.0883	***	1.1814	***	1.0202	***	1.0123	***	1.1305	***
N	411		288		123		129		282	
Loglikelihood	-8572.2		-5872.1		-2506.2		-2715.4		-5703.3	
Chi-squared MS	2158.78	***	1654.17	***	1638.34	***	1464.75	***	1772.89	***
Chi-squared BS	20279	***	11868.3	***	8158.68	***	7377.13	***	14068.2	***
RMSEA	0.096		0.096		0.146		0.132		0.102	
CFI	0.914		0.894		0.845		0.853		0.903	
TLI	0.905		0.884		0.83		0.838		0.893	

1. Expectations and perceptions influence attitudes, with both factors having a similar impact. The effect of expectations is 0.4727, while the effect of perceptions is 0.4749.
2. Attitudes influence understanding, with a coefficient of 1.0883.

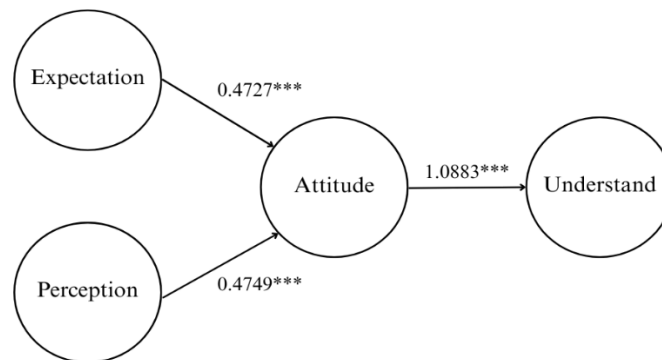


Figure 2 research hypothesis results

Summary of the Study

The research findings indicate that education level and income significantly influence expectations, perceptions, and attitudes toward the Entertainment Complex Bill. Individuals with higher education (above a bachelor's degree) have an expected score of 0.5638***, while those with higher income have a score of 0.4504***. These groups tend to have higher expectations for the act, possibly due to their higher standards for regulation and business development in the entertainment sector. Conversely, individuals with lower income at 0.5578*** and education below a bachelor's degree tend to have lower expectations, potentially due to limited access to information or concerns about the bill's impact.

Regarding perception, the study finds that: Those with higher income at 0.4957*** and a bachelor's degree at 0.4716*** have a more positive perception of the bill. However, individuals with an education above

a bachelor's degree at 0.4300*** and lower income at 0.3873*** exhibit lower positive perception levels. This suggests that while higher-income and bachelor's degree holders better understand and access information about the bill, those with advanced education might analyze it more critically and have more complex viewpoints.

The hypothesis testing results confirm that positive expectations and perceptions significantly influence attitudes toward the Entertainment Complex Bill for the expectation influences attitude at 0.4727*** and perception influences attitude at 0.4749***. This implies that individuals with positive expectations and perceptions tend to hold favorable attitudes toward the bill. Furthermore, the study confirms that a positive attitude strongly influences understanding of the act with a coefficient of 1.0883***, meaning that those with a positive attitude are more likely to understand the bill in greater detail.

Discussions

The research findings indicate that expectations and perceptions play a crucial role in shaping public attitudes toward the Entertainment Complex Bill. Individuals with higher education and income levels tend to have more positive expectations and perceptions, leading to a favorable attitude toward the law. However, those with an education beyond a bachelor's degree exhibit fewer positive attitudes compared to those with only a bachelor's degree. This could be due to their more complex perspectives or critical evaluation of the law's effectiveness. This aligns with Johnson and Lee (2023) in the UK, where highly educated individuals, despite understanding the law, tend to critique its efficiency. Similarly, our study confirms that those with higher education beyond a bachelor's degree are less positive compared to bachelor's degree holders.

Regarding perception, individuals with higher incomes are more likely to comprehend legal details than those with lower incomes. This may be due to better access to information or a greater interest in policies related to the entertainment industry. Furthermore, the confirmation of the hypothesis that positive attitudes influence legal understanding suggests that individuals with a favorable view of the act are more likely to study its details and grasp its provisions more effectively. So, the government sector should enhance legal communication strategies to ensure equal access to legal information, particularly for low-income groups and those who do not regularly follow legal news. This aligns with Smith et al. (2022) in the United States, which found that highly educated and high-income individuals generally hold positive attitudes toward entertainment-related laws due to their better understanding of their impacts and benefits.

The conclusion shows that the study highlights that positive expectations and perceptions strongly influence public attitudes toward the Entertainment Complex Bill, particularly among high-income and highly educated individuals. However, those with an education beyond a bachelor's degree tend to have fewer positive attitudes, possibly due to a more complex or skeptical view of the law's effectiveness. This supports Martinez et al. (2021) in Spain, which found that a positive attitude toward the law directly impacts legal understanding and compliance. Likewise, our study confirms that a favorable attitude can lead to better comprehension and adherence to legal regulations.

Recommendations

1. Practical Applications of Research

1.1 The Entertainment Complex Bill should integrate public expectations into its information dissemination strategy. This can be achieved by ensuring widespread access to relevant information through online media, public broadcasting, and community forums. These initiatives will help enhance public awareness, foster positive attitudes, and promote better understanding of the Bill.

1.2 Government sector can utilize this study to enhance the public perception of the Comprehensive Entertainment Bill, ensuring that it is seen as a beneficial and well-structured policy.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

2.1 Future research should employ a mixed-methods approach (both quantitative and qualitative) to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis, particularly by incorporating insights from key stakeholders.

2.2 Further studies should focus on evaluating the long-term impact of the implementation of the Act. Continuous monitoring will provide valuable data for refining policies and ensuring that they remain adaptable to evolving circumstances.

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