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PHUTAI ETHNIC TEXTILE INTERPRETATION AND THE ADAPTIVE USING OF MEKONG MICE TRAVELERS

Donruetai Kovathanakul

Faculty of Business Administration and Accountancy, Khon Kaen University, Thailand

Abstract

This article “Phutai Ethnic Textile Interpretation and the adaptive using of MICE Travelers” is a part of research plan “Adaptive Using Local Textiles Guidelines for Creative Cultural Heritage Tourism Development”, and a research plan of “Mekong Ethnic Groups Tourism Development, Based on the Authenticity, to Support ASEAN Tourism Plan”. The objectives are 1) studied and analyzed the context of Phutai ethnic textile interpretation and the adaptive using of Mekong MICE travelers; 2) to proposed the concept of Phutai Ethnic adaptive using guideline for ethnic textile interpretation. Related literature was reviewed: ethnic textile, interpretation, adaptive using, and MICE travelers. Field research, interviews, and surveying was extracted. The guideline of Phutai Ethnic textile adaptive using of Mekong MICE travelers was proposed.

Keywords: Phutai, Ethnic Textile, Interpretation, Adaptive Using, MICE Travelers

INTRODUCTION

Local textiles are one part of the cultural heritage. The unique characteristics of local textiles depend on their areas and cultural significance. Local textiles are not only based on physical forms, but can also include intangible values, such as cultural identity, local wisdom, a body of knowledge, and beliefs. As cultural resources, local textiles can be used in community development through tourism. Moreover, they can also be used as a tool in tourism interpretation. With its diversity, local textiles are suitable for creating innovations. This means local textiles can be used for improving, developing, and creating added value, as well as for integrating with other knowledge.

The current study is a part of research project on “The Guideline Application of Local Textile towards Creative Cultural Heritage Tourism Development”. The study area was in the educational area in Northeastern Thailand which is well known for Mudmee silk, Kit-weaving, and Hang kra rok silk (Adapted from: www.kanchanapisek.or.th). These textiles represent the unique identity of Thai wisdom.

However, when searching for Intangible Heritage in the UNESCO, 2007 database, there was no information related to Thai precious Intellectual cultural heritage. This paper has aimed to study Thai local textile interpretation with respect to the adaptation of its valuable use with tourists as the target group.

Tourists are important stakeholders in the economy. According to a study by Pongsiri (2003), it was revealed that Thai tourists tend to buy souvenirs in the form of fabrics, while foreign tourists favor scarves and shawls. It can be seen that the tourists behaviors of both Thais and foreigners differ. Hence, the adaptation should be applied based on each tourist group by using principles of marketing. Niche Market will contribute to income distribution in the community which will result in tangible economic values.

For the abovementioned reasons, the researcher has conducted research on “Phutai Ethnic Textile Interpretation and the Adaptive Using of Mekong MICE Travelers”, so as to publicize the heritage of

Thai cultural wisdom by offering interpretations to Thai and foreign tourists, especially MICE travelers and by adapting culture to increase the value of creative economics.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study and analyze the context of Phutai ethnic textile interpretation and the adaptive use of Mekong MICE travelers.
2. To propose the concepts and guidelines of Phutai Ethnic textiles and adapt their use for ethnic textile interpretation.

RELATED LITERATURE

Ethnic Textile and Adaptive Use

Most of Thai local textiles are produced from two types of natural yarns which are silk and cotton. There are differences in local production in terms of colors, the processes of dyeing & weaving, textures, and stitching with other materials (Ministry of University Affairs, 1998). There are different characteristics between Local textiles made of silk and cotton. Textiles made from silk are more durable, but the process to produce silk yarn is more difficult than producing cotton yarn. As a result, silk is normally used for special occasions, in traditional ceremonies, or in worship ceremonies, while cotton is used in daily life (Silpakorn University, 2001: 40-41).

Since Thai local textiles, which are handicrafts, differ according to the local context and can specify the cultural identity of the community in the area (Woodikarn, 2001). In addition, local textiles also indicate the social status of the people who are using them. (Silpakorn University, 2001: 40).

Thai local texture can be categorized into 5 main types based on the weaving process, the fineness of the texture, the usage, and the mixture of the textures (Silpakorn University, 2001).

Kit-weaving, which is mostly found in Northeastern Thailand, has been inherited from the Laos, Phutai, and Tai Lue ethnic groups. In the weaving process, a thin piece of wood with one sharp end is used as a tool for creating texture. The thin wood is used to pull

the silk up or push it down by counting each silk yarn until the texture is completed.

Mudmee, which is also found in the Northeast, has been inherited from Laos, Phutai, and Khmer ethnic groups. In the dyeing process, in order to create texture, some parts of the materials are tied up with a rope. With respect to the parts, that have been tied up, they will have no color when the texture is woven.

Praewa can be seen in the Northeast and has been inherited from the Phutai ethnic group. Khid, the patterned weaving process, was used to produce Praewa. Each fabric contains a variety of textures. Each texture was woven in levels with different colors. People, who produce Praewa, always have a sample of the texture while weaving.

The Competitiveness Development Office and the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (2006) have systematized cluster mapping into groups. In the Northeast, there are two effective groups which are:

1. Developing Group: Ban Siew Noi silk production network, Chaiyapum Province
2. Seeking Direction Group: Indigo fabric, Sakon Nakhon Province and silk production, Pak Thong Chai District. There are also other Thai local textiles that were called differently.

From the past, weaving textiles was normally produced for household or community use, rather than used for marketing purposes. However, at present, people prefer to use fabrics produced from industry process more than handmade textiles (Wuttatrakul & Phanyura, 1994). As a result, there is a lack of continued development of local Thai textiles. There is no conscientious inheritance and the number of specialists has also decreased. In addition, factors regarding the influence of the Royal culture and cosmopolitan culture (Ministry of University Affairs, 1998: 15), including a lack of education about Thai local textiles and their applications, have contributed to the disappearance of Thai local textiles which are considered to be a cultural heritage. According to an area based survey by Silpakorn University in 2001 (Silpakorn University, 2001: 227),

the results showed that problems and obstacles related to Thai local textile were as follows:

1. There is a lack of attentiveness in weaving work among people who make a living from weaving. Also, identity inheritors or conservators are lacking. Nonetheless, authentic weaving arts are rarely found.

2. There is a lack of strong association in each area. Therefore, the effectiveness of production and production plans are low. In addition, the bargaining power of the community is low and the plans for setting a direction for marketing was also inefficient.

3. There is a lack of product development and new designs. There are no varieties of products that meet market needs.

4. There is a lack of market for product distribution. The price of the product was also lowered by the middleman.

5. There is a lack of sustainable support from relevant sectors in terms of sources of funds, production techniques, marketing, and promoting products.

At present, most of people, who are making a living by producing Thai local textiles, were ethnic groups who had settled in new places or had fled due to war. Textiles from different ethnic groups have been inherited from local habitats. The diversity of cultural identity in Thailand can be seen through different techniques and methods.

Pook (2002) has classified textiles in to three types according to their usages: 1) textiles for everyday use, 2) textiles for special occasions, and 3) textiles used for religious ceremonies. This classification focuses upon clothing.

The development of the Thai textile industry is under the strategic plan and master plan to increase competitiveness. In the textile and clothing industry (2007-2011), it was seen that projections, that direct and carry out the strategic plan, had been conducted during a time when the economic and world markets were growing well with world economic growth at an average of 5.2% and 3.4% in 2007 and 2008,

respectively. In 2008, textile and clothing industries in the world's exporting market were worth 560,277 million US Dollars, increasing from the past year by 7.5%. As a result of the strategic drive under the vision that empowered Thailand to become the center of textile and fashion in ASEAN region, there were innovations, improvements, and the establishment of the center of textiles, so as to compel and facilitate private organizations to conduct research, develop a variety of products, develop labor efficiency, and to develop textile clusters both at the central and regional levels, including supply chain development in ASEAN market. As a result, Thailand's competitiveness has remained at a satisfactory level. In 2008, Thailand received a market share from world's textile and clothing export, ranging from 12th to 13th, respectively, with a total export value of 7,200 million US Dollars (Textile Development Center, 2011).

Currently, there are different ways of applying Thai textiles. For example, the Institute for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (2013) has given an example for applying Thai textiles, such as the production of Thai textile dolls or luxuriously decorated pictures focusing on characters from Thai literature. The renowned fabric production company named Jim Thompson (The Thai Silk Company, 1951) has also applied Thai textiles in production design, such as bags and pen cases.

In Thailand, the Textile Development Center (2011) mentioned that weaving products have been applied in 12 different fields of industries, such as Agricultural, Construction, Geology, Industry, Medical, Automotive, Packaging, Protection, Sports, Household, Environment, and Clothing.

INTERPRETATION

Interpretation is an educational activity which aims to reveal meaning and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information (Tilden, 1957). Interpretation is not an instruction, but a motivation for readers or audience members to motivate their interests and knowledge towards factual understanding. Interpretation is set behind the fact which was revealed through techniques (Gove, 1963), thoughts,

or the transference of feelings from one person to another, and through the appropriate use of gestures, facial expressions, words, written language, television, telephone, and radio, etc. (Good, 1973). These bring meaning to environmental resources, enhance visitor appreciation, promote better understanding through experiences, and deepen people's understanding of people, events, and objects from past and present (Association for Heritage Interpretation, 1975). As a result visitors are more likely to care for and have conservative mindset towards the development of sustainable tourism. Show in Figure 1.

MICE Travelers

The MICE industry consists of Meetings, Incentive Travel, Conventions, and Exhibitions. The following

are details of MICE (Convention and Exhibition Bureau, 2013).

“MICE Travelers”: The factor that differentiates MICE travelers from other tourists, who travel for leisure, is the expenditure per traveler. Data from many countries, including Thailand, showed that the expenditure of MICE travelers per person has almost doubled as compared to people who travel for leisure. (For example, in Thailand, when comparing the expenditure of tourists in 2011, it was seen that general tourists spend 37,000 1 Baht per person per trip while MICE travelers spend 80,000 Baht per person per trip.2). This shows that MICE travelers are high quality travelers and deserve to be given no less priority than tourists who travel for leisure (<http://tourisminvest.tat.or.th>, 2016).

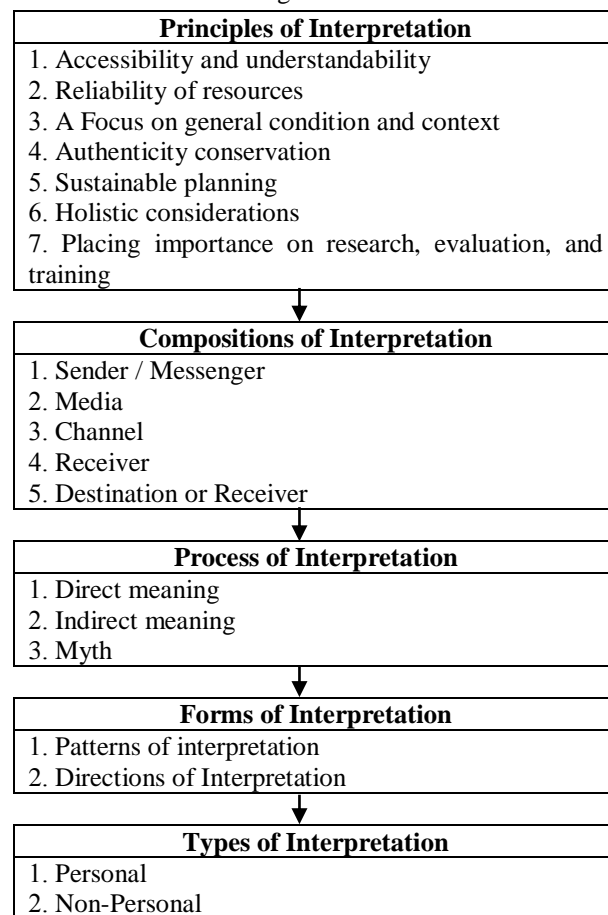


Figure 1 Interpretation Process Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

From Table 1, the instruments used to evaluate this investigation included the following: 1) surveys (used in surveying the area of Phutai Ethnic Group in

Thailand), and 2) Interviews (used to collect data from relevant sectors and individuals involved in tourism). Content Validity Index: CVI was verified by 9 specialists. The result of content Validity Index was $CVI = 0.981-0.989$ which meant these

instruments were qualified and could be used in data collection (Rohwer, 2010).

Table 1 Research Methodology

Objectives	Population	Samplings	Research Tools
1. To study & analyze the context of Phutai ethnic textile interpretation and the adaptive use of Mekong MICE travelers	Tourism Authority of Thailand	1. Tourism Authority of Thailand officer was selected by using Purposive Sampling	Interviews
	Office of Tourism and Sports	1. Office of Tourism and Sports officer was selected by using Purposive Sampling	Interviews
	Cultural Office	1. Cultural Office officer was selected by using Purposive Sampling	Interviews
	Phutai Ethnic Group	The village headman of Phutai Ethnic Group, was selected by using Purposive Sampling	Interviews
	Phutai Ethnic Group Area	Phutai Ethnic Group, Kalasin Province, Thailand	Surveys
	Academic documents, journals, magazines, research papers, thesis, & annual reports of relevant sectors	Academic documents, journals, magazines, research papers, thesis, and annual reports of relevant sectors were used to study cultural tourism management and the authenticity of Phutai Ethnic Group in Thailand.	Secondary Sources
2. To propose the concepts and guidelines of Phutai Ethnic adaptive use for ethnic textile interpretation	Academic documents, journals, magazines, research papers, theses, & annual reports of relevant sectors	Academic documents, journals, magazines, research papers, thesis, and annual reports of relevant sectors were used to propose the concept of Phutai Ethnic adaptive using guidelines for ethnic textile interpretation	Secondary Sources

In terms of data compilation, secondary data was retrieved from academic documents, journals, magazines, research papers, theses, and annual reports from relevant sectors, while the Primary Data was collected from surveys and from interviews.

6. Process
7. Uniqueness
8. Textile guardians
9. Sellers' list
10. Copyright

Data was analyzed by using Content Analysis & Descriptive Analysis. Data from Objective 1, which focuses on studying and analyzing the context of Phutai ethnic textile interpretation and the adaptive use of Mekong MICE travelers, was analyzed and synthesized in order to obtain the results according to Objective 2, which proposes the concept of the Phutai Ethnic adaptive to be used as a guideline for ethnic textile interpretation.

Phutai Ethnic Textile Interpretation and the Adaptive Use of Mekong MICE Travelers

The Northeast

Enterprise: Khok Kong Female Cooperative Village
 Address: 65 Moo. 8, Kud Wa, Kuchinarai District, Kalasin Province
 Telephone number: 08-5740-6072
 Fax: -
 Email: -

The Context of Phutai Textile Interpretation

1. Name
2. Address
3. Tel.
4. Type
5. Material sources

Materials

1. Cotton yarn
2. Water
3. Detergent
4. Natural dye (barks)

5. Alum

Dyeing tones

- Brown/Black/White/Green/Blue/Red/Violet

Dye:

- Natural colors

Dyeing process:

- Place 20 Liters of water, 3 kilograms of bark, and 200 grams of alum into a container. (Alum is added to make the color more permanent and the textiles brighter.)

- Hot dye is filtered through a cloth in the container that is prepared for dyeing process.

- The prepared textile is shaken for flatness, and then soaked in the container. The textile, being dyed, is stirred with a stick so that the colors can be absorbed in the fabric until get the desired color of the textile is reached.

- The dyed textile is washed with clean water (The darker color is prepared by boiling the dyed textile with dye solution again until get the desired color is reached. Then the dyed textile is rinsed with clean water).

Patterns

- Small patterns
- Mi Pla pattern
- Mi Tum pattern
- Mi Kra Jung pattern
- Mi Kho pattern
- White and black Madmee cotton (Julaju, 2008)

The Weaving process

- The unbleached cotton thread is bought locally or in other provinces.

- The cotton is bleached and starched.

- Cotton yarn is spun and stretched for loom preparation.

- The cotton yarn is attached to the loom. The size of loom depends upon the width of textile.

- The cloth is woven and designed into a variety of products by cutting each piece to 1.50 meters. After that, the textile is cleaned before taking it for the dyeing process.



Figure 2 Textile Weaving

Textile Processing

The Development of Shawl Processing: Hand-made cloth patterns from the Phu Tai tribe, Waistbands, and Sarongs are designed to meet the market's needs. In this process, the natural dye and the folk wisdom are preserved.

Price

The local textiles are woven and dyed with natural dyes at the rate of approximately 1,500 -2,000 sheets per month. The price is around 50-100 Baht.

Distribution Channels and Duration

- Distributed at 65 Moo.8 Tumbol Kud Wa Amphur Kuchinarai, Kalasin Province.
- Pre-ordering from customers by telephone
- Selling at exhibitions together with government service

Marketing Promotion

- OTOP (One Tumbol One Product)
- Website: www.otoptoday.com and www.thaitambon.com

Interpretation

Knowledge & Local Wisdom

- Hand-made cloth pattern is a form of the Phu Tai ethnic group. Waistbands and Sarongs are made of natural cotton which is durable, ventilated, and comfortable.

- Dyeing with Natural Dyes: If desired, textiles can be soaked in fabric softener to give softness and a nice smell.

- Drying Dyed Clothes: Clothes should be dried in the shade. If clothes are dried directly in the sunlight, the colors will be different and unattractive.

Media of Interpretation

Local Textile Products from Khok Kong Village in Kalasin Province



Figure 3 Styles of Phutai Textiles



Figure 4 Cotton Shirts



Figure 5 A Phutai Headband



Figure 6 A Display of Phutai Products
(Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.)

Level of Satisfaction re: Local Textile Products with New Designs from designers

Table 2 Level of Satisfaction re: Local Textile Products with the New Design from Designers in terms of Structure

Structure	Mean	S.D.	Level of Satisfaction
1. Pattern is easy to produce.	3.58	1.056	High
2. Products are convenient for transportation.	3.70	1.040	High
3. Products are easy to carry.	3.88	0.998	High
4. Products have different designs than the market.	4.06	0.952	High
5. Production period	3.82	0.968	High
Total	3.81	0.878	High

Note: A Mean score of 4.21-5.00 refers to the highest level of satisfaction. 3.41-4.20 refers to a high level of satisfaction. 2.61-3.40 refers to a moderate level of satisfaction. 1.81-2.60 refers to a low level of satisfaction. 1.00-1.80 refers to the lowest level of satisfaction

According to Table 2, it was seen that respondents were satisfied the local textile products with the new patterns from designers in terms of structure at high level, with the mean score of 3.81. The importance of other minor factors in other parts was also high with mean scores of 3.58, 3.70, 3.88, 4.06 and 3.82, respectively.

Table 3 The Level of Satisfaction re: Local Textile Products with the New Designs from Designers in terms of the Value of Art & Aesthetics

Value of Art & Aesthetics	Mean	S.D.	Level of Satisfaction
1. Products are delicate.	3.77	1.014	High
2. Products have beautiful shapes.	3.91	1.026	High
3. The use of colors is appropriate.	3.92	0.971	High
4. The patterns represent the life style of the villagers.	3.89	0.973	High
5. Products show the identity of the province.	3.79	1.113	High
6. Product can attract tourists.	4.06	0.952	High
Total	3.89	0.891	High

Note: Mean score 4.21-5.00 refers to the highest level of satisfaction. 3.41-4.20 refers to a high level of satisfaction. 2.61-3.40 refers to a moderate level of satisfaction. 1.81-2.60 refers to a low level of satisfaction. 1.00-1.80 refers to the lowest level of satisfaction.

From Table 3, the results showed that the respondents were satisfied the local textile products with the new design from designer in terms of the value of art and aesthetics at high level with the mean score 3.89. Other minor factors in other parts were also at the level of high satisfaction with mean scores of 3.77, 3.91, 3.92, 3.89 and 4.06, respectively.

Table 4 The Level of Satisfaction towards Local Textile Products with the New Design from Designers in terms of Benefits

Benefits	Mean	S.D.	Level of Satisfaction
1. Products can be used in various ways.	3.84	1.012	High
2. Product size is easy to carry.	3.90	0.948	High
3. Product weight is not heavy.	3.87	0.917	High
Total	3.87	0.884	High

Note: A Mean score of 4.21-5.00 refers to the highest level of satisfaction. 3.41-4.20 refers to a high level of satisfaction. 2.61-3.40 refers to a moderate level of satisfaction. 1.81-2.60 refers to a low level of satisfaction. 1.00-1.80 refers to the lowest level of satisfaction.

Table 4 revealed that the respondents had been satisfied the local textile products with the new design from designer in terms of benefits at high level with mean score 3.87. Other minor factors in other parts were also at a high level of satisfaction with means scores 3.84, 3.90, and 3.87 respectively.

Table 5 The Level of Importance of a New Logo according to the Opinions of MICE Travelers

Level of Importance of New Logo	Number	Percentages
Level 1	20	20.0
Level 2	5	5.0
Level 3	10	10.0
Level 4	12	12.0
Level 5	8	8.0
Level 6	13	13.0
Level 7	32	32.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 5 showed that thirty two respondents (32 %) ranged the importance of the new logo in Level 7. Twenty respondents or 20% have given precedence of New Logo in Level 1. Thirteen people or 13% of

respondents ranged the importance of new logo in level 6, and twelve respondents (12%) put priority of the new logo in Level 4. Levels 3, 5, and 2 were ranged by 10, 8, and 5 respondents, respectively. Show in figure 7.

Table 6 The Level of Importance of Public Relations Media according to the Opinions of MICE Travelers

Level of Importance of Public Relations Media	Number	Percentages
Level 1	2	2.0
Level 2	7	7.0
Level 3	6	6.0
Level 4	12	12.0
Level 5	18	18.0
Level 6	38	38.0
Level 7	17	17.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 6 presented that 38 respondents (38 %) ranged the importance of Public Relations Media in Level 6. The importance of Public Relations Media was given

precedence in Level 5 by 18 people (18%), followed by Level 7 and 4 with 17 and 12 respondents, respectively. Levels 2, 3, and 1 were ranged by 7, 6, and 2 respondents, respectively. Show in figure 8.



Figure 7 The New Logo



Figure 8 Public Relations Media

Table 7 The Level of Importance of Souvenir Shops according to the Opinions of MICE Travelers

Souvenir Shops	Number	Percentages
Level 1	6	6.0
Level 2	14	14.0
Level 3	18	18.0
Level 4	15	15.0
Level 5	26	26.0
Level 6	10	10.0
Level 7	11	11.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 7 showed that 26 respondents (26%) ranged the importance of souvenir shop at Level 5. Eighteen respondents or 18% have given precedence to the souvenir shop in Level 3. 15 people or 15% of

respondents ranged the importance of souvenir shop at Level 4, and 14 respondents (14%) put the priority of the souvenir shop in Level 2. Levels 7, 6, and 1 were placed by 11, 10, and 6 respondents, respectively. Show in figure 9.

Table 8 The Level of Importance of Stationery according to the Opinions of MICE Travelers

Stationery	Number	Percentages
Level 1	1	1.0
Level 2	5	5.0
Level 3	22	22.0
Level 4	32	32.0
Level 5	15	15.0
Level 6	14	14.0
Level 7	11	11.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 8 presented that 32 respondents (32%) placed the importance of Stationery in Level 4. The importance of stationery was given precedence in Level 3 by 22 people (22%), followed by Levels 5 and 6 with 15 and 14 respondents, respectively. Levels 7, 2, and 1 were placed by 11, 5, and 1 respondents, respectively. Show in figure 10.



Figure 10 Book Covers

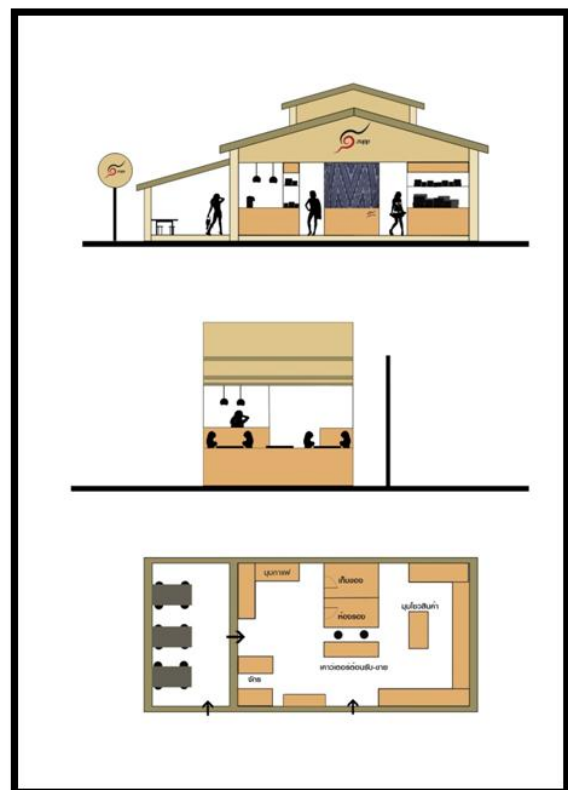


Figure 9 Souvenir Shop (New Design)

Table 9 The Level of Importance of Accessories according to the Opinions of MICE Travelers

Accessory	Number	Percentages
Level 1	15	15.0
Level 2	40	40.0
Level 3	16	16.0
Level 4	7	7.0
Level 5	13	13.0
Level 6	7	7.0
Level 7	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 9 showed that 40 respondents (40%) placed the importance of Accessories in Level 2. Sixteen respondents or 16% have given precedence of accessories in Level 3. Fifteen people or 15% of respondents placed the importance of accessories in

Level 1, and 13 respondents (13%) put priority of the accessories in Level 5. Seven respondents (7%) ranged the importance of accessories in Level 4 and in Level 6. Level 7 was placed by 2 respondents. Show in figure 11.

Table 10 The Level of Importance of Suits according to the opinions of MICE Travelers

Level of Importance of Suit	Number	Percentages
Level 1	43	43.0
Level 2	20	20.0
Level 3	10	10.0
Level 4	8	8.0
Level 5	4	4.0
Level 6	7	7.0
Level 7	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 10 presented that 43 respondents (43%) had placed the importance of suits in Level 1. The importance of suits was given precedence in Level 2 by 20 people (20%), followed by Level 3 with 10

respondents. 8 respondents (8%) placed the importance of suits in Level 4 and in Level 7. Level 6 and Level 5 were placed by 7 and 4 respondents, respectively. Show in figure 12.



Figure 11 Accessories

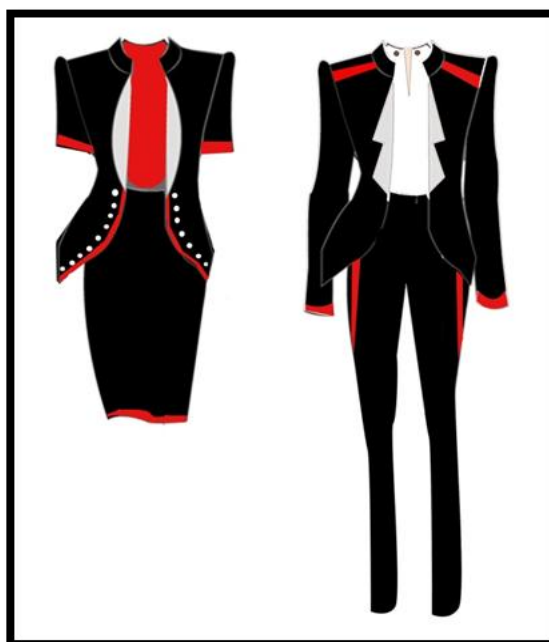


Figure 12: A New Suit Design

Table 11 Level of Importance of Packaging from the Opinions of MICE travelers

Level of Importance of Packaging	Amount	Percentages
Level 1	15	15.0
Level 2	10	10.0
Level 3	18	18.0
Level 4	12	12.0
Level 5	16	16.0
Level 6	10	10.0
Level 7	19	19.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 11 showed that 19 respondents (19%) placed the importance of packaging in Level 7. 18 respondents or 18% have given precedence to packaging in Level 3. 16 people or 16% of respondents placed the importance of packaging in

Level 5, while 15 respondents (15%) put priority of the packaging in Level 1. Level 4 was placed by 12 respondents. 10 respondents (10%) placed the importance of packaging in Level 2 and in Level 6. Show in figure 13.



Figure 13 New Packaging Design

The Guidelines of Phutai Ethnic Textiles adapted by using the Advice of Mekong MICE Travelers

1. The Community's Understanding of the Project
2. Documentary & Field Research re: the authenticity of the Phutai Ethnic Textiles
3. Phutai Ethnic Textile Interpretation Database
4. Co with the Graphic Designer for the product's initiative for Mekong MICE Travelers
5. Phutai Ethnic Textile Products
6. Surveying the Mekong MICE Travelers using Questionnaires
7. Revising the product's concept & design

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RANKING FOUR AND FIVE STAR HOTELS BASED ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH TEXT MINING ALGORITHMS: A SURVEY RESEARCH ON BANGKOK HOTELS

Farhad Safiri and Seyed Mohammad Jafar Jalali

Department of information Technology Management

Abstract

Nowadays, Tourism is one of economics' Foundation of each country and it is injected money to GNP of each country directly hence having a good environment is a mandatory plan for upgrading mentioned industry. One of aspect of tourism is related to hospitality and hotels which means how we can provide best services and hospitalities for visitor and tourist. In the latest decades there are many researches in this case that show which factor in hospitality is important and which one isn't important and how can we improve hospitality. The big concern of each tourist is choosing right hotel that it's started since they make first decision to have a trip to abroad so they face many hotels with many facilities also after reading related comment for each hotel they can't make a right decision in this regard. In this research our goal is to show which hotel is good and why and provide an efficient and trustful ranking for hotels at the specific district with text mining algorithm which is helped people to have best and right choice in their trip. Text mining algorithm can find hidden pattern in each text and help us to find best point for each hotel and make a suggestion system for each case especially in hospitality.

Keywords: Keywords: hospitality, hotel, text mining , algorithm

INTRODUCTION

Hotel sector is one of most important part of tourism industry and it's going to be top priority for each country which wants to have more profit in tourism industry and raising country GNP. Customer's satisfactions and comments are very important to each hotel to improve their services, one the other hand web2 is a tool for reviewing customer's comments and help customer to have the best choose among on many hotels. A popular form of Web 2.0 applications includes online review websites. These allow users to effectively disseminate their post-purchase experiences of products and services to the online communities at little cost.

These comment have some side effects for new customer , old customer and hotel owner which means some comments can decrease the level of a specific hotel or increase meanwhile help hotels to fix their weakness and improve their facilities and services to customer .

Social media and customer produce content on the internet rapid to grow and influence the hospitality

industry(Browninget al., 2013; Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). The scale growth of these data has inspired the new way to understanding the large amount of data(Wood et al., 2013; George et al., 2014).

Online booking system provide rating from travels in two parts(Buhalis & Law, 2008) : first one is related to star rating from one to five for overall and for each specific textual description .Second one is related to sentiment comments for each hotel and it's very vary across many hotels(Kirk, 1995; Namasivayam,ENZ, & Siguaw, 2000).

Hotel guest experience and review have been an interesting topic for many years because it contains a widely range of comment that related to customer royalty, repeat purchase, word of mouth and

ultimately higher profitability(Oh and Parks,1997) hence this paper is shown how to use online review for better choosing a good hotel and why we should choose a specific hotel rather than other hotel.

As Meyer and Schwager (2007) point out , customer experience is more related in the current society , it means consumer have more choices for selection a hotel based on previous experiences (e.g., Clemes et al., 2011;Cronin et al., 2000) which had written by other customers(e.g., Chen and Chen, 2010; Zins, 2002). Although most of studies have been focused on service quality, staff behavior, location, cleanness and top attributes which are used for each hotel that reflexed on customer comments and satisfactions but in previous research it hasn't been discovered and separate comments based on negative and positive comments that called sentiment analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hotel guest experience and satisfaction :

Hotel guest satisfactions and comments are a complex experience based on quality of hospitality services. Studies of hotel guest satisfactions have been started from early 1970s but new definition has been raise and discovered the replaced by old definition. Hunt (1975) point out, satisfactions is a value for evaluation service on each hotel and prove that it's same as thing that supposed to be while others (e.g.,Oliver,1981) define consumer satisfactions can be as an emotional response to use a service or product the estimate the quality and rate of service .

Oh and parks (1997) indicate that satisfication understanding and efficient processes as well as other psychological influence also customer experience has two sides : satisfaction/dissatisfaction for a product that is purchased with evaluation (Engel et al., 1990).

Form managerial points of view, it's necessary to understand the view and main content of hotel guest satisfaction .For example, it has been imaged that hotel product consist of many levels such as core level (hotel room) that directly related to what customer purchase meanwhile hotel product also includes facilities , staffs , view and location .It means how to customer can get good from the

purchase from all aspect such as front desk , staff behavior , breakfast , room service and etc. that belong to core product and various value-added products and services(Kotler et al., 2006).

Online Booking website Comments :

Travelers are classified into one and five group .It appears on all Online booking website .These profiles are couple, friend, family, friend and solo (Dolnicar, 2002;O'Connor, 2008) while these groups have different purpose and exception for traveling (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012) .

Travelers from different group have various perception and view from hotel product and services such as cleanliness ,safety, value for money and location (Atkinson, 1988; Lewis, 1985).

As we mentioned in the last paragraph, each group has a different view for selection a hotel, for example business travelers have many concern about location of hotel and availability of internet rather than room price (Bulchand-Gidumal, Meli an-Gonz alez, & L opez-Valc arcel, 2011; Rivers, Toh, & Alaoui, 1991). satisfaction of peoples who travel as couple is largely different with a business travel and affect by many factors that related to hotel , location and city (Lee,Huang, & Chen, 2010) also family and friends travelers put their focus more on safety and security compare with solo travelers(Lai & Graefe, 2000). All rates are provided by travelers in different profile with different view (Poston, 2008) also they commonly want to post their experience meanwhile a user who booked a hotel and had an experience of a specific hotel share his/her experience with other people regarding hotel that was booked (Gretzel, Yoo, & Purifoy, 2007).

Text mining:

Text mining is a Technique for extraction data and hidden pattern for a text and it consists of some method for doing and find related pattern.

- Association rule
- Decision tree
- Classification

- Clustering

Bangkok City:

Bangkok city is capital of Thailand and it has been in one of tourism distract in the world and it's getting to grow to be a top destination for tourist also city provides many top four and five star hotels for this purpose, on the other hand some attractive place encourage people to have a trip for one time to this attractive and beautiful city in the specific region.

METHOD

Data Source:

All of this paper data are gathered from booking.com website due to some reasons.booking.com is a website for booking hotel around the world also they provide exclusive system for putting customer review. Booking.com provides comment in tow aspects: negative and positive comments that help to customer to have better understanding of situation of hotel and make better decision for choosing good

hotel. The last reason is that booking.com provides a rating from 0 to 10 for 6 specific attribute and product of hotel such as cleanliness , Location , staff , Free Wi-Fi , Comfort , Value for Money and also have overall rating for hotel .

Data Collection and Analysis :

For this section, Bangkok is selected as a tourism destination and all data are extracted form booking.com website by a python program that developed and written exclusively for this purpose. In first phase all reviews are extract for four and five star hotels and divided into two parts: negative and positive comments then all data are cleaned and pre-processed by R program for removing noise and none English comments that increase error. In third phase we provide word frequency for finding top attributes for customer that was important and based on result and clean our data from un-necessary attributes and data. In final phase based on latest data we provide a ranking and weight for all four and five start hotels in Bangkok city in two different sides : positive and negative .

Table 1 Ranking Four Star Hotels .

Rank By Medium Weight	Hotel	Rank
0.642857143	TheDavisBangkok	1
0.633333333	FuramaSilomHotel	2
0.616666667	ApartmentsSomersetL	3
0.607142857	NouvoCityHotel	4
0.602941176	MajesticGrandeHotel	5
0.575757576	GalleriaSukhumvit10BangkokbyCompassHospitality	6
0.558139535	CasaNithra	7
0.552631579	EvergreenPlaceBangkok	8
0.548387097	AloftBangkok-Sukhumvit11	9
0.536585366	GrandSwissSukhumvit	10
0.534482759	ApartmentsSomersetS	11
0.527777778	CentrePointSukhumvi	12
0.52	ApartmentsSomersetP	13
0.514705882	DynastyGrandeHotel	14
0.5	CentrePointSilom	15
0.5	ParkPlazaSukhumvit	16
0.4875	CentrePointChidlom	17
0.483870968	MercureBangkokSiam	18
0.47	USukhumvitBangkok	19
0.465116279	AdelphiSuitesBangkok	20
0.455882353	BestWesternPremier	21
0.445945946	ApartmentsLohasSUITESSUKHUMVITbySUPERHOTEL	22
0.439393939	HolidayInnExpressBangkokSiam	23
0.435897436	ChatriumResidenceSathonBangkok	24

0.42	BaiyokeSkyHotel	25
0.402777778	RembrandtHotelBangkok	26
0.393939394	PresidentSolitaireHotel&Spa	27
0.390625	GMSuites	28
0.39	RivaSuryaBangkok	29
0.384615385	FourPointsbySheratonBangkok,Sukhumvit15	30
0.381578947	BelAireBangkok	31
0.368421053	NovotelBangkokPloen	32
0.357142857	CondoHotelTonsonResidence	33
0.352941176	PhacharaSuitesSukhumvit	34
0.333333333	CondoHotelSkyyResidence	35
0.333333333	PresidentParkBangkok	36
0.333333333	ZenithSukhumvitHote	37
0.313953488	CentrePointPratunam	38
0.282608696	GracelandBangkokby	39
0.279069767	NovotelBangkokonSi	40
0.268292683	NovotelBangkokPlati	41
0.263888889	AmariBoulevardBangk	42
0.235294118	GrandMercureBangkokFortune	43
0.18	ArnomaHotelBangkok	44
0.173913043	GrandDiamondSuitesHotel	45

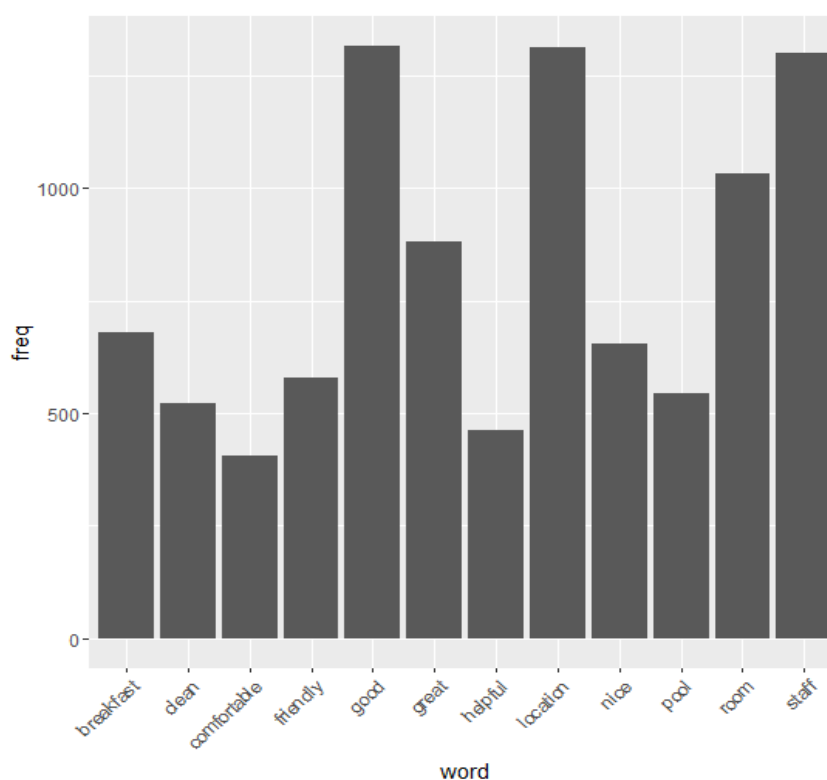


Figure1 Bangkok four Star Hotels Top Attributes

Table 2 Ranking Five Star Hotels.

Rank By Medium Weight	Hotel	Rank
0.583333333	SivatelBangkok	1
0.567567568	PathumwanPrincessHo	2
0.566666667	RamadaPlazaBangkokMenamRiverside	3
0.56097561	EastinGrandHotelSa	4
0.552631579	InResidenceBangkokSukhumvit	5
0.551724138	PullmanBangkokHotelG	6
0.516129032	RadissonBluPlazaBa	7
0.515151515	TheLandmarkBangkok	8
0.484848485	OrientalResidenceBangkok	9
0.461538462	FraserSuitesSukhumv	10
0.459459459	RoyalOrchidSheratonHotelandTowers	11
0.458333333	SwissotelLeConcordeBangkok	12
0.454545455	SofitelBangkokSukhumvit	13
0.452380952	TheOkuraPrestigeBangkok	14
0.447368421	ChatriumHotelRivers	15
0.447368421	HansarBangkok	16
0.441176471	HotelMuseBangkokLa	17
0.428571429	BangkokMarriottHotelSukhumvit	18
0.426086957	GrandeCentrePointH	19
0.40625	CentaraGrandatCent	20
0.4	ApartmentsShamaSukh	21
0.4	TheContinentBangkokbyCompassHospitality	22
0.393939394	AnantaraSathornBangkokHotel	23
0.388888889	PullmanBangkokGrandeSukhumvit	24
0.387096774	TowerClubAtlebua	25
0.382978723	SiriSathornExecutiveServicedResidence	26
0.382352941	BanyanTreeBangkok	27
0.382352941	TheSukhothaiBangkok	28
0.369565217	RenaissanceBangkokRatchaprasongHotel,AMarriottLuxury&LifestyleHotel	29
0.368421053	SiamKempinskiHotel	30
0.357142857	SwissotelNaiLertParkBangkok	31
0.35	SOSofitelBangkok	32
0.348837209	DreamHotelBangkok	33
0.34375	GrandSukhumvitHotelBangkok-ManagedbyAccor	34
0.342857143	ThePeninsulaBangkok	35
0.326086957	ApartmentsMarriottExecutiveApartmentsMayfairBangkok	36
0.325	CentaraGrandAtCent	37
0.3125	AdLib	38
0.310344828	lebuaatStateTower	39
0.305555556	TheWestinGrandeSukhumvit,Bangkok	40
0.303030303	NaturalVilleExecutiveResidences	41
0.266666667	GrandHyattErawanBangkok	42
0.260869565	CondoHotelEmporium	43

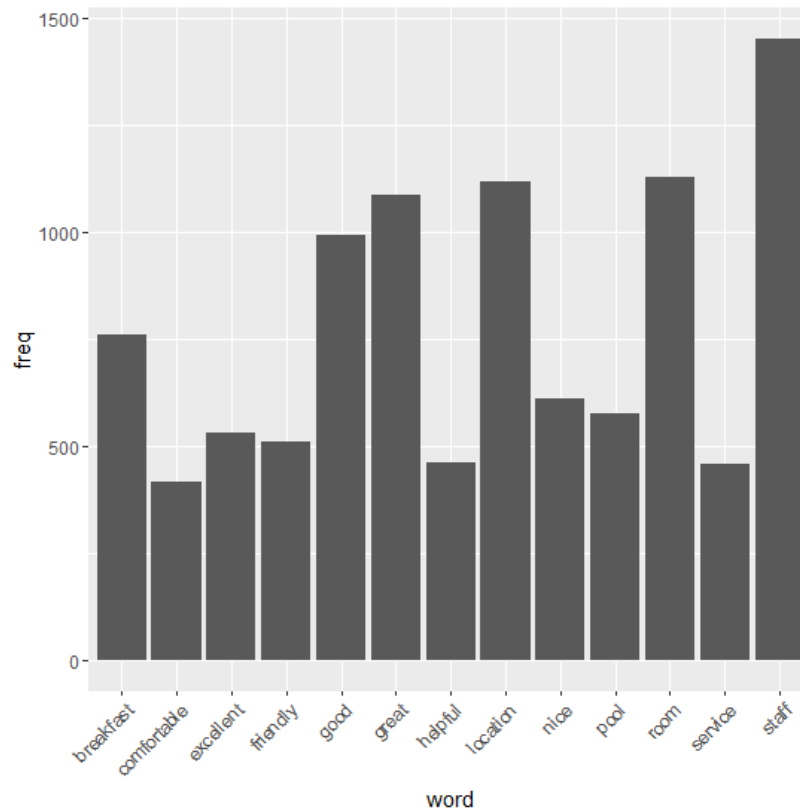


Figure 2 Bangkok five Star Hotel Top Attributes

good	great	helpful	location	nice	pool	room	staff	Medium	Hotel
1	0.75	0.28571	0.78571	0.71429	0.57143	0.92857	0.78571	0.642857143	TheDavisBangkok
0.93333	0.63333	0.36667	0.66667	0.56667	0.63333	0.86667	0.9	0.633333333	FuramaSilomHotel
0.73333	0.8	0.36667	0.9	0.56667	1	0.66667	0.86667	0.616666667	ApartmentsSomersetL
0.75	0.67857	0.53571	1	0.46429	0.39286	0.71429	0.96429	0.607142857	NouvoCityHotel
0.79412	0.58824	0.29412	0.85294	0.64706	0.23529	0.61765	1	0.602941176	MajesticGrandeHotel
0.78788	0.57576	0.33333	1	0.57576	0.45455	0.72727	0.87879	0.575757576	GalleriaSukhumvit10BangkokbyCompassHospitality
0.67442	0.51163	0.51163	0.67442	0.5814	0.88372	0.48837	1	0.558139535	CasaNithra
0.76316	0.44737	0.44737	1	0.63158	0.39474	0.65789	0.81579	0.552631579	EvergreenPlaceBangkok
0.96774	0.77419	0.32258	1	0.58065	0.51613	0.90323	0.90323	0.548387097	AloftBangkok-Sukhumvit11
0.68293	0.53659	0.36585	1	0.39024	0.17073	0.58537	0.85366	0.536585366	GrandSwissSukhumvit
0.62069	0.48276	0.24138	0.93103	0.41379	0.7931	0.82759	1	0.534482759	ApartmentsSomersetS
0.75	0.61111	0.41667	0.5	0.52778	0.38889	0.58333	1	0.527777778	CentrePointSukhumvi
0.84	0.44	0.4	0.68	0.36	0.36	0.96	1	0.52	ApartmentsSomersetP
0.94118	0.5	0.14706	1	0.64706	0.41176	0.52941	0.73529	0.514705882	DynastyGrandeHotel
0.875	0.375	0.28125	0.9375	0.34375	0.40625	1	1	0.5	CentrePointSilom
0.55556	0.55556	0.36111	0.75	0.44444	0.44444	0.55556	1	0.5	ParkPlazaSukhumvit
1	0.475	0.425	0.8	0.45	0.15	0.875	0.9	0.4875	CentrePointChidlom
0.67742	0.54839	0.16129	1	0.16129	0.41935	0.90323	0.6129	0.483870968	MercureBangkokSiam
0.52	0.5	0.32	0.34	0.46	0.56	0.48	1	0.47	USukhumvitBangkok
0.72093	0.5814	0.37209	1	0.2093	0.2093	0.44186	0.83721	0.465116279	AdelphiSuitesBangkok
0.67647	0.44118	0.26471	0.82353	0.41176	0.32353	0.47059	1	0.455882353	BestWesternPremier
0.54054	0.27027	0.2973	0.48649	0.45946	0.51351	0.43243	1	0.445945946	ApartmentsLohasSUITESSUKHUMVITbySUPERHOTEL
0.69697	0.33333	0.33333	1	0.33333	0	0.63636	0.54545	0.439393939	HolidayInnExpressBangkokSiam
0.61538	0.71795	0.28205	0.07692	0.41026	1	0.46154	0.92308	0.435897436	ChatriumResidenceSathonBangkok
0.68	0.64	0.24	1	0.2	0.2	0.72	0.76	0.42	BaiyokeSkyHotel
0.58333	0.52778	0.16667	1	0.27778	0.41667	0.55556	0.72222	0.402777778	RembrandtHotelBangkok
0.84848	0.27273	0.42424	0.81818	0.33333	0.33333	0.87879	1	0.393939394	PresidentSolitaireHotel&Spa
0.71875	0.0625	0.125	1	0.21875	0.125	0.4375	0.71875	0.390625	GMSuites
0.3	0.72	0.44	0.7	0.4	0.58	0.38	1	0.39	RivaSuryaBangkok
0.58974	0.53846	0.33333	1	0.20513	0.30769	0.58974	0.87179	0.384615385	FourPointsbySheratonBangkok,Sukhumvit15

Figure 3 four star hotels sample ranking

breakfast	comfortab	excellent	friendly	good	great	helpful	location	nice	pool	room	service	staff	Medium	Hotel
0.72222	0.30556	0.33333	0.38889	0.63889	0.72222	0.5	0.94444	0.5	0.58333	0.66667	0.13889	1	0.583333333	SivatelBangkok
0.59459	0.2973	0.43243	0.35135	0.56757	0.67568	0.27027	1	0.13514	0.7027	0.62162	0.18919	0.94595	0.567567568	PathumwanPrincessHo
1	0.16667	0.46667	0.33333	0.66667	0.8	0.33333	0.76667	0.53333	0.33333	0.66667	0.56667	0.93333	0.566666667	RamadaPlazaBangkokMenamRiverside
0.92683	0.2439	0.53659	0.43902	0.56098	0.68293	0.41463	0.66098	0.34146	0.87805	0.70732	0.29268	1	0.56097561	EastInGrandHotelSa
0.55263	0.31579	0.26316	0.36842	0.78947	0.65789	0.26316	0.63158	0.60526	0.36842	1	0.55263	1	0.552631579	InResidenceBangkokSukhumvit
0.51724	0.27586	0.31034	0.58621	0.93103	0.93103	0.55172	0.65517	0.37931	0.17241	0.68966	0.2069	1	0.551724138	PullmanBangkokHotelG
0.87097	0.29032	0.25806	0.3871	0.87097	0.67742	0.29032	1	0.51613	0.3871	0.64516	0.16129	0.93548	0.516129032	RadissonBluPlazaBa
0.24242	0.51515	0.27273	0.63636	0.75758	0.66667	0.27273	1	0.21212	0.24242	0.72727	0.30303	0.87879	0.515151515	TheLandmarkBangkok
0.24242	0.63636	0.39394	0.48485	0.42424	0.66667	0.45455	0.66667	0.48485	0.42424	1	0.45455	0.93939	0.484848485	OrientalResidenceBangkok
0.76923	0.30769	0.46154	0.26923	0.88462	0.69231	0.11538	1	0.38462	0.23077	0.88462	0.19231	0.96154	0.461538462	FraserSuitesSukhumv
0.48649	0.13514	0.27027	0.18919	0.59459	0.45946	0.51351	0.7027	0.27027	0.35135	0.7027	0.24324	1	0.459459459	RoyalOrchidSheratonHotelandTowers
0.625	0.41667	0.08333	0.45833	0.83333	0.75	0.375	0.75	0.375	0.25	0.5	0.16667	1	0.458333333	SwissotelLeConcordeBangkok
0.48485	0.45455	0.45455	0.39394	0.45455	0.60606	0.27273	0.72727	0.30303	0.42424	0.57576	0.39394	1	0.454545455	SoftelBangkokSukhumvit
0.47619	0.2619	0.30952	0.21429	0.38095	0.69048	0.14286	0.52381	0.33333	0.45238	0.61905	0.54762	1	0.452380952	TheOkuraPrestigeBangkok
0.47368	0.18421	0.36842	0.36842	0.5	0.68421	0.44737	0.57895	0.31579	0.42105	0.84211	0.34211	1	0.447368421	ChatriumHotelRivers
0.73684	0.44737	0.31579	0.28947	0.47368	0.47368	0.36842	0.51579	0.31579	0.23684	0.89474	0.28947	1	0.447368421	HansarBangkok
0.29412	0.32353	0.32353	0.55882	0.47059	0.73529	0.35294	0.79412	0.38235	0.29412	0.47059	0.44118	1	0.441176471	HotelMuseBangkokLa
0.85714	0.2	0.42857	0.34286	0.68571	0.74286	0.28571	0.48571	0.42857	0.28571	0.54286	0.31429	1	0.428571429	BangkokMarriottHotelSukhumvit
0.33043	0.21739	0.17391	0.33913	0.54783	0.49565	0.25217	1	0.53043	0.42609	0.76522	0.18261	0.61739	0.426086957	GrandeCentrePointH
0.40625	0.21875	0.21875	0.71875	0.65625	0.40625	0.25	0.40625	0.34375	0.21875	0.65625	0.15625	1	0.40625	CentaraGrandatCent
0.06667	0.1	0.2	0.26667	0.56667	0.46667	0.4	0.9	0.43333	0.5	0.36667	0.13333	1	0.4	ApartmentsShamaSukh
0.45	0.2	0.125	0.375	0.7	0.525	0.4	1	0.375	0.25	0.475	0.2	0.775	0.4	TheContinentBangkokbyCompassHospitality
0.60606	0.33333	0.27273	0.39394	0.69697	0.45455	0.27273	0.27273	0.60606	0.39394	0.60606	0.18182	1	0.393939394	AnantaraSathornBangkokHotel
0.36111	0.30556	0.22222	0.5	0.77778	0.52778	0.30556	0.83333	0.38889	0.05556	0.83333	0.25	1	0.388888889	PullmanBangkokGrandeSukhumvit
1	0.19355	0.32258	0.41935	0.3871	0.67742	0.25806	0.25806	0.41935	0.06452	0.67742	0.35484	0.96774	0.387096774	TowerClubAtleebu
0.29787	0.34043	0.25532	0.38298	0.59574	0.53191	0.48936	0.61702	0.38298	0.08511	0.48936	0.21277	1	0.382978723	SinSathornExecutiveServicedResidence
0.41176	0.38235	0.41176	0.38235	0.20588	0.55882	0.23529	0.23529	0.20588	0.29412	0.76471	0.47059	1	0.382352941	BanyanTreeBangkok
0.55882	0.29412	0.38235	0.29412	0.5	0.29412	0.32353	0.26471	0.44118	0.73529	0.38235	1	1	0.382352941	TheSukhothaiBangkok
0.67391	0.26087	0.36957	0.17391	0.56522	0.36957	0.21739	1	0.45652	0.15217	0.34783	0.15217	0.52174	0.369565217	RenaissanceBangkokRatchaprasongHotelAMarriottLuxury&LifestyleHotel
0.21053	0.23684	0.36842	0.26316	0.52632	0.42105	0.28947	1	0.10526	0.31579	0.60526	0.5	0.71053	0.368421053	SiamKempinskiHotel

Figure 4 five star hotels sample ranking

DISCUSSION

Based on above results, some attributes are discovered as top attributes that are shown on figure1 and figure2, these attributes are selected based on minimum word frequencies and these minimum choose per words repeat and it's 400 that help us to decrease the scale of attributes and increase the confidence of result then two ranking tables are provided with word frequency for each attribute and each hotel and two tables are created for four and five star hotels. As results show that three attributes such as staff, location and room have more weight for determining high rank hotels but high weight in five hotels result belongs to staff but in four star hotels each mentioned attributes has been distributed normally between hotels and the lower attribute for four star hotels belongs to "comfortable" and for five star hotels belongs to "service"

CONCLUSION

As this paper mentioned, choosing a good hotel is one of major problem for each tourism that want to travel to abroad so based on mentioned method which has been provided we have ranked all hotels based on important and top attributes which are shown on table1 and table 2 that guide us to choose a good hotel meanwhile it helps to owner of hotels to fix their problems in some attributes that they have lower score also new customer can decide to choose better hotels per results. At the final our suggestion for future works is to provide a suggestion and decision system for introduce top hotels with specific attribute, it means a customer choose some attribute and system suggest top hotels with mentioned attributes and rank based on weight and attributes score.

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TRAVEL BEHAVIOR OF FOREIGN TOURISTS USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN NORTHERN OF THAILAND BY USING MULTILEVEL STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING

Anuphak Saosaovaphak¹, Chukiat Chaiboonsri² and Pairach Piboonrungrroj³

Kazan federal university/ Institute of Psychology and Education

Abstract

This research is to provide a theoretic framework regarding foreign tourists using public land transportation in the north of Thailand. It focuses on the need of foreign tourists to employ roadway and railway transportation as a medium for travelling. Based on literature, two latent variables consisting of economic variables and public land transportation variables are connected; they both would have an impact on the need of foreign tourists visiting the north of Thailand. Survey research was conducted to collect the data from foreign tourists of two multilevel areas: upper/lower areas and region. A total of 400 responses were analyzed by using multilevel structural equation modeling analysis (MSEM). The results indicated that there is a high relationship between the economic variables and public land transportation variables for foreign visitors who wanted to visit whole areas in the north of Thailand, whereas there is low relationship between the economic variables and public land transportation variables for those foreign visitors who wanted to visit between upper north and lower north of Thailand. This research suggests that all involved parties promoting tourism industry in the north of Thailand should focus on both economic factors and public land transportation factors. However, they should be concerned that economic factors are more related to public land transportation factors for tourists who want to travel the whole region, whereas economic factors are less related to public land transportation factors for tourists who want to travel between of sub region (between the upper north and the lower north of Thailand)

Keywords: Tourism, Multilevel Structural Equation Modeling Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Travel and tourism is an important economic sector in many countries around the world (Ecola & Wachs, 2012). The significance of tourism to the Thai economy is widely accepted as it is the main source of foreign revenue and an important part of current accounts which then provides a significant contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employments (Sookmark, 2011). According to

expected to grow by 6.7% per annual to THB2,045.0 per annual (11.7% of GDP) by 2025”.

Further, the role of transportation has been recognized as a key role for developing tourism for many decades (Musa & Ndawayo, 2011). For instance, Hunter (1965) and Wilson (1966) asserted that transportation can impact on regional development while Filani (1995) clarified the role of transportation toward rural development.

World Travel and Tourism Council (2015, p. 3), “the direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP is

Although most international tourists always visit Bangkok, they eventually extend traveling to the

countryside (Sompong & Rampai, 2015). The north of Thailand is one of most popular tourist destinations where the area is 128,480 km² which is approximately 25% of country, and 90 % of upper northern area is covered by sloping, complex highland with hilly and mountainous (Panomtarinichigul, N.D.) while lower northern area has various tourist destinations related history of Sukhothai regime (Jewcharoensakul, 2013). While the Thai Government has many campaigns to promote the tourism industry such as “Ethnic

Tourism on Hill Tribes” (Ishii, 2011), “Tourism for Learning Intellectualities” (Srichoochart & Suriya, 2011) “Thai Kitchen to the World Project” (Sompong & Rampai, 2015) and so on, public transportation between cities may cause significant negative impact to tourism industry expenditure (Albalade & Bel, 2009). This also can imply that the transport and tourism industries are very closely connected (Albalade & Bel, 2009). In northern Thailand, there are three main mode of transportation including roadways, railways, and airways which tourists can employ to travel between sub regions.

OBJECTIVES

To identify what factors (economic and transportation related factors) influence on the need of foreign tourists to visit the upper and lower regions of northern Thailand

To examine how the relationship between those influencing factors impact on the need of foreign tourists to travel the sub-region (between the upper north and the lower north of Thailand)

LITERATURE REVIEW

The travel and tourism industry and the nation's transportation system have significant interdependent impacting on economy (King & Bowie, 2007). It has been confirmed that economic related factors influence on the demand for travelling (Ecola & Wachs, 2012; Litman, 2013). Those factors may include income level (Fouquet, 2012), the number of family numbers (The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, N.D.), budget for travelling (Litman, 2013), budget for accommodation (Moisă, 2010) trip purpose (McFadden, 1974), and etc.

Modes of transport include airways, railways, roadways, waterways, cable, pipeline and space; it also involved with infrastructure, vehicles, and operations. (Onyeocha et al., 2015). Indeed, transport is important because it enables trade between peoples, which then establishes development (Beaver, 2002). According to American Public Transportation System (2007), the need for using mode of transportation is also influenced by the personal need. There is also some evidence showing that the need to use mode of transportation may depend on various factors such as safety concern, impact of having children and household responsibilities, impacts of transportation demand management programs, flexible schedule, emergency services, personal security, and so on (Richardson, Huang, Ebarvia, & Kearney, 2000). This then is a deeply held commitment to rebuy service consistently in the future thereby causing repetitive purchasing (Oliver, 1999).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Regarding previous literature, two latent variables consisting of economic variables and public land transportation variables are connected; and this can be constructed the conceptual framework as figure 1.

METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF STUDY

This research employed a survey approach by analyzing data collected from 400 foreign tourists of two multilevel areas: upper and lower areas of northern Thailand during August – December, 2015.

Regarding traditional structural equation models, all latent variables and indicators contrast between typically subjects and are assumed to be independent across subjects. However, this research practiced by using multilevel settings where units are nested in clusters, leading to within-cluster dependence. This means the different approaches to extend structural equation models for such multilevel settings was examined. The most common approach is to formulate separate within-cluster and between-cluster models.

Since the total of 400 responses were analyzed by using multilevel structural equation modeling analysis (MSEM), in this research, however, the MSEM algorithm is employ so as to fit a between group Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) model

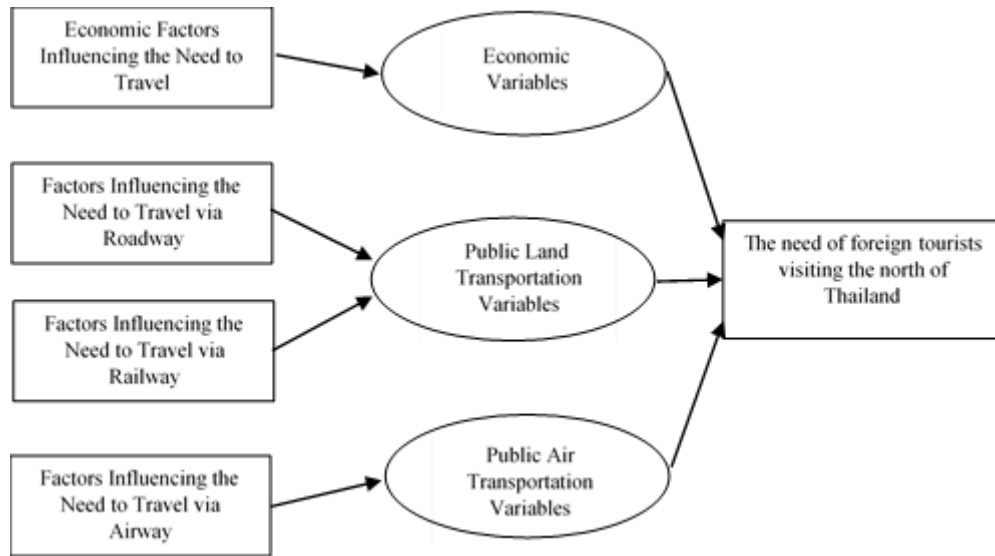


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

and a within group CFA model to a 2-level data set

(the upper north and the lower north of Thailand)

$$Y_{ij} = \mu_j + A_w \mu_{ij} + \epsilon_{ij} \quad (\text{First Level}) \quad (4)$$

This research specifies the data set in two level consisting of 1) foreign tourists visiting the sub.region area (within group), and 2) foreign tourists visiting the whole region (between group). This can be shown as the equation below

Equation (5) specify the structural equation for between cluster.

$$\mu_j = \mu_B + N_j \quad (\text{SecondLevel}) \quad (5)$$

$$T = W + B \quad (1)$$

When combining equation (4) and (5) together,

$$\mu_T = \mu_w + \mu_B \quad (2) \quad \text{equation (6) can be represented as}$$

follows .

$$S_T = S_w + S_B \quad (3) \quad Y_{ij} = \mu_B + n_{ij} + \epsilon_{ij} \quad (6)$$

While T is the entirety of multilevel structural This study hence specifies the entirety of Covariance equation for this research, S represents the Matrix for both within cluster and between cluster as Covariance Metrix for within-cluster, and B is for equation (7) and (8) as shown below between cluster.

$$\beta_w \beta_w \beta_w \beta_w' \beta_w D_w$$

The structural equation for within cluster is shown as

(First Level) (7) equation (4) as follows.

$$\beta_B \beta_B \beta_B \beta_B' \beta_B D_B \quad \text{(Second Level) (8)}$$

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result indicated that there is no relationship between public air transportation variable and the need to travel in the north of Thailand. However, the research found out that they are a high relationship between the economic variables and public land transportation variables for foreign visitors who wanted to visit whole areas in the north of Thailand (3.69.19), whereas there is low relationship between the economic variables and public land transportation variables for those foreign visitors who wanted to visit between upper north and lower north of Thailand (3.01). This means that the foreign tourists who have more advantages in terms of economic related factors are more likely to travel between of sub-regions (between the upper north and the lower north of Thailand) while those who have less advantages in terms of economic related factors are more likely to travel only with in sub-region (within the upper north or the lower north of Thailand)

concerned that economic factors are more related to public land transportation factors for tourists who want to travel the whole region, whereas economic factors are less related to public land transportation factors for tourists who want to travel between of sub region (between the upper north and the lower north of Thailand)

CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH IMPLICATION

This research suggests that all involved parties promoting tourism industry in the north of Thailand should focus on both economic factors and public land transportation factors. However, they should be

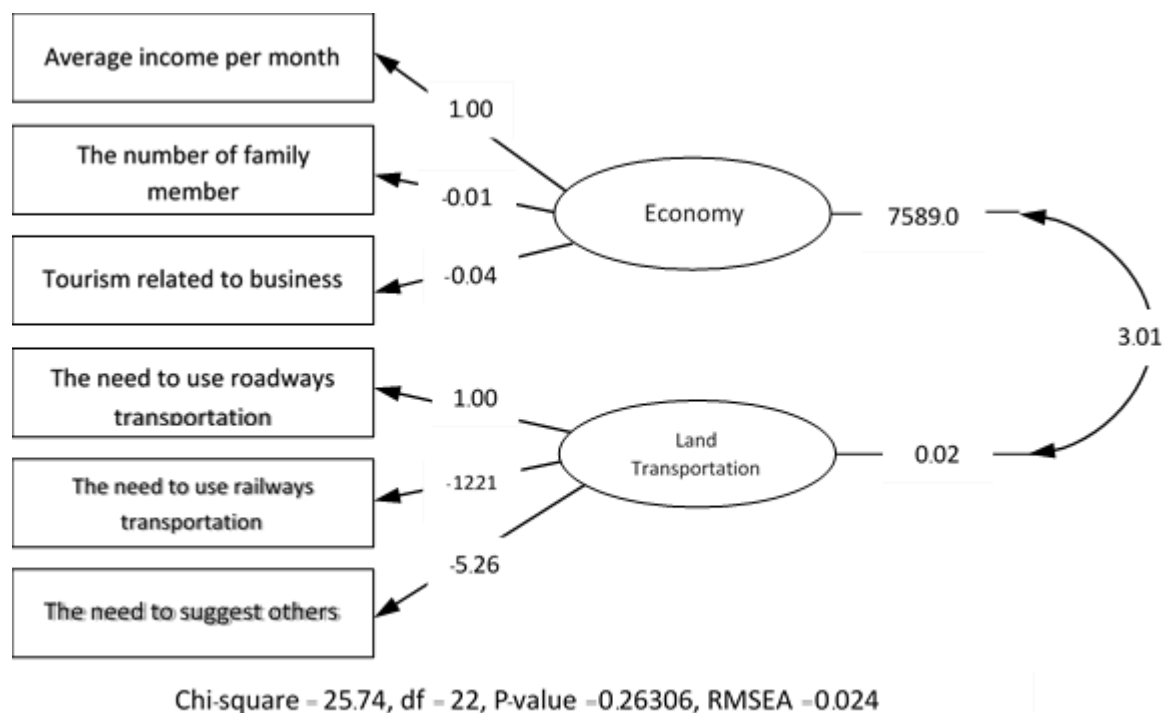


Figure 2: The Result for the within Model

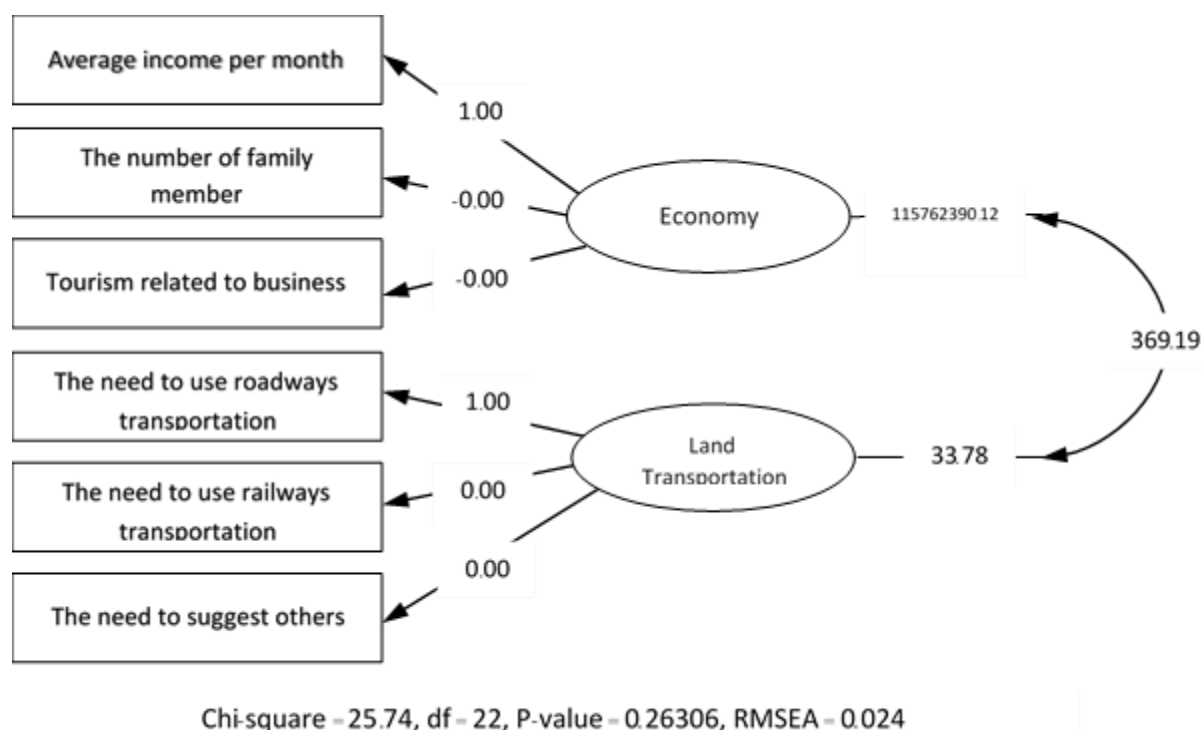


Figure 3: The Result for the between Model

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DOMESTIC TOURIST SATISFACTION IN A COLONIAL HOTEL AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF BANDARAWELA HOTEL

Hanshika Madushani Herath¹ and Sarath Munasinghe²

¹*University College of Rathmalana, University of Vocational Technology, Sri Lanka*

²*Faculty of Management Studies, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka*

Abstract

The most important job and the biggest challenge in contemporary management in service industries, is making the customers satisfied. It can be argued that the difficulty faced by managers committed to customer satisfaction, is designing specific customer satisfaction strategies. This task becomes a challenge due to the lack of studies done to measure customer satisfaction in hospitality industry, which result in the lack of understanding of the governing factors and the level of customer satisfaction. In Bandarawela Hotel the significant differences between the satisfaction of domestic and foreign tourists and the dominant dissatisfaction of domestic tourists have been recognized. The reasons for dissatisfaction were studied using the mixed methodology of the research. The factors affecting their satisfaction were recognized to be in two categories; tangible and intangible. As the significant findings, some features of the hotel that exists due to the Colonial concept were recognized as the main factors that contribute to the domestic tourists' dissatisfaction.

Keywords: Bandarawela Hotel, Guest Satisfaction, Domestic Tourist

INTRODUCTION

The contribution of the tourism industry to the country's economic growth is undeniably significant although the industry is a late entrant to the mainstream of the Sri Lankan economy. This industry is being increasingly recognized as an important player in the economic growth. This is evident in the strategic plan for tourism in Sri Lanka where it is expected to draw 2.5 million tourists by 2016 (Tourism Development Strategy 2011-2016). A special feature that is relevant to this study in this development strategy is that the government's special attention paid to improve domestic tourism.

The problem under investigation was revealed in a preliminary study of reviewing guest comment sheets on the hotel experience of Bandarawela Hotel, Sri Lanka. The review disclosed an unusual nature of the guest satisfaction. That is, the guest satisfaction for the same product was on two different directions; a significant amount of foreign guests were satisfied in their overall evaluation of the hotel experience, while another significant amount of domestic visitors were

complaining over the quality of accommodation and other amenities in the hotel. Accordingly, the objectives of this research were to investigate into this difference of satisfaction levels and to recognize the factors leading to domestic guests' dissatisfaction.

Being a reputed hotel in Bandarawela area that receives a significant amount of domestic tourists as customers, investigating this unusual behavior of the guest satisfaction will be crucial for making satisfied customers.

Bandarawela Hotel is a colonial heritage in the Uva province of Sri Lanka; is the first hotel in the hill country and the history of which goes back to the year 1893. Its antecedents are read from the end of 19th century when it first ran as a guest house. From the beginning, Bandarawela Hotel was conceived as an exclusive club and guest house for Europeans only. Its opening in 1894 coincided with the extension of the rail link from Nanu Oya to Bandarawela. Train travelers needed a place to stay overnight and the Hotel provided an ideal facility for them. With time it became an exclusive recluse for

the Europeans who were resident in Sri Lanka and was nurtured to be so until the 1950's. It even served as a convalescent home for recuperating British soldiers during World War II. Year 1924-1926 Miller & Co purchases The Bandarawela Hotel from the government of Ceylon with the sanction of the Secretary of State for the colonies. Year 1983 Management of Bandarawela Hotel is handed over to Aitken Spence Hotel Managements (pvt) limited.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer satisfaction is basically post consumption evaluation concerning a specific product or service. Satisfaction level is a result of the difference between expected and perceived performance of a product or a service. It occurs when product or service is better than what is expected. Given the vital role of customer satisfaction, it is not surprise that a variety of research have been devoted to investigate the determinants of satisfaction. Basically, satisfaction can be determined by subjective (e. g. customer needs, emotions) and objective factors (e. g. product and service features).

It is necessary to obtain high levels of customer satisfaction for the service supplied in the hospitality industry. Prior understanding of guest perception regarding the hotel attributes is significant. According to the Kone 2006, the miracle of success in hotel development occurs when the business can provide not only the target needs of the guest but exceeds their expectations. A research done by Scott (2008) defined guest perception of hotel attributes can be recognized as the degree to which guests may find various services and number of different services within the same or different buildings which are often available for the use of both residents of the hotel and non-residents. According to Scott, hotel's attributes such as cleanliness, price, location, and security, personal service, physical attractiveness, opportunities for relaxation, standard of services, appealing image, and reputation can be accepted as prominent by travelers to review the quality of the hotel.

The major types of services provided in the hospitality industry can be classified into three main types: accommodation, food and drink apart from miscellaneous services and entertainment. It is

important to note that the extent of these services being made available to customers tends to vary with the size of the establishments and types of organization. The industry provides a range of accommodation services. According to the Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert and Wan hill (1996), they suggested that accommodation provides an essential support service to satisfy the wider motivation that brought the visitor to the destination.

Hotels must therefore ensure that they provide the kind of services that will satisfy current customers and motivate new ones. The most recurring satisfaction attributes were room related aspects such as cleanliness of rooms and excellent performance by housekeeping department (Prayukvong, Sophon, Hongpukdee, & Charapas, 2007). The previous researchers have recognized the following factors as the components of customer satisfaction in hotels.

As same as the accommodation, selling of food and drink is very important aspect of hospitality service, however the provision of such service requires more personnel compared to provision of accommodation. Hence, these aspects can be classified as core offerings of hospitality industry. According to the Oliver's expectancy disconfirmation theory (Oliver 1997), when providing core products to the customers, realization of guests' expectation is vital factor for their satisfaction.

In addition, Barsky and Lebagh (1992) stated that employee attitude, location and rooms are likely to influence travelers' satisfaction. According to Kuo (2007), due to the close interaction between hotel employees and customers, service attitude of the employees plays a critical role in maximizing customer satisfaction.

Customer service and hospitable behavior is a system of activities that comprises customer support systems, complaint processing, and friendliness and speed of service delivery. The key to achieve competitive advantage lies in delivering high quality service that results in satisfied customers (Shemwell et al, 1998). Service quality and customer satisfaction are key factors in the battle to obtain competitive advantage and customer retention.

Although many studies have been conducted on customer satisfaction, most of them were focused on antecedent and consequences of guest satisfaction. However, less work has been done on hotel concept related factors and guest satisfaction. Hence, it is important to conduct a study that uncovers areas of customer satisfaction which is useful for management who are committed to customer satisfaction to make improvement.

Colonial concept and its legal restrictions for hotel operation and design

Bandarawela Hotel has been conserved as a monument under the Antiquities (Amendment) Act, No.24 of 1998. According to the Act, Minister of cultural affairs may by Order in writing' declare that any specified monument which dates or is believed to date period prior to the 1st day of January, 1850 deemed to be an ancient monument. Accordingly, Bandarawela Hotel is declared as an Archeological conserved building and a monument upon the publication in the Gazette notification of the order No. 1586, under section 19, on 23rd of January 2009.

According to the Ordinance, any ancient monument situated on any land other than crown land is in danger of destruction or removal, or damage from neglect or injudicious treatment, and that it is in the public interest that such monument should be protected, by order published in the Gazette declare such monument to be a protected monument. In addition, the ordinance mentioned that, no person shall, except under the authority and in accordance with the conditions of a permit issued by the Archeological Commissioner, or in accordance with an agreement entered into under section 20, commence or carry out any work of restoration, repair, alteration or addition in connection with any protected monument within the hotel premises [Antiquities (Amendment) Act (1998)]. Due to those regulations, as a conserved monument, Bandarawela Hotel couldn't make any refurbishments, changes to the original structure and modifications to expand their operation.

METHODOLOGY

This study took both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. Both

primary and secondary data were used. Secondary data were collected from the review of guest comments and primary data were collected from questionnaire survey. Both domestic guests and foreign guests were considered for the feedback review and only the domestic tourists were considered for further study by using questionnaire survey as it is the target group of the study.

The questionnaires consist of three parts. First part of the questionnaire contains questions pertaining to the profile of respondents, which is designed to gain insights related to a profile of domestic tourists. The second part contained items that explore customer satisfaction with respect to hotel services. In this part, the guests were asked to rank their satisfaction in relation to different services at one of three levels; satisfied, dissatisfied and moderately satisfied. The third part of the questionnaire measures customers' post purchase behavior by asking questions related to their intentions to return and to recommend the hotel to potential customer(s). A total of 45 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and 35 questionnaires were completed and returned to be analyzed. Therefore, the response rate of the study is 78%.

The collected data was subjected to multiple-regression analysis. The reliability of the scale was assessed by subjecting the scale measuring tourists' satisfaction to a reliability test. Stepwise multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the identified factors of guests' satisfaction (independent variables) whose values are known to predict the single dependent variable, which in this case is the domestic tourists' satisfaction in Bandarawela Hotel.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Profile of Respondents

The respondents were mainly from Western Province (80%), mostly coming from Colombo, Nugegoda and Kelaniya areas. Their ages ranges from 35 and above (77%), representing more female participation (60%). In addition majority of the respondents were professionals and executives (63%) by their occupation. Most of the respondents indicated that their purpose of visit to Bandrawela Hotel was holiday and recreation (69%), business purposes

(20%), and visiting friends and relatives (11%). It should be noted that majority of respondents were unaware of the hotel concept of colonialism before their arrival (52%) and that the hotel is colonial old charm hotel which is a monument of British period. In addition from the above respondents first time visitors to the hotel was significantly high (54%).

Factors affecting domestic tourists' satisfaction

Factor analysis of guest satisfaction and their positive and negative relationship applied to the statistical analysis, as illustrated in table 01 to 03.

Table 01- Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.953	17

To investigate the influence of each determinant upon domestic tourists' satisfaction, an analysis was conducted to assess the significance of the relationships between each independent variable and the dependent variable. The dependent variable is domestic tourists' satisfaction and four independent variables are price, hospitable behavior, accommodation & amenities and food & beverages.

Based on the analysis findings are illustrated in table 02. The R vale of 0.825 indicates a strong correlation

As illustrated in the table 01 the results of the test indicated computed Cronbach's alpha values of 0.953 for customer satisfaction. According to Carmines and Zeller (1979) a Cronbach's alpha value of above 0.7 is considered to be reliable. Therefore it is comfortable to proceed to further analysis of the data.

between the independent variables and domestic tourists' satisfaction, the coefficient of the determinant (R^2) was 0.68 which representing the proportion of variation in the domestic tourists' satisfaction that is accounted by the independent variables and the adjusted R^2 was 0.637. According to the results of stepwise multiple regression analysis, these variables, namely, price, hospitable behavior, accommodation & amenities and food & beverages explain almost 64% percent variation in domestic tourists' satisfaction.

Table 02- Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.825 ^a	.680	.637	.45942

a. Predictors: (constant), price, food and beverages, accommodation & amenities and hospitable behavior

The SPSS output in Table 3 indicates the levels of statistical significance. In order to assess the relative importance, beta coefficients were used: the higher the beta coefficients, the more important each determinant. It is important to note that majority of factors to be statistically significant ($p < .01$) antecedents influencing domestic tourists' satisfaction in Bandarawela Hotel. The most important factor

affecting domestic tourists' satisfaction was found to be "Accommodation & amenities" with a beta value of 0.501, followed by "Food & Beverages" with 0.461, "Price" with 0.197 and "Hospitable behavior" with -0.170 was found to be the least important factor affecting domestic tourists' satisfaction in Bandarawela Hotel.

In this particular case it is apparent that significant value for food & beverage is 0.278, followed by hospitable behavior 0.745 and price 0.183 and accommodation & amenities significant value is 0.047 which represents the lowest rate. This means that accommodation & amenities directly influence over the dominant dissatisfaction of domestic tourists,

because, it is a lower value than the accepted significant level of 0.05. Accordingly, the regression analysis showed that accommodation & amenities was significant to be identified as a good predictor of the overall domestic tourists' satisfaction (Sig.T<0.05) in Bandarawela Hotel.

Table 03- Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.390	.523		.746	.462
1 Food & Beverages	.435	.394	.461	1.104	.278
Accommodation	.447	.216	.501	2.073	.047
Hospitable behavior	-.166	.507	-.170	-.328	.745
Price	.156	.115	.197	1.364	.183

a. Dependent variable: domestic tourist satisfaction

Findings indicated that the domestic tourists' dissatisfaction in Bandarawela hotel was directly influenced by accommodation & amenities. This fact was statistically proved by "beta" coefficient of 0.501 and a "t" score of 2.073. For reliability purposes, it is important to note that this factor received a finding of 0.796 as regards the usage of Cronbach's alpha measurement. When it comes to significance, there is a significant relationship between the two constructs (0.047). It must be noted here that the current state of accommodation & amenities is based on the colonial concept. Being a colonial hotel, the hotel is not in a position to change the quality level due to legal restrictions. Accordingly, this aspect related to the colonialism concept can be recognized as a principal factor of domestic tourists' dominant dissatisfaction in Bandarawela Hotel.

Undoubtedly, increasing guest satisfaction is important since securing customer retention would fail without making them satisfied. In order of doing this effectively, the first step is to recognize the factors that drive customer satisfaction. Next, the management should consider the relative importance

of those factors for guest satisfaction. Perhaps, this is useful for hoteliers to focus their efforts on developing strategies to enhance core aspects of customer satisfaction, which contribute to improving customer retention.

In this respect, the above findings of this study draw the attention of the management to an important factor, among others. This study identified four underlying aspects of domestic tourists' satisfaction; accommodation & amenities, food & beverages, price and hospitable behavior. The analysis showed that the quality of accommodation & amenities, that is determined by the hotel concept (in the context of this particular hotel) have significant effect on domestic tourists' satisfaction. Specifically, most of the domestic visitors have been dissatisfied about the factor while they have been satisfied with other factors.

However, it was further noted that the domestic tourists prior knowledge of this hotel been a colonial hotel was very weak. In other words, most of the domestic tourists were not aware that the hotel is such a concept-based hotel and that the nature of

accommodation & amenities are different to that of other hotels. On the contrary, it can be assumed here that foreign tourists who come through travel agents receive this information from the travel agents and thus they are aware of this fact before they come. This prior knowledge of the nature of the product surely influences on forming the expected service quality and thus, as a result, influence upon guests' level of satisfaction. Accordingly, by looking at the domestic tourists' level of satisfaction regarding the accommodation & amenities and their prior knowledge of the hotel concept, it can be concluded here that the colonial concept is not a good Unique Selling Proposition (USP) for the domestic tourists in the hotel.

Considering the purpose of visit, most of the respondents have visited the hotel for holiday and recreation, traveling either with their spouse or friends. It was observed in the data that, there were several factors which influence on the selection of Bandarawela Hotel. Among them, the reputation of the hotel as a member of Aitken Spence Hotel Chain, the convenience due to the close location of the hotel to Bandarawela city and Bandarawela railway station were significant.

Further, based on the data gathered, it was recognized that comparing to foreign tourists, prior knowledge of domestic tourists about the hotel concept and related facilities & amenities was very little. It can be assumed here that this fact can lead the domestic and foreign tourists to have different levels of expectations about service quality and thereby different levels of satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis, a few points can be concluded in this study. The first is that the majority of the domestic tourists who visit the particular hotel for holiday making and the visitors represent the Western Province of the country. Further, although they select this particular hotel, they are not that aware of the

nature of the hotel and thus expect the accommodation and amenities that are offered at typical hotel. Since the hotel is not in a position to offer the luxury that other hotels can offer due to its theme, the average domestic tourist is not satisfied about the quality of accommodation and amenities. Thus, it can be concluded that the colonial concept is not a good Unique Selling Proposition for domestic tourists as far as this particular hotel is concerned.

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CORPORATE CULTURE AND THE CHANGING OF TOURISM IN MAEHONGSON

Krit Phanpanya

Mae Hong Son College, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Thailand

Abstract

Nowadays structure changing such as political structure from the top to the bottom has a strong impact on changing of Maehongson culture. It is because of the policy and strategy of the powerful people who are usually from other provinces and cultures. Their cultures, which are some similar but most are so different, are usually brought to apply in Maehongson. Education, immigrant from Myanmar, moving for study or work in big city such as Chiangmai, Bangkok, marriage and modern technology are other causes that affect the traditional and way of life in Maehongson. Taking standard corporate culture into daily life or receiving news and information without any consideration may interfere and fade away Maehongson cultural capital and tourism which has long history and at the moment has strong tradition. In summary, taking modern corporate culture both managing and staff selecting are very important in order to manage people who work in Maehongson. If they use the strategy in the good deed for example setting the seminar to train staff to have an understanding on Maehongson culture, people and their way of life including their language, believe, cloths or their community relationship, it will be a positive changing for Maehongson. Otherwise, the negative effect will be shown up. The management should not be Top-Down strategy. The integrated policy from rural people, Maehongson people, should be considered to reach the real requirement of them.

Keywords: corporate culture; changing on Maehongson tourism

INTRODUCTION

Mae Hong Son Province is approximately 924 kilometers. North of Thailand's capital city Bangkok. To the north and west it connects to a total of three states in the Union of Burma, namely the southern portion of Shan State, Kayah State, and Kawthoolei State. These formations serve as natural boundaries between the countries. To the south, it connects to the district of Tha Song Yang and Tak, which serve as a provincial boundary. To the east it connects to the districts of Wiang Haeng, Chiang Dao, MaTaeng, Maehaem, Hot and Omkoi in Chiang Mai Province, which serve as a boundary between the two provinces. The impact of technology and modernization currently have been affective the social structure. The impact of infrastructure on growth in developing countries. There is more technical evident that better quantity and quantity of infrastructure can directly raise the productivity of human and physical capital and hence growth by providing access ,road can, improve education and market for farmer's outputs, facilitate private investment, improve jobs and income level for many.

It is because of the policy and strategy of the powerful people who are usually from other provinces and cultures. In Maehongson, it have been to respond to expressed spiritual inherit long history culture. However, it is not yet clear how the changing of tourism and what is the impact on changing of Maehongson culture.

The purpose of this study was to clarify structure changing such as political structure and what is the impact on changing of tourism in Maehongson. In this study, Education, immigrant from Myanmar, moving for study or work in big city such as Chiangmai, Bangkok, marriage and modern technology are other causes that affect the traditional and way of life in Maehongson regarding the theory of structural function and behavior change.

THE STUDY /METHODOLOGY

Subject were recruited for a qualitative descriptive study entitled, Empirical research in influence of organizational culture on leadership was conducted in the period February- October 2015 on a sample of 248,178 populations in 7 districts. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed of which Element Development Organization. The natural beauty of the reporting style of the organization. And the success of the Organization, as well as the effect of changing cultural tourism Chong Hong. Thai people who worked in Maehongson reported positive receiving and negative receiving in culture. The changing of tourism in Maehongson were then interpreted by an investigator using policy from government and CBT community base tourism. Maehongson province has vision "the city of ecotourism open the gateway to. The west, The sustainable economic development "7 districts 44 sub districts and 415 villages. 248,174 population and growth rate 0.66% Population density total 19.24 per sq.km. Population from registration record 5 unknown 19,369 a non-thai national 475 Transferring population 1,791 population registered. In central house file. According to the Provincial Performance Management System Manual Fiscal Year 2013 by grouping the proposals for changes to create transparency practice, Mae Hong Son province was ranked 20th in the country. In the registration process of identity card, a request for the first time of identity cards (Thai children of completed age of 7 years old), it affects toward the changes of high population and the operations of the governmental organizations very efficiently. As for the study of the primary data in the dimension of organization development of year 2011, the achievement level of quality management development of the government sector by 20 percent or an average of 4.2724 which is classified as a percentage of 8.00 of the quality criteria of public administration degree or an average of 3.1833. The achievement level of the weighted average percentage to achieve successful results of the performance of the province on the basis of quality management of the public administration at the basic level is at 6.00 or an average of 4.9969. The achievement level of organizational self-assessment based on the guidelines of the quality development of public administration at the basic level is at **6.00** on an average of 5.0000 in the year of **2012**. Besides, the achievement level of the quality management of the

public administration by 20 percent or an average of 4.1435. In the year of 2013 the assessment method used for improving the cultural organization composes of **1**. Consistency within the organization such as Direction of the organization, Leadership and Climate **2**. Success of the Organization such as Coordination, Control, Motivation, Accountability and Teamwork **3**. New Creation of External Orientation and Innovation and Learning. The indicators of the achievement level of development of the cultural organization are divided into 2 sub-indicators as follows: 1. the difference between opinion and importance towards the satisfaction in improving the cultural organization, its value score is 0.0750 2. The achievement level of a plan for improving the cultural organization, its value score is 0.0750. In the year of the **2014**, the competency development of the organization (human capital information technology and cultural organization) is a continuation of the internal corporate management system as a mechanism for creating a highly efficient organization. It contains **3** main aspects include Human Capital, Information Capital and Organization Capital in order to enhance the operation of the organization, which would result in an effective performance of the organization. It causes the working efficiency to meet the objectives of the organization, expectations and needs of service users. The success of the competency development of the organization, the assessment indicators are divided into 2 sub-indicators; the achievement level of the reporting of the organization's characteristics, using the guidelines to improve the operation of the province on the basis of Public Sector Management Quality Award (PMQA) and the achievement level of the development organization, using an Organization Development Survey which has 2 assessment that is Pre-Test and Post-Test. The questions are composed of three areas as follows: 10 questions from Human Capital Area; it focuses on policies and goals for human resource management, communication, task assignment, job progress, and development, 6 questions from Information Capital Area and 14 questions from Organization Capital.

RESULT/RESEARCH FINDINGS

In 2015, the tourism situations of Mae Hong Son province, there are tourists travelling into the city for

890,159 people in total. It has been increased from last year for 11.40 percent. This can be divided 56.46% for Thailand tourists and 43.54% for foreign tourists. As for the average occupancy rate throughout the year, it is 35.76%. It decreased for 0.48% when comparing to last year. The revenue from tourism is about 5, 996.22 million baht. While the areas of Pai District, there are 579,209 people, representing all tourists travelling in Mae Hong Son province and its revenue from the tourism is 2,689 million baht. Pai District has a growth rate of tourists, especially Chinese tourists with more than 30% which is ranked to the number 1 instead of tourists.

Most came from the city of Chengdu, and Beijing, which is a group of Gen-Y tourists that have moderate to high purchasing power. Most working age group and couples can communicate in English from low to medium level. As for the family group, they will be travelling in a form of caravan from Yunnan from Yunnan Province crossing the border into Thailand through Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai and they continue their journey into Pai District. As for the habit characteristics of Chinese tourists, they focus on good accommodation delicious food and good photo corner whereas F.I.T tourists they will travel by public vans into Pai District and rent motorcycles to tour around Pai. They go sight-seeing and take pictures in tourist attractions, restaurants, coffee shops, and do some soft adventure activities, including elephant riding, rafting, etc.

The tourist business entrepreneurs in Pai District have adapted themselves based on the flow of Chinese tourists by adding tour programs by the needs of Chinese tourists, including accommodation and restaurant as well as Chinese labels and they have received a good response from Chinese tourists as well.

CITATIONS

To provide for an effective performance, the policy of good governance organization of Mae Hong Son has determined the practice principles as follows:

1. Communicate to all personnel to know and understand about the policy thoroughly.

2. Systemize the good governance effectively to ensure that the personnel and the organization will behave according to the policy of good governance organization strictly.

3. Expect everyone to report honestly about the unusual or suspected of the policy to the supervisor directly. If they cannot report directly to their supervisors, they may ask for suggestions from the executives or Mae Hong Son Provincial Office and that information should be confidential. However, the supervisors are responsible to monitor and give suggestions to their subordinates to follow the policy of good governance organization.

4. The policy of good governance organization should be improved annually by Mae Hong Son Provincial Office.

5. The province should determine the guidelines for measurement and assessment of the good governance organization based on the indicators systematically.

PROBLEMS AND OBSTACLES

The operation of the good governance organization policy of Mae Hong Son province is the good management system according to the principles of good governance. It is effective, transparent and it can be investigated with an acceptable standard to all parties. Importantly, the satisfaction of the people under the framework, vision and mission of Mae Hong Son province, which contains the policies and practices under the four main policies of 4 areas; policy of state, social and environment, administrators and the stake holders, organization and performers. Overall, the people have received the cooperation of the relevant authorities as well. However, there are some people who have not been conducted in accordance with the good governance policy organization from Mae Hong Son province perfectly. It may cause from the administrators do not understand the policy clearly so they are not aware of their duties and responsibilities or they understand that they are not responsible directly so it is not pushed for the implementation of all four aspects concretely.

Table 1 Graph of growth indications of Mae Hong Son.

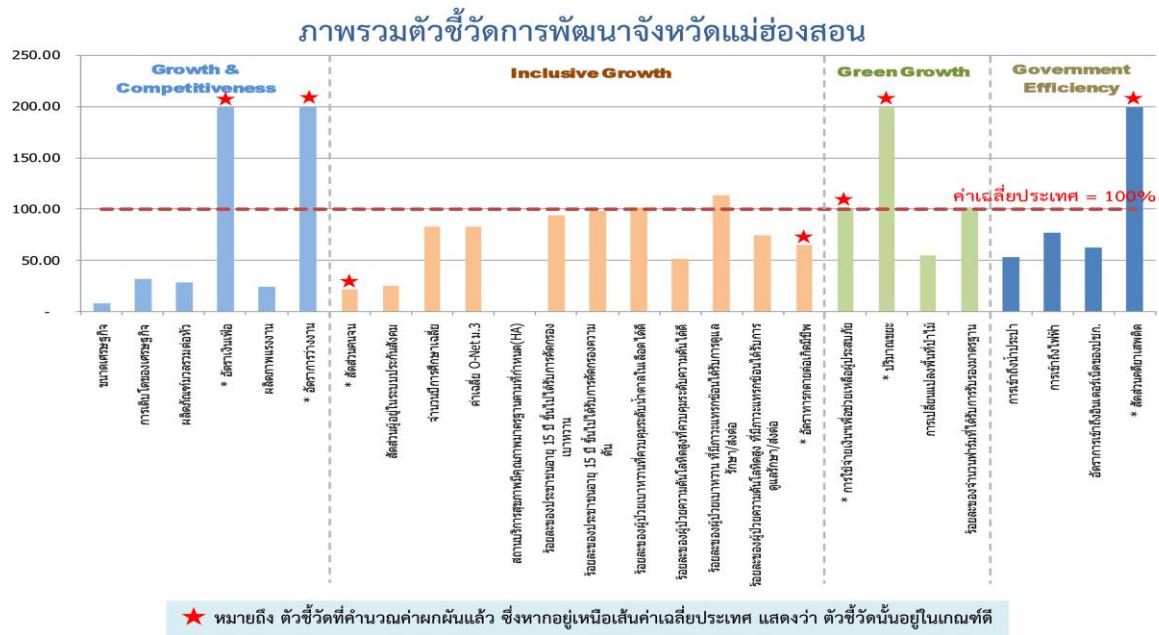


Table 2 Table of growth indications of Mae Hong Son.

ข้อมูลประกอบการอ่านกราฟภาพรวมตัวชี้วัดของจังหวัดแม่ฮ่องสอน

		ประเทศ	แม่ฮ่องสอน	หน่วย
growth & competitiveness	ขนาดเศรษฐกิจ	102,491	8,843	ล้านบาท
	การเติบโตของเศรษฐกิจ	3.1	1.0	ร้อยละ
	ผลิตภัณฑ์มวลรวมต่อหัว	128,245	37,456	บาท/ปี
	* อัตราเงินเฟ้อ	3.0	0.9	ร้อยละ
	ผลิตภาพแรงงาน	158,395	38,997	บาท/คน (ปรับ 6กย56)
	* อัตราการว่างงาน	0.66	0.20	ร้อยละ
Inclusive Growth	* สัดส่วนคนจน	13.15	60.29	ร้อยละ
	สัดส่วนผู้อยู่ในระบบประกันสังคม	26.98	6.89	ร้อยละ (ปรับ 6กย56)
	จำนวนปีการศึกษาเฉลี่ย	9.1	7.6	ปี
	ค่าเฉลี่ย O-Net ม.3	50.00	41.46	ร้อยละ (ปรับ 6กย56)
	สถานบริการสุขภาพมีคุณภาพมาตรฐานตามที่กำหนด(HA)	25.99	0.00	ร้อยละ
	ร้อยละของประชาชนอายุ 15 ปี ขึ้นไปได้รับการคัดกรองเบาหวาน	36.93	34.67	ร้อยละ
	ร้อยละของประชาชนอายุ 15 ปี ขึ้นไปได้รับการคัดกรองความดัน	39.86	39.33	ร้อยละ
	ร้อยละของผู้ป่วยเบาหวานที่ควบคุมระดับน้ำตาลในเลือดได้ดี	3.71	3.78	ร้อยละ
	ร้อยละของผู้ป่วยความดันโลหิตสูงที่ควบคุมระดับความดันได้ดี	4.19	2.16	ร้อยละ
	ร้อยละของผู้ป่วยเบาหวาน ที่มีภาวะแทรกซ้อนได้รับการดูแลรักษา/ส่งต่อ	75.67	86.18	ร้อยละ
	ร้อยละของผู้ป่วยความดันโลหิตสูง ที่มีภาวะแทรกซ้อนได้รับการดูแลรักษา/ส่งต่อ	80.60	60.0	ร้อยละ
	* อัตราการตายต่อเกิดมีชีวิต	6.8	10.4	อัตราการตาย/เกิดมีชีวิตพันคน
Green Growth	* การใช้จ่ายเงินเพื่อช่วยเหลือผู้ประสบภัย	269,688,442	269,739,086	บาท
	* ปริมาณขยะ	167,276	45,078	ตัน/ปี
	การเปลี่ยนแปลงพื้นที่ป่าไม้	2.26	1.25	% เปลี่ยนแปลงปี 47-51
	ร้อยละของจำนวนฟาร์มที่ได้รับการรับรองมาตรฐาน	45.10	46.07	ร้อยละ
Government Efficiency	การเข้าถึงน้ำประปา	20.41	10.93	ร้อยละ
	การเข้าถึงไฟฟ้า	99.20	76.84	ร้อยละ
	อัตราการเข้าถึงอินเทอร์เน็ตของประชากร	23.40	14.61	ร้อยละ
	* สัดส่วนคดีอาชญากรรม	338.6	27.8	อัตราคดีอาชญากรรม/ประชากรแสนคน

Table 3 Number of Thai and Foreign visitors in Maehongson Year 2014-2015.

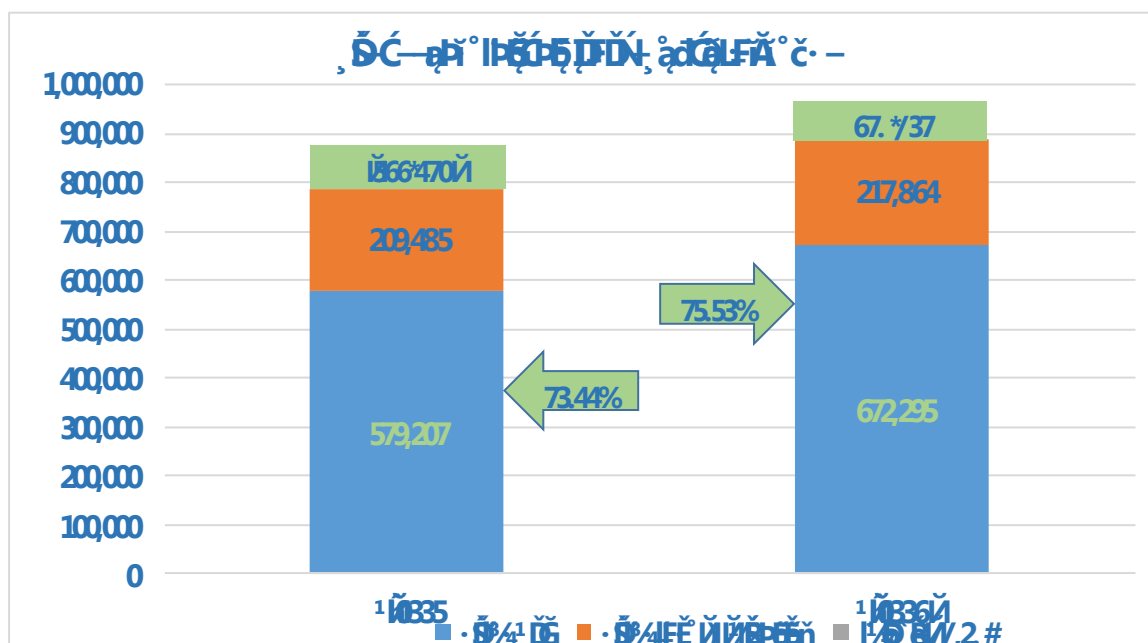


Table 4 Number of Thai and Foreign visitors in Maehongson 2014-2015

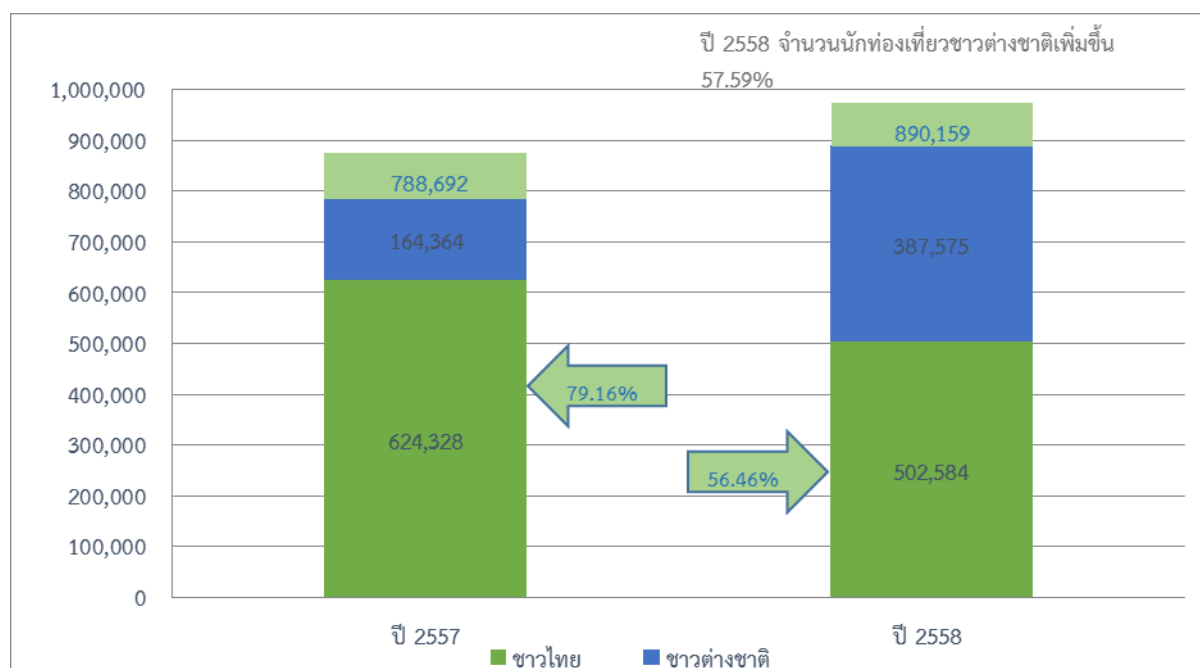


Table 5 Thai and Foreign visitors comparing between 2008-2015

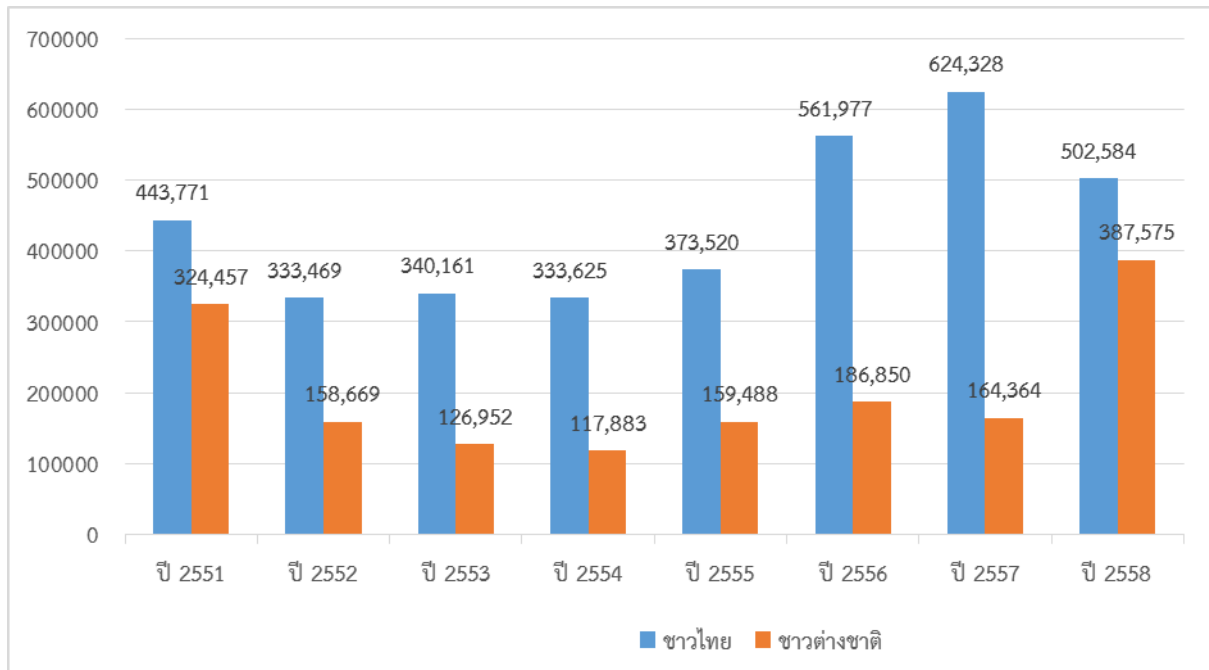


Table 6 Thai and Foreign visitors income comparing between 2014-2015

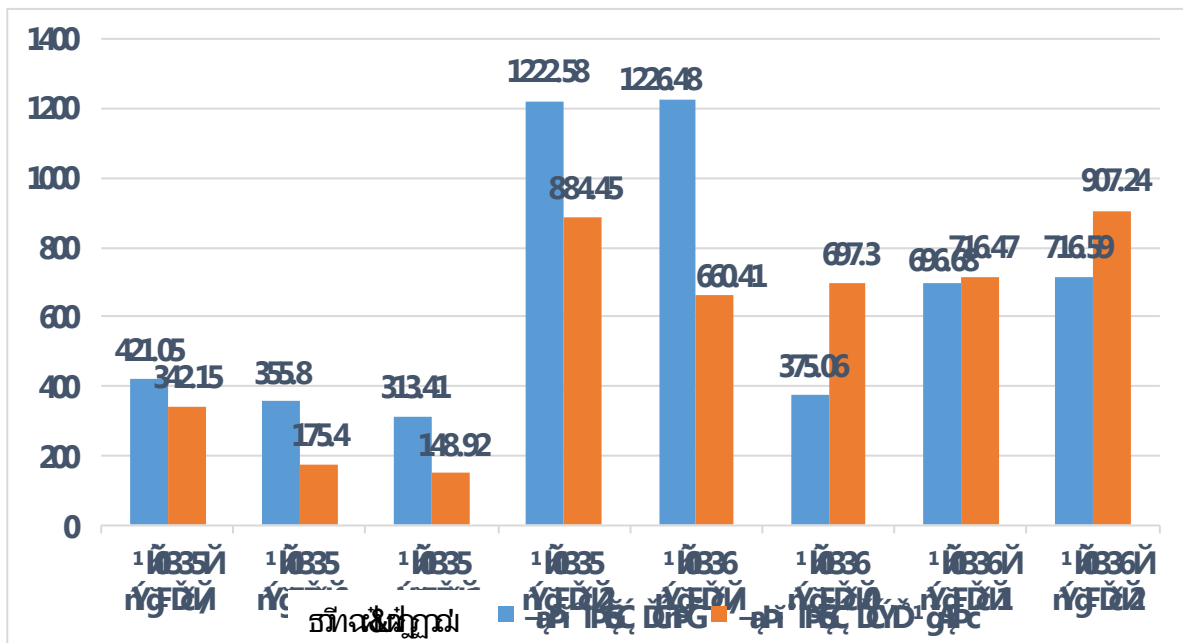
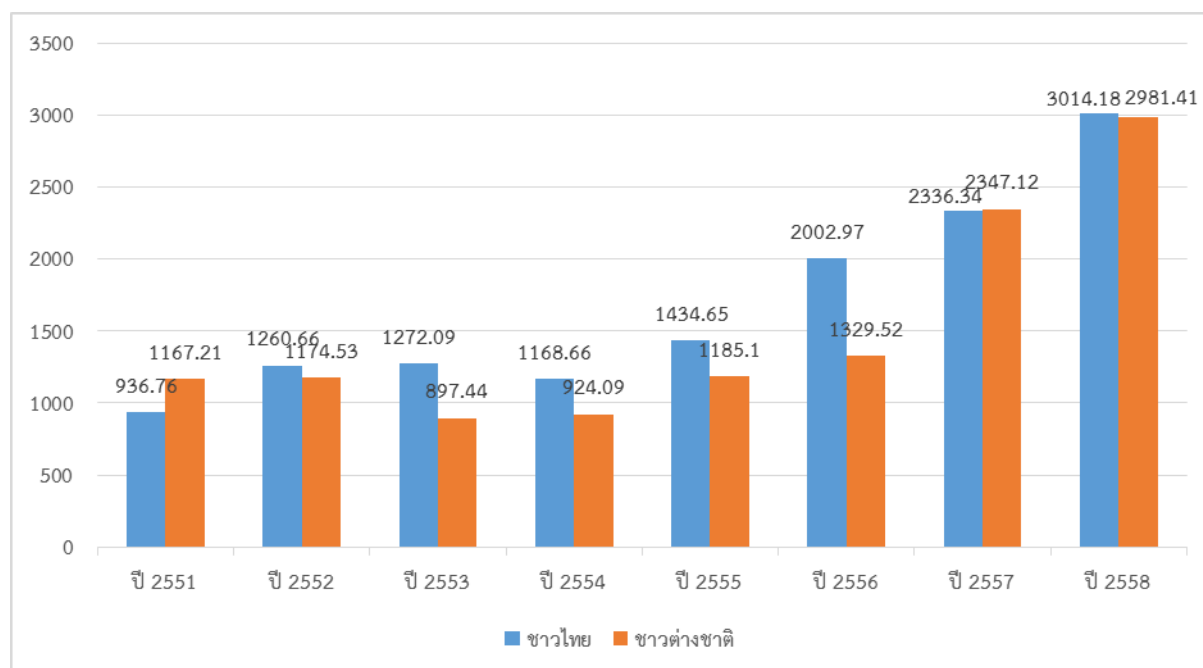


Table 7 Thai and Foreign Visitors income comparing between 2008-2015



SUGGESTIONS

The policy of good governance organization. Mae Hong Son province, the policy of the government agencies under a good management system. According to the principles of good governance Effective Transparent verified with a standard acceptable to all parties. And what is the most important the satisfaction of the people Under Vision and mission of Mae Hong Son This includes policies and guidelines under the four main policy areas of state policy. Social and environmental. The recipient of the organization and stakeholders and practitioners. Overall, the cooperation of the relevant authorities as well. But there are some who have not been conducted in accordance with regulatory policy organization of Mae Hong Son. In its entirety, it is because the management has an understanding of regulatory policy error Organization. Not aware of the importance or do not understand their role or understand the mission of the agency is not directly involved. He did not have to push for the implementation of all four sides with a concrete suggestion. The regulatory policy organization of Mae Hong Son. Be treated effectively even better. Should executives be aware and pay attention? Due to the important role of the executive. To be responsible

for protecting the interests of all stakeholders. The administrators will be able to push policies to accomplish something tangible. The policy will be published Mae Hong Son province in the People's social teaching has been widely acknowledged. In order to understand and to focus even more.

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PREDICTORS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PERCEPTIONS: A CASE OF THE PROVINCE OF CAVITE, PHILIPPINES

Paul Anthony C. Notorio, Ernesto C. Mandigma Jr, Beberlee R. Desingano, Jefferson
S. Buenviaje and Grace Cella R. Mejia

Tourism Management Department, De La Salle University – Dasmariñas Philippines

Abstract

This paper explored how people perceive the impacts of tourism in the Province. The paper further examined by exploring the quality of tourism resources and the intensity of tourism activity, and how these affect the perception. The study was commissioned as an input for creating a tourism development plan for the province. Results of the study show that raising the quality of natural resources and increasing land transport activity leads to a higher perception of negative tourism impacts. Increasing the activities of some industries of tourism contributes to both the positive and negative impact perception. The hotel and restaurant and the human resource have a wider effect compared to other industry and tourism resource respectively.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, tourism development, tourism impact, Cavite, tourism resources, tourism activity

INTRODUCTION

The Province of Cavite has been known as the historical capital of the Philippines. The province has many significant historical sites, the most significant of which is the Aguinaldo Shrine - the site where the first Republic of the Philippines was proclaimed. The province is also famous for the City of Tagaytay, one of the most popular tourist destinations due to the cool climate and beautiful scenery. Its proximity to Metro Manila makes the province a preferred destination for excursions and short stays. The province is popular for short hikes, unique themed restaurants, retreats and conventions, wellness, and other leisure activities.

The tourism industry of the province has been developed on few areas, particularly the City of Tagaytay and the Municipality of Kawit. The island of Corregidor, the last place to fall under the Japanese forces, is well-developed. The island is geographically part of the province of Cavite, but its tourism industry is managed by Sun Cruises, a company based in Manila. Presently, there is no provincial tourism master plan. Moreover, the impact of tourism in the province has not been studied, reflecting the study of Ballantyne, Parker & Axelsen (2009). Several cities and municipalities have

signified the intention of developing their tourism industry. Given these circumstances, it is imperative that development of tourism in the province is guided by the principles of sustainability.

Sustainable tourism encompasses the dimensions of economy, society, and physical environment. This means that trying to develop sustainable tourism in one area may differ greatly to another area due to the varying needs of the economy, society, and physical environment. An expert may affirm that the community is affected positively by tourism, but it is not necessarily felt by the majority in the community. Hence, it is important to determine people's perception on the impact of tourism (Mason, 2012). Kreag (2001) also pointed out that the people's perception on tourism impacts may be due to the quality of tourism resources. This means that developing tourism resources may lead to a higher perception of negative impacts. Another problem is that the impact is usually attributed to the tourism industry as a whole, without recognizing the fact that the tourism industry is a composition of several industries that are related, but is unique from each other. Thus, there is a need to determine which industry is perceived by the public to contribute more to a specific tourism impact.

Tourism development, in general, often stem from two factors: what the destination can offer, and what is the existing demand. This concept is reflected in the Tourism Development Planning Guidebook for Local Government Units (Department of Tourism, 2012). In this framework, whatever negative tourism impact that may arise from the tourism development is mitigated only after the problem has occurred. An ideal framework should incorporate sustainability component before developing tourism. For destinations with a developed tourism industry but without a tourism master plan, it is even more ideal to conduct an impact assessment. This assessment should be integrated in creating the master plan. Hence, this study was commissioned to serve as an input for the creation of the tourism master plan for the Province of Cavite.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study determined the quality of tourism resources (QTR), level of tourism activity (LTA), and impacts of tourism (IOT), and how the QTR and LTA affect the IOT. The study of Notorio (2010) was used as concept for to assess the QTR, namely the natural resources (NR), cultural resources (CUR), human resources (HR), and capital resources (CAR), but has added and excluded selected variables that would apply to the study area. The assessment of LTA adapted the concept outlined in the Tourism Development Planning Guidebook for Local Government Units (Department of Tourism, 2012) and the United Nations Statistics Division (2016) which categorized the variables into hotel and restaurant industry (HRI), land transport industry (LTI), water transport industry (WTI), travel service industry (TSI), and attraction industry (AI). The IOT used the triple bottom-line concept of Kreag (2001). Lastly, the IOT variables were clustered as positive economic impact (PEcI), negative economic impact (NEcI), positive socio-cultural impact (PSCI), negative socio-cultural impact (NSCI), positive environmental impact (PEnI), and negative environmental impact (NEnI).

METHOD

The respondents of the study are the residents of the Province of Cavite. The sampling frame was sourced from the National Statistics Office (2010), where the population is 3,090,691. Krejcie & Morgan's method for sample size computation was used, generating 400 respondents. The researchers were able to distribute 721, yielding a 180.25 percent retrieval rate. Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling was used where the respondents are subdivided into seven districts, 23 cities and municipalities, and barangays.

Survey questionnaire was used incorporating the concepts. The questionnaire's content validity was examined. The questionnaire was critiqued by experts from the areas of economics, social science, and physical science. The research instrument was revised to incorporate their comments and suggestions.

Regression was used to test the hypothesis. The results were then statistically analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The results were validated by a statistician.

FINDINGS

Quality of tourism resources in the Province of Cavite

The results (Table 1) show that the natural resources (NR) were average due to the absence of rare and exceptional geological formations. The findings proves that the locals perceive that the greatest asset of the province of Cavite the unique climate of the upland areas. The finding is opposite to that of the island of Lubang whose NR are at par with that of the resources of major destinations (Notorio, 2010). However, the findings mirrors the ranking of the Philippines in terms of the quality of the natural environment, with the country ranking 92nd out of 140 countries (The World Economic Forum, 2013).

Table 1 *Quality of natural resources*

	WM	VI
climate	2.83	average
rivers	2.82	average
3.5 lakes, ponds, and springs	2.78	average
3.5 mountains and highlands	2.78	average
sea	2.63	average
beaches	2.61	average
forests	2.56	average
wildlife	2.46	poor
waterfalls	2.41	poor
diving spots	2.32	poor
caves and rock formations	2.28	poor
Total	2.61	average

The CUR as shown in Table 2, were rated average because of the lack of significant development. Some variables were rated good because they are anchored on the historical advantage of the province and can compete with other famous attractions in the country.

The findings differs from the island of Lubang whose cultural resources were perceived to be less adequate (Notorio, 2010).

Table 2 *Quality of cultural resources*

	WM	VI
1. churches	3.84	good
2.5 events and festivals	3.52	good
2.5 historic sites	3.52	good
4. local cuisine	3.35	average
5. way of living and traditions	3.32	average
6. folk music and dance	3.17	average
7. museums	3.08	average
Total	3.40	average

The findings of Table 3 can be attributed to the difference between rural and urban workforce. The results reflects that of the findings of Bharwani & Butt (2012) which stressed the need to improve the quality of manpower in the tourism industry. The highest rated variable, hospitality of the locals, shows

that the Filipinos in general are hospitable and customer-oriented (The World Economic Forum, 2013).

Table 3 *Quality of human resources*

	WM	VI
1. hospitality of the locals	3.55	good
2. management skills of the locals	3.41	average
3. available local workforce	3.33	average
4. performing artists	3.23	average
5. visual artists	3.02	average
Total	3.31	average

The CAR was rated average due to the good development in urban areas and the poor development in many rural areas. The solid waste management is particularly needs significant improvement in the municipalities of Magallanes and Silang (Cavite Provincial Planning and Development

Office, 2013). The high rating of the telecommunication is opposite to the data of The World Economic Forum (2013) where internet use, telephone, and mobile phone use is rated low.

Table 4 Quality of capital resources

	WM	VI
1. telecommunication	3.51	good
2. power supply	3.49	average
3. water supply	3.45	average
4. roads	3.35	average
5. solid waste management	3.29	average
6. sewerage system	3.25	average
7. seaports	2.59	average
<i>Total</i>	<i>3.25</i>	<i>average</i>

Cavite's reputation as the historical capital of the country is the reason why the cultural resources were rated the highest among the four categories of resources. Although the overall rating of the tourism resources were rated average which implies that development is still needed. Furthermore, the results

implies that tourism should be developed around the highest rated variables. Although this argument opposes the view of Calabro & Spina (2013) who claims that provinces with cultural resources tend to have less and seasonal visitors.

Table 5 Overall quality of capital resources

	WM	VI
1. CUR	3.40	average
2. HR	3.31	average
3. CAR	3.25	average
4. NR	3.08	average
<i>Total</i>	<i>3.14</i>	<i>average</i>

Level of tourism activity in the Province of Cavite

The HRI of the province was rated with moderate activity due to the high density of hotel and restaurants among tourist areas, especially in Tagaytay, and few hotels and restaurants among the rural and non-tourism areas. The rating was moderate

despite the fact that the province has more accommodation establishments among all the provinces in the region (Department of Tourism, June 2012). The high ranking of the restaurant industry mirrors that of the Department of Tourism & USAID's (2014) report which shows that food and beverage services has the most number of establishments among registered tourism establishments within Metro Manila.

Table 6 LTA of HRI

	WM	VI
1. Restaurants	4.12	moderate
2. hotels and resorts	3.74	moderate
3. bars	3.56	moderate
4. motels, camps and other short-stay accommodations	3.44	Low
<i>Total</i>	<i>3.72</i>	<i>Moderate</i>

the high ranking of the country in LTI (The World Economic Forum, 2013).

The findings of Table 7 revealed that the tourist destinations of the province are accessed either by private or public transport, due to the few activity of the tourist transport. These findings are contradicts

Table 7 LTA of LTI

	<i>WM</i>	<i>VI</i>
1. small boats	2.45	very low
2. other tourist water transport (kayaks, rafts, etc.)	2.20	very low
3. yachts	2.05	very low
4. ferries	2.04	very low
<i>Total</i>	<i>3.72</i>	<i>Very Low</i>

The findings of Table 8 shows that many of the municipalities and cities of the province are landlocked. Furthermore, the findings from Table 5 shows that the coastal areas lack water accessibility

and support infrastructure. The findings were similar to the study of Olugu & Onukwube (2012), which revealed that Lagos, Nigeria has low tourist water transport activity.

Table 8 LTA of WTI

	<i>WM</i>	<i>VI</i>
1. small boats	2.45	very low
2. other tourist water transport (kayaks, rafts, etc.)	2.20	very low
3. yachts	2.05	very low
4. ferries	2.04	very low
<i>Total</i>	<i>3.72</i>	<i>Very Low</i>

The TSI lacks tourism activity due to several reasons. The tour guides of tourists are mostly from outside the province. Also, the local tour guides also perform guiding duties outside the province. The registered travel agencies and tour operators are more in number but mostly offers services outside of Cavite. The

travel agencies, tour operators and tour guides of the province have fewer accredited tour guides and travel and tour operators compared to the neighboring regions (Department of Tourism, 2009).

Table 9 LTA of TSI

	<i>WM</i>	<i>VI</i>
1. tour guides	3.30	Low
2. travel agencies	3.27	Low
3. tour operators	3.24	Low
<i>Total</i>	<i>3.27</i>	<i>Low</i>

Table 10 LTA of AI

	<i>WM</i>	<i>VI</i>
1. religious and pilgrimage tourism	3.79	moderate
2. cultural and heritage tourism	3.64	moderate
3. nature-based tourism	3.57	moderate
4. sports and recreation tourism	3.54	moderate

5. medical and wellness tourism	3.47	Low
6. business tourism including MICE	3.46	Low
7. agritourism	3.42	Low
8. culinary tourism	3.31	Low
9. adventure tourism	3.30	Low
10. water tourism	3.21	Low
<i>Total</i>	<i>3.08</i>	<i>Low</i>

The overall rating of 'few' among the AI was due to the few popular tourist attractions. Among these known attractions, the most popular is Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine, and some attractions in Tagaytay. Although it can be noted that the highest rated attraction is the religious and pilgrimage sector which gives us a glimpse on the untapped tourism potential in this area. The result refutes the tourism profile of the province (Cavite Provincial Planning and

Development Office, 2013) who does not highlight the churches and pilgrimage of the province. The other variables rated 'moderate' were due to the famous cultural and heritage sites (Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine), popular mountain climbing area (Mt. Pico de Loro), and the established sports and recreation industry (Carmona).

Table 11 Overall LTA

	<i>WM</i>	<i>VI</i>
1. HRI	3.72	Moderate
2. AI	3.48	Low
3. TSI	3.27	Low
4. LTI	2.77	Low
5. WTI	2.18	Very Low
<i>Overall Total</i>	<i>3.08</i>	<i>Low</i>

The findings on Table 11 is consistent with the data of the Department of Tourism & USAID (2014) and the Cavite Provincial Planning and Development Office (2013) which shows that most of the registered tourism-related establishments in the province belongs to the hotel and restaurant industry.

the improvement on the local economy and the income. These findings reflect that of the study of De Asis, et al. (2012) whose assessment revealed that the tourism industry has high PEcI in Tagaytay. Among the variables with the highest rating were because of the direct effect to the lowest sector of the economy and the society.

Impacts of tourism in the Province of Cavite

The tourism industry is generally viewed to contribute positively to the economy, particularly on

Table 12 PEcI

	<i>WM</i>	<i>VI</i>
1. improves local economy	3.01	strongly agree
2. contributes to income and standard of living	3.00	strongly agree
3. increases employment opportunities	2.95	agree
4. creates new business opportunities	2.92	agree
5.5 improves transport infrastructure	2.91	agree
5.5 improves investment and development	2.91	agree
7. improves public utilities infrastructure	2.87	agree
8. increases opportunity for shopping	2.86	agree
9. increases tax revenue	2.85	agree
10. economic impact is widespread	2.84	agree
<i>Total</i>	<i>2.91</i>	<i>Evident</i>

The findings on Table 13 reveals that the residents perceive an increased spending on basic commodities. This result also reflects the findings of De Asis, et al (2012) wherein the NEcI are perceived as high. Both the positive and negative impacts of

tourism were rated moderately despite the few level of tourism activity. The findings implies a high multiplier effect of the tourism industry, and a lack of regulation to mitigate the NEcI.

Table 13 NEcI

	<i>WM</i>	<i>VI</i>
1. increases price of land and housing	2.83	agree
2. increases price of goods and services	2.74	agree
3. increases cost of living	2.70	agree
4. increases road maintenance and transport cost	2.68	agree
5. increases potential of imported labor	2.66	agree
6.5 increases competition for land	2.63	agree
6.5 jobs pay low wages	2.63	agree
8. creates seasonal employment	2.60	agree
9. profits are exported by non-Cavitenos	2.59	agree
10. creates high risk jobs	2.57	agree
<i>Total</i>	<i>2.66</i>	<i>Evident</i>

The findings suggests that tourism in the province are highly qualified for educational tours and heritage enrichment. The overall rating supports the findings

of Elshiki & Kaboudi (2011) stating that tourism has a positive impact on the residents' quality of life.

Table 14 PSCI

	<i>WM</i>	<i>VI</i>
1. facilitates educational experience	3.02	strongly agree
2. improves quality of life	3.01	strongly agree
3. contributes to positive changes in values and customs	2.93	agree
4. promotes cultural exchange	2.89	agree
5. increases demand for historical and cultural exhibits	2.87	agree
6. preserves cultural identity of host population	2.85	agree
7. encourages greater tolerance for social differences	2.80	agree
8. satisfies psychological needs of people	2.79	agree
<i>Total</i>	<i>2.90</i>	<i>Evident</i>

Table 15 NSCI

	<i>WM</i>	<i>VI</i>
1. displaces residents for tourism development	2.51	agree
2. encourages excessive drinking and alcoholism	2.46	disagree
4. encourages excessive gambling	2.37	disagree
4. effects language and culture negatively	2.37	disagree
4. creates unwanted lifestyle changes among locals	2.37	disagree
6. exclude locals from natural resources	2.35	disagree
7.5 increases crime and drugs	2.32	disagree
7.5 increases smuggling	2.32	disagree
9.5 increases prostitution	2.31	disagree
9.5 changes values and customs negatively	2.31	disagree
<i>Total</i>	<i>2.34</i>	<i>Slightly Evident</i>

Table 15 shows that tourism is seen as a 'clean' and wholesome industry. This further implies that tourism in the province has been developed as a family-friendly destination. This is due to the various laws among cities and municipalities that prohibits unwholesome activities. The findings mirrors the results of Monterrubio, Gullette, Ontiveros, Fernandez, & Luque's (2012) findings which stated that tourism does not contribute to crime, prostitution or drug.

Table 16 PEnI

	WM	VI
1. improves cleanliness	3.08	Strongly agree
2. preserves historical sites	3.07	Strongly agree
3. improves areas' appearance	3.06	Strongly agree
4. protects the natural environment	3.02	Strongly agree
<i>Total</i>	<i>3.06</i>	<i>Evident</i>

The findings in Table 16 shows that, despite the problems on solid waste disposal, the major attractions are kept clean and presentable. The findings further implies that the environmental management among the sites and destinations in Cavite are good. Mensah (2012) has stated that tourism has contributed to the positive image of a destination, in which case is applicable to most of the key attractions in the province.

Table 16 NEnI

	WM	VI
1. increases air pollution	2.62	agree
2. decreases open space	2.61	agree
3.5 increases solid waste pollution	2.59	agree
3.5 increases noise pollution	2.59	agree
5. increases water pollution	2.55	agree
6. natural landscape is lost to tourism development	2.49	disagree
7. contributes to water shortage	2.46	disagree
8. destroys flora and fauna	2.44	disagree
9. degrades landscape and historic sites	2.43	disagree
10. disrupts wildlife	2.41	disagree
<i>Total</i>	<i>2.52</i>	<i>Evident</i>

The findings revealed that most of the environmental problems are pollution-related. The findings indicate that pollution and congestion are the first aspect to be affected in a tourism activity. The findings supports the argument that tourism contributes to traffic, noise, and littering (Monterrubio, Gullette, Ontiveros, Fernandez, & Luque, 2012).

Table 17 Overall IOT

	WM	VI
1. PEnI	3.06	Evident
2. PEcI	2.91	Evident
3. PSCI	2.75	Evident
4. NEcI	2.66	Evident
5. NEnI	2.52	Evident
6. NSCI	2.33	Slightly Evident

The findings on Table 18 confirms the findings of Vareiro, Remoaldo & Ribeiro (2012) wherein residents perceive lower negative impact of tourism development, especially if the destination is in its not yet fully developed. Moreover, the finding implies that the current tourism practices are more beneficial than detrimental to the economy, society, and the environment.

Effect of QTR and LTA to the IOT

The quality of CAR and HR, and the LTA of the HRI are the best predictors for the positive economic impacts. The quality of the CAR are often the benchmark for a healthy economy. The quality of HRis directly linked to the employment and income which are also benchmark for economic development. Meanwhile, the HRI, being the most in number among all the tourism-related establishments, contributes a lot to salary, tax, employment, and development.

Table 18 Regression analysis of the PEcI

<i>predictors</i>	<i>unstandardized coefficients</i>		<i>standardized coefficients</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>sig</i>
	<i>b</i>	<i>std. error</i>	<i>beta</i>		
(Constant)	.977	.079		12.366	.000
CAR	.294	.029	.381	9.967	.000
HR	.209	.029	.282	7.111	.000
HRI	.081	.017	.151	4.817	.000

The quality of HR and CAR, and the level of activity of the HRI have significant effect to the NECI. The findings implies that the increase in prices of land, basic commodities, and cost of living is attributed to the development of CAR and the increase of the number of hotels and restaurants. Moreover, the

tourism industry requires many types of skill sets that usually prompts the industry to import labor. In this case, the need to import labor contributes to the leakage.

Table 19 Regression analysis of the NECI

<i>predictors</i>	<i>unstandardized coefficients</i>		<i>standardized coefficients</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>sig</i>
	<i>b</i>	<i>std. error</i>	<i>beta</i>		
(Constant)	1.413	.110		12.906	.000
Human Resources	.189	.041	.234	4.632	.000
Hotel and Restaurant Industry	.094	.023	.161	4.038	.000
Capital Resources	.089	.041	.106	2.189	.000

The regression model in Table 20 shows that the HR, capital resources, CAR, and the level of activity of the HRI are predictors to PSCI. The results implies good socio-cultural practices among the given predictors. The HR and CAR are benchmark for

healthy society and culture respectively. Also, the recent development in the CAR of the province are geared towards improving the quality of life of the residents. Furthermore, the HRI facilitates host population and tourist interaction.

Table 20 Regression analysis of the PSCI

<i>predictors</i>	<i>unstandardized coefficients</i>		<i>standardized coefficients</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>sig</i>
	<i>b</i>	<i>std. error</i>	<i>beta</i>		
(Constant)	1.175	.092		12.705	.000
HR	.181	.038	.240	4.731	.000
CAR	.218	.034	.277	6.386	.000
CUR	.081	.034	.110	2.366	.018
HRI	.039	.020	.072	1.964	.050

The LTA on LTI, and the quality of HR and NR contributes to the NSCI, as shown in Table 21. However, the quality of AI offsets the perception of the negative impacts, because the highest rated attractions those that are cultural in nature. The negative effect of the LTI may be attributed to its contribution to traffic, especially on areas with many tourists. The negative effects of the quality of HR

may be due to the many employees of tourism establishments that has to travel long distance, which prompts many to rent a boarding house. The effect of the NR implies that locals are excluded or even displaced from areas with high quality of NR. This is true especially in Tagaytay, whose prime locations are mostly privately owned.

Table 21 Regression analysis of the NSCI

<i>predictors</i>	<i>unstandardized coefficients</i>		<i>standardized coefficients</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>sig</i>
	<i>b</i>	<i>std. error</i>	<i>beta</i>		
(Constant)	1.541	.104		14.751	.000
LTI	.155	.033	.241	4.656	.000
HR	.123	.037	.151	3.319	.001
NR	.110	.034	.153	3.195	.001
AI	-.084	.036	-.139	-2.353	.019

The findings on Table 22 shows that the quality of CAR and the LTA of the HRI contributes to the PEnI. This can be attributed to the orderliness and cleanliness of the surroundings among the HRI.

Furthermore, the findings suggests that the employees are well-informed and trained in making the area clean and physically appealing.

Table 22 Regression analysis of the PEnI

<i>predictors</i>	<i>unstandardized coefficients</i>		<i>standardized coefficients</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>sig</i>
	<i>b</i>	<i>std. error</i>	<i>beta</i>		
(Constant)	1.202	.102		11.764	.000
CAR	.363	.038	.413	9.529	.000
HR	.147	.038	.174	3.867	.000
HRI	.049	.022	.081	2.271	.023

Table 23 suggests that the NEnI are caused by the quality of the CUR and NR, and the LTA of the LTI and HRI. The higher the quality of the NR, the higher the perceived negative effect on the environment, which means that the locals perceive more pollution

on areas with high value NR. Meanwhile, the AI has an inverse effect on the perceived NEnI which suggests that the attractions in the province have effective programs in managing pollution.

Table 23 Regression analysis of the NEnI

<i>predictors</i>	<i>unstandardized coefficients</i>		<i>standardized coefficients</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>sig</i>
	<i>b</i>	<i>std. error</i>	<i>beta</i>		
(Constant)	1.708	.121		14.089	.000
CUR	.153	.044	.175	3.516	.000
LTI	.099	.040	.138	2.470	.014
AI	-.142	.043	-.212	-3.324	.001
NR	.110	.039	.138	2.807	.005
HRI	.070	.033	.108	2.105	.036

Table 24 shows that tourism has more positive impacts than negative impacts. The findings mirrors the study of Vareiro, Remoaldo & Ribeiro (2012) which revealed that residents perceive lower negative impacts of tourism development. This also suggests the need to improve existing tourism-related policies and programs to help enhance the positive impacts, while mitigating the negative ones.

Table 24 Model summary of the dependent variables

<i>dependent variables</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r square</i>	<i>adjusted r square</i>	<i>std. error of the estimate</i>
1. PEcI	.492	.492	.490	.5017
2. PSCI	.602	.362	.359	.573914
3. PEnI	.592	.351	.348	.648
4. NEcI	.424	.179	.176	.695
5. NSCI	.351	.123	.118	.723
6. NEnI	.301	.091	.084	.8208

Table 25 shows that the HR has the widest scope and the highest cumulative impact ($B = .849$). However, the CAR contributes the most to the total positive impact ($B = .581$), while the quality of HR contributes the most to the negative impacts ($B = .312$). Only the AI has an inverse effect to the tourism

impacts. It can also be noted that the HRI, although with only moderate impact, has a wide scope. These data can be used by the provincial and local government offices to help them focus their development based on which area of sustainability they want to focus.

Table 25 Model summary of the independent variables

<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>beta</i>								<i>Overall Impact</i>
	<i>peci</i>	<i>psci</i>	<i>peni</i>	<i>pi total</i>	<i>neci</i>	<i>nsci</i>	<i>neni</i>	<i>ni total</i>	
HR	.209	.181	.147	.537	.189	.123	---	.312	.849
CAR	---	.218	.363	.581	.089	---	---	.089	.670
CUR	.294	.081	---	.375	---	---	.153	.153	.528
HRI	.081	.039	.049	.169	.094	---	.07	.164	.333
LTI	---	---	---	---	---	.155	.099	.254	.254
AI	---	---	---	---	---	-.084	-.142	-.226	-.226
NR	---	---	---	---	---	.110	.110	.220	.220

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The development needs of the tourism industry of the province of Cavite are few, but significant. Furthermore, the tourism industry of the province has yet to achieve its full potential, as evidenced by the average tourism activity and moderate tourism impacts. Presently, the tourism industry cannot compete against more established tourist destination when considering the overall quality of tourism resources. However, the province can boast of its good historical sites. The overall practices of the tourism industry is presumed to be above average, as evidenced by a higher positive impact compared to the negative impact, although these practices still be significantly improved. The tourism industry also has a significant contribution to the positive and negative economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts.

This researchers created sustainable tourism development plan for the province of Cavite, and highly recommends its use and implementation. The proponents also recommends creating a sustainable tourism development plan for each city and

municipality. The data gathered can be isolated, recomputed and be made specific for each city and municipality. Further recommendations include a study on budget, and a marketing plan that may be applied together with the proposed tourism development plan.

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TOURISM, MODERNITY AND SPIRIT OF THE PLACE: A CASE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS HERITAGE SITE MANAGEMENT IN LAMPHUN, THAILAND

Saranphat Wongput

Department of Tourism, Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University

Abstract

These *Genius Loci* or the concept of ‘Spirit of place’ has been an essential factor that all religious site managers need to take into consideration, because such concept may help to preserve the integrity of the place both for worshipers and tourists. The advent of modernity and tourism at times has implications on cultural fabric of sacred cultural landscape as sacred sites have increasingly been used in tourism promotional campaigns. Alteration and modification of religious space for use and for tourism purposes is inevitable. This research draws on the religious city of Lamphun, a town located in northern Thailand, as a case study. The research addresses the question “To what extent has tourism and modernity affected the ‘spirit of place’ of religious heritage sites?” The research is based on qualitative methods of observation and in-depth interviews at significant religious sites in Lamphun. Research findings may contribute to the debates over the balance between conservation and development paradigms.

Keywords: religious tourism, cultural heritage management, Spirit of Place, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

Research background

The concept of *Genius Loci* or the ‘Spirit of the place’ has been seen as an integral part of cultural heritage management as it offers a comprehensive understanding of monuments as well as the surroundings. Spirit of place is physical and spiritual values that gives meaning and values to a place. In other words, Spirit of Place include the integrity of both tangible (building, site, route, objects) and intangible elements of the place, the meaning, emotion and mystery (Quebec Declaration 2008).

However, the advent of modernity and tourism at times has implications on cultural fabric of sacred cultural landscape. Tangible heritage and intangible heritage has already been transformed as a consequence of changing ways of life. While tourism has become an integral part of the regional development plan, sacred sites have increasingly been used as tourism resources and exposed to the process

of transformation and adaptation to ease visitors’ convenience.

This research draws on the religious city of Lamphun, located in northern Thailand, as a case study. Lamphun has been widely known as a religious town since the early times and it now still contains a number of significant religious features, such as the Buddha relic shrines and the Buddha footprints. Intangible heritage has also been transmitted to current generation.

Lamphun was the case study for my thesis in 2011. The findings suggest that religious heritage in Lamphun is valued, understood, interpreted and managed differently by different parties. Since 2011, I have been involved in many tourism development projects that included Lamphun in the study area. Therefore, the knowledge about Lamphun in this paper comes from my longitudinal experience since my first field survey in 2009.

This research paper addresses the main question “To what extent has tourism and modernity affected

‘spirit of the place’ of religious heritage sites?’ Sub questions include:

How has tourism influenced religious heritage management in Lamphun?

What are visitor motivations and behaviours?

What parties are involved in determining ‘spirit of place’?

How has tourism and modernity affected ‘spirit of the place’ at religious heritage sites in Lamphun?

Site Background

Lamphun has been a renowned pilgrimage destination in Northern Thailand (see figure 1). The city is full of tangible religious heritage, such as the Buddha relic shrine, Phrathat Haripunchai (*Phrathat* means the relic shrine; Haripunchai is the former name of Lamphun), and a number of noteworthy temples within the walled city and scattered across the outer districts of Lamphun. Lamphun’s intangible religious heritage has also attracted visitors to the province, especially during the religious festivals, such as the Relic Shrine Bathing Ceremony. In addition, lamphun has been known as home of Krubas. Krubas are honourable monks whose lives were dedicated to Buddhist practices (Buadang 2002:1; Cohen 2001:227). *Krubas* were the most respected persons in Lanna society and, as a community’s spiritual leaders; they maintained social norms and values (Buadaeng n.d; Santayos 2010: 82) One of most famous *Krubas* that resided in Lamphun was Kruba Sri Wichai who was widely known as the ‘saint’ of Lanna (The Northern Thai Kingdom) as he was the head of many temple and monastery development and renovation projects.



Figure 1 Location of Lamphun in Northern Thailand.
Source: Thailandmap.net

Lamphun’s religious heritage has been frequently used in tourism promotional campaign (Saengphueng, 2014) as well as to empower local residents’ awareness of local identity. Religious significance has been emphasized in many other contemporary events, such as the car rally that the route passed through many temples that have relations to the past *Krubas* across the province of Lamphun.

Literature Review

There is a wide array of literature that addresses the significance of ‘spirit of place’ in cultural heritage management. The paper first discusses the current situations of religious heritage in Thailand, particularly the issues of competing discourses between Western and Eastern conservation ethics. Then, it proceeds to discuss the concept of ‘spirit of place’, authenticity and The implications of tourism on cultural heritage.

Spirit of the place and Authenticity

Central to this research is the concept of ‘Spirit of the Place’. According to the Quebec Declaration, spirit of

place is 'The tangible (buildings, sites, landscape, routes, objects, etc.) and Intangible elements (memories, narratives, written documents, ritual, festivals, traditional knowledge, values, textures, odours, etc.), or in other words, the physical and the spiritual elements that gives meaning and values to the site' (Quebec Declaration, 2008).

The concept of 'Spirit of Place' has been reconceptualised over the past decade in relation to the changing nature of conservation ethics in the academic world as intangible has increasingly been recognised as an integral part of heritage sites. The launch of Quebec Declaration in 2008 was aimed to explore the relationship between tangible and intangible heritage and recognise the dynamic nature of the concept (Quebec Declaration, 2008). Currently it is accepted that the 'Spirit of Place' is multiform and often varies over time and from one culture to another and thus it needs to be understood by the processes of identification, safeguarding and transmitting.

'Spirit of Place' is an important concept for religious site management as the preservation of material authenticity and preservation of intangible values attached to the sites means the life of the site is prolonged as a religious compound. For tourists, 'Spirit of Place' is the concept that creates a kind of atmosphere that gives them unique experience and better understanding of the site. For example, when visitors walked into a cathedral, they would expect to have peaceful and holy experience or similar kind of experience that connect the mundane to the spiritual space.

Modernity and Tourism

Tourism has long been seen as a series of activities that have a close relationship with Modernity. The concept of 'Modernity' has been associated with social changes that occurred in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, such as impacts of industrialisation and urbanisation. Increasing mobility and changing perception of the world and the environment are also consequences of modernity (Eyerman, 1992). These changes also include increased movement of goods, capital, people, and information among formerly discrete populations. In terms of arts and literature, modernism means the

new sense of individuality, future orientation, and creative possibility among individuals and community of interest (Eyerman, 1992)

Modernity was thought to be a consequences of social changes bounded to Europe following the industrial revolution and technological innovation (Giddens, 1991), however, it is accepted that the impacts of modernity has become globalised. Like other places, Lamphun has been affected by the advent of modernity. The construction of the railway in 1903 and the motorway to Chiang Mai significantly brought about changes to Lamphun. The Chiang Mai-Lamphun basin experienced great cultural changes following the expansion of the local economy and improved transportation systems (Sethakul, 2009: 309). Tourists started to arrive in Lamphun, which is located on the way from Bangkok to Chiang Mai. Modern tourism activities have subsequently been developed.

Religious Heritage and Religious Tourism in Thailand

Buddhism has been one of the most significant ideologies in Thailand as it has been used as the central ideology and foundation of cultures at both central administrative and local level. Modern Thailand is a Buddhist state and much of the driving force for domestic tourism is Buddhist pilgrimages, which may include general visit to reliquaries and famous *wats* throughout the country (Byrne 1993).

Religious tourism, including pilgrimage, is embedded within heritage tourism and mass tourism activities (Rotherham, 2007: 65). It includes the visit for the purpose of participating in religious ceremonies and conferences, and the visit to local, regional, national, and international religious centres (Rinschede, 1992: 52). From a spiritual perspective, an experience at religious sites is associated with someone or something that believers venerate. Sociologically it may provide cultural access to sacred art and sculpture, which may attract atheists or those of other religions as well as the devout of a particular faith (Rotherham, 2007: 65).

Smith (1992) argues that the relationship between tourism and religion may be conceptualised as a continuum depending on the degree of intensity of

religious motivation (see figure 2). Sacred pilgrimage, a journey driven by faith, religion and spiritual fulfillment, lies at one extreme; at the other extreme lies the secular tourist who may seek to satisfy some personal or spiritual need through tourism.

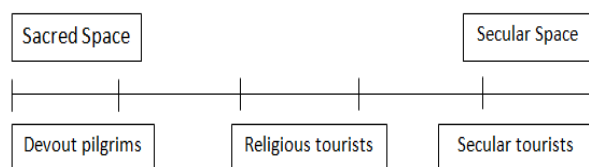


Figure 2 Continuum of a relationship between the sacred and the secular
Source: Timothy 2011: 386 (after Smith 1992)

Lamphun is home to many temples and sacred sites that are pilgrimage destinations. Wat Phrathat Haripunchai, a temple that hosts the Buddha reliquary in Lamphun, has always been under royal patronage throughout the history, and it has been declared one of the most significant 'national' Buddhist *stupas* of 'Thailand' (Synchro 2009b). Tourists and pilgrims from different provinces and regions visit the relic shrines during the annual festival and authentic spiritual feelings are still in the atmosphere. The relic shrine has always been the core attraction of Lamphun. Recently, any festival or ceremonies related to the relic shrines have also been promoted as tourism events. Local authority also set up a tram route that starts from Wat Phrathat Haripunchai and extended through other religious sites across the main district of Lamphun.

Competing Discourses in Religious Heritage Management in Lamphun

Perception of heritage is like the perception of 'Spirit of Place'. It varies temporally and geographically. Lamphun's heritage is perceived differently by its communities. There are significant discourses that shape the way heritage is managed in Thailand, and particularly in Lamphun. According to my thesis (Saengphueng, 2011), the major discourses are: firstly, the traditional religious discourse, which is mainly based on Buddhist ideologies with some influence from spiritual cults; secondly, the royalist-nationalist discourse underlying national cultural policies implemented by the central government; and, finally, the Western conservation ethics or Western

AHD. However, this does not mean that there is no other discourse that shapes the way people understand and perceive heritage.

These competing discourses shape the way people understand and manage religious heritage. For example, the Head Monk who has full authority over the maintenance of a temple may be adhered to the local/traditional discourse that favours the transmission and continuity of religious practices with less consideration of material authenticity. He might call for the renovation of an ancient pagoda to create an opportunity for the followers to donate as their 'good deeds'. Government agencies are often influenced by National planning policies. Their actions on religious heritage are likely to follow government's agenda of the time. Local residents, believers and pilgrims, that comes from different location may also perceive religious heritage differently according to their background and personal experience. This variation often add conflicts religious heritage. Although the Head Monk is the authorised person to determine the faith of religious heritage under his care, local communities and believers also see themselves as owner of such religious heritage and thus entitled to express their opinions and their needs.

The advent of tourism also add more conflicts to religious site as more and more 'tourists' may enter into a 'sacred space' and have no idea about 'Dos and Don'ts' in the religious space. Local residents and host communities also have various responses to tourism development. In addition to the issue of conservation, many religious sites now have to deal with visitor management on-site. Implementing a repressive measure to control visitor flow may on one hand preserve the 'spirit of place' in terms of general atmosphere. On the other hand, pilgrims and visitors may feel that they have no freedom and feel uncomfortable at the religious space as expected. It is essential for local stakeholders to find a balance between conservation and development and also between tourism/ modernity and original 'Spirit of Place'.

METHODOLOGY

The research was based on a range of data collection methods. These methods comprise documentary

evidence, such as government policy documents, archives, records of events, papers of conference proceedings, local newspaper articles and other secondary sources. In addition data was used from a questionnaire survey on 'Visitor Motivation' survey conducted in 2015. The survey focused on visitors' motivations, perceptions, experiences and expectations at religious heritage sites. Qualitative interviews were another data collection method used to explore both the ethnographers' and experts' viewpoints. Groups of interviewees included: local government officials, the head monks of significant temples on the tourist route, local residents, shopkeepers at religious heritage sites and visitors to the sites. Finally, participant observation was undertaken in different settings, at different religious sites, festive events, and at local organisations. Observation was also made at significant temples in Lamphun, including *Wat Phrathat Haripunchai* (the temple that hosts the Buddha relic shrine. It is located at the heart of the main district of Lamphun), *Wat Mahawan* (the temple that is famous for ancient Buddha amulets called 'Phra-Rod') *Wat Jama Thewi* (the temple that hosts the pyramidal pagoda claimed to be the shrine of the first ruler of Lamphun), *Wat Ton Kaew*, *Ku Chang – Ku Ma*, *Wat San Pa Yang Luang*, *Wat Phra Yuen*, *Wat Phra Puttabat Tak Pha*, *Wat Pa Nam*, *Wat Ban Pang*, *Wat Phra Puttabat Huay Tom* and *Chedi Sri Wiang Chai*.

These sites may be roughly divided into two main groups: the city temple cluster and the en-route temple (see figure 3). Most of the significant temple and sacred sites are in the Muang (main) district, Pa Sang district and the Li district. Li was also an ancient town and when it became part of Lamphun, this district was home of many revered *Krubas*.

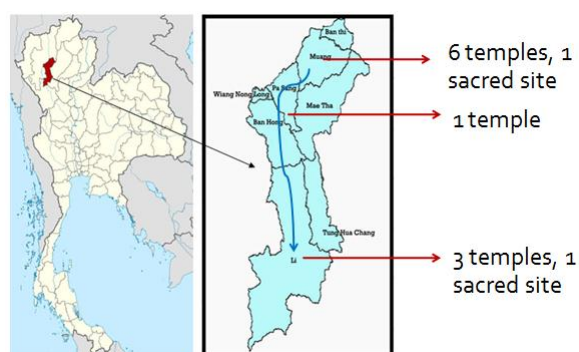


Figure 3 Two clusters of sample sites in three districts

RESEARCH FINDINGS

In order to understand how tourism and modernity has left impacts on 'Spirit of Place' at religious sites, I propose that the system of 'Spirit of Place' consists of four important elements: People, Place, tangible components and intangible components (see figure 4).



Figure 4 Spirit of Place is maintained if the balance between the four components is achieved.

People: visitors, surrounding, communities as well as carers of religious heritage.

Place: significance, management system, governance, regulations, policies, etc...

Tangible components: buildings, sites, objects, facilities, landscape, etc...

Intangible components: attached values, beliefs, atmosphere, ceremony, festivals, etc.

These four essential components need to be taken into consideration so as to keep the spirit of place intact.

Tourism and Religious Heritage

Tourism is one of the factors that emphasize the significance of Lamphun as a religious destination. However, Lamphun's religious significance has been well known by local and regional visitors before the advent of modern tourism. Kruba Sriwichai (1878-1938) was one of the most 'respected' Lanna monks at the turn of the twentieth century (Srisuwan, 1997; Buadaeng, 2002.; Chanamool, 2010). His residence in Lamphun attracted a number of followers. Phrathat Haripunchai or the Buddha relic shrine also receives a large number of pilgrims each year. Some important relic shrines in Northern Thailand have been linked

with the twelve-year animal cycle, and Lanna Buddhists feel obliged to make a pilgrimage to a particular shrine, depending on one's zodiac sign (Keyes, 1975: 73). Phrathat Haripunchai, which represents the 'chicken' year, also attracts a number of pilgrims ever since.

Lamphun was a famous stopping point for visitors to the north as it is located on the route from Bangkok to Chiang Mai. Modern tourism activities have subsequently been developed, especially at Pa Sang, a district famous for hand-woven cotton cloth. Pa Sang expanded significantly as it was used as a stopover point by tourists for lunch and the purchase of souvenirs. However, the construction of another larger superhighway diverted tourists away from the original route. Tourists only needed to travel through the outskirts of Lamphun without passing through the city. This diversion saved time and fuel for the journey to the north, but significantly affected Lamphun's tourism. This external change coincided with the passing away of many *krubas*, who used to be a magnetic power that attracts a vast number of believers to different places in Lamphun. Many temples in Lamphun that used to receive a large number of tourists every year gradually lost its popularity.

Currently, Lamphun has received much less number of tourists than its neighbour, Chiang Mai. Domestic excursions seem to be more influential compared to international tourism. In 2013, 94.3% of visitors to Lamphun are domestic and only 5.7% are international. 70.7% of visitors are excursionists, whilst 29.3% are tourists that stayed overnight (Department of Tourism). Wat Phrathat Haripunchai is the main tourist destination. Other temples have received less number of tourists, but many local visitors. Religious heritage, either tangible or intangible, is widely used as tourism resources to attract visitors. There are two tram rides starting at 9.00 and 13.00 that take visitors to different religious heritage sites across the main district of Lamphun. Religious tourism is one of the key goals that local government aims to benefit from, apart from the promotion of agro-tourism and cultural tourism. Many of the tourism events are associated with Buddhist festivals or Buddhist religious sites.

Some important temples are funded by local government for the improvement of landscape and facilities. Most of the temples are self-funded through donation. When temples are open for visitors, much of the donation must be used for visitor management. Tourists and pilgrims are very hard to distinguished, as for Thai people merit -making can also be considered 'recreational' activities.

To conclude, tourism has given values and recognitions to religious heritage, but local communities and the temples still manage to control the tourism impact at this stage. There is no obvious sign of the favouring tourism development over local use of religious site for spiritual purposes, but religious heritage has increasingly been promoted as tourism attractions.

Visitor Motivation for Visit and Visitor Behavior

The exploration of visitor motivation is essential as it tells us whether visitors to the sites will enhance the preservation of 'Spirit of Place' or act as ones who destroy the general sacred atmosphere. According to the result of the questionnaire survey, the majority of participants visit temple from their inner desire to make 'merit' or to pay 'respect' to the sacred structure, such as the relic shrine, or the Buddha footprints.

The reasons for choosing the temple are reputation of the place, personal connection or the locations of the temples are accessible. Almost 50% chose the temple they visited because of it is located close to their homes. Approximately 32% chose to visit the temple because they were recommended by friends or relatives. 26% visited the site due to its reputation or the attached narratives. Over 40% of participants are local (lived in Lamphun).

Motivations generally are divided into push and pull factors. Push factors include inner desire that makes the travel happen. Pull factors are associated to the destinations. They are the attractiveness that makes visitors desire to visit. For the case of religious sites in Lamphun, it can be seen from the survey that inner motivation or the push factors definitely play a more significant roles than the pull factors. Thus, local visitors are not fussy about facilities. They do complain about toilets, coffee shops, or even car park. They expected more shades to sit and rest and reflects good deeds that they conducted. Visitors from other

parts of the country pay more attention to physical authenticity and the landscape, but generally visitors are satisfied with the atmosphere of temples in Lamphun as they have experienced a more crowded and touristy atmosphere of temples in major cities like Chiang Mai and Bangkok.

To sum up, most of visitors to religious heritage have the quality of ‘pilgrim’ in themselves, although they may not consider themselves pilgrims or believers. Their motivations for visit are generally related to religious practice, and thus these motivations have strong control over their behaviour. These motivations often influence them to think less of

surroundings, but pay more attention to what they are doing at the sites.

Local communities and their roles in determining ‘Spirit of Place’

Local communities are important factors that will determine the spirit of place. According to my study for my thesis and my observation during the involvement in other projects, involved parties that play a role in determining the spirit of place may have different perceptions of ‘Spirit of Place’ as outlined below (see table 1):

Table 1 Parties that may play a role in determining the concept of ‘Spirit of Place’

Parties	Perception of Spirit of Place
Heritage agencies	Authenticity in material, craftsmanship, design, and continuity of traditional culture
Academician	Authenticity in material, craftsmanship, design, and continuity of traditional culture
Government Agencies	Continuity of on-site Culture and Activities, participation of local communities, awareness and recognition of key religious heritage
Local Communities	Ongoing activities (either traditional or not), faith from believers (observed from donations, new structures built, etc.), autonomy over the religious site, connection between the sacred and the mundane ¹
Tourists	Cultural landscape, sacred atmosphere, cultural significance, authentic experience
Believers or pilgrims	Site significance, Oral histories, legend, continuity of ritual practices, connection between the sacred and the mundane

Impacts of Tourism and Modernity on Spirit of Place

Although Lamphun has welcomed less than a million visitors annually, tourism and modernity has left some significant impacts on Lamphun religious heritage. The reason might be the city of Lamphun itself is also small and visitors are normally concentrated at the famous temple. Most of the temples that are popular among both pilgrims and tourists are Phrathat Haripunchai, Wat Jama Thewi, and other temples that are related to the *Krubas*. Impacts may be categorised into impacts on physical environment and impacts on culture and society.

Modernity has led to changes of social structure and cultural diffusion. Lamphun residents have moved to Chiang Mai, a larger and more urbanised neighbor and a number of Lamphun residents commute to Chiang Mai for work. This results in the problem of

aging population and many material culture and intangible heritage is on the verge of decline as younger generations are not present for the transmission process without motivations from local government agencies. Globalisation also brings changes and allows local residents to absorb outside culture. Traditional culture of which Buddhism is placed at the heart of a community is much affected by urbanisation, modernisation and Westernisation. Tourism is also a catalyst in the processes of commercialisation and commodification that are inevitable in any tourist destination. Intangible heritage is slowly losing its significance. The worldview of local residents is shifting. This is quite crucial

Regarding physical environment of the religious heritage, many on-site amenities for tourists e.g. museums, weaving centre were developed with the hope for visitors to spend more time learning about

the site and having better experience. In many temples, communities do not see these structures as relevant to the religious compounds and the facilities were left unattended leading to the deterioration of such structures. Other facilities, such as coffee shops, viewpoints, social media check-in points and other decorations that are rather alienated have been installed at religious heritage sites. These additions may affect the sacred atmosphere at religious sites.

Many temples that formerly have a traditional environment are renovated into a completely different and modern styles as the Head Monk want his visitors to enjoy better facilities among the cries of local experts and academicians at the loss of cultural heritage.

Discussion: Tourism, modernity and the future of religious tourism in Lamphun

According to the research findings, Lamphun has long been perceived as a religious town, and the image of Lamphun as a religious town is still portrayed by local government and in the mass media. Local residents also believe the same. Thus the term ‘religions’, ‘Buddhist’ and ‘Krua’ are still key words that are often used as part of the heritage discourse for tourism development and for community empowerment. Tourism not only generates income, but attracts visitors to the site. This prolongs the life of religious sites as a place of worship. Although the role of Buddhism and Buddhist practices in everyday life is changing, Lamphun’s general atmosphere is still ‘traditional’ and ‘authentic’ compared to a more touristic neighbour, Chiang Mai.

Lamphun’s religious heritage is still given much recognition from different communities in the province, thus each community attach meanings and values to such heritage. The way religious heritage are managed by different communities is often the best way

On one hand, preservation of material and atmospheric authenticity helps to preserve cultural values that may lead to sustainable management of the cultural resources. On the other hand, modernity leads to innovation. Social and cultural changes illustrate that such community is still active. Their

heritage is still evolving and valued by host communities. If temples are not open to outside visitors but Buddhist pilgrims, or if innovative events are limited just to preserve traditional and sacred atmosphere, the number of temple users will be definitely declined as a consequence of social changes. Changes occur from within a community. Safeguarding of Spirit of the Place has to be a negotiation between involved parties, government agencies and local communities.

The determination of ‘Spirit of Place’ is like a cultural process that involves the process of meaning making between communities. The nature of cultural heritage is discursive and its management is even more so. The concept of ‘Spirit of Place’ that fits in with one context may not work properly in another context, where social and cultural factors are different and visitors to the sites may as well have different profile and behaviours. Thus ‘Spirit of Place’ may be defined and re-defined by a range of communities as they negotiate their identities and sense of place.

CONCLUSION

Different parties are adhered to different concept of ‘Spirit of the place’. Tourism does accelerate the changing nature of religious heritage, but maybe not the main factors that affects ‘Spirit of the place’. Safeguarding of Spirit of the Place has to be a negotiation between involved parties, government agencies and local communities. The content and meaning of ‘Spirit of Place’ is not universally and all time true. One community must find the one concept that best suit their religious heritage management.

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THE COMPARISON OF THAI TOURISTS BEHAVIORS IN CHOOSING THAI BOARDING POINT SERVICES: CASE STUDY OF THAI- LAO BRIDGE, NONGKHAI AND NAKORN PANOM

Susaraporn Tangtenglam

Abstract

This study aims are (1) to investigate Thai tourists' behaviour of choosing border services in Nongkhai and Nakhon Phanom provinces (2) to study border services qualification in Nongkhai and Nakhon Phanom provinces (3) to compare the Thai tourists' goals of choosing border services in Nongkhai Border (NB) and Nakhon Phanom Border (NPB) and (4) to compare qualification of border services between Nongkhai Border (NB) and Nakhon Phanom Border (NPB). The questionnaire was used as a main research instrument. It was used to collect the data on the perception of the 770 samples. The samples are all Thai tourists and use border services from both Nongkhai Border (385) and Nakhon Phanom Border (385). The convenience sampling was used a main method of data analysis. The collected data was analysed by using statistical package. Frequency, Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, and ANOVA (i.e. t-test, F-test) were also used to analyse the collected data.

The results show that the Nakhon Phanom Border (NPB), most of the samples were 202 female tourists (52.47%), aged between 31 – 40 years. The samples were 155 tourists (40.26%), and the samples who had Bachelor Degree were 186 (48.31%). They approximately gained 25, 001 Bath for monthly income. The 117 samples (30.39%) out of 297 samples (77.14%) were students. The reason the border service at Nakhon Phanom Border (NPB) was for the trading purpose, showing 132 samples (34.29%). The tourists perceived the service as moderate, representing 3.27 in percentage and 0.16 in standard deviation. For the income, it showed that there are some factors such as objective factor (= 3.87, S.D.= 0.29), responsive factor (= 3.66 ,S.D.= 0.33), trust (= 3.57 ,S.D.= 0.32), knowing each other(= 2.80 ,S.D.= 0.32) and warranty (= 2.44 ,S.D.= 0.27). The results show that the Nongkhai Border (NB), most of the samples were 194 female tourists (50.40%), aged between 31 – 40 years. The samples were 187 tourists (48.60%), and the samples who had Bachelor Degree were 195 (50.60%). They approximately gained above 25, 001 Bath for monthly income. The 316 samples (82.10%) out of 297 samples. The 113 samples (29.40%) were traders. The reason the border service at Nongkhai Border (NB) was for the travelling purpose, showing 155 samples (40.30%). The tourists perceived the service as high, (= 3.76 ,S.D.= 0.16). In this regard, it showed that there are some factors such as objective factor (= 4.02 ,S.D.= 0.32), warranty (= 3.98,S.D.= 0.28), trust (= 3.87,S.D.= 0.29), responsive factor (= 3.53,S.D.= 0.29), knowing each other(= 3.37, S.D.= 0.36).

It is suggested that the tourists who had different ages, education background, monthly income, and different purposes in travelling showed no difference at 0.05 in statistical difference in border service use in Nakhon Phanom Border. However, the factors i.e. age and occupation within the same group showed statistical difference at 0.05 in border service use in Nakhon Phanom Border. For Nongkai Border, the tourists who had different ages, education background, monthly income, and different purposes in travelling showed no difference at 0.05 in statistical difference in border service use in Nongkai Border. However, the factors i.e. age and occupation within the same group showed statistical difference at 0.05 in border service use in Nongkai Border.

Keywords: Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge, Tourists behaviors

INTRODUCTION

Thailand and the Lao People's Democratic Republic's borders have been connected for a long time. It has been known that the two countries have been joining 'trade' and 'travel' for long time. It has also has an effect on transportation between these two countries and has been considered as 'Thai-Lao as neighbour' and have good relationships for long time including geography, society, culture and language, politic and economy, especially the transportation between Thai and Lao, travelling. Besides, with a 'history' that has been developed for long time, and with the closeness of Thailand and Lao. Their borders have been connected approximately 1.810 kilometres, and been connected to 11 provinces: Nong Khai, Mukdahan, Ubonrachathani, Nakhon Phanom, Loei, Nan, Phayao, Utaradit, Chiangrai, Pitsanulok, and Umnartcharoen. It has passed through 'border trade' in 36 points as they are called '36 permanent border service point', 2 temporary border service points', and 20 negotiating points. The transportation from Thailand to Lao can be done by private car, train, or transportation cars. Thus, there is a potential for many Thai tourists to travel in Lao. This is also supported by Thailand and Lao governments, in particular 'transportation business between Thailand and Lao.

The people from the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) countries such as Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, the People Republic of China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Vietnam are 240 million. They have their own identities in their society, and culture. From this reason, it has attracted the people to travel in GMS. In 1992, GMS countries have been offered helped from Asian Development Bank (ADB) to be able to cooperate in economic with the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS).

As above reasons, countries in this region tend to expand more trades into the region such as the Indonesia Malaysia Thailand Growth Triangle or IMT-GT, Great Mekong Basin Region or GSM comprising of 6 countries including China, Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. These economic cooperative groups have cooperated in trades, investments and transportation connection. Thailand has benefited from these kinds of

cooperation to expand trade into the region as well as expanding tourism industry in the provinces along the inter-connected transportation routes. Thailand is geographical center of South East Asia as it has borders with neighboring countries. Thailand can trade with 4 neighboring countries including Myanmar, Laos, Malaysia and Cambodia which share the border lines with 30 provinces of Thailand. This can enhance different forms of trade.

In term of tourism, these economic areas can attract tourists to experience the natures and the exotic cultures, which spot all over the provinces along Mekong River. These include nature, history, culture, tradition, life style of different ethnic groups. The rich resources will help promote Thailand becoming tourist hub of the region or becoming Indochina Gateway.

The other benefit of Thai government's open boarding point service of bordering provinces along Myanmar, Malaysia, Laos, and Cambodia is that it boosts tourism in the area. The number of tourists has increased. This encourages the Thai government to promote tourism in boarding points. As a result, Thailand has cooperated with Australia and Laos to construct the bridge across the longest river in South East Asia (about 4,000 km) in Nongkhai province. This river flows through many countries including China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. It is the first bridge crossing Mekong River, connecting Thailand and Laos. The bridge is called Thai-Laos Friendship Bridge. The bridge connects the transportation from Nongkhai to Vientiane. Besides, Thailand has constructed the third bridge crossing Mekong River in Nakorn Panom, which connected Thailand with Kam Muan of Laos. The bridge enhances the traveling between Nongkhai and Nakorn Panom of Thailand and Kam Muan of Laos with comfort. As a result, it boosts Thai cargo transportation as well as tourism.

The geographical advantage of Nongkhai and Nakorn Panom as a gateway for trade, investment and tourism results in the changes in society, economy, trade, and tourism of both provinces. Moreover, the openness, political stability, natural resources of Laos

supports the future forecast that there will be more development to support the economic and social growth as well as the growth in tourism. This will drive Thailand to become tourism hub in the Sub Mekong region or Indochina Gateway. These promising situations encouraged the researcher to conduct the research of The Comparison of Thai Tourists behaviors in choosing Thai boarding point services : Case study of Thai- Lao Bridge, Nongkhai and Nakorn Panom. The research aims to compare the tourist behavior in choosing boarding point services. The study result would identify the motivation, attitudes and behaviors which could be useful in tourism strategy to increase number of tourists in the provinces that have boarding point. The result of the study could be used to improve the service quality of the boarding points to meet the needs and satisfaction

OBJECTIVES/RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- (1) To investigate Thai tourists' behaviour of choosing border services in Nongkhai and Nakhon Phanom provinces
- (2) To study border services qualification in Nongkhai and Nakhon Phanom provinces (3) To compare the Thai tourists' goals of choosing border services in Nongkhai Border (NB) and Nakhon Phanom Border (NPB)
- (4) To compare qualification of border services between Nongkhai Border (NB) and Nakhon Phanom Border (NPB).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire was used as a main research instrument. It was used to collect the data on the perception of the 770 samples. The samples are all Thai tourists and use border services from both Nongkhai Border (385) and Nakhon Phanom Border (385). The convenience sampling was used a main method of data analysis. The collected data was analysed by using statistical package. Frequency, Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, and ANOVA (i.e. t-test, F-test)

FINDINGS

Summary of tourists' opinion on quality of boarding point service Nakornpanom province

Tourists' opinion on the service quality is average (= 3.27 ,S.D.= 0.16). When considered each area of service, the result can be summarized from high to low as follows.

Tangibility aspect (= 3.87,S.D.= 0.29) Response (= 3.66 ,S.D.= 0.33) Trust (= 3.57 ,S.D.= 0.32) Understanding (= 2.80 ,S.D.= 0.32) and Guarantee (= 2.44 ,S.D.= 0.27)

Nongkhai provice

Tourists' opinion on the service quality is high (= 3.76 ,S.D.= 0.16) When considered each area of service, the result can be summarized from high to low as follows.

Tangibility (= 4.02 ,S.D.= 0.32) Guarantee (= 3.98,S.D.= 0.28) Trust (= 3.87,S.D.= 0.29) Response (= 3.53,S.D.= 0.29) and understanding (= 3.37,S.D.= 0.36)

SUMMARY RESULTS ACCORDING TO THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

1.The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nakorn Panom of tourists with different genders in terms of response, understanding, tangibility have no differences with significant statistic at 0.05. The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nakorn Panom of tourists with different genders in terms of trust and guarantee are different with significant statistic at 0.05

2.The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nakorn Panom of tourists with different ages in terms of response, guarantee, and tangibility have no differences with significant statistic at 0.05. The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nakorn Panom of tourists with different ages in terms of trust and understanding are different with significant statistic at 0.05

3.The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nakorn Panom of tourists with different education

backgrounds in all aspects are different with significant statistic of 0.05

4.The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nakorn Panom of tourists with different average incomes in terms of understanding, guarantee and tangibility have no differences with significant statistic of 0.05. The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nakorn Panom of tourists with different average incomes in terms of trust and response are different with significant statistic of 0.05

5.The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nakorn Panom of tourists with different careers in terms of response and tangibility have no differences with significant statistic of 0.05. The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nakorn Panom of tourists with different careers in terms of trust, understanding and guarantee are different with significant statistic of 0.05

6.The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nakorn Panom of tourists with different traveling objectives in terms of response, understanding, and tangibility have no differences with significant statistic of 0.05. The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nakorn Panom of tourists with different traveling objectives in terms of trust and guarantee are different with significant statistic at 0.05 Nongkhai boarding point

1.The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nongkhai of tourists with different

genders in terms of trust, understanding, tangibility and guarantee have no differences with significant statistic of 0.05. The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nongkhai of tourists with different genders in terms of response are different with significant statistic of 0.05.

2.The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nongkhai of tourists with different ages in terms of trust, guarantee, and tangibility have no differences with significant statistic of 0.05. The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nongkhai of tourists with different ages in terms of response and understanding are different with significant statistic of 0.05

3.The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nongkhai of tourists with different education

backgrounds in terms of trust, response and guarantee have no difference with significant statistic of 0.05. The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nongkhai of tourists with different education backgrounds in terms of understanding and tangibility are different with significant statistic of 0.05.

4.The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nongkhai of tourists with different average incomes in terms of guarantee and trust have no differences with significant statistic of 0.05. The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nongkhai of tourists with different average incomes in terms of response, understanding and tangibility are different with significant statistic of 0.05

5.The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nongkhai of tourists with different careers in terms of trust and tangibility have no differences with significant statistic of 0.05. The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nongkhai of tourists with different careers in terms of response, understanding and guarantee are different with significant statistic of 0.05

6.The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nongkhai of tourists with different traveling objectives in terms of response and guarantee has no differences with significant statistic of 0.05. The behaviors in choosing boarding point in Nongkhai of tourists with different traveling objectives in terms of trust, understanding and tangibility are different with significant statistic at 0.05

DISCUSSIONS

1. Comparison of Thai tourist opinion on service quality of Thai boarding point : Case study of Thai-Lao friendship bridge in Nakorn Panom with different ages, genders, educations, average incomes, careers and traveling objectives.

Tourists with different genders, educations, average incomes and traveling objectives have no behavioral different in choosing boarding point in Nakorn Panom, with significant statistic of 0.05. The results are in line with the study of Anothai Mahamart et al.(2012), who studied the guidelines for potential and strategy development of service quality of Taksila Hotel, Tambol Talad, Mahasarakam province.

He found that the hotel's clients with different ages, genders, educations, and incomes have the similar opinion on service quality of the hotel with significant statistic of 0.05.

2. Comparison of Thai tourist opinion on service quality of Thai boarding point : Case study of Thai-Lao friendship bridge in Nongkhai with different ages, genders, educations, average incomes, careers and traveling objectives.

Tourists with different genders, educations, average incomes and traveling objectives have no behavioral different in choosing boarding point in Nongkhai, with significant statistic of 0.05. The results are in line with the study of Anothai Mahamart et al. (2012), who studied the guidelines for potential and strategy development of service quality of Taksila Hotel, Tambol Talad, Mahasarakam province. He found that the hotel's clients with different ages, genders, educations, and incomes have the similar opinion on service quality of the hotel with significant statistic of 0.05.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The scope of the study should focus on the service marketing strategy in order to improve service to response to the need of tourists.
2. The scope of the research content should include the study of the potential in officer performance development of both Nakornpanom and Nongkhai provinces in order to improve their performance.

RESEARCH LIMITATION

The researcher conducted the research under the title of The Comparison of Thai Tourists Behaviors in Choosing Thai Boarding Pont Services : Case Study of Thai-Lao Bridge, Nongkhai and Nakorn Panom 2012. The researcher found some limitations of data gathering, which can be summarized as follows:

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THE INFLUENCE OF A GREEN IMAGE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

Yusnita, Y¹, Yahaya Ibrahim² and Zainudin Awang³

^{1,2} Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin,

³ UniSZA International Centre, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia

Abstract

Tourism is currently one of the largest sectors in the world and has contributed to world economic growth. Malaysia, in recent times, has become one of the most visited countries in Southeast Asia. An increase of tourist arrivals (from both domestic and international visitors) has caused an increase in the number of accommodation that is available each year, and places the hotel industry as one of the most popular segments in the tourism industry. Since environmental awareness has been increasing across the world, a green image is seen to be an important aspect to be explored in the hotel industry in current times. Thus, the aim of this study is to examine the influence of a green image towards customer satisfaction and customer loyalty among a hotel's guests in the Malaysian hotel industry.

Keywords: Green Image, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Hotel Industry, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Asia. According to UNWTO (2014), international tourist arrivals to Asia and the Pacific increased by 6 percent to 248 million visitors in 2013 over the previous year. From this number, the Asia-Pacific region showed the highest increase of 6% compared to Europe and Africa that showed increases of 5%. As expected, Southeast Asia was fastest growing destination in the region and in the world for two consecutive years (2012 and 2013). Through this increment, this sector has the potential for infrastructure development and in providing sufficient employment opportunities to residents (UNWTO, 2014). However, since tourism involves the interaction between humans and the environment, the increase of tourist arrivals and tourism activities is seen to give an impact on the environment (Siti Nabiha et al., 2011).

According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (2015) and Zam Zuriyati et al. (2014), environmental issues has plagued Malaysia for

some time, which include water pollution, air pollution, waste disposal, climate change, global warming, deforestation and haze. According to Siti Nabiha et al. (2015), Malaysia still lack of tourism strategy in place at the national level; however, there are a few plans and policies that are relevant to a few national development plans namely the Five-Year Malaysia Plan, the National Tourism Policy and the National Ecotourism Plan. The 10th Malaysia Plan concentrated on the steps to solve global warming, environmental conservation and sustainability, while the 11th Malaysia Plan (2016-2020) will emphasise on proposing policies and regulations, human capital development and green technology investments. This plan will also enhance the country's economy through the cooperation from all agencies including the government as well as private and non-profit organizations. In this 11th Malaysia Plan, four focus areas were given priority, such as strengthening the resilience to climate change and natural disasters, enabling the environment for green development, adopting the

Corresponding Author: yusnitayusof@unisza.edu.my

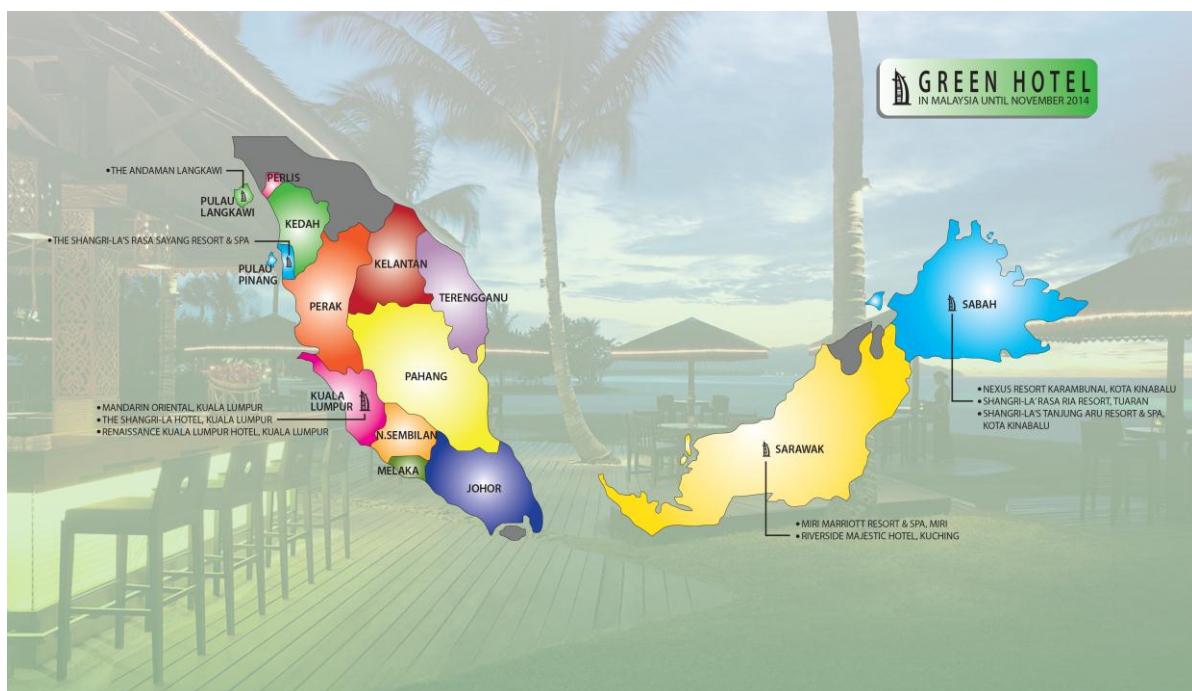
concept of sustainable consumption and production and conservation of natural resources for present and future generations (Economic Planning Unit, 2015).

According to Lita et al. (2014), attention to the environmental issues and business practices is more popular in developed countries compared to developing countries, particularly in the aspect of community awareness and government policies and regulation. This statement supported the research by Kang et al. (2012), which found that the world's leading hotels have taken their own initiative to invest in environmentally friendly practices a few years ago. Furthermore, according to Abdul Samad et al. (2008), hotels in Malaysia are more focused on facilities and services rather than environmental policies and practices. Based on previous research, a number of hotel management teams were hesitant to take the initiative in carrying out green practices in their hotel because they are not certain whether these provide value or not to the customers (Nor Azila and Kumar, 2014) and are uncertain of the need of becoming green (Smith and Perks, 2010).

Recently, research about image has become the focus among researchers as well as the management of organizations because it involves employee or customer behavior in making decisions (Han, Hsu

& Lee, 2009). However, until 2010, there has been no research focused on a green hotel's image from the perspective of hotel guests (Lee et al., 2010). Research by Bell (2008) indicates that there is also limited research linking green practices and hotel image in the hospitality sector.

Since the hotel industry makes a huge impact on the environment from the construction and daily operations which can bring about effects of climate change, it seems that this industry is an important one to be explored. Green hotels, also called eco-friendly hotels, ecologically friendly hotels or environmentally friendly hotels, are institutions that eagerly follow water and energy saving practices, solid waste reduction, and cost saving to help in protecting our earth (GHA, 2013). According to ASEAN (2013), a green hotel is an environmentally friendly hotel that practices energy conservation. This concept of hotel development is one of the initiatives made to protect and conserve the environment. From all the registered hotels with the Ministry of Tourism and Culture up until November 2014, only 10 of 1935 hotels were awarded as green hotels in Malaysia by ASEAN and this is illustrated in Figure 1.4. This number indicates there are still very few hotels that recognize the importance of utilizing green practices in their hotel and the need for green hotels is constantly increasing.



LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Lee et al. (2014), various definitions of brand image began over the last six decades through specific terminology. Initially, the concept of brand image was associated with the cognitive and effective perspective, then in the 1980s, the concepts of image related to the symbolic meaning of products. Beginning in the 1990s, service image was considered part of the brand image concept. However, the product image concept is now described as a separate term from brand image. The image concept of a firm has attracted increasing attention from both academia and industry, because it is believed to play an important role in customer's decision-making process (Han et al., 2009) and behavior (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Furthermore, image of the company plays a vital role in distinguishing it from another company (Jeong & Jang, 2010). According to Han et al. (2009), overall image refers to hotel customers' overall perception towards green hotel, formed by information and knowledge about green hotels and its attributes. Image gives an impact to the customer behavior in buying or consuming good and services (Kadampully & Suhartanto, 2003). Image also creates a first impression for the customer, thus an attractive image can create good word of mouth from previous customers and can attract new customers (Khan, 2013). Thus, a green image refers to the perception of the guest towards the green characteristics provided in the hotel. Since this research covers non-green hotels, a green hotel image is the perception of the guest towards the green attributes provided in the hotel as a whole. Echtner and Ritchie (1991) classified image into two dimensions, namely holistic and attributes. Holistic refers to the picturing of the phenomena as a whole in the individual's mind, while attributes refer to the facilities and physical environment that influence the phenomena. Thus, the attributes in this research focus on the perception of the customer towards physical facilities, interior design, price, the quality of the products provided and staff performance, while holistic is the perception of the customer towards a hotel's atmosphere, reputation, external appearance and hotel layout as suggested by Kandampully & Suhartanto (2000).

Customer satisfaction has been a popular topic in academic research, especially in marketing research since the initial study done by Cardozo (1965) on customer effort, expectations and satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is an essential factor to provide

revenues and profits and one of the critical components of the hotel industry's position of value to a guest (Maghzi, Abbaspour, Eskandarian, and Abdul Hamid, 2011). To ensure customer satisfaction is achieved, it is important to recognize and anticipate customer needs (Dominici and Guzzo, 2010). This statement is agreed by Ranjbarian et al. (2011) who states that customer satisfaction is related to the needs and expectations of the customers towards several factors, such as previous personal experience, well known products or what the company has promised and the price of the goods or service. Customers are satisfied if they have positive feelings that result from having received beyond what was expected, including the purchase decision and the needs associated with the purchase (Armstrong & Kotler, 1996; Wiele, Boselie & Hesselink, 2002; Akbar & Parvez, 2009). Customers will respond positively if the products and services meet or exceed their requirements. However, if their needs are not met, they will respond differently.

Since the cost of attracting new customers is higher than the cost of retaining the existing ones, in order to be successful managers must concentrate on retaining existing customers by implementing effective policies for customer satisfaction and loyalty (Dominici and Guzzo, 2010). Customer loyalty refers to the strength of the relationship between an individual's attitude towards product, brand, service, store or vendor and repeat patronage. According to Oliver (1999), customer loyalty consists of both attitudinal and behavioral commitment to the relationship, such as being price insensitive, giving positive word of mouth and repeat patronage. Attitudinal loyalty is closely related to the power of psychology and attitudes towards products or services offered at the green hotels. Customers who have high attitudinal loyalty will endure and resist attempts in contrary directions. It is likely to influence behavior among customers. According to Allen and Wilburn (2002), loyalty has two constructs namely affective loyalty and cognitive loyalty. Affective loyalty is based on emotions and interactions between people, while cognitive loyalty involves perception towards what is being offered such as price, accessibility and punctuality. Most hotels are now faced with the challenge of meeting and further exceeding these customer expectations to ensure repeat patronage, which is the bedrock of any business (Caruana, Money & Berthon, 2000). Although several factors have been reported as relevant for gaining customer loyalty, nonetheless,

customer satisfaction is highly recognized for its fundamental role (Jamal & Naser, 2002). According to Nurul Syaquirah and Putra Faizurrahman (2014), the success of the tourism industry, especially in the hotel sector, depends on the customer satisfaction. Moreover, an emotional link to customer loyalty is one of the key strengths of any green product (Hartmann & Ibanez, 2006). According to Nurul Syaquirah and Putra Faizurrahman (2014), one of the factors that influence customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the hotel industry is the perception towards physical aspects and tangible dimension, or more commonly known as image. An article reviewed by Cohen, Prayat and Moital (2014) on Customer Behavior literature published in three major tourism journal namely *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Tourism Management* and *Journal of Travel Research* from 2000 to 2012 reveals that from 519 articles, 117 article research on satisfaction, trust and loyalty. It is shows that, this kind of concepts is the leading compared to others. This means concept of satisfaction and loyalty is the most important conceptual dimensions of tourism customer behavior research.

Green hotels refer to properties that have programs or activities conducted by the management that are environmentally friendly, can save energy and water and can improve waste management (GHA, 2013; Alexander, 2002). According to Alexander (2002), by the efficient use of water, energy and materials, the green hotel can reduce cost and liabilities, receive higher returns with low-risk investments and expand profits. By relating with socio-economy elements, Kasim (2004) explains the operation of a green hotel should be in an accountable approach towards employees, society, local culture and environment, while from a business view, it is related to decision-making and green thinking. Wolff (2008) and Heisterkamp (2009) agree that consumers expect more by green hotels need to be more socially and environmentally responsible. According to Han, Hsu and Sheu (2010), eco-purchasing and recycling are also activities that can reduce negative impacts on the environment. This paper looks at the perceptions of the customer towards a non-green hotel; a non-green hotel refers to the hotel that has been registered with the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia, but has not been awarded as a green hotel by the ASEAN Tourism National Organization. However, this type of hotel has the probability of adopting a green image in their hotel even though not it has not been awarded

as a green hotel. Thus, this paper is to answer the two objectives as follows.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the level of green image in the hotel industry in Malaysian non-green hotels
2. To examine the influence of green image towards customer satisfaction and customer loyalty among a hotel's guests in the Malaysian non-green hotel industry

METHOD

Participants

Since this study involved hotel customers and the number of study population cannot be determined, the researcher used sample frame design as suggested by Burns and Bush (2014) named Confidence Interval Method. The sampling frame for this study was created based on the valuable questionnaires with the population (N) size of 932.

The calculated sample (n) size is between 96 and 384. However, as an additon to obtain an adequate and appropriate number of samples, the researcher also used the sampling size formula by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). By using this formula, the final number of respondents that are usable for analysis is 265 respondents.

Measures

This study involves three sections of questionnaire. For green image, the questions were adapted and modified from Kandampully & Suhartanto (2000). After having conducted the Exploratory Factor Analysis, the final number of items for this construct was 9 items. For the customer satisfaction construct, there were 14 items developed. The items were adapted from the questions that were modified by Skogland and Siguaw (2004).

While for the customer loyalty questions, this research referred to the questionnaire that was modified by Al-Rousan, M. Ramzi and Badaruddin (2010) and Skogland and Siguaw (2004) to ensure that the questionnaire is compatible with these studies, and consists of 8 questions.

All responses for all constructs were recorded on a 10-point Numerical Scale with 1 = “strongly disagree” and 10 = “strongly agree”. There are several reason why this research used a larger scale - the 10-point scale, which include to have more variance to determine the variable, to give a higher level of accuracy of measurement, to minimize the leniency problem, central tendency and the “halo effect” associated with the scales and also because it is suitable for advanced statistical analysis technique (Hill, Roche and Allen, 2007; Coelho & Esteves, 2007; Wittink and Bayer, 1994; Walker, 1994).

RESULTS

Based on demographic analysis, among the respondents were 44.9% male (119 respondents) and 55.1% female (146 respondents). The majority of respondents were teenagers, where 49.1% (130 respondents) were between 21 to 30 years oo age, followed by 24.5% (60 respondents) who were

between 31 to 40 years old, 13.6% (36 respondents) who were between 41 to 50 years of age, 9.8% (26 respondents) who were below 20 years of age, and the remaining 3% (8 respondents) who were aged between 51 to 60 years of age.

There are several reasons why the respondents stayed at the hotel. Most of them were travelling for relaxation (30.6%), while a number of others were for business purposes (18.1%). A total of 31 respondents were travelling for educational purposes such as attending a conference or meeting, etc (11.7%). The remaining balance of 18.1% were staying in a hotel for other purposes such as visiting friends or relatives, culture, fun, and sport.

Preliminary analyses

Table 1 Reliability Test

Dimension/Variable	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha (n=265)
Green Image	9	.963
Attributes	6	.946
Holistic	3	.926
Customer Satisfaction	14	.978
Cognitive	7	.965
Affective	7	.959
Customer Loyalty	8	.965
Attitudinal	5	.965
Behavioral	3	.916

To verify the reliability of the instrument for the variables green image, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, instrument reliability analysis was conducted. Based on Table 1, the three variables showed values of Cronbach's Alpha as above 0.90. Sekaran and Bougie (2010) and Zainudin (2015)

stated that values of Cronbach's Alpha that is more than 0.6 is acceptable for further investigation. This means all the variables involved have good value of reliability coefficient and are acceptable for further analysis.

Table 2 Normality Test

	Min	Max	Mean	Skewness	Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Error
Green Image	1.44	10.00	6.7466	-.418	.150	.130

Customer Satisfaction	1.43	10.00	6.9725	-.345	.150	-.233	.298
Customer Loyalty	1.00	10.00	6.7883	-.385	.150	.141	.298

Normality tests were conducted to determine whether the data was normally distributed or not. This procedure is a basic requirement for conducting inferential statistical analysis. From Table 2, the result of the skewness and kurtosis tests conducted shows that the value of skewness is -.418 and kurtosis is .130 for the variable of green image, the skewness and the kurtosis for the customer

Level of Green Image

Table 3 shows the mean value of green image in Malaysian non-green hotels. The values shown is from the perception of a customer towards the green image applied or used in the hotel they stayed at. The mean values for all items of green image is 6

satisfaction variable is -.345 and -.233 respectively, and the value of skewness is -.385 and the kurtosis value is .141 for the customer loyalty variable. This results of the normality tests show that all the variables are normally distributed. According to Zainudin (2015), the data is normally distributed if the skewness and kurtosis value is 1.0 or lower.

and above. Since this study used a 10-point scale, the results reveal that all the items in this study were at a good level (6 and above) when the mean value is between 5.51 to 7.75 (Rist and Allen, 2011).

Table 3 Level of Green Image

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation
Physical facilities	265	1	10	6.69	1.947
Interior design	265	1	10	6.68	1.964
The quality of the products provided	265	1	10	6.53	1.981
Staff performance	265	1	10	6.76	1.917
Hotel's atmosphere	265	1	10	6.65	2.010
Reputation	265	1	10	6.89	1.842
External appearance	265	1	10	6.75	1.969
Layout	265	1	10	6.99	2.015

Structural Model of Green Image, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty

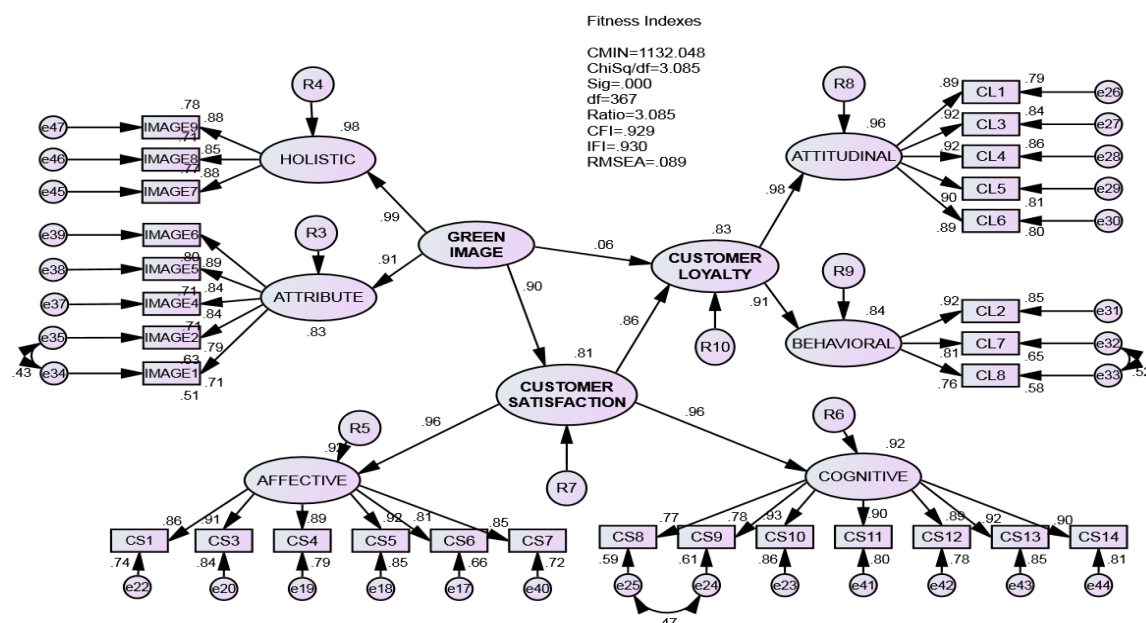


Figure 1 Structural Model of the Relationship between Green Image, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty

In Figure 1 the value of R^2 for the whole model is 0.86. As a conclusion, the model is good since it could capture 86% of the estimate on endogenous construct by including certain exogenous constructs in the model. At the same time, most of the fitness indexes are good since the value achieved the requirement level and the factor loading for all

items are good (above the required 0.6). This model indicates that 86% of the Customer Loyalty could be estimated by using two exogenous constructs in the model namely Green Image and Customer Satisfaction, while 81% of the Customer Satisfaction could be measured by using Green Image.

Table 4 The Path Regression Coefficient

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-Value	Result
Customer Loyalty	<---	Green Image	2.573	.175	14.696	.000	Significant

Table 5 The Path Regression Coefficient and its Significance

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-Value	Result
Customer Satisfaction	<---	Green Image	1.186	.083	14.367	.000	Significant
Customer Loyalty	<---	Green Image	0.173	.328	0.527	.598	Not significant
Customer Loyalty	<---	Customer Satisfaction	2.026	.274	7.401	.000	Significant

Table 5 and Table 6 show the significant values of the relationship between each variable in the model. Based on Table 5, the relationship between green

image and customer loyalty is significant. However, when customer satisfaction is entered into the model, the significant value of the relationship

changed. According to Table 6, there is a significant relationship between green image and customer satisfaction, and between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Meanwhile, the relationship between green image and customer loyalty is not significant.

From these results, it shows that customer satisfaction is a mediator in the relationship between green image and customer loyalty. Nevertheless, the effect of the relationship is still yet unknown. Thus, it is important to calculate the effect of the relationship using the standardized estimate.

Table 6 The standardized regression weights and its significance for each path

Construct	Path	Construct	Standardized Estimate	P-Value	Result
Customer Satisfaction	<---	Green Image	0.902	.000	Significant
Customer Loyalty	<---	Green Image	0.056	.598	Not Significant
Customer Loyalty	<---	Customer Satisfaction	0.859	.000	Significant

According to Table 6, after calculating the effect of the indirect relationship, ie. between green image to customer satisfaction, and between customer satisfaction to customer loyalty, the result shows that the effect of the indirect relationship (0.775) is greater than the effect of the relationship between green image and customer loyalty (0.56). Since the indirect effect is larger than the direct effect, this

means mediation occurs in the relationship and both of the indirect paths (GI to CS and CS to CL) are

significant. The type of mediation here is Complete Mediation since the Direct Effect is not significant after the mediator enters the model.

The Effect Size in a Mediation Model

The effect size is the amount of variance explained in the mediation model contributed by every single path (Zainudin, 2015). There are two steps that can be found in the model as follows:

R^2 measures the effect size of an individual path in the model (3paths)

- 1) R^2_{XM} represents squared partial correlation between Green Image and Customer Satisfaction (0.81)
- 2) R^2_{XY} denotes squared partial correlation between Green Image and Customer Loyalty (0.69)
- 3) $R^2_{MY.X}$ represents squared partial correlation between Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty
- 4) when the influence of Green Image is removed from the model ($0.83-0.69= 0.14$)

$$R^2_{MY.X} = 0.83 - 0.69 = 0.14$$

Since the effect size is 0.14, thus the conclusion from this measure is that the effect size of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty is a medium range because according to Cohen (1988), the effect size of mediator when the range of R^2 is

between 0.13 to 0.26. is categorized in medium range.

R^2 measures the size of the mediated effect of a mediator in the model

The formula is $= R^2_{MY} - (R^2_{XMY} - R^2_{XY})$, where:

- R^2_{XY} is the R2 for the model containing Green Image and Customer Loyalty only
- R^2_{MY} is the R2 for the model containing Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty only
- R^2_{XMY} is the R2 for the model containing Green Image, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty

$$0.86 - (0.83-0.69) = 0.72$$

Thus, based on Cohen (1988), the mediated effect size of the Customer Satisfaction (mediator) in the relationship between Green Image and Customer Loyalty is large (above 0.26).

CONCLUSION

Since the awareness towards the environment increases globally, the managers of the non-green hotels should improve the image of their hotel to the conducive environment and did not impact negatively on the environment in accordance with the requirements of conscious customers. Besides that, it will bring higher satisfaction and loyalty among customers. The results indicate that customer satisfaction is a mediator in the

relationship between green image and customer loyalty and the effect size of customer satisfaction is large. This means that customer satisfaction is an important thing to consider since having customers who are satisfied with the facilities and the environment provided by the hotel will increase their loyalty to the hotel and also increase their patronage.

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BACKPACKER TOURISM AND CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM: WAT THUNG SRI MUANG (UBONRATCHATHANI, THAILAND)

Patlapa Buddalerd

*Architectural Heritage Management and Tourism (International Program), Graduate School
Silpakorn University, Thailand*

Abstract

One aspect of backpacker tourism that has not been studied extensively, especially in Thailand, is the role of backpacker tourism in promoting cultural tourism as well as its impact on the integrity of cultural heritage. Ideally, cultural tourism is a type of sustainable tourism, which promotes the welfare of local community and the preservation of local culture. Likewise, the influence of the locals on the backpackers is inevitable, hence, affecting their way of thinking about traditional culture, beliefs, and practices. This study determined the role of backpackers in promoting cultural values, with a focus on Wat Thung Sri Muang Ubonratchathani province (Thailand). Cultural tourism is closely linked with the daily lives of the local people. Cultural properties, such as religious temples, are not merely built heritage objects; they also carry with their tangible and intangible heritage values that are strongly engrained into the lives of the local community. The aim of this study is to assess the role of backpacker tourism in sustaining the cultural heritage attributes of the study area - Wat Thung.

The population of respondents and participants in this study were divided into 3 groups, first is group of local community members, second group of backpacker tourists, and third group of operation/managers and relevant government officials. The members of the local community were residents of Ubonratchathani Province. The study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Data collection involved the use of questionnaire survey instruments containing both close-ended and open-ended questions.

Keywords: Backpacker tourism

INTRODUCTION

Backpacker Tourism is a part of sustainable tourism that tourists call themselves “backpackers”. They usually travel with their backpack. This backpacker tourism is a tour with affordable price and a long trip than any other tour. Visitors will gain experiences from tourist attractions, culture and mingle with tourist attractions or work during their trip. Visitors may stay with indigenous people or may stay in the hotel, which focused on the economy in the temple and community.

Backpacker tourism has recently become very popular not only in Thailand but also worldwide. The international growth and development of backpacker

tourism has strong implications to local economy and to the integrity of environment in general and to local culture in particular. This rapid development has generated some criticisms because of the potential negative effects, notably on the environment, cultural, economic and social aspects, that are often associated with backpackers’ behavior and activities (Ooi & Lang, 2010).

Within certain tourist destinations, backpacker enclaves have become important arenas for tourists where they can have social and cultural exchanges and identity formation. These enclaves provide economically ideal and homely accommodations that cater to the simple needs of backpackers. Because

backpackers strive to experience something different and personal during their travel, they often mingle with the locals and their families. Backpacker's enclaves are places where there are close interactions among tourists and local community (Richard & Wilson, 2008)

However, many backpackers may also be considered "eco-tourists" as they are attracted to ecotourism attractions, even though they do not purposely state it in their tourism plan and objectives. Given that sustainable tourism involves nature-based recreation and leisure, adventure ecotourism or backpacker tourism, especially in remote natural areas, has a key role in influencing, either in positive or negative way, the natural state of heritage attractions as well as the local cultural traditions. m. Many backpackers are interested in local culture including religious place, such as temple, where locals visit to pray or meditate. Thus, backpacker tourism to be considered a form of ecotourism should ensure that backpackers are responsible and aware of the conservation of the environment, cultural heritage, and the wellbeing of the local people (Sicrofit, Alos, & Shestha, 2003).

Backpacker tourism

Backpacker tourism is a form of tourism involving a group of travelers known as "backpackers" who are often associated with the backpacks that they carry in their travels. Backpackers constitute a small but significant segment of tourism market. They usually take longer trips than others tourists (Pearce, 1990). Some backpackers are educated, and they travel independently (Hottola, 2008). Backpackers have recreational interests similar to those of many others travelers, but they tend to spend more time within a particular destination and spread their expenditures at various sites that they visit (Markward, 2008), hence, contributing to low economic leakage and higher multiplier effect. Backpacker is known to be self-organized in their prolonged multiple-destination journey with flexible travel itinerary that extends beyond the usually cyclical holiday pattern (Serensen, 2003).

Backpacker Activity

Backpackers experience more of local culture than other visitors because they spend longer in the country. Backpackers striving to experience

something different often end up surrounded by the extended familiarity of home even in the most remote destinations. Backpacking provides more contact with local culture remains strong, indicating that backpackers are able to see themselves as experiencing more local culture primarily in relation to other visitors. (Richards&Willson, 2008)

According to Loker (1993) Backpacker are often keen to share the local lifestyle and Riley (1988) citing "meeting the people" Loker, Murphy & Pearce (1995) their recreational activities are likely to focus around nature (such as trekking), culture (village stays and more), or adventure (including river rafting or riding camels). Haigh (1995) adopted backpackers to travel more widely than other tourists, seeking unusual or out of the way locations and/or experiences. (Scheyvens, 2002)

In addition backpackers are looking for authentic and usual travel experiences. (Holding, 2009). They want to be a part of local and global culture. Backpacker, supposedly driven by desire to experience something different from their home environment, often end up surrounded by the extended familiarity of home even in the most remote and exotic destination. Backpackers also end up in fashionable destinations, rather than those places where they might expect to find 'real' local. (Richard&Wilson, 2008)

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To assess the role of backpacker tourism in sustaining the cultural heritage attributes of the study area - Wat Thung (Ubonratchathani ,Thailand)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Data collection involved the use of questionnaire survey instruments containing both close-ended and open-ended questions. Secondary data were obtained from published literature and government reports.

DATA COLLECTION

The population simple divided into 3 groups as followed first is group of local community numbers The members of the local community were residents of Ubonratchathani Province are 400 people, second group of backpacker were comprised of visitors of Wat Thung who had been to the Temple during the study period both Thai and international are 398 tourists . The result of both sizes was gauged using the Taro Yamane formula (Tanaree, 2014) and third group of operation/managers and relevant

government officials are 17 people consisted of selected tour operation/managers, relevant government officials who were willing to be interviewed and participate in the discussions about management and heritage tourism in the study area.

DATA ANALYSIS

Both primary and secondary data were statistically analyzed using the SPSS program. The mean or average values were presented in graphs and tables. A SWOT analysis was also performed to determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of backpacker tourism development at Wat Thung. The roles of the public and private sectors well as tourist and locals were also assessed. Data Processing and Research Analysis using both content analysis and descriptive statistic following the chart below.

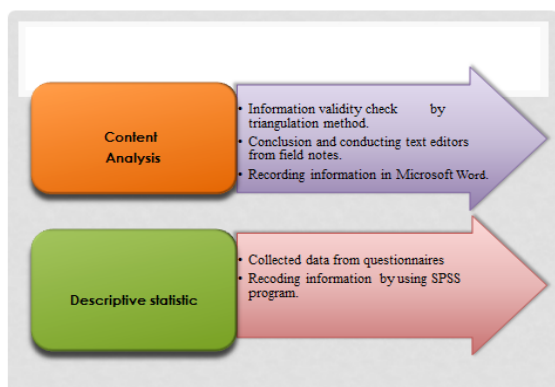


Chart 1: Data Processing and Research Analysis

Research tools used descriptive statistic questionnaire with guideline.

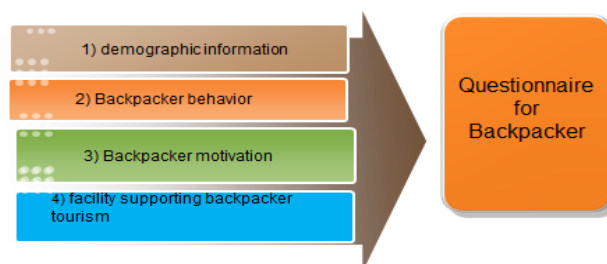


Chart 3: Backpacker tool used

The process is comprised of four major steps, namely, preparation, data collection, collecting primary data, summary of e primary data, and conclusion as shown below.

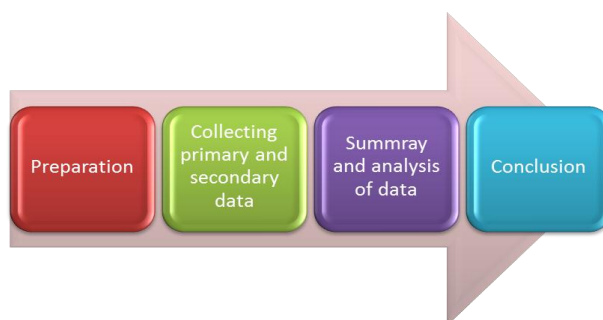


Chart 3: Data collection

Research tools used Semi-structure interview with interview guideline.

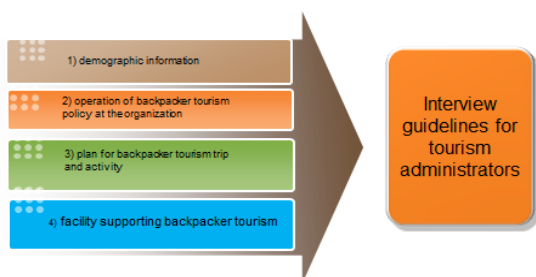


Chart 2: Tourism administrator's tool used

Environment inside the temple

The precinct where the Wat Thung is built is planted to many trees. The temple is divided into three zones; monastic zone, \ is Buddhist shrine zone, and crematory zone. The monastic zone is restricted to novices and monks. The Buddhist shrine zone includes the Sermon Hall, Tripataka library Hall, bell tower, visitor center, toilet, multipurpose building, and scripture educating building. Visitors are allowed to go to the consist Buddhist shrine zone. Although they can also visit monastic zone, they first have to ask the permission of the temple manager. The crematory zone consists of crematory and multipurpose building area.

Wat Thung is also known as a school of Barley Sanskrit, where monks and novice study s

Tourist attractions at Wat Thung

Wat Thung offer very interesting cultural and historical objects and materials that attract many visitors. Two buildings - In addition \the Phrabat hall and Tripataka library hall are listed by the Fine Arts Department as cultural heritage site. The Buddha images, both Pha cha yai Ong Ngen and Phachao Yai Sri Muang, are well known as the province important ancient images. . Recently, a community museum was \ opened, and there is no entrance fee.

Phrabat Hall or Buddha footprint hall

Art characteristic and architecture style of the building is mixed between Thai Siam in period if the King Rama III of Siam and Laos art and architecture style. Subsequently, it heaps up the soils at the courtyard of Phrabat hall to prevent flooding in the rainy season. It is created a dam glass wall, Phrabat hall. There are two layers around Phrabat with 23 m in width, 32 m in length and heap up as high as a tower pedestal. It was dug the soils from the north pool(The Tripataka Hall pool) which is 13 m. in width, 24 m. in length and 3 m. in depth. The roof decorating is mixed between both Thai and Laos. Door Panel and window panels were decorated with Thai wooden carving (Period of king Rama III art and Architecture style).The whole building was built with bricks and mortar, covered with plaster and decorated with stucco modeling. Four side of insider building walls were painted murals painting that showed local people along Mea Moon river way of life,

angels, and Buddha. This art style always apparent on Siam king Rama III art characteristic style.

Decorated by using Laos's art and architecture style. The **Phrabat hall** was listed of the Fine Arts

Tripataka Library Hall (Hor Trai)

Hor Trai one of the most beautiful buildings in Wat Thung (locally called Hor Trai Krang Nam Wat Thung Sri Muang). It is strongly promoted as the main travel attraction of Ubonratchathani province. The wooden building \stands in the middle of a man-made pond, called Sa Bok Khorani Sri Muang, which is full of colorful lotus plants . The building is considered with unique and outstanding artistic and architectural style. Plenty of visitors around Thailand and oversea have headed to visit the charming Hor Trai each year. (Pha-kru Chandee, 2013)



Figure 4: Tripataka Library or Hor Trai

Source: Patlapa buddalerd

Department as national historic site in 1985. (Wikipedia,2010)



Figure5: Phrabat Hall / moral painting inside the hall

Source: Phra-kroo Chandee

Phra Chao Yai Ong Ngen which was enshrined in Phrabath hall.The stature Buddha is an attitude of subduing Mara and covered with gold paint over two hundred years. Later it found out that the body was bronze. So, it is the source of fixing the puzzle what is actually the history. Therefore it is concluded that Phra Chao Yai Ong Ngen is the art of Rattanakosin period in the 24th century.



Figure 6 : Phra Chao Yai Ong Ngen

Source: Patlapa buddalerd

Festival and ceremony resource

Candle festival: Ubonratchathani candle festival is a famous festival in Thailand. The festival will be taking a place at the Thung Sri Muang Park. It is the biggest and most interesting festival in the province. There are a lot of visitors both in Thailand and oversea are headed to joy the festival. There will be traditional dancing parades and candle parades from each community the city and from other district of Ubonratchathani come to joy candle competition in the town too. There are two kind of candle pared that divided by design and decorating first, carving candle second, collage candle. Usually the candle will be decorated on big trailer. The decorating using traditional carver and special technique work on candle. Usually Wat Tung Sri Muang joyed for candle festival contest and won for award on 2007 over participating of local local community, related

sectors and opened wild for every visitor. After festival the candle will be present at the temple until next year festival.



Figure 7: Candle festival

Source: Phra-kroo Chandee

Mahachat Festival - It is called Boon Pa Wed in native language or Boon Maha Chard in Thai. The temple is held this festival annually during March every year. There are third parties to join such as the municipality and schools. Boon Maha Chard is very popular and important to local people. The event has Thet Mahachat, “Wetsandon Chadok” Sermon Ceremony and festive parades and processions through Ubon city. The elephant joins a parade as well. People, students, and government officials have joined the processions that parade around Ubon city. The monks give a sermon and there is the festival for several consecutive days, where visitors can attend the ceremony.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1. Travel motivation satisfaction

Components	Item	Satisfaction	
		SD	Result
Attraction at the temple	Phrabath Hall	0.66	G
	Tripataka Hall	0.65	G
	Phra chayai srimuang Hall	0.96	G
	Pracha yai ong ngern	0.86	P
	Mural painting	0.75	M
	Total	0.78	M
Festival	Candle festival	0.76	M
	Fire Floating festival	1.37	P
	Maha chart festival	0.76	M
	Community relation activity	0.79	M
	Total	0.92	G

Cultural value	Be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance	0.68	M
	Be outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history	0.78	M
	The building are beautiful	0.68	M
	Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement or land-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change	0.64	M
	Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared	0.65	G
	Represent a masterpiece of human creative genius	0.40	M
	Exhibit an important interchange of human values over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts	0.79	M
	Total	0.65	M

Table 2. Tourism industry management satisfaction

Components	Item	Satisfaction	
		SD	
	Tourist control entrance- exit	0.43	P
	Providing tourist information	0.43	P
	Official advised	0.46	P
	Total	0.44	P
	Public transportation	1.38	M
	Private vehicle	0.57	G
	Walking	0.76	M
	Total	0.90	M
	Friendly service and helpful	0.70	G
	Close to the community	0.73	G
	Conductive to learn traditional culture	0.53	G
	Comfortable	0.56	G
	Total	0.64	G
	Religious activities out of the temple	0.91	G
	Religious activities in the temple	0.60	G
	Have knowledge by participating and observing while the trip	0.69	G
	Have more good experience from	0.72	M
	Interesting	0.65	M
	Advisable to the site	0.76	M
	Attractiveness	0.71	M
	Total	0.72	M
	Traffic sign	0.63	P

	Travel sign	0.75	M
	Toilet	0.90	M
	Parking	0.72	M
	Tourist information	0.79	M
	Souvenir shop	0.83	M
	Food drink restaurant	0.70	M
	Tourist center	0.83	P
	Total	0.77	M
	Friendly	0.68	M
	Helpful	0.79	M
	Still keep the original way of life	0.72	M
	Total	0.73	M
	Taste of the food	0.92	M
	Reach to local taste	0.62	M
	Easy to find out	0.72	M
	Hygienic	0.65	M
	Total	0.73	M
	Internet accesses	0.75	M
	Cost of the trip	0.77	M
	Exposure to Buddhist	0.73	M
	Urban trip	0.67	M
	Safety	0.64	M
	Total	0.71	M

Table 3. Tour operation/managers, relevant government official's suggestion

Components	Item	N	%
	Equip with the entire tourism management.	3	5.00
	Promote community involvement in conservation.	5	9.00
	Arrange guides for tourists.	3	5.00
	Tourist information such as brochures.	2	3.00
	Set the regulations for visiting clearly.	2	3.00
	Promote cultural heritage and value of the temple .	5	9.00
	Improve the surrounding community to be appropriate. Harmony with eco-tourism.	1	200
	All sectors involved in the decision, focusing on cooperation.	8	14.00
	Improve landscape to be appropriate.	1	2.00
	Arrange the temple to be a place of ecotourism and recreational facility for the community.	1	2.00
	Share benefits fairly.	1	2.00
	Need external organizations to help give knowledge such as knowledge of welcome tourists activity and language.	6	11.00
	Do not try to change things too much.	2	3.00

Management	Improve things which already have and work well like existing traditional activity.	3	5.00
	Improve access to facilities such as map.	1	2.00
	Find budget support.	1	2.00
	The government has to support.	3	5.00
	Cleanliness	1	2.00
	Networking in tourism.	1	2.00
	Provide direct person responsible for the temple.	1	2.00
	Leaders focus and strengthened.	1	2.00
	Promote homestay accommodation.	1	2.00
	Focus on sufficiently developed.	1	2.00
	Build awareness, cherish the community culture.	1	2.00
	Total	55	100
Instructions to improve the backpacker travel experience	Arrange information for tourists.	3	8.00
	Have database about the temple.	3	8.00
	Arrange staff to guide tourists.	2	5.50
	Educate the local community about local arts and improve a positive attitude towards tourists.	6	17.00
	The local people are involved in tourism activities.	4	11.00
	Set tourist routes to be linked and interesting.	6	17.00
	Try to pull the local outstanding to present.	2	5.50
	The community members are friendly to tourists.	2	5.50
	Update religious activities and give tourists the opportunity to participate.	1	3.00
	Improve tourist routes to enter the community more to increase access to community resources.	4	11.00
	Improve the existing activities to more interesting.	2	5.50
	Increase tourism routes.	1	3.00
	Total	36	100
Role of community to maintain the local culture integrity	Educate the local people in the arts and culture and proud of it.	3	8.00
	Provide community involvement in management decisions and arrange activities.	8	20.00
	Create awareness of the arts and culture to the community.	2	5.00
	Raise awareness of the arts and culture to the community.	8	20.00
	Distribute income from tourism to the community.	4	10.00
	The community gives the importance of the temple.	3	7.5
	Create a positive attitude towards backpackers.	2	5.00
	The community members must act as a conservator and a good model.	5	12.50
	The community members should not see their personal benefit.	4	10.00
	Transfer knowledge to future generations.	1	2.50
	Total	40	100
	Follow the regulations of the temple and the community.	11	35.00

Role of backpackers to preserve cultural integrity	Accept the local culture.	10	32.00
	Studying tourist information before visiting.	3	10.00
	Dress appropriately.	3	10.00
	Transfer experience to others.	1	3.00
	Do not try to change and deviate the local culture.	3	10.00
	Total	31	100

Table 4. Stakeholder suggestion

Component	Item	N	%
Backpacker	Provide more tourist Information.	52	13.30
	Add advertising.	44	11.30
	Improve local themed restaurants.	12	3.10
	Improve parking lot.	20	5.10
	Improve Tripitaka Hall visiting management.	4	1.00
	Provide more promote in any souse.	12	3.10
	The service is not satisfied.	12	3.10
	Inadequate tourist signage.	24	6.00
	Finding more local cooperation and related stake holder.	12	3.10
	Improve quality souvenir product.	24	6.10
	Should link with other related tourist attractions .	24	6.10
	Grow more plants and trees around the area.	20	5.10
	Increase more signage and interpretation in English.	28	7.10
	Add the bin and make it align with the tourist attraction.	23	6.00
	Have a guided tour to provide information to tourists at tourist attraction	12	3.10
	Present about mural paintings.	4	1.00
	Cleanliness.	20	5.10
	Information leaflets to tourists.	12	3.10
	There is lines block tourist area around the pool.	20	5.10
	Local people should blend with the local culture.	12	3.10
	Total	391	100
	Landscape makes a nice visit.	112	14.00
	Signage and map.	80	10.00
	Organize pathway and grow more trees.	8	1.00
	Cleanliness.	96	12.00
	Keep original .	32	4.00
	More PR and presentation.	56	7.00
	Person responsible, guide and regular staff at the place and building.	56	7.00
	Traffic and parking.	32	4.0

Local community	Safety.	40	5.00
	Toilets.	28	3.50
	Tripitaka Hall with guano.	16	2.00
	Encourage the study of Dhamma.	8	1.00
	Accommodation.	12	1.50
	Add more activity on the merits.	52	6.50
	Provide interpretation on murals.	64	8.0
	Have a tourist center, sarong for rent, and souvenir shop.	32	4.0
	Make fencing look beautiful and attractive.	20	2.51
	People who do not answer this item.	52	6.87
	Total	796	100

CONCLUSION

The research show that backpacker characteristic, backpacker motivation that provided into two components first, attraction second, festival, Moreover backpacker satisfaction tourism management industry and cultural heritage value, recommendation of both group of government official and non-government official both in and outside Ubonratchathani province including related recommendation of both local communities and backpackers. The results of the research will lead to the backpacker development plan that comply with the National Tourism Development Plan No. 11 (2012-2016) and the needed of all stake holder under the constraints of limited resources for their upmost benefit and sustainable development in the future.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the information by previously discussed above, section of the government and entrepreneurs in business should promote backpacker tourism by following strategies plan. The Strategic plan for backpackers and sustainable tourism of Wat Thung, have divided into 4 strategies. First, strategic development of tourism to be suitable and attractive for backpackers, second, strategy to raise awareness on the conservation of cultural heritage, arts, traditions and local wisdom, third, Strategy for stimulating economic equity, forth, strategy to develop community under efficiency economic to promote backpacker tourism.

Strategy 1 Tourism development for attracting backpackers

Tactic 1: To use the temple areas for backpacker tourism and tourism-related

Tactic 2: Environmental management in the temple

Strategy 2 Awareness rising on conservation of cultural heritage, cultural traditions and local wisdom

Tactic 1: To raise awareness.

Tactic 2: To develop the mental maturity.

Tactic 3: To preserve and promote culture for backpacker tourism

Strategy 3 Stimulating local economy

Tactic 1: To develop souvenirs and tourism products.

Tactic 2: Tourism management

Tactic 3: Marketing management

Strategy 4 Development of community based on sufficiency economy principle for sustainable tourism development

Tactic 1: To strengthen the community.

Tactic 2: To distribution of income to local community.

Tactic 3: To promote local authorities to raise awareness about the importance of the cultural heritage of the locality.

Tactic 4: To create opportunities for the temple to spread Buddhism into the community and tourists sectors.

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EXPERIENTIAL QUALITY, AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT, ZOO IMAGE, NOVELTY-SEEKING, EXPERIENTIAL SATISFACTION AND REVISIT INTENTIONS

Hung-Che Wu¹, Wi-En Hong¹, Yi-Chang Chen¹, Tsung-Pao Wu¹

¹ *Nanfang College of Sun Yat-sen University, China*

Abstract

This study aims to examine the relationships among experiential quality, affective experience, novelty-seeking, experiential satisfaction and revisit intentions. Based on an extensive literature review and empirical research, the effects of experiential quality, affective commitment, zoo image, novelty-seeking, experiential satisfaction on revisit intentions using a multi-dimensional mode as a framework are proposed to facilitate research into the dynamics of the tourism industry and offer guidelines for practitioners as they constantly strive to provide the very best experience for their visitors.

Keywords: experiential quality, experiential satisfaction, switching intention, dimensions of experiential quality.

INTRODUCTION

Morgan and Hodgkinson (1999) consider a zoo to be the most important source of contact between visitors and animals in modern society. Therefore, it is necessary to understand visitors' attitudes towards zoos because zoos that are perceived positively may receive more visitors and thus have more opportunities to satisfy their mission to promote environmental education and global conservation (Davey, 2007).

Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990) have confirmed that quality is positively influenced by affective commitment under varying contexts. Oliver (1999) shows that satisfaction is an antecedent of affective commitment. Gundlach, Achrol, and Mentzer (1995) propose that affective commitment is the desire to maintain a relationship and is based on revisit intentions. Several studies (Kao, Huang, & Wu, 2008; Wu, Li, & Li, 2016) note that experiential quality plays a critical role in increasing perceived levels of experiential satisfaction. Empirical evidence from several marketing studies indicates that perceived experiential quality has a positive impact on the formation of visitors' perceptions of image, which in turn results in revisit intentions via experiential satisfaction (Wu & Li, 2014; Wu, Li, & Li, 2014).

Assaker, Vinzi, and O'Connor (2011) propose that novelty-seeking has a positive influence on satisfaction. Jang and Feng (2007) indicate that novelty-seeking has a negative influence on revisit intentions. However, few studies examine experiential quality for the tourism industry, including diverse psychological and physical aspects, and the simultaneous links among experiential quality, affective commitment, image, novelty-seeking, experiential satisfaction and revisit intentions from the perspective of zoo visitors. Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine the relationship between revisit intentions of visitors and the other higher order constructs: experiential quality, affective commitment, image, novelty-seeking and experiential satisfaction as perceived by zoo visitors.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Service quality

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) define service quality as the ability of the organization to meet or exceed customer expectations. The model includes five dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and

empathy. However, many researchers have been skeptical about whether these dimensions are applicable when evaluating service quality in other service industries (Cronin & Taylor 1992). Kang and James (2004) argue that SERVQUAL focuses more on the service delivery process than on other attributes of service, such as service-encounter outcomes (i.e. technical dimensions). In other words, the SERVQUAL measurement does not adequately explain a technical attribute of service. A performance-based model of service quality (SERVPERF) is developed by Cronin and Taylor (1992). SERVPERF measures service quality based only on the customer perception of the performance of a service provider's attitude-based (Cronin & Taylor 1994). However, Nadiri and Hussain (2005) have found that SERVPERF cannot form its five assumed dimensions in the service industry.

Experiential quality

Lemke, Clark, and Wilson (2011) define experiential quality as a perceived judgment about the excellence or superiority of the visitor experience. In general, experiential quality is subjective in terms of measurement while service quality is objective. The evaluation of experiential quality tends to be holistic/gestalt rather than attribute-based, and the focus of evaluation is on self (internal) but not on service environment (external) (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). In the tourism context, service quality refers to service performance at the attribute level. In contrast, experiential quality refers to the psychological outcome resulting from visitor participation in tourism activities. The former has been defined as the quality of the attributes of a service which are under the control of a supplier, while the later involves not only the attributes provided by a supplier but also the attributes brought to the opportunity by the visitor (Chen & Chen, 2010). Lemke et al., (2011) show that experiential quality has a stronger connection between visitors and attractions than that of product quality and service quality alone.

Affective commitment

Gilliland and Bello (2002) define affective commitment as a state of attachment to a partner

expressed as a feeling of allegiance and faithfulness. In this study, visitors' affective commitment has been defined as a psychological state that relates to a visitor's intention to develop and maintain a stable and durable relationship arising from needs, wants and obligations (Bansal, Irving, & Taylor, 2004). Malhotra and Mukherjee (2003) indicate that affective commitment has been found to be a predictor of quality. Bansal and Voyer (2000) consider affective commitment as one of the positive outcomes generating from internal satisfaction. Morgan and Hunt (1994) have found that affective commitment completely mediates the relationship between consumers' evaluations of background variables and revisit intentions. However, the interrelationships among affective commitment, quality, satisfaction and revisit intentions perceived by visitors remain scarce in a zoo context.

Zoo image

Barich and Kotler (1991) and Barich and Srinivasan (1993) describe a corporate image as the impressions, beliefs, and feelings that individuals have about the organization. However, the definition of zoo image remains unexplored and unclear. In this study, zoo image is defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas, or impressions that a visitor has of a zoo (Crompton, 1979; Loureiro & González, 2008). In other words, zoo image is considered as the result of how the visitor perceives the zoo or, in other words, their vision of the zoo.

Wu and Li (2014) and Wu et al. (2014) propose that experiential quality positively influences experiential satisfaction through image. Also, those authors argue that image plays a critical role in increasing visitors' revisit intentions. Despite demonstration of the link between perceived zoo image and visitors' experiences in various other sectors, deriving logic to connect all segments is difficult. Accordingly, this study extends and adopts the concept of means-end theory through demonstrating the relationships among image, experiential quality, experiential satisfaction and revisit intentions, specifically for the zoo sector.

Novelty-seeking

Novelty-seeking theory provides a stronger theoretical foundation in explaining destination choice behavior (Bello & Etzel, 1985). Pearson (1970) refers to novelty as the degree of contrast between present perception and past experience, making it the opposite of familiarity. From one perspective of the definition, it is possible to understand that visitors want to experience something novel through their travel. Based on the aforementioned statements, novelty-seeking is the central component of travel motivation and influences visitors' decision-making process (Crompton, 1979; Petrick, 2002). Because novelty-seeking is an affective state, it is believed that visitors' perceived quality can have a significant influence on their novelty (Chua, Lee, Goh, & Han, 2015). Assaker et al. (2011) propose that novelty-seeking has a positive influence on satisfaction. If visitors seek novelty and the experience meets or exceeds their expectations, they will be satisfied.

Experiential satisfaction

According to Kao et al. (2008), experiential satisfaction derives from the concept of service satisfaction, though it extends beyond service satisfaction in that it focuses on consumers' overall evaluation of their experiences after consumption. In this study, experiential satisfaction is defined as a visitor's overall satisfaction with the visit experienced at a zoo, as proposed by Chen and Chen (2010). From an experiential perspective, experiential satisfaction reflects the satisfaction experienced from the service content associated with a specific transaction. Visitors compare their experiences with their prior expectations, which cause positive or negative disconfirmation. The emotional responses resulting from positive or negative disconfirmation form the basis for visitor satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Bigne, Andreu, & Gnoth, 2005).

Jang and Feng (2007, p. 580) propose that "to understand why visitors make repeat visits, many studies have focused on the antecedents of destination revisit intention in recent years" including satisfaction (e.g. Yuksel, 2001). One

dominant predictor of repeat business or intention to revisit is satisfaction (Kim, Goh, & Yuan, 2010; Wu & Li, 2014). According to Kim, Kim and Goh (2011), satisfaction is a defining component in determining if a customer will revisit a destination or repeat a purchase. However, the relationship between experiential satisfaction and revisit intentions remains scarce in the tourism industry (Kim, Duncan, & Chung, 2015; Wu et al., 2014).

Revisit intentions

The concept of revisit intentions derives from behavioral intentions. Oliver (1997) defines behavioral intentions (e.g., repurchase and word-of-mouth intentions) as "a stated likelihood to engage in a behavior" (p. 28). The revisit intentions of visitors to a destination may be affected by their performances at the destination, as well as by the promotional efforts and the spreading news of new attractions at the destination (Aziz, Ariffin, Omar, & Evin, 2012). Revisit intentions have been considered to be an extension of satisfaction rather than an initiator of revisit decision-making process (Um, Chon, & Ro, 2006). Tomas, Scott, and Crompton (2002) examine the relationships of quality, satisfaction, and future intention to visit among visitors to a zoo, finding that intentions to revisit or to recommend it to others are based on quality delivery, recreational benefits, and overall satisfaction.

RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Malhotra and Mukherjee (2003) indicate that affective commitment displays a significant positive influence on quality. Satisfaction is an antecedent to affective commitment (Oliver, 1999). In support of this view, Bansal et al. (2004) argue that the stronger the satisfaction, the stronger the commitment in consumer services. Lai (2015) argues that satisfaction positively influences affective commitment. Several studies have reported that affective commitment is a determinant of revisit intentions. Iglesias, Singh, and Batista-Foguet (2011) note that affective commitment has been considered to be a determinant of revisit intentions. The following hypotheses are therefore proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Affective commitment has a positive effect on experiential quality.

Hypothesis 2: Experiential satisfaction has a positive effect on affective commitment.

Hypothesis 3: Affective commitment has a positive effect on revisit intentions.

Customers' evaluation of quality represents another important factor in their satisfaction (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehman, 1994). Previous studies have tended to focus exclusively on the quality of products or services (Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha, & Bryant, 1996), whereas this study considers experiences and proposes that experiential quality results in experiential satisfaction. According to Juaneda (1996), visitors' positive opinions about their holidays are likely to increase the probability of their intention and willingness to revisit. Likewise, when visitors have a more enjoyable experience than expected, they are more likely to revisit in the future than go to other tourism destinations (Ross, 1993). Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 4: Experiential quality has a positive effect on experiential satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5: Experiential satisfaction has a positive effect on revisit intentions.

Several researchers propose that quality has a positive effect on image (Balmer, 2001; Brodie, Whittome, & Brush, 2009; Kayaman & Arasli, 2007). Image has been considered to have a positive effect on satisfaction judgment. When customers are satisfied with the services rendered, their attitude toward the organization is improved. This attitude will then affect the customer's satisfaction with the organization (Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998). Several studies reveal that the image of a visitor attraction significantly affects revisit intentions (Choi, Tkachenko, & Sil, 2011; Lee, Scott, & Kim, 2008; Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly, & Luk, 2008). Namely, visitors who have high evaluations of a visitor attraction where they have desirable emotion find a match in self-congruity, or a favorable overall impression, and they would be disposed to visit or revisit the

destination (Kim & Lee, 2015). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 6: Experiential quality has a positive effect on zoo image.

Hypothesis 7: Zoo image has a positive effect on experiential satisfaction.

Hypothesis 8: Zoo image has a positive effect on revisit intentions.

Novelty-seeking has a negative influence on satisfaction (Assaker et al., 2011). If visitors seek novelty and the experience meets or exceeds their expectations, they will be dissatisfied. On the other hand, one of major antecedents of revisit intentions is novelty-seeking (Jang & Feng, 2007). Novelty-seeking has become the powerful factor that is found to negatively affect revisit intentions of the visitors (Haque & Khan, 2013; Jang & Feng, 2007). As a consequence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 9: Novelty-seeking has a negative effect on experiential satisfaction.

Hypothesis 10: Novelty-seeking has a negative effect on revisit intentions.

Figure 1 indicates the hypotheses to test each path based on the conceptual research model.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire and pre-test

In this study, each construct is measured using multi-measurement items because a single item

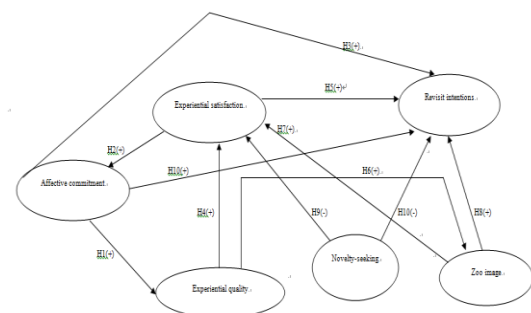


Figure 1. A conceptual research model.

may lead to a high measurement error rate (Churchill, 1979). In this study, three to five items are adopted to measure each construct (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Crompton & Love, 1995). Three questions from the study of Wu and Li (2014) are designed to measure experiential quality. Based on the study of Lai (2015), three items are developed to assess affective commitment. Three items based on the study of Wu et al. (2014) are developed to assess experiential quality. Four items are used to measure novelty-seeking based on the study of Toyama and Yamad (2012). Three questions from the studies of Tsai, Lee, and Pan (2015) and Wu and Li (2014) are developed to assess zoo image. Five items are used to measure revisit intentions based on the study of Tosun, Dedeoglu, and Fyall (2015). All of the construct items are shown in the appendix.

This study will initially develop a 44-item questionnaire. To confirm the content validity of the questionnaire, a discussion will be held with three zoo managers, four professionals, and six assistant and associate professors from China, all of whom specialized in the tourism industry. They will be asked whether the items are appropriate for the questionnaire. The items rate important (3), very important (4), or extremely important (5) by at least 90% of professionals and professors. The survey will also include some demographic questions that are consistent with previous studies on social and human behaviour. A seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) is used for all construct items. Seven-point Likert items have been shown to be more accurate, easier to use, and a better reflection of a respondent's true evaluation. In light of all these advantages, even when compared to higher-order items, seven-point items appear to be the best solution for questionnaires such as those used in usability evaluations. Whether usability practitioners are developing a new summative scale, a satisfaction survey, or a simple one-item post-test evaluation item it would serve them well to use a seven-point rather than a five-point scale (Finstad, 2010). The original question items are written in English; however, a bilingual expert is invited to translate them into Chinese to ensure the validity of the questionnaire.

Sample and data collection

Due to limited time and manpower, data will be collected using convenience sampling of visitors, aged over 18 years, who complete visiting the Beijing Zoo between June 2 and August 2, 2016. Cooper and Emory (1995) argue that the obvious advantages of adopting convenience sampling are low cost and save time. Convenience sampling is most commonly used technique because it is the best way of obtaining effective information fast. Although useful applications of the convenience sampling technique are somewhat limited, the sample can deliver accurate results when the population is homogeneous (Starmass, 2007).

The Beijing Zoo is the largest zoo in China and one of the most famous zoos all over the world (Asiavtour.com, 2016). It is located in the Xicheng District (2km west of Xizhimen subway station), next to the Beijing Exhibition Hall. The zoo occupies an area of 89 hectares, including 5.6 hectares of lakes and ponds. This ground includes a diverse collection of animals, a number of exhibition halls and some sites of historical interest. It is one of the oldest zoos and now the biggest zoo in China with the largest animal number of species (China Highlights, 2015).

The survey administrators will be five undergraduate student helpers who understand the purpose of the study and have been trained in the use of the questionnaire. After the respondents are willing to respond to the questionnaire, they will be given the questionnaires to fill in. The questionnaire is self-completed by the visitors, with assistance available if required. The respondents will be required to complete and return the questionnaire to the surveyors around each exit of this visitor attraction. The reason for choosing Beijing Zoo for sample collection is that the number of visitors is large and it is suitable for measuring the zoo visitors' perceptions of experiential quality, affective commitment, image, novelty-seeking, experiential satisfaction, and revisit intentions, as suggested by several researchers (China Highlights, 2015; Peng, Jiang, Liu, Huang, Zhang, & Wang, 2001). To ensure confidentiality, the names of study participants will not be required and the surveyors will ensure that

all survey respondents' responses would remain completely confidential and anonymous. The participation in this study is voluntary. In order to ensure a high response rate, souvenirs will be prepared and given to respondents upon completion.

DISCUSSIONS

This study examines the theoretical concepts of experiential quality, affective commitment, novelty-seeking, image, experiential satisfaction and revisit intentions and their interacting relationships in the zoo setting. The proposed hypothetical model is developed for the further research on the Beijing Zoo. A better understand of the relationships among experiential quality, affective commitment, novelty-seeking, image, experiential satisfaction and revisit intentions in the zoo may help zoo management to retain its success and therefore receives more contributions to the tourism industry in China. This proposed model in this study is still on the early development stage and needs to be enriched. In order to revise this model and apply it in the zoo setting, further quantitative research will be performed to evaluate validity and reliability of the model. In the proposed model, experiential satisfaction will positively influence affective commitment, which in turn, results in experiential quality. Also, experiential quality positively affects zoo image. Moreover, experiential quality and zoo image positively influence experiential satisfaction while novelty-seeking negatively influences experiential satisfaction. Besides, affective commitment, zoo image and experiential satisfaction positively influence revisit intentions while novelty-seeking negatively influences revisit intentions.

APPENDIX

Scaled items

Experiential quality

EQ1. I believe that visiting this zoo is going to provide the visitor with an interestingly educational and instructive experience.

EQ2. The quality of this zoo could be considered superior when compared to other zoos.
EQ3. Visiting this zoo is a pleasant experience.

Affective commitment

AC1. I feel a strong sense of identification with this zoo.
AC2. I feel emotionally attached to this zoo.
AC3. This zoo has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

Zoo image

ZI1. This zoo provides good service.
ZI2. This zoo is big and spacious.
ZI3. This zoo has an exciting atmosphere.

Novelty-seeking

NS1. This zoo provides me with an unusual experience.
NS2. This zoo provides me with a new experience.
NS3. This zoo provides me with a new discovery.
NS4. *This zoo* is new for me.

Experiential satisfaction

ES1. Visiting this zoo goes beyond my expectations.
ES2. I really like this trip to this zoo.
ES3. It is worthwhile to be in this zoo.

Revisit intentions

RI1. I would like to revisit this zoo in the near future.
RI2. If I had to decide again, I would choose this zoo again.
RI3. I would come back to this zoo in the future.
RI4. I would visit this zoo more frequently.
RI5. This zoo would be my first choice over other attractions.

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PAPER TITLE: SCANNING THE NUANCED DIMENSIONS OF GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL AS PRIME CUSTOMER RETENTION STRATEGY IN INDIAN TRAVEL INSURANCE INDUSTRY

Mary Jeniffer. S ¹ and Anu Chandran ²

^{1,2}Department of Tourism Studies, Pondicherry University, Puducherry - 605001, South India.

Abstract

Travel Insurance as an ancillary service is emerging as the buzz word in the outbound tourism sector. It is being realized as a dire need, keeping in view the uncertainties associated with modern day travel. The paradigm change in the travel industry shall be captured in this work as the accent is increasingly laid on people centric business approaches wherein the policyholder is at the focal point. The present work probes the regulations in place in the current perspective in the travel insurance business to protect the interests of both insurers and the insured which also focus on customer retention. Presently, the travel insurance market, with an immense pool of transactions and huge customer size faces lot of challenges, particularly the policyholders' grievances. Across all corporate entities there is a drastic improvement in the customer service culture, albeit it leaves much to be desired. Settling of claims at a fast pace is the sure shot to customer retention. A perceptible development has risen in the Indian insurance industry during the last few decades with the emergence of the institution of ombudsman set up by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA). The 'Insurance Ombudsman' is engaged to receive and consider complaints from any tourist who has grievance against a travel insurance product of a company; to handle issues at appropriate time such as claim settlement to be operated in a transparent mode and initiation of user friendly process for the customers while filing complaints related to travel insurance. This study focuses on customer grievance redressal mechanisms in vogue as regards rendering travel insurance schemes and services with the scrutiny by the insurance ombudsman at the time of dispute, as a customer retention strategy. In fact, recently, travel insurance industry has seen a remarkable growth both in the number of policies as well as the premium incomes of travel insurance. The intensity of this growth has brought to fore large number of consumer complaints and grievances. Therefore, it may be construed that each travel insurance company has to devise an in-house department exclusively for customer grievance redressal to accentuate customer retention. This explorative work in a qualitative mode makes a critical analysis on the contemporary practices and propositions.

Keywords: Insurance Ombudsman, Customer Grievance Redressal, Retention Strategies, Complaints and Grievances, Travel Insurance.

INTRODUCTION

The Travel Insurance sector, globally, in the 21st century is cruising remarkably amidst enormous challenges arising from intense competition, rising regulatory compliance and growing payouts due to fraud and natural disasters while traveling, especially overseas. Considered among the fastest growing industries, travel insurance industry of India has a number of license holders operating business in this sector. Travel insurance is dealing with vast numbers of customer grievance redressal issues that have a

profound impact on accentuating travel insurance business. With an increased usage of information technology and its allied services, there have been better improvements in the field of dealing with customer related issues for retaining customers. Across all corporate entities there is a vast improvement in the customer service culture and there is still a lot to be desired in achieving fool proof status in this matter. Even though the Ombudsman's office can operate within certain pre-defined set boundaries and limitations, one should see that the institution has contributed a lot in the field as a

crucial consultant nurturing the trends of growing customer satisfaction in travel insurance sector. Earlier, grievances filed by the customers were treated as definitive cases and some kind of crafted remedies were suggested, but with the changing environment, increasing competition and high level of customers' awareness in travel insurance sector, now grievances are not treated as particular events. In order to gain good reputation in the market, cause and effect analyses of the grievances are undertaken not only as a corrective step but also as a preventive step. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 is one of such examples that are to be treated as a milestone in the history of socio-economic legislation to protect the interests and bring in stability as regards respecting the consumers' rights in India. As a matter of fact, insurance companies have recognized the need to handle the customers, instilling confidence in them through appropriate measures giving accent to addressing their grievances swiftly and professionally. This has become the cornerstone of the customer relationship strategies devised by the insurance industry.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The travel insurance industry in India is advancing at a staggering pace and underpins the potential utilization of novel advancements pertaining to the setting up of customer grievance redressal systems in a full-fledged manner by subscribing to the major transitions as it proceeds towards adoption of registering complaints directly via online process as a technology determined initiative for customer satisfaction in travel insurance business. It is the need of the hour to assess the trends and practices with respect to the progressive trends and of customer retention strategies in Indian travel insurance industry. By implementing appropriate operations in sorting out complaints efficiently, customers are motivated to purchase travel insurance which in turn propels volume of sales. In this backdrop, a study on the strands of customer redressal schemes that can catapult the retention strategies in the insurance sector of India can result in a win-win situation for the travelers as well as the insurance companies.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) have been established to regulate the business of travel insurance in India. While framing the regulations for travel insurance, the authority keeps in mind the primary objectives of protecting the interests of and secure fair treatment to the insured (consumers). Consistent with this, the authority has set up Grievances Redressal Cell and tries to ensure speedy redressal of the complaints received from the insured to retain customers. Tourists (the insured) who have complaints against insurers are required to first approach the Grievance Complaints Cell of the concerned insurer (the insurance companies). If they do not receive a response of the company, they may approach the Grievance Cell of the IRDA. The scant research works in the area have attempted to unveil the issues hovering around customer relationship management in the insurance sector of India. No study has gauged the dynamics of grievance settlement mechanisms exclusively. In this context, the present study has been undertaken to fill up the gap.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study has been conducted with the broad objective of unraveling the significance of customer redressal approaches as a productive retention strategy in the Indian Travel Insurance Industry.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- (a) To examine the practices in vogue as regards customer grievance redressal systems in the travel insurance business in India.
- (b) To analyze the operational performance of grievance settlement processes and procedures for the insured.
- (c) To study the role of the Ombudsman in Indian travel insurance industry.
- (d) To envisage a model to throw insights to connect between the efficacy of the redressal systems and the retention strategies.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Methodology describes the research route to be followed, the instruments to be used, universe and

sample of the study for the data to be collected, the tools of analysis used and pattern of deducing conclusions. Explorative method of study has been employed for presenting the challenges and intricacies related to the progressive trends and nuanced dimensions of customer redressal practices and policies as an utmost important retention strategy in Indian travel insurance industry. Delphi Technique has been adopted to collect data. The Panel constituted experts and practitioners in the travel insurance sector. Personal interviews were conducted and in addition responses were collected over phone and e-mail.

DATA COLLECTION

The data was compiled through direct interviews with experts (practitioners) from the industry sector and various stakeholders of insurance industry dealing with travel insurance in particular. Secondary data was collected from documents and records of tour and travel companies offering the travel insurance policies, journals, brochures, periodicals, insurance blogs, and websites. The relevant secondary data has been collected through the data bases of Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India (IRDA) websites, travel insurance companies, various reports, dossiers, and other studies.

LITERATURE SCAN

A considerable amount of research has been done on the operations and performance of insurance industry in India, albeit limited in the realm of travel insurance. The literature obtained by investigators, in the form of reports of IRDA, research studies, articles of researchers, insurance officials and news, are briefly reviewed in this part.

Mathur, N.D (2002) in his study concludes that competition in insurance is one aspect of the post liberalization scenario; the other aspect would be the public and private sector companies working together to ensure the healthy expansion and progress of the travel insurance sector.

Dr. Narayana Rao, S.B. and Dr. Madhavi, C. (2006) in their study analyzed the performance of the insurance industry in India and deducted that the public sector should further improve their product varieties and attract schemes to compete with other

competitors in the market and also change their attitude further towards service to survive in the industry.

Vara Praad & Murali Krishna (2009) in their study attempts to analyze the success of insurance business and categorically states that it depends on the role played by the intermediaries and changed marketing strategies to suit the customers' needs. There are references on the methodologies implemented to have a hold over customer grievance redressal.

Sorab Sadri (2009) avowed the social image in a highly competitive market where even foreign players are steadily entering the domestic scene; people management expertise is inevitable to sustain the Indian insurance industry. This approach has increased quality in the travel insurance product to draw novel strategies such as customer grievance redressal to retain customer.

Monica Suri (2011) in her study attempts to highlight the market share of the Quarts Insurance and concludes that the insurance sector in India has come to a position of very high potential and competitiveness in the market. Moreover, the volume is bound to increase by clearing more number of grievances of customers at the right time that will ultimately result in customer retention.

Srinivasa Narayanasamy (1989) undertook a study entitled, "Consumer Education and Academic Curricula" in which he states that consumers are the largest economic group in the country and they are the centers of all economic activities. It mentions that the consumers at present do not have even the kindergarten level of consumer education. The consumer has to be educated on the importance of buying travel insurance along in their journey.

Lizzy (1993) investigated 'The efficacy of consumer redressal agencies in Kerala' and found that the literacy levels were correlated to the filing of complaints in the consumer forums. The study revealed that the number of complaints received by redressal agencies was high, when the literacy rate was high or almost equal to the state average literacy rate. The customers have knowledge about their purchases and ensure optimum benefits out of the products. Therefore, it may be inferred that customer grievance redressal have been started by each

company to sort out the issues and for better customer retention strategies.

P. Sivaprakasam (1995) in the work “Recent Trends that Reflect Consumer Protection in India” discusses the features of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and the role of voluntary organizations. He also explains how legislation and voluntary associations protect the interest of consumers. He identifies the problems in the execution of Consumer Protection Act and makes proposals.

C. Gnanadesigan and N. Thanulingom (1996) have conducted a study entitled “Awareness of Consumer Rights among the Educated” which underscores the relationship between the educational qualification of consumers and the extent of their awareness of consumer rights. They identified the extent of awareness of consumers towards consumer rights, consumer protection laws, and consumer protection council. It concludes that the success of consumer movement depends upon the consumers’ involvement and other stakeholders in the market to retain the customers.

Asha Nagendra (1999) in the study entitled “Consumer Protection - An Analytical Study on the legal and Institutional arrangements for Protection in Poona” conducted to identify the loopholes in the administration of machinery suggested ways and means to strengthen them. This study exposes that the apathy of consumers is the major bottleneck in the growth of consumer movement. He also points out that the characteristics of Indian consumers are the main causes for unlawful practices in India.

K.K. Falgunan (2001) has tried to evaluate the performance of consumer disputes redressal agencies in the application of the Consumer Protection Act 1986. He has analyzed the extent of awareness and the attitude of consumers with regard to Act. He also has analyzed the changing attitude of the business community after the enactment of the Consumer Protection Act 1986.

M. Selvin Marry (2002) has made a comparative analysis of the awareness and utilization of consumer protection laws. She has offered a few suggestions to increase the awareness in order to facilitate the effective utilization of the consumer protection laws.

Shrimant F. Tangade and C.S. Basavaraj (2004) examined the level of awareness of educated consumers on the Consumer Protection Laws and unveiled the satisfaction levels by exercising their rights under the consumer protection laws. This study revealed that there is a direct relationship between education and awareness. Most of the educated consumers are aware of the consumer protection laws. Electronic and press media have played a very significant role in creating awareness among the consumers. Most of the consumers are satisfied with the application of consumer protection laws. Finally, it suggests that the government should take serious efforts to increase the level of awareness of consumers towards consumer rights and laws by conducting various programs in rural areas targeting the illiterate masses and also provide them better opportunities to make use of the benefits extended to them under various consumer protection laws.

Slants of Customer Grievance Redressal towards the Retention Strategies

The practices of customer grievance redressal system have attained the requisite momentum and importance in Indian travel insurance industry. The grievance redressal centers with efficient approaches have emerged to sort out issues face by customers which helps the insurance companies to chalk out new strategies to retain the customers by proving their efficacy and also provide clear cut definitions for various behavioral scenarios, trends analysis of grievances, and their classifications and quantification of impacts on travel insurance services, etc. To be successful, the grievance redressal system must be activated at the first service encounter point with the policyholders. In addition, it also includes identifying the requirements of customers for effective grievance redressal and what are the factors that make the client satisfied. The main factors comprise securing a viable system for grievance reporting and redressal, transparency in the processes, and proper feedback. Ideally, grievance administration and meticulous handling influence the customers to purchase the insurance products and they turn out to be repeat customers. Such satisfied customers also inspire other potential customers. Customer grievance redressal is a completely dynamic assignment as it has to be accurate and within a specific time frame. The implications of the

e- grievance redressal including kiosk offerings brings forth flexibility for customers and better avenues for the insurance majors to dish out services efficiently as a forecast model. Mooted as a novel scheme, the installation of the e-complaints login process, linking customers' particulars would be a paradigm in future in the travel insurance industry.

Role of Insurance Ombudsman

The establishment of Insurance Ombudsman was made by Government of India, 1998 with the motivation of speedy transfer of the grievances to safeguard clients and to alleviate their issues included in redressal of those complaints. This foundation is of incredible significance and importance for the assurance of investments of arrangement holders and likewise in building their confidence in the framework. The institution has served to produce and support the confidence and certainty amongst the insured and insurers. The Insurance Ombudsman is engaged to get and consider complaints from any individual who has any grievance against a travel insurance providing company.

The following are the reasons for lodging complaints against the travel insurance company:

Any partial or total repudiation of claims by the travel insurance providing company;

- ✓ Any disagreement concerning premium paid or payable in the travel insurance policy;
- ✓ Any dispute upon the justifiable construct of the wordings in the event of dispute related to claim settlement;
- ✓ Delayed in the process of satisfying customers at time of claims, and
- ✓ Even after the receipt of premium, non-issuance of any insurance document i.e. Travel insurance certificate. Insurance ombudsman's powers are confined to insurance policy contracts of worth not exceeding Rs. 20 lakhs. The insurance providing companies are obliged to respect the recompenses passed by an Insurance Ombudsman within three months. Mode of lodging complaint the grievance by an aggrieved person has to be in writing, and addressed to the

insurance Ombudsman of the jurisdiction under which the office of the insurance providing company falls. Aggrieved person can also file grievance through the legal heirs.

IMPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analyses and discussions are featured as under:

- ❖ Globalization has brought a lot of competition among the travel insurance companies in India. Insured remain the cynosure point of the travel insurance sector. After the entry of private and foreign insurers, the industry is witnessing a lot of competition and thus there is a dire need for improvement of the consumer service by implementation of customer grievance redressal.
- ❖ With the pace of the number of travel policies sold an extensive number of complaints have been lodged by the insured which are being sorted out to retain the customers in the long run. So far as outstanding complaints, travel insurers have shown impeccable performance. Compared to the complaints received and resolved, travel insurers are quite consistent in terms of outstanding complaints. There is a significant difference in performance of both the complaints received and resolved in respect of insurers in the travel insurance industry.
- ❖ E- Customer grievance redressal can be implemented for a better and vital role in augmenting the volume of businesses which take a steep rise in terms of customer satisfaction and create more trust in customers towards travel insurance industry. India needs to improve its performance in the area of grievances settlement a lot to face the challenges.
- ❖ The efficacy of resolving complaints has made a profound impact with an optimistic attitude towards travel issuance policies as each travel insurance counters are obliged to encourage and establish small software pockets, for the vendors, by assigning different roles to sort out the issues whenever required by the travel insurance corporate at a rapid speed without any delay.
- ❖ In terms of customer interactions - customer satisfaction, quality control, and cost concerns

are important, this very well elucidate the repeat purchase as regards using customer grievance redressal initiatives in travel insurance sector.

- ❖ The credibility of travel insurance companies is of paramount significance in terms of assurance provided to customers in the services and the clarity provided at the time of resolving grievances.
- ❖ More awareness generation campaigns are essential to equip the customers in terms of information and usage of novel concepts and advancements in travel insurance industry in the form of E-customer grievance redressal.

CONCLUSION

With the increasing numbers of customer bases and travel insurance schemes and policies, the quantity of grievances related to insurance services is also rising. Therefore, today it is very much essential to have clear cut grievances system. The Insurance Ombudsman ensures that every complainant should be provided good opportunity to raise his or her grievances. Constant increase in number of complaints received by various ombudsman offices all across India shows that the policy-holders are gaining their confidence and trust in the institution of Insurance Ombudsman. The IRDA has recently established the Consumer Affairs Department to give a special focus to and oversee the complaints by insured of the IRDA Regulations for Protection of policyholders' interests and also to empower consumers by educating those regarding details of the procedures and mechanisms that are available for grievance redressal. Policyholders must be provided with inexpensive and speedy mechanisms for complaints disposal and the IRDA (Regulations, 2002) require travel insurance companies to have in place, effective and speedy grievance redressal mechanisms. IRDA has also issued guidelines for customer grievance redressal, which will further strengthen the redressal systems for the insured already in place. This will enhance customer trust upon the travel insurance industry; to sort out issues and challenges of grievances and help to retain customers.\

Scope for Further Research

The study can be further extended to scan the progressive trends and nuanced dimensions of customer retention strategies in Indian travel insurance industry; the performance in terms of consumer protection and their welfare, and comparison among travel insurers. Such a study would enhance the awareness of travel policies and its provisions for insured, insurers, academicians and researchers. This research paper and its findings may be of considerable use to insurance institutions, policy makers and to academic researchers in the area of customer grievance redressal in the travel insurance sector.

Model - Diagram

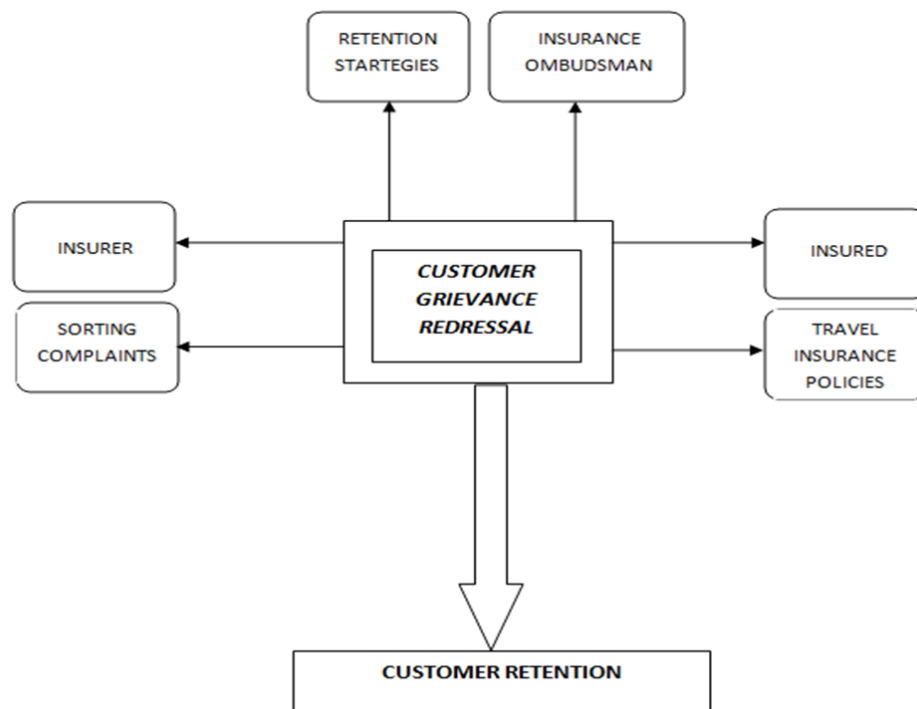


Figure 1:
Trends and

Dimensions of Customer Retention Strategies in Indian Travel Insurance Industry by Activating Customer Grievance Redressal

Notes: In the travel insurance industry, the Consumer Affairs Department of IRDA handles customers' grievances. By all means, customer grievance redressal is not a one-time task. It is a completely vibrant project as it requires steady observing skill sets by its employees to adapt and adjust the clock and is never said to be finished as long as the business is in vogue. It works as an intangible promotional tool for potential travelers to purchase travel insurance as they become confident on the grievance redressal cell. The corporate insurance houses have their own in-house redressal cell. The

service quality is a critical element of business strategy for most service businesses, and the travel insurance industry is no exception. The insurance regulators are ingrained with the duty of monitoring insurer service quality. Therefore, the measurement of service quality is a concern of both insurers and regulators to satisfy customers' with proper feedback and grievances. Therefore the above formulated model "Trends and Dimensions of Customer Retention Strategies in Indian Travel Insurance Industry by Activating Customer Grievance Redressal" explains the travel insurance policies.

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TOURIST PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLANNING

Yuthasak Chatkaewnapanon

Department of Tourism, Faculty of Humanities and Center of Tourism Research and Development, Chiang Mai University, Thailand

Abstract

Tourism, theoretically, is perceived as either important for rural sustainability or major cause in host community impacts. Practically, tourism is also increasingly important as a cause for urbanization in many rural areas, particularly in developing countries including Thailand. Therefore, there are highly dynamic and interactive studies on the interaction between tourism and destination development. Tourism is not only to generate local economic, but also to change physical landscape of the area. Tourism has transformed an area into a tourist destination. However, overdevelopment of tourism industry can be resulted in no longer attract people to come. Therefore, understanding what tourists perceive as tourism attractiveness of the destination is important for guiding appropriate development. Regardless of taking sustainable tourism development concept into tourism planning consideration, ignoring to understand the holistic concept of tourism system can lead to the process of the perceived impacts of tourism on host communities. This is a conceptual paper attempts at raising an awareness of a destination attractiveness using tourist perceptions for sustainable tourism planning in rural Thailand. The conceptual framework is developed from existing theoretical and empirical research in the field of tourism studies. The paper has contributed to develop desired planning for sustainable tourism development in rural Thailand.

Keywords: Tourist perception, Tourism planning, Sustainability, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

Tourism as soft industry, it was once believed that less harmful to our livelihood. It is perceived as important for rural economic development. It is also increasingly important for urbanizing rural Thailand. However, tourism brings tourists to the destination areas. While it is to generate rural economic, it also changes physical landscape of the areas. Tourism has transformed an area into a tourist destination (Chatkaewnapanon 2012). It then has the potential to create direct impacts on any visiting location.

In response, various researches have been conducted to explain the results of uncontrolled tourism development in different locations. There are highly dynamic and interactive studies on the interaction between tourism and destination development. There are included the issues of both negative and positive economic, socio-cultural and physical aspects

affected at host communities. Moreover, the alarms on those harmful effects on the host communities have led to new ways of thinking in protecting tourist destinations. Sustainable tourism development concept is then adopted to ensure the maintenance of environmental and social integrity within development process (Garcia-Rosell and Makinen 2013).

In recent years, the concept of sustainable tourism development has been widely discussed. Particularly, it has focused onto rural communities to minimize negative impacts (Sharpley 2009). In this essence, the concept aims to reconciling the rural livelihood and tourism development. To achieve the goal of sustainable community from tourism development requires the understanding of sustainability, tourism development and their component and relationships to a community (Garcia-Rosell and Makinen 2013). In other words, as issues of community and

sustainability increase, it reflects on the importance of community participation in tourism development process.

Moreover, tourism research has explained extensively the interrelationship between tourist sustainability and community participation, which emphasizing on the process of quality of local participation (Garcia-Rosell and Makinen 2013). Without the effective of local participation, arguably, the community tourism development is doubted to be sustainable. Within this aspect, most research studies imply sustainable community tourism development into only the aspects of destination development. However, to make tourism development sustainable is not only keeping the community maintainable. In fact, along with the ensuring that a community does not live beyond its means, it is important to achieve, and to maintain an acceptable numbers of tourists. A community with no tourist cannot be examined within the concept of tourist destination development.

The paper argues that sustainable tourism development cannot be achieved when the focus is limited only within tourist destination development paradigms. In fact, it needs to include the analysis of its components surrounded the issue of tourism system. In other word, it needs to understand what the perceptions of tourists towards tourism development (Xu, Cui, Ballantye, and Packer 2013). This understanding will help to guide the development more precisely. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to propose the tourism system concept for a sustainable tourism development in rural Thailand. By understanding the demand side of tourism system, it will help guiding on planning tourism industry more sustainably.

Sustainable tourism development: the discussion

The adoption of the principle of sustainable development into a tourism context has been widely practiced with the idea of engaging and creating a balance between society, the environment and the tourism industry (Cawley and Gillmore 2008; Garcia-Rosell and Makinen 2013). In particular, Butler (1993: 29) one of the leading researchers in the area of Tourism Studies, defines tourism in context of sustainable development as:

Tourism which is developed and maintained in an area (community, environment) in such a manner, and at a scale that it remains viable over an indefinite period, and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well-being of other activities and process.

Considering, the concept of sustainable tourism development aims to encourage economic growth and social development through tourism development while maintaining the environment. It has encouraged a revision in developmental thinking. Tourism economic development, therefore, acknowledges the ecological and social environment within its takes place (Mason 2008; Garcia-Rosell and Makinen 2013). However, to meet a point of sustainable tourism, economic growth is necessary in order to meet basic needs. Thus, tourism economic development should focus on the quality of economic growth rather than its quantity (Butler 1993).

The concept of sustainable tourism development has more focused onto particular areas to ensure that tourism development has minimized the environmental problems of destination areas. In other words, the concept is then a process of tourism development at destination areas in hopes of promoting economic developments and at the same time conserving local natural and cultural resources (Garcia-Rosell and Makinen 2013). To achieve such development, tourism activities need to consider locals and carrying capacity measure of the destination (Butler 1980). Therefore, in attempting to achieve sustainable tourism development, different aspects surrounding the issues of destination development have been suggested to be included in tourism development paradigms. There is, for instance, co-ordination of policies, tourism planning and local participations (Hall 2008; Mason 2008).

Tourism can create changes in values and system, traditional lifestyles, individual behavior and community structure (Chatkaewnapanon 2012; Tucker 2003). Thus, tourism research focuses on an increasing awareness of the dynamics, development processes and consequences for tourist destination and their population (Butler 1980; Cohen 2004; Cole 2008). In addition, the acknowledgement of a series of tourism development processes influences the

social structure and the historical sequences of development in a destination resulted in Butler's tourism area lifecycle has been discussed worldwide (1980).

Butler's tourist area lifecycle model (1980), ever, since the concept created, it has led to a paradigm of destination development projects in examining the evolution of tourist destination within their conditions (Garay and Canoves 2011). While the tourist area lifecycle concept provides a tool by which the tourist stage of any destination can be evaluated, the concept has mellowed in its stated discussion only of a tourist destination. Therefore, sustainable tourism development regardless of it's attempting to include the perceptions of tourists towards a location (Xu, Cui, Ballantyne and Packer 2013), coupled with the concept of tourist destination lifecycle is widely focused on only the well being of tourist destination.

Community tourism development: a local aspect

Tourism has proved to be one of the most ingeniously crafted, deliberately propagated and expedient opportunities for social exchange. Its philosophy enshrines some of the most ennobling aspirations of peace, enlightenment, self-actualization, social exchange, mutual understanding and learning. In principle, it is a remarkable largesse bequeathed upon humanity by humankind. At the same time, it has been a culprit of negative change, wherein destination environments have deteriorated, cultures changed and economics faltered. (Singh, Timothy and Dowling 2003: 3)

Tourism is, undoubtedly, a cause of the transition in many locations from a largely agricultural-based community to a contemporary tourism-based society (Chatkaewnapanon 2012; Huang 2013; Tucker 2003). Tourism is a mechanism in urbanization process in many remote and underdeveloped areas (Chatkaewnapanon 2012; Sharpley 2009; Tucker 2003). In this respect, tourist destinations are facing unexpected and uncontrolled changes. Major concerns have arisen about the potentially unfortunate effects of tourism on various aspects of the destinations (Moscardo, Konovaluv, Murphy and McGehee 2013).

Awareness of tourism development and their impacts on related areas has led to the growth of community approach towards sustainability (Okazaki 2008; Garcia-Rosell and Makinen 2013). To concern over the issue of local community selling their resources to tourists, the concept of community-based tourism (CBT) is introduced (Singh, Timothy and Dowling 2003). The concept is an alternative thinking towards achieving a sustainable tourism development (UNWTO 2008). CBT is a concept focusing on the ability of local community involved in tourism projects, particularly in rural areas. Actively participating in the development is a central focus to the concept (Simpson 2008). Therefore, CBT development strategy is based on community resources, needs and decisions. It aims to support livelihood, maintain biodiversity, stimulate SMEs, and reduce poverty (Okazaki 2008; Simpson 2008; UNWTO 2008). In other words, CBT is a concept created in hopes of achieving sustainable community tourism development.

CBT concept encourages the community to take control and management of their tourism industry for greater success of achieving sustainability (Choi and Sirakay 2006). In this respect, community participation is seen as the most important tool needed for the success of CBT. In fact, it is not a CBT project if a community lacks the desire to participate, control, manage and make decisions over their tourism industry (Tosun 2000). Therefore, involved with the community approach are two related concepts, participation and empowerment (Overton 1999). Both concepts are discussed the idea of concerning the locals as priorities in development process. Importantly, it is not only to make local participation more effective, but also to restore people the power to govern their own development (Overton 1999). Therefore, CBT has introduced as a promising alternative to conventional approaches to sustainable community tourism development. It is a holistic and inclusive process can lead to positive and permanent changes in host communities.

Considering, concept of sustainable tourism development in a community approach aims to reconciling the local livelihood in a tourism context (Sharpley 2009). The brief review has shown that sustainability is mainly defined and implemented as a guiding principle for tourism destination

development. In other words, regardless of its widely practices, and concern over economic growth, mostly researches have been limiting their focus only on the quality of tourism destinations. Theoretically, the essence of the sustainable tourism development thinking should not be limited only on how to ensuring that a destination does not develop beyond its means. Or, the application of sustainability needs to go beyond only tourism products.

In fact, it is required to ensure that the broader concept of tourism system is instigated. This paper, therefore, argues that the challenge of the sustainable community tourism development is to find a way to apply the principle of tourism system to the practice of community tourism development.

Tourism system

To start tourism in a community requires a working process. The quality of the community in their attractions, infrastructure and facilities are necessary. Then tourism industry has a potential to be developed (McKercher and Ho2006; Graci 2008). Once it developed, to keep the community tourism running and working attractively is more challenging. Within this concern, sustaining tourism development in a community is not only to create tourism industry at a community, or to retain the quality of the destination, but all of those as well as to maintain the tourism industry in the community for the future generations. Therefore, this section discusses tourism system as a means to generate awareness, understanding and interest for the sustaining community tourism development.

According to Uysal (1998), the tourism system can be divided into two components, as origin and a destination. The origin refers to tourists, where the destination is a destination community. Tourism system is started off with a potential to be a tourist destination of any place. Moreover, to be developed into a tourist destination is a community with potential tourism products and adequate infrastructure and facilities. Those tourism products are natural and cultural resources, events and activities, handicrafts and souvenirs (Kresic and Prebezac 2011). Infrastructure and facilities are accommodation, road, transportation, and other services (Graci 2008).

On the other hand, tourists are those who come to the destination. In order to make them come, those tourism resources, infrastructure, and facilities need to be able to attract the potential tourists (Kresic and Prebezac 2011). Respectively, to attract tourists is to give them awareness of ‘the attraction power and uniqueness of a destination’ (Formica 2000: 22). In these forms of to attract them and to give them awareness can be explained within the push-pull theory. The attractiveness of the community is the pull factor to bring in tourists. The push factor refers to the perceived attractiveness of the place and the decision making of those tourists to travel to the destination (Formica 2000).

Therefore, the tourism system is the completed model of demand-supply (Leiper 1990). The supply side of the system, the community as a tourist destination, needs to be analyzed. At the same time, the potential tourists, as a demand segment, need to be market (Leiper 1990). Once the destination has been promoted to the market, it is up to the tourists to desire whether to go or not.

In fact, the tourism system will be completed when ‘the destination area reaches people in the market and encourages them to travel’ (Mill and Morison 1992: xv). Then the question is how to create the holistic process. Formica (2000) emphasizes that the reinforcement of those segments to achieve the concept of tourism system is though the collaboration of the marketing travel link, where is refereed to travel agencies and tour operators.

Thus, to make the whole tourism system completed is to keep the two components interconnected. In this respect, a community needs to pull tourists into the area, at the same time, the tourists need to be pushed into the destination. Therefore, the model of tourism system is a cycle of a community and tourists, where it is within the linkage of push and pull theory.

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATION OF TOURISM PLANNING

The paper will bring back the discussion on sustainability back to the situation with which it began: the limitation of the interpretation. The implementations and focuses of sustainable tourism development arise in conditions of negative impacts of tourist destinations. As a result of to preserving the

effected areas, defining or understanding the principle of sustainable development go directly to destination contexts. Moreover, other concepts such as tourist area lifecycle model, community-based tourism, local participation and empowerment are prescriptive approach to support the focus of sustainable tourism development on mainly only tourist destinations.

The paper is not questioning the desirable objective of sustainable tourism development. In fact, the concept of sustainable tourism development should not be directed into only the supply segment of tourism system. Along with the ensuring that a community should not live beyond its means, it is important to achieve, and to maintain an acceptable numbers of tourists. Therefore, the paper proposes the awareness of the holistic approach to achieve sustainable community tourism development.

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