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AN EXAMINATION OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS ON LEVEL OF SATISFACTION FROM THAI TOURISM

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Abstract: The objective of this research was to examine the level of satisfaction from the perspective of international tourists who visited Bangkok, Thailand during January to March of 2016. This paper utilized the quantitative method to search for the answer of research questions. The independent variables included gender, age, levels of education, occupation, and income, whereas, the dependent variables were ten reasons for their visiting Thailand as well as their satisfaction level. A quota sampling method was conducted to obtain 200 respondents with 50 percent male and 50 percent female respondents. The majority of respondents were between 30-40 years old. Most were married with an undergraduate degree. The average income of the respondents was between $35,000-50,000 per year. The findings disclosed that the ranking levels of satisfaction by highest mean to lowest mean as follows: variety of Thai food, nature-beach-mountain, spa-massage-beauty, malls-shopping places, night entertainment souvenir and handcraft, festivals and activities, traditional night markets, museum-art-history, souvenir and handcraft, and conferences & exhibition.

Keywords: International Tourists, Satisfaction, Tourism

I. INTRODUCTION

International tourists are the most important group that contributed to the Thai GDP for the last decades. Whether these tourists will be happy and revisit Thailand again and again in the near future depend on their level of satisfaction from their current visit. Therefore, it is important to understand how these tourists can be satisfied and what are the major factors that influences their level of satisfaction. International tourists often consider Bangkok as the major tourist destination of Thailand and ASEAN nations along with other tourist destination such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam. Despite the fact that after international tourists visited tourist destinations in Thailand, they often unveiled their good attitudes towards the major destinations in almost every tourism element [1]. The more international tourists, the deterioration of tourist destination occurred. Therefore, tourism activities and tourist destinations should be improved to gain its reputation. For instance, a strategy in improving the standard of souvenirs should be considered, even though the souvenir item received good level of attitude. There is a need to support the better control quality standard of products and services. Some practices can be done, for example product quality standard labeling and signing to enhance tourists’ satisfaction. Moreover, public facilities for international tourists must be improved such as clean toilets, sufficient provision of foods and drinks. Moreover, the punctuality of public transport service and service of entertainments. These problems must be solved by involved tourism organizations; there should be brainstorming among tourism and service entrepreneurs for practical measurements in order to manage popular tourist destinations in Thailand. Standard and excellent services can guarantee tourists’ satisfaction and revisit.

The tourism business is one of the most important money making business of every ASEAN country in that it generates stable tourists’ revenues of foreign currency, and creates jobs. In the past, many tourist destinations in Thailand had an edge over other ASEAN countries in terms of low price, friendly service, unique culture, and relaxing environment. Nowadays, other ASEAN countries have a national policy to promote tourism to earn more foreign money.

In order for Thailand to be competitive in tourism, Thailand needs to increase the tourists’ level of satisfaction to attract and find new international tourists as well as motivate the same international tourists to revisit Thailand rather than other ASEAN countries. It is therefore imperative to understand what satisfy international tourists to select Bangkok again and again. When international tourists keep revisiting the same tourist destination, this means loyal international tourists. How to enumerate the benefits of having international loyal tourists? Shoemaker and Lewis (1999) explained that international loyal tourists lead to steady income for tourist destination, providing free positive word of mouth advertising, and, at the end of process, and contribute to increase jobs as well as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) [2] [3]. Many studies state that high level of satisfaction is the key to increase loyalty. In fact, satisfaction is an important condition for loyalty. Therefore, the focus of this study is to find out the level of satisfaction for each reason that international tourists choose to visit Bangkok, Thailand. Therefore, the focus of this study is about level of satisfaction in each factor of international tourists consider as important factor to visit Bangkok. Thailand in order to find the best way to develop the best marketing to increase tourists’ satisfaction in the long run.
II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of level of satisfaction of international tourists was based on the theory of consumer behavior, which explained the gap between consumer's expectation and consumer's experience with the product or service [4][5]. It is imperative to understand the level of satisfaction factors influencing the decision to visit Bangkok, Thailand. Satisfaction factors influencing the decision to visit Thailand may vary from one consumer to the next consumer. International tourists' loyalty is the process that tourists are satisfied with their experience and choose to visit the same tourist destination and plan to tell their friends and family to visit the same tourist destination as well. This research study, however, aimed to study ten different satisfaction factors that international tourists often experience during their trip.

Research Framework

1. Nature-Beach-Mountain
2. Thai Food & Beverage
3. Malls & Shopping Places
4. Tradition Markets
5. Museums, Art, History
6. Spa, Massage, Beauty
7. Festivals, Activities
8. Night Entertainment
9. Conference-Expo

III. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objective, Likert five-scale English questions were designed to measure the importance of these satisfaction factors to their decision to visit a particular tourist destination. Bangkok was chosen as a main tourist destination to collect information. The target population was international tourists who visit Bangkok. The sample size for this study was 200 respondents with a total time of collection duration of one month. The quota sampling method was utilized. An English questionnaire was utilized as the tool for collecting data. The independent variables of this study included gender, age, level of education, occupation, and income. Independent variables included satisfaction factors. Descriptive statistics utilized in this research included percentage, mean, and standard deviation and t-test. Taru Yamane's sampling technique was utilized to get a sample group that included 200 international tourists. [6] The total of 15 pilot samples was tested to achieve a Cronbach alpha for the level of 0.70.

IV. FINDINGS

The findings of this research revealed demographics information, male and female respondents were collected in almost the same proportion, or 50:50 respectively. The majority had the age between 30-40 years old. About 60 percent of the respondents were single, 35 percent were married, and the remaining 5 percent were either divorced or widowed. Up to 89 percent of the respondents had a college degree or high school diploma. The majority of respondents or about 79 percent would be considered to be middle class with an average income between 30,000-50,000 US dollars per year. The majority of respondents were from EU countries, Asia, and ASEAN. In terms of their traveling, 57 percent preferred to travel in a small group of 2-3 persons with no children. TABLE 1 shows the level of satisfaction in each factors

<table>
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<th>S. D.</th>
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<td>1. Nature-Beach-Mountain</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>0.749</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>2. Thai Food &amp; Beverage</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>0.983</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Malls &amp; Shopping Places</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>0.787</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tradition Markets</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>0.692</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Museums, Art, History</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>0.949</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Spa, Massage, Beauty</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.600</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Festivals, Activities</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>0.986</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Night Entertainment</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>0.542</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Conference-Expo</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.788</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Souvenir, Handcraft</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>0.887</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>0.891</td>
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</table>

After the data analysis, the findings from TABLE 1 revealed the level ranking of satisfaction level by highest mean to lowest mean as follows: Thai food and beverage, nature-beach-mountain, spa-massage-beauty, malls-shopping places, souvenir and handicraft, festivals and activities, tradition markets, museum-art-history, night entertainment, and conference-expo. In addition, the overall means is 4.21 with 0.891 SD. The ranking can be shown as follows.

V. DISCUSSION

The study of level of satisfaction had focused on ten important factors which influenced the international
tourists’ level of satisfaction. From the findings, it can be concluded that the majority of international tourists had rated the overall importance of the ten factors at a high level of satisfaction but not the very high since the overall mean is 4.19 which is less than 4.5. Thai food again, was rated with the highest ranking level of importance.

This finding concurred with the study of Kevin Wonglee Dee which reported that Thai food often had been rated at a highest level of importance as well as level of satisfaction [7]. However, the findings disclosed that night entertainment as well as conference and exposition had a low ranking level of importance.

VI. FUTURE STUDIES

In order to achieve a full potential used of the findings, future research should use a random sampling technique with a diverse group of international tourists and try to increase sample size to 400 respondents if time and budget is permitted. Moreover, future studies should use small group interviews with an in-depth interview to investigate the reasons behind their level of satisfaction in each factor of visiting Bangkok, Thailand.

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