

THE STUDY OF CLIENT REQUIREMENTS IN CHOOSING ACCOMMODATION IN SURIN PROVINCE

Kanamon Suwantada

*Faculty of International College, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand,
E-Mail:Kanamon.su@ssru.ac.th*

ABSTRACT

The goal of this research is to determine customer requirements in choosing accommodation in Surin province, Thailand. The study purpose is to define customer expectations in choosing accommodation in the local area to aid local business owners. The outcome of this research will be provided to local hotels and accommodations in Muang District, Surin Province, Thailand.

Methodology in this research allowed researcher to gain qualitative data from the tourists. The data was collected from 200 tourists in Muang district, Surin province from 1st February- to 30st April, 2017 from both sexes and from different demographics to create variation in data based. The questionnaires were divided into three parts; demographic profile, general information on tourist behavior and factors affect to decision making in choosing accommodation.

The finding of this research showed that the most popular means of accommodation searching is through internet. Price is also one of the main factors affects to tourist decision making. Moreover, choices of room prices should be available to select. In addition, the results directed that check in and check out timing speed is also another important component. And finally, the internet connection in the accommodation area should be provided gratuity.

Keywords: English language, Homestay, Using English, ASEAN

INTRODUCTION

Thailand is one of the top tourist destinations in South/East Asia. It has rich historical heritage sites as well as stunning natural attractions. Chon (2000) mention in her research that organizations include The Ecotourism Society (TES), a surrogate global ecotourism association based in united states of America and the Ecotourism Association of Australia (EAA) stated that tourism in South east Asia especially ecotourism is growing rapidly. Elliot (1987) explained that tourism in Thailand was first established by The Tourism Organization of Thailand in 1959 and was renamed as the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in 1976. After the TAT began a national marketing plan called “Amazing Thailand” in 1997, Thai Tourism Industry has been recognized as the top tourist’s currency generator and has boosted the national economic and helped the country from the economic downturn crisis during that period). Many types of tourism have promoted such as Thai arts and lifestyle, agricultural tourism, sports tourism, shopping tourism and domestic tourism.

Tourism Industry plays an important role to Thai Economic. According to the annual report from the Department of Tourism and sports (2017) stated that numbers of tourists from different countries travel to Thailand are continuously increasing every year. In 2016, there are 27,842,753 tourists travel to Thailand and in January – April, 2017, the numbers increasing to 28,824,753. As for Surin province, there were 1,044,669 tourists traveled to in 2014. Surin, which literally means “City of Happiness” or “Peaceful City”, is situated in the lower part of the Northeastern region, about 410 km from Bangkok. Surin area is approximately 10,321 square kilometers. Many evidences of ancient Khmer culture were founded around this area from the Dvaravati period (6th-11th centuries C.E.). Nowadays elephants are Surin’s claim to fame. In the province’s northern reaches, an entire village –Baan Ta Klang – has long been devoted to elephants, which hold a special place in Thai and Khmer cultures. (Tourism Authority of Thailand: TAT, 2017)

Tourism Authority of Thailand (2017) stated that in 2012, numbers of tourists travel to Surin province in 2015 is at 896,262 and has increased to 1,044,669 people in 2016 which bring more income to the province from 1,835 million THB in 2015 to 2,035 million THB in the following year. Numbers expected to rise. Schmitz A. (2012) explained about the consuming pattern that consumer behavior begin with having a stimulus to stimulate the feeling which create the sense of needs which drive the consumers to make a purchase. The Stimulus can be dividing into inside stimulus and outside stimulus. The inside stimulus happened from the unbalance in human's mine. The outside stimulus can be divided into marketing stimulus concerning with marketing mix of 4Ps (Product, price, place and promotion) and other stimulus which cannot be control for instance, economic downturn.

Dietrich (2010) explained in her research that there are many significant factors that influence people's decision making. For instance, past experiences, biased, a growth of commitment and outcomes, individual differences, including age and a belief in personal relevance. She also state that past experiences can impact future decision making. This explains that when something positive results from a decision, people are more likely to decide in a similar way or repeat that decision again. Yiamjanya (2016) stated in her research that The Internet has vastly been known as the key drive of growth for the demands and supplies of the tourism industry. Consumers' behavior has also been shifted in ways that they greatly adopt the Internet in their life including as the source of travel motivation, expression and trip planning. The Internet endlessly supports people in the post- modern world in exploring new things more easily. Particularly, consumers today have increasingly sought for traditional, indigenous and authentic experiences. Along with the fact that buying and selling of many tourism products today is mainly based on direct contact, especially in small and medium enterprise market. Accommodation in Thailand, has nowadays adopted e-marketing strategies, in spite of its superficial level of knowledge about e-marketing. Internet based advertising activities involve utilizing social media, portal sites and destination sites for accommodation listings that link to particular accommodation business domains. A few accommodation businesses apply Google Plus, a social networking platform for discovering and sharing digital content with friends, family and coworkers, for promotion, and Google Ad words to advertise the business.

METHODOLOGY

The objective of this research is to determine factor affecting tourists decision making in choosing accommodation in Surin province from the questionnaires. The method is to analyze data from the questionnaires to determine the customer's needs.

Research Approach

Research approach helped researcher to find factors that influence to customer decision in choosing accommodation and determining customer expectations. The researcher use quantitative method to collect data. This research was conducted by distributed 200 questionnaires to collect the data from 200 tourists in Muang district, Surin province. The Data were collected from both sexes and from different demographics to create variation in data based. According from the statistic of annual tourists travel to Surin province, in 2014, there were 1,044,669 people traveling to Surin (The Department of Tourism and Sports, 2017). This number was utilized to calculate the accurate amount of questionnaire for this research. The questionnaires were conduct only during three months period from 1st February- to 30st April, 2017. So when using Taro Yamane calculation with 5% allowable error the amount of questionnaires should be at 400. However, researcher limited samples from Muang district only and also not during high season.

The 200 questionnaires were collected from 200 tourists in Muang district, Surin by using a representative sample methods; simple random sampling for quantitative studies area. Researcher distribute the questionnaire to ten representative hotel in Muang district, Surin.

Research Instrument and Data Collection

In this research, the research instruments were questionnaire. The questionnaire method was employed to gain quantitative data from tourists in order to analyze tourists' needs in general. The questionnaires were divided into three parts; demographic profile, general information on tourist behavior and factors affect to decision making in choosing accommodation to find out about customers' perception and expectation towards the preferred accommodation as well as the customer expectation on the services. The quantitative data was analyzed and demonstrated in Frequency, percentage and mean. By solicit 5 lecturers in the Tourism Industry who had experience doing research before to rate the questionnaire, total score given were 8 out of 10.

Limitations

The Limitation of this research was the limited of time to collect the quantitative data which took place in Muang district, Surin province, Thailand during 1st February- to 30st April, 2017.

RESULTS

The research finding discussed the result of the 200 questionnaires concerning customer's about factors affecting to customers decision making in choosing accommodation in Surin, collected during during 1st February- to 30st April, 2017 from 200 tourists in Surin. The questionnaires were divided into three sections; demographic profile, general information on tourist behavior and factors affect to decision making in choosing accommodation.

The results of the questionnaires were as followed there were more males (58.5%) travelling to Surin than females (41.5%). Most of the respondents were from Asia (42%). The majority of the respondents aged between 36-45 years accounted for 39 % and tourists who were 46-55 years accounted for 21%.

As for the education level, 65.5 % of the respondents graduated in a Bachelor's degree followed by 15.5 % graduated in High school level. The marital status showed that 53.0% of the respondents are married, 39.0% are single and 8.0% are divorced/ widowed. In the occupation section, research result found that 38.0% of the respondents work in the private company, 37.0% of the respondents work for government and 10.5% have got their own business. Most samples have revenue from 20,001-30,000 baths/month which accounted for 36.0% followed by 30% of revenue from 30,001-40,000 baths/month.

When studied the general information on tourist behavior, researcher found that 70% of the respondents are repeated tourists and 30% of the respondents traveled to Surin for the first time. The tourists traveled alone accounted for 37.5%. There were 31% of tourists who traveled with families or relatives and 19% traveled with friends. As for the length of stay, the result showed that 64% of the respondents stayed for 1-3 nights, followed by 15.5% stayed for 4-7 nights and 8% stayed for 15-30 nights. Researcher found that 55% of the samples interested to stay in the hotel, 28.5% choose to stay in an apartment and 8% interested in Bungalow. The price of the accommodation that attracted tourists the most is 500 baths/night and 1,001-2000 baths/nights which both accounted equally for 35%. Followed by 501-1,000 bath/nights which accounted for 14.5%. The result showed that 52.5% of the respondents know about the accommodation in Surin through internet/website, 21.5% recognized the accommodation from friends/word of mouth and 21.0% known about their accommodation through Travel Agent Company. For the Booking Method, 38.5% of the samples booked their accommodation through hotel website, 19.0% made a reservation with Travel Agent and 16.5% booked their accommodation by phone.

In part 3, the research focus on factors affect to decision making in choosing accommodation in physical factor, service factor, price factor , booking channel actors and other factors. The result are presenting in the table below

Table 1
Physical Factors of the accommodation

physical Factors of the accommodation	\bar{X}
location near tourist attraction/ near city	3.95
Atmosphere of in room / accommodation area	3.93
Cleanliness of in room / accommodation area	3.85
Size of room	3.62
various room types	3.58

When observe the result in each Factor, researcher found that the physical Factors of the accommodation is very important (\bar{X} =3.78).

Table 2
Service factor

Service factor	\bar{X}
Rapidity of service	3.87
Adequate staff for guest needs	3.84
Staff friendliness	3.80
Staff able to communicate in your language	3.70

The overall importance of service factor are rated as high (\bar{X} =3.80).

Table 3
Price Factor

Price Factor	\bar{X}
various room prices	3.80
Reasonable price for room quality	3.75
Cheaper price than other place	3.72
Promotion/ Discount	3.72
clearly inform room prices	3.62

Price Factor are rated as high (\bar{X} =3.72).

Table 4
Booking Chanel Factor

Booking Chanel Factor	\bar{X}
Travel agent booking service	3.85
Accommodation's website	3.52

As a final point, the importance of Booking Chanel Factorare rated as high (\bar{X} =3.68).

Table 5
Other Factor

Other Factor	\bar{X}
Internet / Wi-Fi	4.09
Parking	3.75
Restaurant / Bar	3.62
Security	3.89
Laundry Service	3.32

The overall importance of other factor are rated as high (\bar{X} =3.73).

According to the data, the result show that the overall importance level of factor in choosing accommodation such as physical factors, service factors, price factors and booking channel factors were rated very high (\bar{X} =3.74).

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Considerate from the research findings, accommodation owner should pay attention to customer expectations and needs in some aspects more than others. Masters P. (2010) stated that the tools for implementing are The Marketing Mix which can be determining by using the 4Ps which are product, place, price and promotion.

Product: The owner had to adapt the product correspond to the need of the customer which in this case had to be authentic and original because that's what the tourists sought for accommodation. According to the research result, customers require many activities involved with traditional culture such as chance to learn new culture, village tour, local attraction tour, village daily life experiences, local ceremony participation, and interactive conversation with local people.

Price: According to the research finding, the price was the most important factor people would considered when choosing Home Stay. Price should be corresponding to the product quality. The price can be set up according to the target customer. The price also could be set up according to other competitor by set our price slightly lower than the competitor to attract more tourists. However, for accommodation, customers are sensitive to price, the accommodation provider should consider to set a low to medium prices which was generally around 500 -1,000 baht per night.

Place: In accommodation, "Place" refers to location which is suitable for the product. Customers expected to see real traditional ways of Thai; therefore, good locations for accommodation should be in the rural area where there were many traditional rituals that tourists participated in.

Promotion: According to the data collection, a researcher found that 112 people out of 200 studies in Bachelor degree level at the age 20 - 30 years which were accounted for 62% from all the samples. This data showed that university students were another important market for accommodation. Accommodation providers should come up with appropriate package for them such as discount or special activities for big group.

In conclusion, the research result showed that tourists who travel to Surin province booked their accommodation through internet the most, consequently hotel and accommodation owner should focus more on presenting their product using online travel agents. Moreover, the accommodations owner should also consider having hotel website containing online reservation system. In addition, the accommodation owner should pay attention to employees' competency. Employee should be able to work fast as well as having service mind. Moreover, various room types should be available at the premises to create more alternative to the customers. And finally, free internet and Wi-Fi is also substantial component nowadays. A free Wi-Fi in the resident area can be appealing for tourists.

Future Research

The future research should focus on the products and services that customers expect to be given when staying in an accommodation in Surin province and comparing with the services accommodation owner provided. By comparing both side, researcher expect to gain more information to improve accommodation's product and services to be equivalent with customer's needs. A further study can be complete by an in-depth data analysis by arranging interview with tourists in Surin Province to further find out about consumers' requirements in dept to develop accommodation's products and services in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for invaluable help throughout this research. I also would like to acknowledge the Research and Development Institute, SuanSunandhaRajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand for financial support and for their guidance, supervision and continuously encouragement throughout the research process. Finally, I also would like to thank Professor Doctor KrongthongKhairiree, Director of International College, SuanSunandhaRajabhat University.

REFERENCES

- [1] Albaladejo-Pina, P (2009), □ Tourist preference for rural house stays: Evidence from discrete choice modeling in Spain, *Tourism Management*, Vol.30, Pp.805-811.
- [2] Corbin, J (2008), □ Basics of Qualitative Research. 1st ed. London: Sage Applications Inc.
- [3] Chon, K.S.1999), Functional and Symbolic Approaches to Consumer Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction. *Journal of the International Academy of Hospitality Research*, No.28, Pp.1-20.
- [4] Chon, K.S. (2000), *Tourism in Southeast Asia*. 1st ed. NY: Haworth Hospitality Press.
- [5] Department of Tourism and Sports , (2017), International Tourist Arrival, [Online]. URL: <http://newdot2.samartmultimedia.com/farms/uploaded/Information%20Technology%20Center/stat/276/2010/thailand%20Tourism%20Statistics%20Total%20Tourism%2053.pdf>
- [6] Dietrich, C (2010), "Decision Making: Factors that Influence Decision Making, Heuristics Used, and Decision Outcomes." *Student Pulse*, 2(02), [Online]. URL: <http://www.studentpulse.com/a?id=180>
- [7] Elliot, J (1987), Government management of tourism – A Thai case study. *Tourism Management*, Vol. 8, Pp.223-232.
- [8] Master, P (2010), To develop a sustainable Marketing Plan for Thailand's Home-Stay Operation. Master Degree. Bangkok: Siam University.
- [9] Nykiel, R (2007), *Handbook of Marketing Research Methodologies for Hospitality and Tourism*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- [10] R. Matikiti, B. Afolabi and W. Smith (2012), An empirical evidence on the usage of internet marketing in the hospitality sector in an emerging economy and its relationship to profitability. *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*. Vol. 4(1). Pp. 181- 197, [Online]. URL: http://irssh.com/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/20_IRSSH-395-V4N1.321102855.pdf
- [11] Schmitz A (2012), *Marketing Principles*, [Online]. URL: <http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/marketing-principles-v1.0/index.html>
- [12] Siripen Yiamjanya (2016), "Endogenous and Exogenous Factors for e-Marketing Technology and Innovation in Homestay Establishments: A Case Study of Samut Songkhram Province, Thailand," *Journal of Economics, Business and Management* vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 40-46.
- [13] Suwittayapan, N (2002), *The study of news, knowledge and tendency of Thai tourism traveling to Home Stay*. Chulalongkorn University Press, Vol.3, Pp.123-128.

[14] Tourism Authority of Thailand: TAT. (2017), About Surin. Tourism Organization of Thailand Official Site, [Online]. URL: <http://thai.tourismthailand.org/>