

Service Marketing Mix Factors of Malaysian Tourists Influencing Decision Making on Selecting Accommodation in Phuket, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to 1) study the level of importance service marketing mix factors 2) study the different demographic characteristics that affect the importance of service market mix factor of Malaysian tourists 3) to study the importance of service marketing mix factor that influenced accommodation in Phuket selection of Malaysian tourists. This research was a quantitative and questionnaires were used for data collection. The random sampling method was non-probability of 240 samples. Processed using statistics frequency distribution, percentage, T-Test, One Way ANOVA and Multiple Regression Analysis.

The result found that the most important of service marketing mix factors to Malaysian Tourists was promotion factor 2) the hypothesis testing showed that the different demographic characteristics took importance to marketing mix factors were different with statistical significance of 0.05 3) the results of the analysis of the variability and multiple regression showed that there were 4 independent variables: price factor, place factor, promotion factor and physical factor which have a linear relationship with the dependent variables.

Keywords: Malaysian Tourists, Service Marketing Mix Factor, Influencing Decision on Accommodation, Phuket tourism

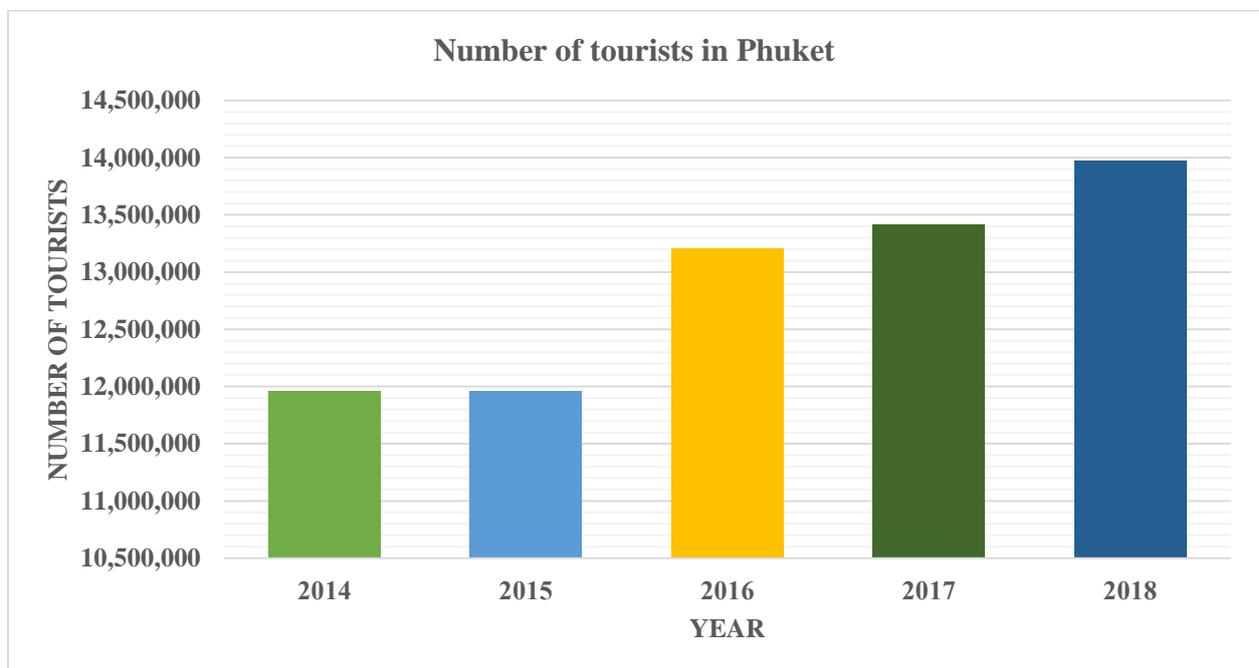
INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry is an important part of the economy of all countries around the world. The tourism industry has continued to develop and expand and quickly become a staple in international trade and investment. It is important to be in the top 10 major industries, which is consistent with the growth of the Thai tourism industry as well. Therefore, the tourism industry of Thailand is an economic force that has played a prominent role over the years. It is also a catalyst for economic expansion that leads to employment, income distribution and investment in related businesses. It creates wealth and leads to success in raising the quality of Thais' life.

Thailand is a destination for tourists from many countries because of its perfect nature and cultural uniqueness. This brings almost 39 million foreign tourists annually to Thailand and the expenditure of foreign tourists was estimated at 2.16 – 2.20 trillion baht per year. (KASIKORN Research Center, 2019) It generates income for local people and Thai community especially the hotel and hospitality businesses, which impress tourists around the world. This became the highlight of Thailand. Moreover, the Thai government has also promoted tourism as a key policy in the country's development and the main economic driver of the country.

Phuket is the only province of Thailand that has an island topography, and it is a world-famous tourist attraction as known for its beautiful sandy beaches, clear waters, and picturesque seas suitable for diving as well as having facilities fully supports tourists. Phuket is generally considered a world-class tourist destination. In 2011, Phuket ranked 3rd of top 10 most romantic islands in the world. In addition, according to information from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, it also pointed out that the number of both Thai and foreign tourists visiting Phuket is likely to increase every year. In 2017, Phuket was the second highest income of Thailand, followed by Bangkok, with a tourism value of 420 billion baht. As the figure 1 shows that there were 14 million tourists: 10 million foreign tourists and 4 million Thais, which shows the potential of Phuket as a tourist attraction and was considered an important province in Thailand.

Figure 1: Number of tourists in Phuket in 2014 – 2018



Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2018

There were many foreign tourists visiting Phuket. According to statistics as show in the table 1, number one was Chinese tourists and the second was Malaysian tourists. However, the number of Malaysian tourists could not be equal to Chinese tourists, it was considered a new potential tourist group that should be given importance because it was a group of tourists with unique behavior and the cost of tourism was high. Moreover, Malaysia's economy had been expanding in a good direction, causing the middle-class people to have more moderate income. As a result, Malaysian tourists had more power to spend on tourism. The income of Malaysian tourists who traveled to Malaysian in the past year was circulating income into Thailand growing to 103.5 billion baht. From the same period in 2017, the value of tourism expenditures of Malaysian tourists, resulting in an increase in tourism products of the nation (GDP) in

Malaysian. In addition, the number of Malaysian tourists was ranked 2nd among foreign tourists who traveled to Malaysian in 2018.

Table 1: Statistics of foreign tourists entering Thailand in 2018.

Tourists	Number of Tourists	Income (million baht)
Chinese	10,525,241	518,911
Malaysian	4,020,526	103,499
Korean	1,796,426	71,240
Laos	1,664,630	49,547
Japanese	1,656,101	80,617

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2018

The accommodation business was established with the objective of running a business for a fee. To provide temporary accommodation for tourists. Malaysian tourists spend the most on accommodation compared to the others. The current accommodation marketing planning was fiercely competitive. Since there were many entrepreneurs who see the benefits of doing business, there were many accommodation businesses in Thailand, especially in Phuket. Therefore, accommodation businesses must be outstanding and well-managed for their business to succeed. Operators should study the behavior of Malaysian tourists in order to plan service procedures that could meet the needs of Malaysian tourists for service satisfaction by applying the principles of service marketing mix. It helped in planning an accommodation business that could be used as a competitive strategy against competitors and in planning a strategy that would be used to prepare the service to meet the needs of Malaysian tourists in the future. However, good marketing planning using the service marketing mix principles, could also encourage tourists to make more informed choices about accommodation.

For the reasons mentioned above, the researcher was interested in studying the service marketing factors of Malaysian tourists influencing their decision to choose a hotel in Phuket. which had brought various concepts used as a variable in this research. In order to use the information obtained to improve and formulate guidelines in the planning of service marketing or to make a development plan for the hotel business to be most effective in serving Malaysian tourists.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- 1) to study the level of importance service marketing mix factors.
- 2) to study the different demographic characteristics that affect the importance of service market mix factor of Malaysian tourists.

- 3) to study the importance of service marketing mix factor that influenced accommodation in Phuket selection of Malaysian tourists.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study was a quantitative research using questionnaires to data collection. The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts. The first part was the personal data of the respondents, consisting of gender, age, income, occupation, and marital status. The second part was information about the importance of service marketing factors, comprising of products, prices, and channels. distribute marketing promotion, personnel, service process and physical components. The third part was information on service marketing factors of Malaysian tourists influencing the decision to choose a hotel in Phuket, Thailand.

The tools of this study were created by studying concepts, theories, articles, and related research, and online media as a guideline for creating a questionnaire. The research tool had passed the Reliability check by collecting data from populations with similar properties to the sample of 30 sets to check the quality of the tool's reliability with Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient formula. It was found that the overall alpha of the tool had a confidence value of 0.78, indicating that the questionnaire had quite high reliability. therefore, it could use to data collection of sample group.

The statistic to analyze the results, was Descriptive Statistics, is used to describe the data in each part of the frequency and percentage with Inductive statistics to test at the 95% of confidence level. Statistics used in the test. was a T-Test, One-Way ANOVA, to find differences using F-Test differential statistic. When the difference was found, the Multiple Comparison (LSD) method and Multiple Regression Analysis would use the Enter method to find out between two or more independent variables: product, price, distribution channel. marketing promotion, personnel, service process and physical components, and one dependent variable was the decision to choose a hotel in Phuket of Malaysian tourists. where independent variables were variables that predict the variation of the dependent variable.

RESEARCH RESULT

From the study of demographic characteristics of Malaysian tourists, it was found that the respondents were female, 135 people, representing 56.3 percent, aged 21-30 years, 92 people, representing 38.3%. 20,000-30,000 Baht, 100 people, representing 41.7%, private business, 78 people, representing 32.5%, and single status, 110 people, representing 45.8%.

The results of answering the first research objective, from study of the overview of the importance level of service marketing factors that Malaysian tourists pay attention to all 7 areas were of high importance ($\bar{X} = 3.74$, $SD = 0.572$). When considered in order, the mean could be priority as following: Marketing promotion area which was the most importance factor that tourists attach ($\bar{X} = 3.93$, $SD = 0.558$), the physical component factor ($\bar{X} = 3.88$, $SD = 0.543$), and the service processing factor ($\bar{X} = 3.78$, $SD = 0.567$) distribution channel factor ($\bar{X} = 3.71$, $SD = 0.605$), personnel factor ($\bar{X} = 3.70$, $SD = 0.580$), price factor ($\bar{X} = 3.58$, $SD =$

0.607) and the least important factor to tourists was the product aspect factor ($\bar{X} = 3.57$, $SD = 0.524$).

The results of answering the second research objective, from study differences in demographic characteristics that affect the differences in service marketing factors among Malaysian tourists. It was found that the differences of tourists with different sexes gave importance to service marketing factors were significantly different at the 0.05 level, which had 2 different factors: the personnel aspect factor had the Sig. of 0.006, which is less than 0.05, means that heterosexual travelers were more focused on the service marketing factors in personnel were statistically different at the 0.05 level. Female ($\bar{X} = 3.82$) gave more importance to the personnel service marketing factor than males ($\bar{X} = 3.55$).

In terms of physical components factor, the Sig. was 0.006, which was less than 0.05, meaning that tourists of different sexes prioritized different factors in service marketing in terms of physical components at statistically significant levels. 0.05, where females ($\bar{X} = 3.94$) gave more importance to physical component service marketing factors than males ($\bar{X} = 3.81$).

The results of testing the different ages tourists gave importance to service marketing factors were significantly different level at 0.05, which had 2 different factors: namely price factor, which had a Sig. of 0.012. and the physical component factor, which had the Sig. of 0.000, respectively, which was less than 0.05, meaning that there was at least one pair of tourists with different ages giving different importance to service marketing factors.

The results of the difference of tourists with different incomes, gave importance to service marketing factors were significantly different at the 0.05 level, which had 3 different factors. There was namely price factor, which had Sig. at 0.000, the distribution channel factor, which had the Sig. at 0.009, and the physical component factor has the Sig. at 0.001, respectively, which is less than 0.05, meaning that there were at least 1 pair of tourists with different incomes. Service marketing factors were different.

The results of testing the differences of tourists with different occupations, giving importance to service marketing factors were different with statistical significance at the 0.05 level, which had 1 different factor, namely the physical component had the Sig at 0.014, which is less than 0.05, means that there were at least 1 pair of tourists with different occupations, giving different importance to service marketing factors.

The results of testing the differences of tourists with different occupations, giving importance to service marketing factors were different with statistical significance at the 0.05 level, which had 1 different factor, namely the physical component, which had Sig at 0.014, which was less than 0.05, means that there were at least 1 pair of tourists with different occupations, giving different importance to service marketing factors.

The results of testing the differences of tourists with different marital status gave importance to service marketing factors with statistical significance at the 0.05 level. The Sig. value is 0.001, which is less than 0.05, meaning that there are at least 1 couple of tourists with different marital status, giving different importance to service marketing factors.

The results of answering the second research objective.

Table 2: Regression-variance analysis of service marketing factors of Malaysian tourists influencing the decision to choose accommodation in Phuket, Thailand.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig
Regression	29.157	7	4.165	30.782	0.000 ^a
Residual	31.393	232	0.135		
Total	60.550	239			

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant) Price, distribution channel, marketing promotion, and physical components

From Table 2, the results of ANOVA showed that 4 independent variables were linearly correlated with the dependent variables. Test statistic ($F(7, 232) = 30.782$, Sig. 0.000), significance level of 0.05 (Sig < 0.05). Showed that the 4 independent variables had a linear relationship with the dependent variable.

Table 3: Regression coefficients of service marketing factors of Malaysian tourists influencing the decision to choose a hotel in Phuket, Thailand.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.045	0.225		4.644	0.000*
Price	0.113	0.052	0.136	2.185	0.030*
Distribution Channel	0.118	0.047	0.141	-2.488	0.014*
Marketing Promotion	0.321	0.058	0.355	5.555	0.000*
Physical Components	0.345	0.056	0.372	6.140	0.000*

Note: Dependent Variable: Malaysian tourists' decision to choose accommodation in Thailand R = 0.694, R Square = 0.482, Adjusted R Square = 0.466, Std. Error of the Estimate = 0.368

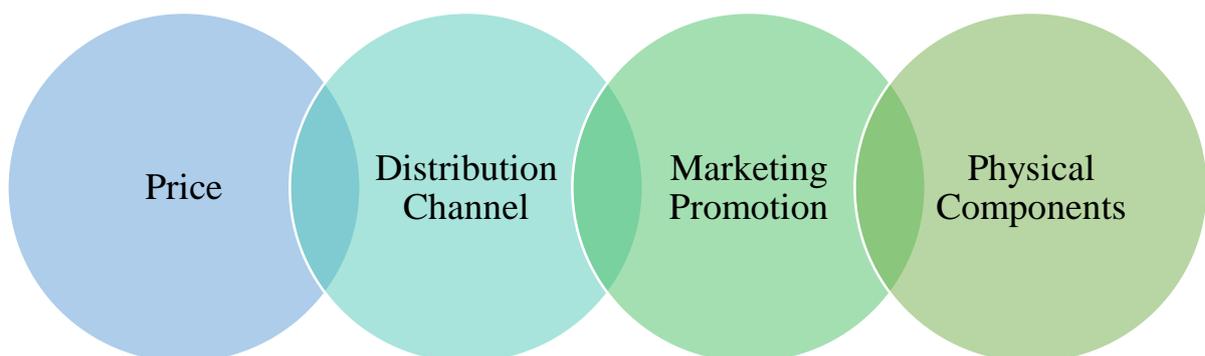
From Table 3, service marketing factors were products, price, distribution channels, marketing promotion, personnel, service process, and physical components. The results of the regression variance analysis of service marketing factors of Malaysian tourists influencing the decision to choose a hotel in Phuket revealed that there were 4 independent variables that were linearly correlated with dependent variables, namely price, distribution channel, marketing promotion and physical components. The multiple relation coefficient (R) was at 0.694 and the square of the multiple relation coefficient (R^2) was at 0.482. The adjusted multiple relation coefficient (Adjusted R^2) was at 0.466, explaining that the four independent variables were significant. The dependent variable was the decision to choose accommodation in Phuket of Malaysian tourists. The four independent variables could be used to write the forecast equation (\hat{Y}), price (X_1), distribution channel (X_2), marketing promotion (X_3), and physical component (X_4). Forecast Standard Error (SEE) was of 0.368 at 0.05 significance level, the forecast equation is obtained:

$$\hat{Y} = 1.045 + 0.113X_1 + 0.118X_2 + 0.321X_3 + 0.345X_4$$

The above equation shows that if the price side ($\beta = 0.136$) increases by 1-unit, decision-making increases by 0.113. The next factor is the channel side ($\beta = 0.141$) increases by 1-unit, decision-making increases by 0.118. Promotional units ($\beta = 0.355$) increased by 1 unit, Decision making increased by 0.321 units, and Physical component ($\beta = 0.372$) increased by 1 unit, Decision making increased by 0.345 units.

NEW KNOWLEDGE

From the forecast equation $\hat{Y} = 1.045 + 0.113X_1 + 0.118X_2 + 0.321X_3 + 0.345X_4$ It shows the service marketing factors of Malaysian tourists that influence the decision to choose a hotel in Phuket, Thailand. There were 4 variables:



The price factor was a service market factor that influences Malaysian travelers' accommodation choices. Because the Thai currency is stronger than the Malaysian currency. In each purchase, Malaysian tourists will consider the price that best suits their spending abilities. Therefore, entrepreneurs should formulate a price strategy that was suitable for the quality of service that will be able to grab the attention of Malaysian tourists. The hotel service rate must be set food and beverage or other additional services with fairness. That makes Malaysian tourists had a good attitude and interested and affect the decision to use the service. This factor was considered an important factor that Malaysian tourists pay attention to because

Malaysian tourists will adhere to the information they receive. When the service fee has been notified If there is a changed in higher prices or other expenses. More would make Malaysian tourists dissatisfied.

The distribution channel factor was a way to find information to make decisions about choosing the right hotel. Social media communication played the most role in Malaysian tourists' accommodation decision making followed by Information from travel agencies Thailand Tourism Exhibition in Malaysian travel magazine word-of-mouth for people who have visited Thailand and travel guide Therefore, entrepreneurs need to develop distribution channels both online (on-line) and offline (Off-line) to be effective so that Malaysian tourists can easily and conveniently access news and information about hotels.

The marketing promotion factor was the factor that Malaysian tourists pay high attention to. The Malaysian tourists pay attention to the details of the package information of the accommodation. Advertising through various media marketing activities between buyers and sellers that influence the decision to choose accommodation. In addition, Malaysian tourists would look for a place to stay near shopping or maritime activities or various entertainment activities. Because if talking about Thailand in the line of Malaysian tourists will think of the sea. night attractions shopping. Therefore, entrepreneurs should define campaign details or eye-catching promotions that could attract purchasing decisions, such as discounting on room rates. Providing special privileges for guests to receive a discount on food and beverage rates. There were Malaysian restaurants, etc.

The location factor and the physical element of the inn were the factors that Malaysian tourists prioritize when it comes to safety and the location of the impressive beauty creates a feeling of service. Therefore, entrepreneurs should decorate the campsite both inside and outside to be beautiful by bringing nature as part of the composition and create a unique feature that was uniquely different. But not lacking in the convenience of various amenities and there was a private corner that creates an atmosphere of freedom to relax. Including the location of the hotel those Malaysian tourists pay attention to be the location of the hotel that was convenient to travel. Most Malaysian tourists would choose a hotel that offers transfers from their accommodation to various places. Or there was a public bus through the hotel. Because this factor was what facilitates travel and making travel easier.

DISCUSS THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

From the study of service marketing factors of Malaysian tourists influencing the decision to choose a hotel in Phuket There are important issues that can be discussed as follows:

Discuss the results of the research answering the first objective. Malaysian tourists place a high level of overall service marketing factors in all 7 aspects. It found that marketing promotion was the factor that Malaysian tourists give the most importance. When considering each item, it was found that the room rate discount. It was the point that Malaysian tourists pay the most attention, followed by the privileges of stay such as stay 4 nights, pay 3 nights, promotion according to festivals. and discounts on food, beverages, and other additional services. This might be because Malaysian tourists look to promotions that would offer the most benefits per stay. Including considering the worthiness in terms of the service fee that you

have to pay compared to the service received which have the same opinion with the research of Techawatcharamongkol (2016) conducted a study on the decision to choose a 5-star hotel in the area of Hua Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, said that the overall marketing promotion had a high impact on the decision making. When classified by item, it was found that the top 3 places that tourists pay attention to be the hotels with travel booths in various places, marketing promotions in conjunction with credit cards, such as redeeming reward points, and having discounts in Festivals such as New Years, Birthdays.

Discuss the research findings answering the second objective from the analysis of different demographic characteristics such as sex, age, income, occupation, and marital status. Pay attention to different service marketing factors with statistical significance at the 0.05 level. This may be because different demographic characteristics will have different opinions, tastes, needs, and attitudes, for example, different genders give importance to the marketing mix is different. Most of the females are meticulous and meticulous in terms of the service quality of the staff. and the decoration of the inn which is more beautiful than the male which have the same opinion with Charoensiri's (2015) study on Factors and decision-making process for Thai tourists in choosing an accommodation in Muang district Nakhon Ratchasima province said that personal factors are gender and average monthly income according to research assumptions, i.e., tourists with different personal factors give different importance to factors in marketing. There are also similar opinions with Pongpanich's (2012) research study on Factors Influencing Thai Tourists' Choice of 3-Star Hotel in Pattaya Chonburi province said that demographic differences in age, education, occupation, and income pay attention to the different 8Ps service marketing mix. The researcher is of the opinion that people with different occupations and incomes, both of which are factors indicating the power or ability to spend on accommodation. A person who has a stable career and can earn a lot of money will choose the best hotel. There is a beautiful decoration of the place. The place is in a good location, easily accessible. They will decide to choose a hotel that is suitable for their own income, even if the rate of accommodation or other service charges. will have a high price Because he is a person who can earn income from his career and wants to use part of his income to spend on tourism to facilitate and benefit himself.

Discuss the research findings answering the third objective. Based on the regression analysis, it was found that the service marketing factors of Malaysian tourists Influencing the decision to choose a hotel in Phuket, it was found that there were 4 factors: price, distribution channel. marketing promotion and physical components.

In terms of price, it was found that Malaysian tourists gave a high level of importance. This is because Malaysian tourists want a variety of hotel rates. as a choice of stay and consider the occupancy rate as well as various expenses. accurately and clearly Because the behavior of Malaysian tourists is characterized by the need for clarity of service rates. And considering the value of the hotel service rate that is reasonable and worth the price. This agrees with Tongkham's (2008) study on Behavior and preferences in choosing the accommodation of tourists A case study in Ao Nang Krabi province has said that entrepreneurs should pay attention to the price of accommodation that is priced appropriately for the products and

services. Because it shows that the room price is appropriate, it will affect the decision to choose the service more.

Distribution channel, it was found that Malaysian tourists were given a high level of importance. Due to distribution channels, Malaysian tourists can easily find information and find complete information. This affects the decision to choose a hotel quickly. Including Malaysian tourists also consider the accessibility of the hotel whether it is easy to access the hotel or not. Can I travel by public transport? Near tourist attractions or community sources or not. because these factors affect travel The opinions are consistent with the research of Tantipidok and Wetprasit (2019). Factors affecting the accommodation selection behavior in Phuket of Generation Y tourists said that the marketing mix of distribution channels affecting the hotel selection behavior of tourists. In general, it is classified as very good. When considered in order of averages, the first three were commuting with the highest level of convenience, followed by a variety of payment methods. It is classified as a very criterion and the location of the accommodation near tourist attractions was very good.

Marketing promotion, it was found that Malaysian tourists were given a high level of importance. This is because Malaysian tourists consider the most beneficial and cost-effective marketing approaches to hotel marketing, such as advertising or offering incentives for extra value to drive purchasing decisions. Offering sales by using salespeople directly in contact with customers that show empathy Organizing promotions associated with the brand to enhance the brand's standing or create a positive feeling for customers who use the service. Including providing news and public relations about the organization and services to create attitudes. credibility and create a good image for the organization and tourists which has the same opinion with the idea of Wanwanich (2011) said that Marketing promotion is a collection of various methods of communicating with different markets. whether through advertising Individual sales activities promotional activities and other forms, both directly and indirectly through the media the researcher is of the opinion that marketing promotion factors are very important that entrepreneurs should pay attention to. This is because it is the most important factor for Malaysian tourists when deciding where to stay. This may be because it is the factor that is most accessible to Malaysian tourists without using the service. By how to find marketing information for the hotel that they are interested in from the Internet, word of mouth or other news sources.

Physical components, it was found that Malaysian tourists were given a high level of importance. Because Malaysian tourists want to experience the architecture and decoration of Phuket 's accommodation that is uniquely beautiful. In addition to the beauty of the inn. Malaysian tourists also look at the project of buildings and facilities that are safe, clean, and well-equipped. which have the same opinion with the research of Kaemorrakod (2011) study on Marketing mix factors affecting hotel choice among Thai tourists in Krabi said that physical factors influence decision-making to a large extent. in the hotel atmosphere. The Malaysian equipment and facilities are unique and modern. Decoration of the exterior and interior of the building.

SUGGESTION

1. Suggestions from the research

- 1.1. The accommodation industry should consider the appropriate location component. Because Malaysian tourists like to do activities during tourism, namely shopping, beach activities and entertainment activities, and historical tourism. If entrepreneurs could meet the needs of Malaysian tourists, it would be the first choice for them.
- 1.2. The accommodation industry should understand Malaysian culture and traditions for formulate a service strategy and Marketing strategies that are appropriate for their behaviors such as mealtimes, food, identity of Malaysian peoples as well as staff's mind service.

2. Suggestions for the next research

- 2.1. Government and private businesses should have policies in place to promote marketing promotions or exhibitions to promote sales to Malaysian tourists to know the advantages and benefits of tourism in Phuket, Thailand. To attract more Malaysian tourists to travel to Thailand because Malaysian tourists were considered a new market that cannot be overlooked.

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