

TOURISTS' PERCEPTION AFFECTING DECISION-MAKING ON VISITING NAKHON PHANOM

Sornsawan Chotiwtutideacha*, Phurichchaya Taeporamaysamai**
and Worrasit Wongadisai***

*Graduate Student of Kasetsart University, Thailand

E-mail Address: sornsawan_cho@hotmail.com

**Department of Business Management, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Management Science,
Kasetsart University, Thailand

E-Mail: ornuma.t@ku.ac.th, worrasit.w@ku.th

ABSTRACT

The purposes of the research were 1) to investigate the different demographic factors effects on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom. 2) to study perception of tourist attractions has positive effect on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom. In this research, the focus target population included the tourists visiting Nakhon Phanom. The sample size was 400 of tourists determined by Taro Yamane's formula from the total population of 1,074,937. The data collection was a questionnaire. Statistics used in data analysis were descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation (SD). The statistical hypothesis test consisted of t-test, F-test, one-way ANOVA, Pearson correlation coefficient analysis and multiple regression analysis.

The results found that the demographic factors in monthly incomes had effect on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom with a significance level of 0.05. In relation to, perception of tourist attractions agriculture, nature, and physical have positive effect on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom a significance level of 0.01. The coefficient of regression ($\beta = 0.298$), followed by the natural factors. The coefficient of regression ($\beta = 0.208$), followed by agriculture. The coefficient of regression ($\beta = 0.125$), followed by physical characteristics respectively.

Keywords- Perception of tourist attractions, Decision-making on visiting

INTRODUCTION

Background

In the present, tourism has brought about contributions to environmental conservation; simply speaking, when tourism occurs, communities in the tourist attractions are aware or recognize values of the environment as a tourism resource. With that recognition in their mind, it will promote collaboration on conserving the communities' landscape to attract more tourists, and tourism incomes can be further used to support conservation of the environment in those attractions, which can be deemed as maximizing the use of tourism resources.

Nakhon Phanom is a small province situated in the highlands near the bank of Mekong River. Formerly, it served as the center of KhotTra Boon prosperous Kingdom; it was originally located on the Laotian side or left side of Mekong River, south of the Xe Bang Fai river cave, opposite Phra That Phanom district. In the present, Nakhon Phanom has numerous tourist attractions in its twelve districts, including Mueang Nakhon Phanom, Pla Pak, ThaUthen, Ban Phaeng, That Phanom, Renu Nakhon, Na Kae, Si Songkhram, Na Wa, PhonSawan, Na Thom and Wang Yang. Each district has its own tourist attractions: Phra That Phanom housed at Wat Phra That Phanom in That Phanom district; Phra That ThaUthen at Phra That ThaUthen in ThaUthen; Phra That Prasit at Wat Phra That Prasit in Na Wa sub-district, Na Wa district; Phra That Maha Chai at Wat Khositaram in Maha Chai sub-district, Pla Pak; Phra That Renu Nakhon at Wat Phra That Renu in Renu Nakhon; Phra That Si Khun at Wat Phra That Si Khun in Na Kae; Phra That Nakhon at Wat Mahathat located in the municipal area, Soonthorn Wichit road around Mueang Nakhon Phanom dam. Apart from those places, each district still has other interesting tourist attractions; for instance, other tourist attractions in Mueang Nakhon Phanom are Wat Okatsribuabun, Wat Si Tep Pradittharam, Wat Maha That, Wat Nak Bun Anna, Wat Nak Bun Anna Nong Saeng, Wat Phosri, Nakhon Phanom Provincial Governor's Residence Museum, Suan Luang Rama IX, Na Muang Nakhon Phanom Dam, Si Khotrabun Golden Beach and the Thai-Vietnamese friendship village or Ban Na Chok.

In addition, there are still many tourist attractions in other districts. Consequently, the present study intended to conduct a case study on those attractions since Nakhon Phanom has attracted tourists' attention and

its popularity has been growing because of its new landmark PhayaSrisatta Nagara. Specifically, it aimed to investigate tourists' perception influencing decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom [1].

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examined tourists' perception of value affecting decision-making on tourism in Nakhon Phanom. In investigating the issue in question, theoretical frameworks and relevant theories were employed to determine variables, design instruments and discuss results.

Perception of tourist attractions [11]

According to Rattanachot (2010), Peter Drucker, a management expert, described perception as a reality of matters, which in a way refers to perception of such matters. Simply speaking, nobody recognizes the identity of matters but only what they are; thus, perception is a reality of such matters. Persons will be surrounded with stimuli from environment passing through our senses as in sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste; their perception of stimuli will be based on their interests [3].

The perception process refers to a cognitive process containing stimuli in the environment and the perception process consisting of observation, selection, interpretation and responses with the mentioned attitudes, motivation and behavior [3]. Value perception can be categorized into six types as follows:

Physical characteristics

Ryua and Han (2011) stated that physical environment features serve as an essential element in consumption decisions in respects of psychology and behavior when services are provided for convenience and customers' spending occurs for a moderate or long period in a specific atmosphere [5].

Environmental conservation

In reference to Charoensin (2015), environmental conservation can be referred to as the wise and maximum use and preservation of resources. In fact, it involves human beings and the environment; that is, benighted human actions can backfire or a counter effect on themselves inevitably. Many generations of human beings have already destroyed their races and civilization by their benighted actions, thus causing an effect on the later generation [9].

Social characteristics

Walters (1978) refers social characteristics to daily-life factors affecting consumption behavior; they compose of the reference group, family, social roles and consumer status [4]

Arts and culture

According to Suphap (1993), culture is a very broad term covers everything as in mental models and actions which reflect lifestyles of particular communities or societies. Humans have formulated rules and practice for social organization as well as belief, knowledge and technologies for managing and making use of the environment [6].

Nature

Taranatham (1995) stated that there are various types of natural resources and the environment, each of which has its own features and identity; therefore, in management, principles of management should be determined in compliance with types, features and identity of such natural resources and the environment [7].

Agriculture

According to Sawaenganuchai (2014), tourism is an activity which humans perform to relax themselves and alleviate stress at work. In general, tourism can be referred to as traveling regardless of distance or an overnight stay. Agro-tourism is one of the tourism types which will help generate and distribute incomes to the locality by allowing tourists to visit agricultural communities to expose themselves to local lifestyles, customs and culture [8].

Tourists' decision-making

Sangkaw (2011) stated that decision-making is a very important matter which all humans must encounter and perform regularly, for decision-making will enable them to choose what is deemed most suitable for themselves. Thus, the present study explored the decision-making process and behavior [10]. With the review of concepts and theories on decision-making, decision-making has been defined by several theorists.

Thosuwonchinda (1992) defined decision-making as selection of the best choice among many others which meets his/her own needs.

As for Usuk (1994), decision-making refers to opting for one particular or many practices; the selection is thoroughly weighed whether it complies with organizational goals.

Meanwhile, in Wongput's definition (1996), decision-making is the consideration of the best choice among available alternatives; leaders shall make a decision logically and reasonably, for logical and reasonable decision-making is deemed most effective and can result in effective outcomes.

As discussed above, decision-making can be defined as the consideration based on information, reasoning and analytical thinking for selecting the best approach which can fulfill organizational goals most effectively.

There are three elements of decision-making as follows:

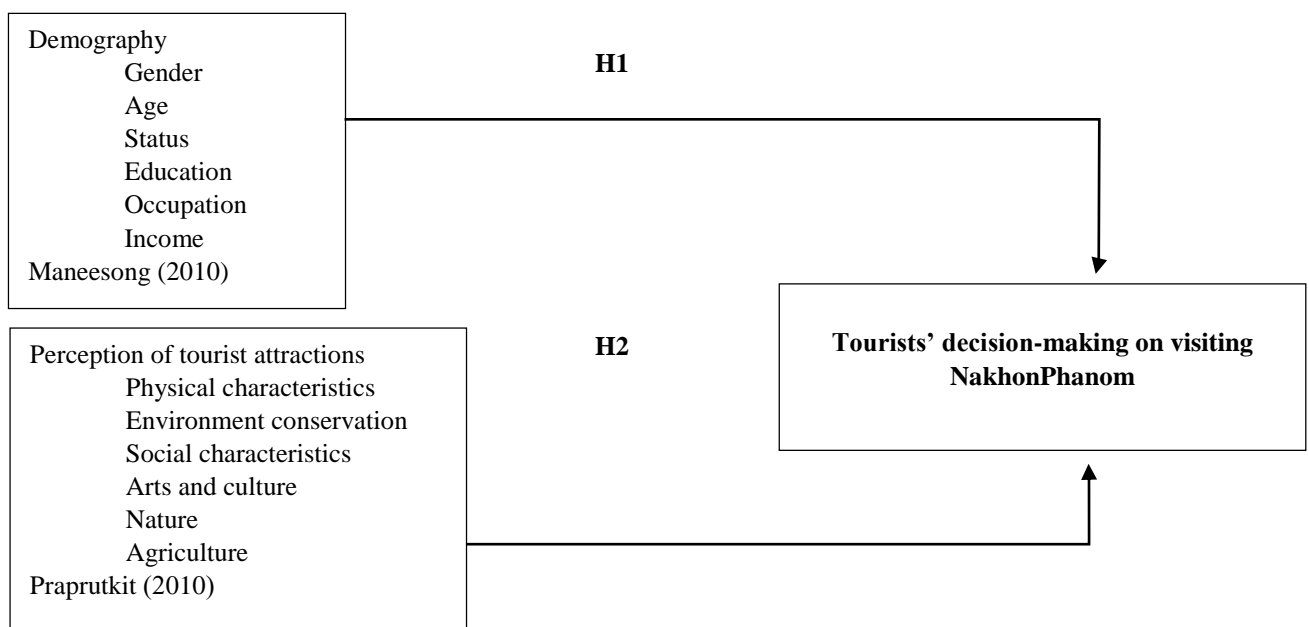
1. A decision maker is capable of estimating or assessing values, benefits and importance of each alternative.
2. An alternative is faced by a decision maker; without it, there is no decision or choice to be made.
3. Outcomes of past alternatives are dependent on the selection and scenarios, each of which may result in different outcomes [2].

CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Based on the review of literature, concepts, theories and related studies, the present study investigated tourists' value perception affecting decision-making on traveling to Nakhon Phanom. The hypotheses and conceptual frameworks in this study were as follows:

H1: Different demographic factors effects on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom.

H2: Perception of tourist attractions has positive effect on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom.



In investigating tourists' perception affecting decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom, the sample in this study included 400 of tourists traveling to Nakhon Phanom.]. Data were collected through 5-point Likert scale questionnaire surveys. This research study was cross-sectional as the data were collected at a single point of time from the key respondents. Content validity was applied to ensure the accuracy of an assessment tool. Cronbach's alpha was conducted to test for reliability as shown in Table 1. The cronbach's alpha value of the scale of all variables is greater than 0.700, so it shows that the scale has very good reliability. Data were analyzed by descriptive statistics including t-test, F-test, One Way ANOVA, Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regressions.

Table 1
Result of measure validation

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Physical characteristics	.751
Environmental conservation	.761
Social characteristics	.773
Arts and culture	.861
Nature	.759
Agriculture	.825
Tourists' decision-making	.824

Table 2
Description of the Respondents

Personal background	Number	Percent <small>n = 400</small>
Gender		
men	152	38.0
women	248	62.0
Age		
Under 20	29	7.3
20 - 30 Y	112	28.0
31 - 40 Y	106	26.5
41 - 50 Y	95	23.8
51 - 60 Y	49	12.3
Upper 60	9	2.3
Status		
Single	183	45.8
Married	188	47.0
Divorced	29	7.3
Education		
Under Bachelor	85	21.3
Bachelor	239	59.8
Master's	72	18.0
Upper Master's	4	1.0
Occupation		
Farmers	10	2.5
Employees	30	7.5
Trading	20	5.0
Private Employee	31	7.8
State Enterprise Employees	21	5.3
Government officials	190	47.5
Student	69	17.3
Other	29	7.3
Monthly income		
Under 15,000 B	155	38.8
15,001 – 20,000 B	72	18.0
20,001 – 25,000 B	49	12.3
25,001 – 30,000 B	51	12.8
30,001 - 35,000 B	42	10.5
Upper 35,000 B	31	7.8
Total	400	100

Table 2 According to personal information can be discussed below.

Based on the gender, 248 of the respondents, accounting for 62.0 percent, were female, whereas 152 of them, 38.0, were male.

In terms of age, 112 of the respondents, representing 28.0 percent, were aged 20-30, followed by 106 of them 26.5 percent in the age group of 31-40, 95 of them 23.8 percent in the age group of 41-50 and 49 of them

12.3 percent at the age of 51-60.29 of them, 7.3 percent, were under the age of 20 and 9 of them, 2.3 percent, were over the age of 60.

On marital status, 188 of the respondents, constituting 47.0 percent, were married, while 183 of them, 45.8, were single and 29 of them, 7.3, were divorced.

Regarding education, 239 of the respondents, accounting for 59.8 percent, attained a bachelor's degree, while 85 of them, 21.3, had a degree lower than a bachelor's degree. 72 of them, 18.0 percent, had a master's degree, whereas 4 of them, 1.0, attained a degree higher than a master's degree.

On occupations, 190 of the respondents, 47.5 percent, were government officials, followed by 69 of them, 17.3, being a student. Thirty-one of them, 7.8, were a private company employee, while 30 of them, 7.5, were an employee, and twenty-nine of them, 7.3, had other non-listed occupations. Twenty-one of them, 5.3, were a state enterprise employee, while twenty of them, 5.0 were a merchant and 10 of them, 2.5, were farmers.

In relation to monthly incomes, 155 of the respondents, representing 38.8 percent, earned less than 15,000 baht, while seventy-two of them, 18.0, earned 15,000 – 20,001 baht and fifty-one of them, 12.8, had an income of 25,001 – 30,000 baht. Forty-nine of them, 12.3 percent, received an income of 20,001 – 25,000 baht, whereas forty-two of them, 10.5 percent, earned 30,001 – 35,000 baht and thirty-one of them, 7.8, had an income of 35,000 baht.

The Descriptive Statistics

On general background of the respondents, 62.0 percent of the respondents were female, while 38.0 were male. Most of the respondents, specifically 28.0 percent, were aged 20-30, and 47.0 percent of them were married. What's more, 59.8 percent of the respondents attained a bachelor's degree; 47.5 of them were a government official, and 38.8 of them earned a monthly income below 15,000 baht.

Hypothesis Testing

In this study, the correlation analysis was conducted to identify the correlation among variables, where multiple regression analysis was carried out to test the hypotheses. Abbreviations of variables were provided as follows:

- Physi stands for physical characteristics
- Envi stands for environmental conservation
- Soci stands for social characteristics
- Artcul stands for arts and culture
- Natur stands for nature
- Agri stands for agriculture
- Deci stands for decision-making

Table 3
Correlation Analysis between independent variables

Variable	Physi	Envi	Soci	Artcul	Natur	Agri	Deci
\bar{X}	3.88	4.03	3.92	4.13	3.96	4.06	4.18
SD.	0.625	0.608	0.662	0.647	0.642	0.663	0.640
Physi	1						
Envi	.515**	1					
Soci	.511**	.586**	1				
Artcul	.409**	.574**	.583**	1			
Natur	.459**	.479**	.544**	.495**	1		
Agri	.419**	.509**	.525**	.603**	.623**	1	
Deci	.427**	.454**	.442**	.447**	.534**	.570**	1
** P<0.05							

Table 3 shows that the relationship between the variables that are related was not exceed 0.80. Hair et al. (2010) described that he relationship between the variables must be less than 0.80 that the relationship higher than 0.80 may cause Multicollinearity. The research found the relationship between the independent variables was not exceeding 0.80. Multicollinearity problem was not found. Therefore, it can be future tested by using multiple regression analysis.

Hypotheses were tested to analyze the effects of factors and tourists' perception influencing decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom, classified by personal factors using t-test for the sample. F-test was also employed to identify differences of the mean score among different groups, specifically at a significance level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 1: Different demographic factors effects on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom.

Table 4
Research Results from Hypotheses Testing for Different demographic factors

Variables	t-test, F-test	Sig.
Gender	t=.289	.772
Age	F=.972	.434
Status	F=.972	.971
Education	F=1.445	.229
Occupation	F=1.453	.183
Monthly income	F=4.793	.029

The table showed that monthly income has effected on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom with F-test of 4.793. Thus, hypothesis 1 is partial support.

The research results from hypotheses testing perception of tourist attractions has positive effect on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom were presented in Table5.

Hypothesis 2: Perception of tourist attractions has positive effect on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom.

Table 5
Research Results from Hypotheses Testing for Perception of tourist attractions

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.004	.203		4.933	.000
1 Physi	.128	.050	.125	2.583	.010
Envi	.105	.057	.100	1.853	.065
Soci	.026	.053	.026	.480	.631
Artcul	.040	.054	.041	.744	.457
Natur	.207	.053	.208	3.889	.000
Agri	.288	.054	.298	5.346	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Deci

Based on Table 5, in relation to, perception of tourist attractions agriculture, nature, and physical have positive effect on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom a significance level of 0.01. The coefficient of regression ($\beta = 0.298$), followed by the natural factors. The coefficient of regression ($\beta = 0.208$), followed by agriculture. The coefficient of regression ($\beta = 0.125$), followed by physical characteristics respectively.

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to investigate the different demographic factors effects on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom and study perception of tourist attractions has positive effect on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom.. The findings revealed that different demographic factors had

different effects on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom; their income was found to affect decision-making the most. On value perception, perception of tourist attractions was correlated with decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom; in particular, agriculture influenced their decision-making the most, followed by nature and physical characteristics. Nonetheless, there were other factors which may have an effect on tourists' decision-making on visiting Nakhon Phanom; new physical features, environment, agriculture and other factors which may potentially affect decision-making should be investigated further in future research.

REFERENCE

- [1] Wanthanom, C. 2009. Tourism Of World: Definition and importance of tourism industry. Nakhon Phanom Tourism. 2017. Office of Nakhon Phanom, City Hall, Nakhon Phanom. History of Nakhon Phanom (online). Retrieved October 3, 2018, from <http://www.nakhonphanom.go.th/nakhonphanom/traval.php>.
- [2] Praditrod, C. 2014. Components of tourist attractions and tourism motivation affecting to working people's decision making to travelling in vicinity areas. Master independent study in Business Administration, Bangkok University.
- [3] Qianwen, L. 2016. Perceived price and travel value affecting satisfaction and loyalty of Thailand' tourists toward travel to China. Master independent study in Business Administration, Bangkok University.
- [4] Intarasarn, K. 2015. Social cultural and psychological factors influencing the customer' expectation in using the service of couple matching business in Bangkok Metropolitan District. Master independent study in Business Administration, Bangkok University
- [5] Pinyopragran, M. 2015. Physical environment, service quality, social media and food quality affecting intention to revisit Vietnamese restaurants in Bangkok. Master independent study in Business Administration, Bangkok University
- [6] Tabsirak, A. 2012. Potential development of cultural tourism management for the Nyahkur ethnic group of Thepsathit district, Chaiyaphum province. Master Independent study in Tourism Management, KhonKaen University.
- [7] Taranatham *et al.* 1995. Concepts on management of natural resources and environment (online). Retrieved October 20, 2018, from <http://kanchanapisek.or.th/kp6/sub/book/book.php?book=19&chap=1&page=t19-1-infodetail03.html>.
- [8] Thongroad, C. 2018. Agro - tourism management cruise along the garden, Khlong Mahasawat, Phutthamonthon District, Nakhonpathom Province. Master thesis in Public and Private Management, Sillapakorn University.
- [9] Chuangweruwan, N. 2013. Participation in natural resources and environment conservation of people in the area under responsibility of Sato sub-district administrative organization, Khao Saming district. Master thesis in Public and Private Management, Burapha University.
- [10] Seyidov, J. and R. Adomaitiene. 2016. Factors Influencing Local Tourists' Decision-Making On Choosing A Destination : A Case Of AZERBAIJAN. Faculty of Economics Vilnius University.
- [11] Ada and Candy. 2016. Motivations and perceived value of volunteer tourists from Hong Kong. School of Hotel and Tourism Management The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.