

Tourism Elements Influence the Decision Making in Traveling to Visit Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand

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Abstract

The objectives of this research are 1) to study the levels of opinions of the tourists on the tourism elements of Nakhon Pathom and the decision making in traveling to Nakhon Pathom, 2) to study the influence of the tourism elements on the decision making of the tourists in traveling to Nakhon Pathom. The research results reveal that the tourism elements on the decision making of the tourists in traveling for the entire picture are in the high level. When considering each aspect, it is found that every aspect is also in the high level. When analyzing each element, it is found that the decision making in traveling is influenced by the tourism elements with statistical significance. When analyzing the weight value, it is found that the aspect of facilities and the residence is ($\lambda y=0.93$), the aspect of activities is ($\lambda y=0.89$), and the aspect of attraction with the access is ($\lambda y=0.89$). When secondarily considering confirmatively, it is found that the aspect of attraction is having the good image ($\lambda y=0.87$), the aspect of access is having the routes to link the tourist attractions ($\lambda y=0.81$), the aspect of facilities is having the clean toilets in the sufficient quantity ($\lambda y=0.80$), the aspect of residence is having the good selection of quality food for the tourists ($\lambda y=0.80$), the aspect of activities is having the tourism activities creating the happiness and not being against the principles of moralities and ethics ($\lambda y=0.81$). The tourism elements have the direct influence on the decision making in traveling to visit Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom for 97% and the independent variables on the decision making to travel for 94%.

Keywords: Tourism, Decision Making, Phra Pathom Chedi

Introduction

Tourism is one of human activities which are done to relieve stress from regular work. Normally, tourism means traveling from one place to another regardless whether the distance is near or far. Such traveling can be either with or without overnight stay. This is for leisure, recreation, education on ecotourism, agro-tourism, geological tourism or marine ecotourism. Thailand is the country with abundant natural and cultural resources. Tourism in Thailand is popular among domestic and foreign tourists. Tourism is the industry bringing a lot of revenue to the country. Both government and private sectors are aware of the importance of this industry in bringing foreign currency into Thailand. Thailand has tourism potential because of its natural resources and unique cultural attractions spreading across different regions of the country. Due to the tourism potential combined with revenues from service provision and government support, the tourism industry expands widely having the Ministry of Tourism and Sports as the main supporter. The main goal is to make tourism one of the major industries with sustainable growth and to become the tourism hub of Asia that can distribute income and provide the opportunities for community development to the tourism administrators both central and regional to respond to the government policy by increasing the efforts in expanding the economic growth in tourism and seeking out the remarkable tourist attractions to be publicized to attract the tourists to visit their provinces. Previously, a

lot of Thai people traveled abroad causing a lot of money to flow from the country. From this reason, the strategic plan is required for attracting the tourists to travel in the country more. Nakhon Pathom Province is one of the potential provinces to be developed as the major tourist attraction of the country because of its long history. Nakhon Pathom is located in the south of Bangkok only 56 km far. There are various interesting tourist attractions in culture, health, agriculture and ecology. There are also agricultural products and OTOP products. The province is the heaven of the food lovers as in the province's famous slogan, "Sweet pomelos, white rice, beautiful daughter, sweet glutinous rice roasted in bamboo joints, beautiful Sanam Chan, precious Phuttamonthon, and high-rise Phra Pathom Chedi" (Tour on Thai Com., 2015). The historical and cultural attractions in Nakhon Pathom are quite popular. According to the research on the approaches in the brand promotion of agricultural products and tourist attractions to the development of tourism industry in Nakhon Pathom Province (Boonsiri et al., 2009), it is found that the top five tourist destinations most visited by travelers are; 1. Phra Pathom Chedi calculated as 92.80%, 2. Wat Rai King calculated as 80.50%, 3. Samphran Elephant Ground & Zoo calculated as 65.30%. This can be seen that the most tourist attractions are historical and cultural attractions. Therefore, the researcher is interested in studying the tourism factors influencing the decision to travel to Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom Province. It is important and will be useful for planning to publicize the tourism of Nakhon Pathom leading to this research.

Objectives

1. To study the level of tourists' opinions on tourist elements of Nakhon Pathom Province and the decision to travel to Nakhon Pathom.
2. To study the influences of tourist elements on the decision of the tourists to travel to Nakhon Pathom.

Literature Review

Concept on tourism elements 5 As

Kunlawadee Lamaichin (2009) stated that in order that tourism can be successful, the tourist attractions must have 5 main elements called 5As as follows:

1. Attraction means tourism resources that attract the attention of tourists or have a unique charm from natural beauty such as white beaches, colourful coral reefs including various kinds of fish, forests with several kinds of plants or man-made splendour.
2. Accessibility means attracting the tourists to visit tourist attractions by facilitating the tourists to conveniently reach the tourist attractions. Although the tourist attraction is beautiful, if it lacks of convenience in accessing, the tourists will not travel to. The responsible travel agencies need to carry out a comfortable transport arrangement.
3. Amenity means in traveling to any place, what the tourists want to receive is the convenience in traveling. The agencies related to tourisms must provide the facilities and fundamental infrastructures in the tourist attractions such as electricity, water supply, roads, and communication system.
4. Accommodation means in traveling, what the tourists want is lodging. This is because in some trips, there may be overnight stay in the tourist attractions. For facilitating the tourists, there should be the arrangement of lodging inside the tourist attractions as well.
5. Activity means the activities occurring in the tourist attractions such as trekking, rafting, rowing, or dancing activity, festival arrangement, wrist-binding ceremony, etc. เป็นต้น

Dickman (1996) stated that Tourist Destination and Tourism Product is required to consist of 5 main elements or 5As as follows:

1. Attraction is a very important element as it attract tourist to travel in such places. The tourist attractions can be classified as religious sites, beaches, mountains, national parks, festivals, or beautiful and unique places. Generally, the famous tourist attractions must have more than one attractions. For example, Phuket has various tourist attractions such as beaches, water activities, entertainment places including interesting architecture.
2. Accessibility means the convenience that make the tourists or travellers reach the places rapidly, safely, and conveniently. The tourist sites must provide the transportation system consisting of transportation routes, vehicles, and stations. The transport operators have the aim in transporting people and goods to the destinations.
3. Amenity means basic facilities and infrastructures for tourists such as public utilities, electricity, water supply, telephones, toilets and needed facilities for tourists such as hospitals, banks, post offices, and emergency services which are important as well.
4. Accommodation: The tourist sites should provide sufficient number of lodging with the variety in prices and service provisions suitable for the places. Moreover, the lodges should not be located too far from the tourist sites.
5. Activity means what the tourists can do in the duration of rest and travel in such places in order to make the travel and rest time of the tourists more interesting. The activities should be various and match the demands of the tourists; for example, activities related to expenditures, marine activities such as scuba diving, swimming, etc.

Phayom Thammabut (2006) classified the tourism elements into 5 types as follows:

1. Accessibility is having suitable infrastructure system such as airports, transport system as well as the services of transport industry such as air, land, and marine transports which can facilitate the tourists to be able to reach the Destination or Attraction.
2. Accommodation for overnight stay is various types of lodges such as hotels, resorts, guesthouses, home stays. The lodges will have facilities in various levels causing the prices and services to be in different levels such as restaurants, bars, swimming pools, fitness centres, sauna, business centres, and other facilities.
3. Attractions is the most important element of travel as it is the point to attract tourists to travel to such places. The tourist attractions may be the unique natural sites such as Doi Inthanon having the biodiversity of the Himalayas or history or cultural attractions such as Prasat Phanom Rung showing the prosperity of the Khmer empire or rural tourism to experience the way of life of the villagers to learn about the local wisdom and ancient archaeological sites such as Ban Chiang culture, etc.
4. Tourist Activities and Recreational Activities are the important elements in the present day because tourism does not mean just the travel to visit ancient places, monuments, or the beauty of nature but the tourists can also have the opportunity to do various activities. All of these activities are the experiences that will be in the memory of tourists. Moreover, these activities often cause the income distribution.
5. Ancillary such as services of restaurants, hospital, post offices, petrol station, shops, souvenir shops, toilets, etc. The five elements should exist on the basis of Destination Management System (DMS).

Concepts on the decision-making

According to Flekel (2013), the goal of every marketer in the consumer's context is that you want to know how consumers make the decisions and how you can do to make them decide to buy your products or services. The 5 steps of the consumer's decision making are the steps to search, compare, choose the products or services, and evaluate the decision-making.

1. Problem recognition means most decisions start with certain problems. The consumers want, demand, want to be satisfied, or the consumers feel that something is missing and they need to solve such problems to have regular feeling. If you can schedule the duration that

your target group can develop these needs or requirements, it will be the perfect time to advertise for them.

2. Searching process means that in the searching process, we may conduct the research to find the products or services that can respond the needs or demands of customers. The search engines have become our primary research tool for answers as it is the easy way to find the answers.

3. The assessment on the alternative means when the consumers have determined what to meet their needs or demands, they will begin to find the best deal which may depend on the prices, quality, or other factors that are important for them.

4. Selection process means after collecting all of the criteria for making decision, the customers decide what to buy or do. They are already at risk and have the clarity on what they want.

5. Evaluation on the decision results means when we make the decision to purchase or fulfil the demands, the customers must evaluate their own decision whether they will repeat the purchase over the usage lifetime or not. If not or having the bad experiences, they will make us feel depressed forever. On the other hand, if the experience is excellent, it will create loyalty to the brand and the customers can continue to tell other customers which will become the disseminator for our brand.

According to Kotler & Keller (2006), the decision making in using the services of the consumers can be considered following the 5 processes.

1. Problem Recognition means the behaviours of service use is initiated by the consumer's needs that may be derived from outside stimuli such as motivational advertising media or seeing the surrounding people use such products or from inside such as basic needs, etc.

2. Search process: After the consumers have the needs, they will search and study the information about the product. This is the step that will be followed. However, the searching process may not happen if the consumers need the product very much and can buy the product immediately.

3. Evaluation Alternatives: After the consumers have already searched for the information, then the consumer will understand and evaluate the alternatives. That means the consumers have to decide which brands to use or what service to use. Each consumer has different decision-making options depending on the situation of the decision and the available choices. Marketers need to know various methods that the consumers use in alternative assessment. The evaluation process is not easy and is not the only process that can be applied to all consumers.

4. Selection stage: The assessment on the alternatives of decision-making allows consumers to prioritize in choosing to use the service. The next step is to consider the attitudes of the others on the decision making and the Unexpected Situation. That the consumers can evaluate and choose the product or brand does not mean that the use of service will occur because of both factors. It possibly causes the risks from choosing to consume such product as well.

5. Evaluation of decision: After having used the service, the consumers will experience the consumption which may be satisfied or not. If the consumers are satisfied and they know the advantages of the product, it will lead to the repurchase or introduction to new consumers. On the contrary, if not satisfied, the consumers may stop using the service next time and may cause bad effects consequently from the word of mouth resulting in less consumers using the services as well.

Related researches

Atchara Sombatnantha (2012) conducted the research on the behaviours of Chinese tourists traveling to Thailand. The study results indicated that 51.5% of the tourists were male, 48.5% of them were female aged from 30-39 years accounted for 59.3%. 59.3% of them graduated with bachelor's degree. 52.8% of them were married. 45.5% were the company employees.

74.5% of them travelled with tour companies. Regarding 5A'S, it was found that their purpose was to relax for 59.9%. About the opinions of the questionnaire respondents on the tourism elements, it was found that in the attractions, the level of opinions was the most followed by the Accessibility, Amenities, Accommodations, and Awareness, respectively.

Chittaworn Praditrod (2014) studied the factors of tourism attractions and the motivation factors on tourism affecting the decision making in traveling in metropolitan areas of working-aged people in Bangkok. The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors of tourist attractions and factors of tourist incentives affecting the decision making in traveling in metropolitan areas of working-aged people in Bangkok using the close-ended questionnaires to collect the data from 400 persons in Bangkok metropolis. The statistics used in the data analysis were descriptive statistics; percentage, mean, standard deviation, and the inferential statistics used to test the hypothesis were Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis. The study results revealed that the respondents were mostly male aged from 21-30 years old. They were single and graduated with the bachelor's degree earning 15,001-30,000 baht per month. They were employed in private companies. The results of hypothesis test revealed that the factors of tourism incentives affect the decision making in choosing to travel in metropolitan areas of working-aged people in Bangkok with the statistical significance at 0.05 level. The factors of tourist attractions influenced the decision making in traveling in metropolitan areas of working-aged people in Bangkok.

Natthapong Kuma (2006) studied the tourism behaviors of the tourists in Pai District, Mae Hong Son Province, with the three objectives; to study the behavior of tourists in Pai District, Mae Hong Son Province, to study the tourists' opinions on factors influencing their travels to Pai district, Mae Hong Son province, and to study the satisfaction of tourists on traveling to Pai District, Mae Hong Son Province. The data was collected by distributing the questionnaires to 389 participants; 294 foreigners and 95 Thai. The statistics used in the data analysis were the descriptive statistics and tests. The opinions of travelers having factors affecting the travel to Pai District, Mae Hong Son Province were tested by using the chi-square statistics. The results indicated that most tourists were women and they came for relaxing. They seek for the data from friends. They mostly traveled by private car. The most popular time in travelling was from November to February. The site where most tourists visited was Tha Pai Pong Nam Ron. The total cost was about 2,194.90 baht per day.

Yutthana Kampha and Akkarakit Phatthanasamphan (2016) studied the 5A'S tourism elements influencing the decision making in traveling to Khao Chi Chan tourist attraction of Chinese tourists. The objectives were 1. To study the individual factors influencing the decision-making process to visit Khao Chi Chan of Chinese tourists, 2. To study the 5A'S elements influencing the decision-making process to travel to Khao Chi Chan. It was found that most of the respondents had the opinions on their decision to travel to Khao Chi Chan. Most of Chinese tourists decided to travel to Khao Chi Chan because they wanted to study religion, art, and culture. They seek the information from other tourists. There was the comparison on activities of other attractions with the selected location. They decided to come to travel because they want to do the activities as they wanted. Most of them return to Khao Chi Chan again and the respondents commented on the 5A'S tourism that in the Attractions, it was found that the reputation of the carved Buddha image had the highest level of opinion. In Accessibility, it was found that there were shuttle buses from the resort to Khao Chi Chan having very high level of opinion. About the Amenities, it was found that having the restaurants and beverage sufficiently for servicing had very high level of opinion. Regarding the Accommodations, it was found that having the accommodation available near the tourist attractions sufficiently had high level of opinion. In the Awareness, it was found that having the staffs to provide the services in the tourist attractions and being friendly with the tourists had very high level of opinions.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Tourism elements 5A's

1. Attractions
2. Accessibility
3. Amenities
4. Accommodation
5. Awareness

Kunlawadee Lamaichin (2009),
Phayom Thammabut (2006),
Dickman (1996)



Dependent Variables

Decision-making process in traveling

1. Problem recognition
2. Search process
3. Evaluating alternatives
4. Selection stage
5. Evaluation of decision

(Flekel (2013), Kotler & Keller (2006))

Method

Population and Sample

The population consists of totalling 899,491 Thai tourists who come to visit Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom (Nakhon Pathom Statistical Office, 2013)

The sample group consists of 400 tourists visiting Phra Pathom Chedi. There are 400 people in Nakhon Pathom Province based on Yamane's sampling calculation (Yamane, 1967) with tolerances of $\pm 5\%$. The sample group of 400 persons are selected using Accidental Sampling method.

Data Collection

The researcher collected the data from June-September, 2017, by using the questionnaires obtained from the review of related literatures and researches. In testing the quality of tools used in the data collection of this research, the tools are applied to examine the Validity and Reliability as follows. The Validity in all questions has the value over 0.5 (in the range from 0.67-1.00. Meanwhile, the results of analysis and Reliability are passed in all questions as the value is over 0.6 in the range of 0.71-0.90. The questionnaires are used to collect the data from 400 tourists coming to travel in the area of Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom.

Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics are used in analysing the Mean and the ready-made program is used in testing the hypotheses to indicate the tourism elements whether they influenced the decision making to travel to Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom. The questionnaires were used to examine and evaluate by using the index of consistency, descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and analysing the influence routes from the ready-made computer program.

Results

From general information, most of tourists are women calculated as 51.7%. Most tourists are in the age of 21-30 years calculated as 35.8%. The educational level was in the secondary level calculated as 36.3%. 46.8% of them have the married status. Most of them are merchants/own the business for 28.2% with the monthly income of 10,001-20,000 baht calculated as 31.5%.

For the opinions on the tourism elements of Thai tourists traveling to Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom, in the entire picture, it is found to be in the high level ($\bar{X}=4.07$). When considering each aspect, all items are found to be in the high level; Attractions ($\bar{X}=4.19$), accessibility ($\bar{X}=4.13$), activity ($\bar{X}=4.05$), accommodations ($\bar{X}=4.04$), and amenities ($\bar{X}=3.95$) ($n = 400$).

Opinions	\bar{X}	S.D.	Level of opinions
Attractions	4.19	.57	High
Accessibility	4.13	.60	High
Activity	4.05	.70	High
Accommodations	4.04	.65	High
Amenities	3.95	.69	High
Total	4.07	.55	High

The results of study on the tourism elements influencing the decision making to travel to Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom, are as follows:

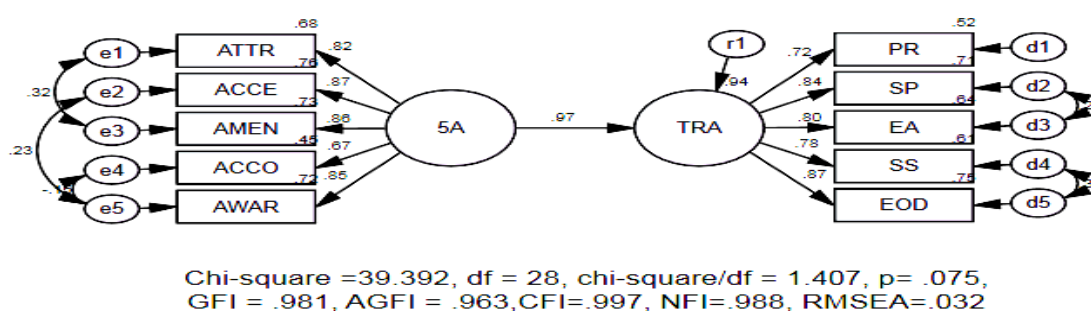


Figure 1 Tourism elements influencing the decision making to travel to Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom

From analyzing the weight value of the elements, it is found that the factor of tourism elements (5A) has the weight value of elements arranged in order from the most to the least as Accessibility (ACCE), Amenities (AMEN), Activity (AWAR), Attractions (ATTR), and Accommodations (ACCO) with the weight value of elements (λ_x) of 0.87, 0.86, 0.85, 0.82, and 0.67, respectively.

Factors of tourism elements (5A)	Weight value of the elements (λ_x)
Accessibility (ACCE)	0.87
Amenities (AMEN)	0.86
Activity (AWAR)	0.85
Attractions (ATTR)	0.82
Accommodations (ACCO)	0.67

In analyzing the weight value of the elements of the dependent variable which is the decision making to travel (TRA) arranged in order from the most to the least as evaluation of results after traveling (EOD), searching for information (SP), evaluation of alternatives (EA), decision making to travel (SS), and problem recognition (PR) with the weight value of elements (λ_y) of 0.87, 0.84, 0.80, 0.78, and 0.72, respectively.

Decision making to travel (TRA)	Weight value of the elements (λ_y)
Evaluation of results after traveling (EOD)	0.87
Searching for information (SP)	0.84
Evaluation of alternatives (EA)	0.80
Decision making to travel (SS)	0.78
Problem recognition (PR)	0.72

Discussion

According to the research results on the tourism elements influence the decision making in traveling to visit Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom, it is found that the tourism elements (5A) has the weight value of elements arranged in order from the most to the least as Accessibility (ACCE), Amenities (AMEN), Activity (AWAR), Attractions (ATTR), and Accommodations (ACCO) with the weight value of elements (λ_x) of 0.87, 0.86, 0.85, 0.82, and 0.67, respectively. This is correspondent with the research results of Chittaworn Praditrod (2014) conducting the research on the factors of tourism attractions and the motivation factors on tourism affecting the decision making in traveling in metropolitan areas of working-aged people in Bangkok. The results of his research found that the factors of tourism attractions affect the decision making in traveling in metropolitan areas of working-aged people in Bangkok with statistical significance at 0.05 level. This is also correspondent with the theories of Kunlawadee Lamaichin (2009) describing that the tourism can be successful if the tourist attractions contain the importance 5 elements (5As); Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities, Accommodation, and Activities. Similarly, this agrees with the research of Yutthana Kampha and Akkarakit Phatthanasamphan (2016) on the 5A'S tourism elements influencing the decision making in traveling to Khao Chi Chan tourist attraction of Chinese tourists. Their study results revealed that the factors of tourism attractions in the lodges and tourism promotion influenced the behaviors in traveling to Thailand of Chinese tourists with statistical significance at 0.05 level. This is also in accordance with the study of Atchara Sombatnantha (2012) on the behaviours of Chinese tourists traveling to Thailand. Her research results revealed that the factors of tourism attractions, lodges and tourism promotion influenced the behaviors in traveling to Thailand of Chinese tourists with statistical significance at 0.05 level as well.

Recommendations

1. The government agencies should improve and develop the accommodation of tourist attractions to be varied and meet the needs in order to yield good results for tourism to Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom
2. The government agencies and people should help preserving the historical and cultural identity of the tourist attractions more.
3. The government agencies and people should have more tourism activities without causing damage to Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom

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