

## ปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจเลือกโรงแรมของนักท่องเที่ยวในจังหวัดบุรีรัมย์ Factors Affecting to Tourists in Choosing Accommodation in Buriram Province

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to understand tourists' behavior in choosing accommodation in Muang district, Buriram province. The researcher aims to ensure that each host provides experiences that travelers are looking for in order for the business owner to improve their products and services to serve up customers need. The result from this research will be providing to hotel and accommodation owner in Muang District, Buriram Province.

The research methods in this research allow interviewer to gain qualitative data from the tourists. The data was collected from 200 tourists in Buriram area from 1st January- to 31st March, 2014 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 result of this research revealed that tourists are looking for accommodation via internet the most. The aspect of products and services important to the tourists are the price of accommodation which should be suitable for the quality. In addition, the accommodation should provide with variety of room price ranges. Moreover, the results indicated that Speed of service is another aspect travelers are looking for and the most important element is the internet connection in the accommodation area.

**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 state 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 (2012) stated

that numbers of tourists from different countries travel to Thailand are continuously increasing every year. In 2010, there are 14,147,841 tourists travel to Thailand and in 2011; the numbers increase to 15,936,400 and continuously increased in 2012 to 19,230,470.

The fact that more and more tourists travel to Thailand has effect Thai economic in a positive way especially in the major tourist's destination areas. Data from the Department of Tourism has shown that average rate of tourism spending in 2011 is approximately 4178 bath/day/person.

### Review of Literature

Buriram, which literally means "City of Happiness" or "Peaceful City", is situated in the lower part of the Northeastern region, about 410 km from Bangkok. Buriram 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.). There are numbers archaeological discoveries in Buriram Including more than 60 sandstone sanctuaries made from brick and igneous stone as well as pottery and earthenware model called "ceramics Khmer" that date back to the 10th – 13th centuries. Buriram contains abundant sandstone sanctuaries built by the Khmer Kingdom at Angkor, including Phanom Rung which considered being the main tourist attraction in Buriram. Historical evidence of Buriram was founded again in late Ayutthaya period by appearing as a colony province of Nakhon Ratchasima. And later in the Rattanakosin period, Buriram has been raised as Buriram

Province as it remains to this day. It subdivided into 23 districts. (TourismThailand.org, 2014).

Nowadays Buriram province has a new tourism role. Beside cultural tourism, Buriram appear to the eye of the world as a new sport city by having a famous football team "Buriram United" and a new I-mobile stadium as a landmark to visit. The i-mobile Stadium is the largest football stadium in Thailand. Its nickname is "Thunder Castle". The I-mobile stadium was record in Guinness Book for the football stadium spending lease construction time in the world which was 256 days. Other sport Touristic site in Buriram is The Buriram United International Circuit : BRIC. It is a motorsport race track. The circuit was opened in 2014. This is the first FIA Grade 1 and FIM Grade A circuit in Thailand. The track's primary corporate sponsor is Chang Beer, named the track as part of the sponsorship. This new role of tourism emerging in Buriram has been new phenomenal drawing new types of travelers travelling to the province.

The Department of Tourism conclude the tourists situation in 2012 that the total numbers of tourists travel to Thailand are 19,230,470 which increased by 19.84% from last year. The main reason why more tourists are traveling because the economic recover from the crisis especially in China, India and Russia where economic are continuously grow.

The research from the Department of Tourism describe the research result found that from 4,046 questionnaire samples, there are 1,200 Thais and 2,486 Touristsers. Most of the tourists came from Europe followed by Asia, America, Middle East, Oceania and Africa. There are more males (57%) than female (43.2%) The

first three types of accommodation that tourists interested were hotel, stay with friends/relatives and Bungalow.

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, a biases, 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 explain 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. Internetbased 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 Adwords to advertise the business.

## Research Methodology

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

### 1. 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, Buriram area. 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 Buriram province, in 2011, there were 879,452 tourists traveling to Buriram (The Department of Tourism, 2012). This number was utilized to calculate the accurate amount of questionnaire for this research. The questionnaires were conducted during three month period from 1st January- to 31st March, 2014. 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, Buriram by using a representative sample methods; simple random sampling for quantitative studies area. Researcher distribute the questionnaire to ten representative hotel in Muang district, Buriram

## 2. 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 7 out of 10.

## 3. Limitations

The Limitation of this research was the limited of time to collect the quantitative data which took place in Muang District, Buriram Province Thailand during 1st January to 31st March, 2014. In addition, some tourists cannot speak or read English which is a language used in the questionnaire.

## Research Findings

The research finding would be discussed the result of the 200 questionnaires concerning customer's about factors affecting customers decision making in choosing accommodation in Buriram, collected during 1st, January to 31st, March 2014, from 200 tourists at Buriram Area. 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 following: there were more males (50.5%) travelling to Buriram than females (49.5%). 42% of the respondents were from Asia followed by Europe which accounted for 36%. The majority of the respondents were age between 25-30 years accounted for 48 % and tourists who were 46-55 years accounted for 26%.

As for the education level, 50.5% of the respondents were graduated in a Bachelor's Degree. Followed by 28% were graduated in High school. The marriage status showed that 55.5% of the respondents were married, 68% were single and 10.5% were divorced/ widowed. In the occupation section, research result found that 49.5% of the respondents work in the private company, 32% of the respondents got their own

business and 8.5% are in retirement. Most samples have revenue from 20,001-30,000 baths/month which accounted for 33.5% followed by 22% of revenue from 10,001-20,000 baths/month.

When study the general information on tourist behavior, researcher found that 59% of the respondents has never travel to Buriram before and 49% of the respondents is a repeat tourists. The tourists travel with friends accounted for 39%. There are 31% of tourists who travel with families or relatives and 22% travel alone. As for the length of stay, the result show that 25.5% of the respondents stay for 4-7 nights , followed by 23.5% stay for 8-14 nights and 21% stay for 15-30 nights. Researcher found that 52% of the samples were interested to stay in the hotel, 28.5% will choose to stay in an apartment and 7% were interested in Bungalow. The price of the accommodation that attracts

tourists the most were 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 show that 57% of the respondents know about the accommodation in Buriram through internet/website, 19.0% recognize the accommodation from friends/word of mouth and 17.5% know about their accommodation through Travel Agent Company. For the Booking Method, 38.5% of the samples booked their accommodation through hotel website, 19.0% make 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. When observe the result in each Factor, researcher found that the physical Factors of the accommodation is very important (=3.80).

physical Factors of the accommodation	$\bar{X}$
location near tourist attraction/ near city	3.94
Atmosphere of in room / accommodation area	3.92
Cleanliness of in room / accommodation area	3.84
Size of room	3.72
various room types	3.58

The overall importance of service factor are rated as high (  $\bar{X}$  =3.74).

Service factor	$\bar{X}$
Rapidity of service	3.86
Adequate staff for guest needs	3.83
Staff friendliness	3.76
Staff able to communicate in your language	3.73

Subsequently, the overall importance of Price Factor are rated as high (  $\bar{X}$  =3.72).



Price Factor	$\bar{X}$
various room prices	3.80
Reasonable price for room quality	3.77
Cheaper price than other place	3.71
Promotion/ Discount	3.68
clearly inform room prices	3.62

As for the overall importance of Booking Chanel Factor are rated as high ( $\bar{X}$  =3.74).

Booking Chanel Factor	$\bar{X}$
Travel agent booking service	3.72
Accommodation's website	3.54

As a final point, the importance of other Factor are rated as high ( $\bar{X}$  =3.69).

Other Factor	$\bar{X}$
Internet / Wi-Fi	4.07
Parking	3.69
Restaurant / Bar	3.58
Security	3.57
Laundry Service	3.56

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 ( $\bar{X}$  =3.71).

## Conclusion

The research is concerned about two hypotheses. First, if the staff can speak English, there will be more travelers and profits. The research shown that Thai homestay are more focus on English language, and it also has more positive benefit to their business, as Stone (2013) describes “the business optimization through language training is the way language skills enhance customer service. There is a wealth of data showing that investments to improve

customer service pay off. For example, a study published in the Harvard Business Review found that a 5 percent improvement in customer retention rates can increase profits by more than 25 percent. Among respondents, 89 percent said they felt that customer satisfaction and loyalty would increase if employees could serve and support customers in their native languages”.

And, the second hypothesis is Manager of Thai homestay know more English than Vietnamese manager. Consequently, for the staff of Thai homestay, they understand English and have ability to use English language in their business, according to the finding of 92 owners of homestay realized that if the staff understand English language, it would be better for doing their businesses.

## Recommendations

After understanding the customer expectations and needs from the market research, the owner of accommodation should be able to develop the precise marketing strategy to increase the customer and customer's satisfaction in accommodation business. Masters et Al (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. Nanosoft (1999) explained about different types of customers that they are willing to pay different price. 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.

To develop the right marketing strategy, the owner of accommodation had to understand other factors that affected to people's decision to choose their destinations. Accommodation providers had to understand the different needs from different markets to develop the right marketing strategies to increase the volume of the business and eventually adapted the sustainable accommodation tourist to the community and in the country as a whole.

The results showed those tourists who travel to Buriram booked their accommodation through internet consequently business owners should focus more on presenting their product using website in order to offer suggestion about the accommodation to aid with tourists decision making. Furthermore, the accommodations owner should also consider having an online reservation system.

The accommodation owner should pay attention to speed of service. A speed of service come from the competence employees with service mined which can serve customers better and influence to the customers satisfaction.

The business owner should display different types of rooms to generate different room prices and create more alternative to the tourists.

The internet or Wi-Fi is a very significant decision making component for the tourist nowadays. A free Wi-Fi in the resident area can attract more tourists to stay in the premise.

### Future Research

The future research should focus on the products and services that customers' expect to be given when staying in an accommodation in Buriram province and comparing with the experience accommodation truly provide. 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 Buriram Province to further find out about consumers' requirements in dept to develop accommodation's products and services in the future.

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