

**A Study of Hotel Websites as Potential Tools to Provide Information about Local Tourism: A Comparison between Hotel Websites in Primary and Secondary Tourist Provinces**  
**การศึกษาเว็บไซต์ของโรงแรมด้านศักยภาพในการให้ข้อมูลการท่องเที่ยวของท้องถิ่น : การเปรียบเทียบระหว่างเมืองท่องเที่ยวหลักและเมืองท่องเที่ยวรอง**

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**บทคัดย่อ**

The objectives of this research are: 1) to compare the extent of information on tourist attractions and tourist activities that are provided on hotel websites and on other online platform websites; 2) to compare the extent of information on tourist attractions and activities provided on hotel websites in regard to primary tourist provinces and secondary tourist provinces. The study employed a desk research method where the researcher gathered online data from hotel websites as well as other online hotel platform websites. The population includes 3-star and 4-star hotels based in six tourist provinces in Thailand. Fifty percent of the samples are hotels based in three primary tourist provinces and the other fifty percent are hotels based in three secondary tourist provinces. The research was conducted during April –September, 2023. The study found that 1) hotel websites provided significantly different information about tourist attractions from other platform websites (sig. 0.000). It was also found that hotels with their own websites provided significantly different information about local tourist activities from other platform websites (sig. 0.000), 2. there was no significantly different information

of tourist attractions and tourist activities on hotel websites in primary tourist provinces and secondary tourist provinces. However, the number of hotels that have own websites in primary tourist provinces are significantly more than hotels that have websites in secondary tourist provinces. This study strongly urges hotels in primary and secondary tourist provinces to create their own websites through which they can provide more information about local tourism attractions and activities in order to induce potential clients to visit the destinations, and have a longer stay at their hotels.

**Keywords:** Information on Tourist Attractions and Tourist Activities, Hotel Website, Primary Tourist Provinces, Secondary Tourist Provinces, Sustainable Tourism

### Abstract

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ 1) เพื่อเปรียบเทียบขอบเขตของข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับแหล่งท่องเที่ยวและกิจกรรมท่องเที่ยวที่มีอยู่บนเว็บไซต์ของโรงแรมและบนเว็บไซต์ของแพลตฟอร์มออนไลน์อื่น ๆ และ 2) เพื่อเปรียบเทียบขอบเขตของข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับแหล่งท่องเที่ยว และกิจกรรมท่องเที่ยวบนเว็บไซต์ของโรงแรมในจังหวัดท่องเที่ยวหลักและจังหวัดท่องเที่ยวรอง การศึกษาใช้วิธีการวิจัยแบบ Desk Research โดยผู้วิจัยรวบรวมข้อมูลออนไลน์จากเว็บไซต์โรงแรม รวมถึงเว็บไซต์ของโรงแรมที่อยู่บนแพลตฟอร์มออนไลน์อื่น ๆ ประชากร ประกอบด้วย โรงแรมระดับ 3 ดาว และ 4 ดาวที่ตั้งอยู่ใน 6 จังหวัดท่องเที่ยวในประเทศไทย ห้าสิบเปอร์เซ็นต์ของกลุ่มตัวอย่างเป็นโรงแรมที่ตั้งอยู่ในจังหวัดท่องเที่ยวหลักสามจังหวัด และอีกห้าสิบเปอร์เซ็นต์เป็นโรงแรมที่ตั้งอยู่ในจังหวัดท่องเที่ยวรองสามจังหวัด โดยดำเนินการวิจัยระหว่างเดือนเมษายน – กันยายน 2566 ผลการศึกษาพบว่า 1) เว็บไซต์โรงแรมให้ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับแหล่งท่องเที่ยวแตกต่างจากเว็บไซต์ของแพลตฟอร์มอื่นอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ ( $\text{sig.} = .000$ ) นอกจากนี้ยังพบว่า โรงแรมที่มีเว็บไซต์ของตนเองให้ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับกิจกรรมการท่องเที่ยวในท้องถิ่นแตกต่างจากเว็บไซต์บนแพลตฟอร์มอื่น ๆ อย่างมีนัยสำคัญ ( $\text{sig.} = .000$ ) และ 2) ขอบเขตของข้อมูลสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวและกิจกรรมการท่องเที่ยวบนเว็บไซต์ของโรงแรมในจังหวัดท่องเที่ยวหลักและจังหวัดท่องเที่ยวรองไม่มีความแตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ อย่างไรก็ตามจำนวนโรงแรมที่มีเว็บไซต์ของตนเองในจังหวัดท่องเที่ยวหลักนั้นมีมากกว่าโรงแรมที่มีเว็บไซต์ในจังหวัดท่องเที่ยวรองอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ การศึกษานี้สนับสนุนให้

โรงแรมในจังหวัดท่องเที่ยวหลักและจังหวัดท่องเที่ยวรองพัฒนาเว็บไซต์ของตนเองเพื่อให้สามารถให้ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับแหล่งท่องเที่ยวและกิจกรรมในท้องถิ่นได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ เพื่อจูงใจให้นักท่องเที่ยวที่มีศักยภาพมาท่องเที่ยว และไปเยี่ยมชมแหล่งท่องเที่ยวและพักที่โรงแรมของตนมากขึ้น

**คำสำคัญ:** ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับแหล่งท่องเที่ยวและกิจกรรมท่องเที่ยว เว็บไซต์โรงแรม จังหวัดท่องเที่ยวหลัก จังหวัดท่องเที่ยวรอง การท่องเที่ยวอย่างยั่งยืน

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Rationale of the Study

The tourism industry has been a major foreign income earner for Thailand for several decades. In 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were 39.9 million international tourist arrivals to Thailand, which generated 1.9 trillion Thai Baht. The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on most businesses, including tourism. Post COVID-19 tourism has been perceived as a catalyst for several countries that previously depended on international tourism to bring in foreign income and to improve the economic situation. One of the trends of post COVID-19 tourism is to seek new and authentic experiences by exploring local tourist attractions and products (SiteMinder, 2022; Hollander, 2023), and staying in independent or boutique hotels rather than big resorts or chain hotels. Thailand's tourism development plan also aims to promote secondary tourist provinces in order to spread foreign income to upcountry provinces (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2023).

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, research revealed that the majority of tourists had turned to online purchasing of tourism products and reserved their hotel rooms online (Barthel & Perret, 2015; Patchamas, 2017; Chubchuwong, 2019). One of the reasons for potential tourists perusing hotel websites was to seek information about nearby tourist attractions, tourist activities and local events (Chubchuwong, 2021). This indicates that a hotel website is one of the sources used by tourists to find information about destinations to plan their trips. However, earlier research found that a minority of hotels provided information about tourist attractions and tourist activities on their websites

(Chubchuwong, 2022). If tourists can access more information and are better aware of local attractions and activities, they are likely to plan their trips better. In 2019, it was found that the online search volume on Google for trips had increased by 7% in 2018 (Das, 2023). As most international tourists stay in hotels, hotel websites can be a potential channel to help promote local tourism. The statistics on Thailand's tourism between 2011-2019 demonstrated a reduction in the average length of stay and slow growth in the average per capita spending of international visitors over the last decade (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2020). In addition, the tourism plan indicates that promotion and publicity should be encouraged, and it should not only be the responsibility of the government, but also of the private sector in the tourism industry, which should find ways to promote tourism products and to support each other in order to promote provincial and local tourism (National Statistical Office, 2021).

If the government policy aims to promote international and domestic tourism to secondary tourist provinces (The Government Public Relations Department, 2024), effective hotel websites can be used as one of the online channels to promote local tourism.

Until now there has been little research on how hotel websites can be used as a tool to provide information about local tourism (Chubchuwong, 2022), particularly for the primary and secondary tourist provinces. The researcher intends to study its potential by researching the types and extent of information about local tourism attractions and activities that are currently provided on hotel websites in comparison to websites on other online platforms, and to explore whether the information on hotel websites in primary tourist provinces is different to the information on the hotel websites of secondary tourist provinces. These findings can indicate how much the hotel websites, as one of major online marketing channels, currently help communicate about local tourism to the public and contributes to promote local tourism.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are 1) to compare the extent of information on tourist attractions and tourist activities that are provided on hotel websites and on other online platform websites; 2) to compare the extent of information on tourist attractions and activities provided on hotel websites in regard to primary tourist provinces and secondary tourist provinces.

## 1.3 Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this research are H1. hotel websites provide information about local tourist attractions different from websites created by other online platforms, H2. hotel websites provide information about local tourist activities different from websites created by other online platforms, H3. hotel websites in primary tourist provinces provide information about local tourist attractions different from hotel websites in secondary tourist provinces, and H4. Hotel websites in primary tourist provinces provide information about tourist activities different from hotel websites in secondary provinces.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 The Tourism Situation in Thailand

The tourism industry has been the top foreign income earner for Thailand. In 2019, the year before the COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand, the number of international tourist arrivals was 39.91 million, and the revenue from international tourism was 1.91 trillion THB (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2020). Hotel businesses were the top income earning sector in Thailand's tourism industry. In 2019, the distribution of tourist consumption expenditure to the accommodation sector was 28.45%. In 2019, there were approximately 24,300 hotels in Thailand with 27.6% in the south, 25.1% in central Thailand, 20.6% in the north, 20.6% in the north-east and 6.1% in Bangkok and adjacent provinces. The majority of hotels (93.7%) are small in size (1-25 employees) and are distributed throughout all regions (National Statistical Office, 2021).

At present, Thailand tourism is under the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Tourism Development Plan 2023-2027, which focuses on sustainable growth, modern tourism, development through the use of technology and innovation, upgraded tourism personnel and entrepreneurs, and the integration of the public and private sectors and local communities (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2023). According to a survey in 2021 in which 88.7% of hoteliers shared their opinions, one of the obstacles for hotel businesses was the lack of promotion and publicity in regard to tourism. The tourism plan indicates that promotion and publicity should be encouraged, and it should not only be the responsibility of the government, but also of the private sector in the tourism industry, which should find ways to promote tourism products and to support each other in order to promote provincial and local tourism (National Statistical Office, 2021).

The statistics on Thailand's tourism between 2011-2019 demonstrated a reduction in the average length of stay and slow growth in the average per capita spending of international visitors over the last decade. In 2011, the average length of stay of tourists was 9.64 nights and in 2019, nine years later, it was 9.26 nights. For the average per capita spending, in 2011, it was 4,187.12 THB per day and in 2019 it was 5,172.29 THB per day (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2020). This is equal to an average annual increase of 2.61%. This has not yet taken the average annual inflation rate at 1.4% during 2011-2019 into account (Macrotrends, 2023). This indicates that there is still room for improvement in the length of stay and tourist expenditure locally if tourism stakeholders can work together and closer to find ways to promote tourist attractions and tourist products such as tourist activities. If the accommodation sector can use online channels and provide information on local tourist attractions and activities on their websites, it can be one of the ways to help promote provincial tourism, particularly in secondary tourist provinces.

## **2.2 Trends of Post COVID-19 Global Tourism**

Over the last decade, studies have revealed that the majority of tourists conduct online searches and purchasing of tourist products (Barthel & Perret, 2015; Chubchuwong, 2021 & 2022). As a core tourism sector, the hotel

business can also play a role as tourism information providers which can help to promote local tourist attractions and local activities. SiteMinder (2022) reported various trends revealing that tourists were booking independent or boutique hotels rather than big resorts or chains, and looking to tick off bucket list items and making the most of their time by taking truly meaningful trips (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2023). Hollander (2023) found that tourists sought experiences in preference to material possessions suggesting that they intended ‘to buy less, but do more’ such as ‘experiential travel’, which means immersive experiences like trips that offer unique activities and accommodations. In addition, the national tourism statistics reported fewer group tours and more independent travelers (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2020). The Thai government and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT Intelligence Center, 2018) have tried to promote tourism in secondary tourist provinces in order to increase income in local areas. Based on above mentioned rationale, the provision of information about local tourist attractions and products provided by hotel businesses on their websites would be significant and in line with the requirements of post COVID-19 tourists.

### **2.3 Online Purchasing of Tourism Products**

Online purchasing of hotel rooms has increased for more than a decade. Two major online travel companies, Expedia and Priceline, were established in the 1990s. Both Agoda.com and Booking.com are under the Priceline Company (Barthel & Perret, 2015). Chubchuwong (2019, 2021) found that in the past decade, most hotels have turned to online marketing and selling due to the changing demand of consumers. In 2019, it was found that the online search volume on Google for trips had increased by 7% in 2018 (Das, 2023) and that 45% of small and medium-sized hotels in Thailand did not have their own online booking systems. As a result, they tended to rely on Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) and other online hotel platforms to help in selling their rooms and to increase their market exposure (Chubchuwong, 2019). In 2021, the hotel clients’ behaviors and preferences towards online direct hotel booking were studied. It was found that tourists used online

channels to search for information and purchase tourism products where 25.51% of tourists checked hotel websites most of the time before making reservations, 34.09% checked sometimes, and 15.91% rarely checked (Chubchuwong, 2022). Therefore, hotel websites with comprehensive tourism information are one of the potential tools for the success of destination marketing. Hotels have their own websites to provide hotel information and to facilitate direct bookings. A ‘hotel’s own website’ means a website that is operated and managed independently by a hotel. However, not all hotels have their own websites.

When searching websites for more information about hotels, Chubchuwong (2022) found that consumers looked at user-friendly websites that had good pictures, provided a variety of hotel information such as nearby attractions, had positive client reviews, and were translated into many languages.

#### **2.4 Current Online Marketing Channels for Small and Medium-sized Hotels in Thailand**

Hotels have their own websites to provide hotel information and to facilitate direct bookings. A ‘hotel’s own website’ means a website that is operated and managed independently by a hotel. However, not all hotels have their own websites or their own booking engines. Some hotels use the marketing channels of other online platforms. In 2019, it was found that 65% of tourists booked hotel rooms via OTAs and 19% booked with hotels directly, whereas 16% said it depended on their requirements at the time (Chubchuwong, 2021). Currently, there are several types of online platforms that facilitate online bookings. They 1) hotelmix.com and Booked.net. These two international brands are operated by the same mother company Ciliara Trading Limited. Its headquarters is in Cyprus. They claim in that they have 400,000 hotel rooms for reservation and have 120,000 customers (same information for both brands). They describe themselves as “an ever-evolving hotel search service that leverages all necessary factors to assist you in selecting and reserving an ideal hotel” (Hotelmix, 2023; Booked, 2023). These two brands create web pages very similar to hotel’s own websites. 2) Provincial or city brand platforms- these websites use the names of cities or provinces.

They create a brief or one-page website for a hotel. However, the website is linked to major OTAs such as Agoda.com for online booking. Examples of popular city and provincial online platforms in Thailand are Chiangdao.com. and Chiangmai.com. 3) Google.com - a few years ago, many hotels used Google.com to increase a hotel's exposure in customer searches. Recently, having known the potential of being an online booking channel, Google.com has established small web pages for hotels which provide room rates and links to online booking engines. 4) Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) - most hotels, whether they have own websites or not mostly sell via OTA platforms due to the global market exposure. The top three most popular brands in Thailand are Booking.com, Agoda.com and Expedia.com (Patjamas, 2017; Chubchuwong, 2022). Many hotels in Thailand, even those with their own websites, use these platforms.

### **2.5 Primary and Secondary Tourist Provinces of Thailand**

Primary tourist provinces are provinces that have more than four million tourist arrivals per year (22 provinces). Secondary tourist provinces are provinces that have less than four million tourists (55 provinces) (TAT Intelligence Center, 2018). In this research, the author used hotels in Phuket, Chiangmai and Saraburi to collect data from primary tourist provinces, and Phetchaburi, Ratchaburi and Samut Songkhram to collect data from secondary tourist provinces. For each province, 50 samples were collected. Brief descriptions of these provinces are presented below (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2023)

Phuket Province is a globally-known seaside resort island located next to the Andaman Sea, in the south of Thailand. It is popular for sea, sand and sun holidays. There are a number of beautiful beaches, famous temples, Chino-Portuguese architectural style buildings, and unique food. Phuket has a lot of international hotel chains and is accessible by international scheduled and charter flights.

Chiangmai Province is famous for her beautiful nature blended with Lanna culture. The province is one of the most popular destinations for Thais and foreigners. Phra That Doi Suthep is one of the landmarks of this province.

There are also botanical gardens, a royal park, and several hill tribe villages. Chiangmai also offers stylish, handmade products. Northern style food is also one of the pull factors drawing people to this province. Chiangmai is also accessible by international flights.

Saraburi Province is located in Central Thailand and is famous for its mountainous landscape and beautiful natural sites, cultural festivals and majestic temples with Khmer influence. It is about 1.5 hours or 108 kilometers north-east of Bangkok. Khao Yai, which is partly located in Saraburi, and partly in Nakorn Ratchasima Province, is popular for both overnight trips and excursions for domestic tourists. In recent years, there have been more overseas travelers visiting Khao Yai, Saraburi.

Phetchaburi Province is situated about 1.5 hours from Bangkok to the south. It is famous for beaches and mountains. A popular beach is Cha-am, which is close to Hua Hin. Phetchaburi is also well known for historical parks, ancient temples and palaces. It is also famous for delicious food and sweets. In 2019, Phetchaburi Province was awarded UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy status (UNESCO Creative Cities Network, 2023). The province is visited by both international and domestic tourists.

Ratchaburi Province is situated on the banks of Mae Klong River, 80 kilometers west of Bangkok. It has beautiful mountains and landscape. It also has several natural attractions and one of the attractions is Damnoen Saduak Floating Market. Ratchaburi is more popular for the domestic market.

Samut Songkhram Province is a small but interesting province situated about one hour from Bangkok to the south west. It connects to the Gulf of Thailand and has a fascinating history and famous tourist attractions. Amphawa Floating market is one of the most popular floating markets in Thailand. There are also famous temples and Wat Amphawan Chetiyaram, a former residence of King Rama I and the birth-place of King Rama II. It is popular for Bangkokians to visit on a day trip. Due to the slow growth of tourist arrivals in secondary tourist provinces, the Thai government and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT Intelligence Center, 2018) have encouraged

all parties to try to work together in order to promote tourism in these provinces.

In terms of providing information on local tourist attractions and activities, it is likely that hotels that are based in the locality or province are likely to provide tourism information on their websites in more detail than websites on other online platforms. This is because the hotel business is a local tourism stakeholder and is thus motivated to help promote local tourism. The information they provide may encourage tourists to plan longer trips in order to visit the attractions and join other activities, which may encourage tourists to stay longer and spend more. Websites created on other platforms, such as hotelmix.com, booked.net or online travel agencies (OTAs), mostly sell rooms in large numbers, so it is less likely that they provide information about local tourist attractions and activities in detail.

As primary tourist provinces are more developed and welcome more international and domestic tourists than secondary tourist provinces, the websites of hotels in primary tourist provinces tend to provide more comprehensive information than hotels in secondary tourist provinces. In addition, hotels in primary tourist provinces have more resources and more access to informative personnels, hence, are able to invest more efforts in providing more comprehensive detailed information about local tourist attractions and activities on their websites than hotels in secondary tourist provinces.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The study employed a qualitative desk research method. Desk research is a type of market research that involves collecting and examining information that already exists and is easy to obtain, such as company records, published government reports, and information in newspapers, magazines and on the internet (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). In this research project, the researcher gathered online information from hotel websites and other platform websites based on stratified and convenient random sampling

methods. This desk research was conducted between April and September 2023.

The questions were divided into two parts: I. The hotel profile including hotel name, the name of the province in which the hotel is located, the classification of the province, i.e. primary or secondary province, the level of service, whether the hotel has its own website or uses websites created by other online platforms; II. whether the website has information about tourist attractions, the characteristics of information about tourist attractions, whether the website has information about tourist activities and the characteristics of the information about tourist activities. An Excel table was created for tabulating and categorizing the data obtained from the research questions.

### **3.1 Population and Samples**

The research population included 3-star and 4-star hotels in Thailand. The star(s), or the level of service of the hotels, are usually indicated on the OTA webpages of hotels. The hotels are small and medium-sized and are not part of international hotel chains. The reasons for not including international brands are that most international hotel chains have their own computer reservation system (CRS) and they are not usually located in secondary provinces whereas 3 and 4-star Thai hotels are located in both primary and secondary tourist provinces.

The author gathered data from 300 hotel websites including hotel own websites and websites of hotels which were created by other platforms, 50% of the hotels were based in primary tourist provinces, namely, Phuket, Chiang Mai, and Saraburi, and 50% were hotels based in the three secondary tourist provinces, namely, Phetchaburi, Ratchaburi and Samut Songkhram. For each province, 50 samples of hotels were collected based on stratified and convenient random sampling using online searching during April to September, 2023. The hotels that did not have own websites, the author collected data from websites of hotels which were created by other online platforms.

For the sampling procedure, firstly, the author identified primary and secondary provinces based on the definitions (TAT Intelligence Center, 2018), and then employed Google to search for independent 3-star hotels and 4-star hotels in each selected province. Secondly, the author employed Google to search for hotel names in order to study the websites. If the hotels did not have own websites, the names were obtained from websites created by other platforms. Thirdly, when visiting the websites, the author searched for the keywords “tourist attractions” or “tourist activities”. The details of tourist attractions and tourist activities were analyzed and categorized based on the quantity of information provided.

### **3.2 Data analysis**

This study used three hundred sample hotels out of the 23,400 hotels in Thailand, representing less than a 0.06 % confidential level, using the formula of Taro Yamane (1973) to determine a reliable number of samples. The analyses applied in this study included the following: 1) comparative constant analysis for the qualitative part (Creswell, 2007) and 2) statistical and descriptive statistics, frequency tests, and chi-square tests for the quantitative part.

## **4. Research Results**

Based on the data of 300 hotels in Thailand’s primary and secondary tourist provinces, the details of hotels which have their own websites and use ‘other online hotel platform websites’ that provide information about tourist attractions and tourist activities are presented below. Table 2. presents the profiles of the samples.

Of the 300 hotels, 150 hotels (50%) are in primary tourist provinces which are Phuket, Chiangmai, and Saraburi, and 150 hotels (50%) are in secondary tourist provinces, which are Phetchaburi, Ratchaburi, and Samut Songkhram. The author collected data from 50 hotel websites in each province. Out of 300 hotels, 187 hotels (62.30%) were 4 - 4.5-star hotels and 113 hotels (37.70%) were 3-3.5-star hotels; 171 hotels (57%) had their own website, and 129 hotels (43%) did not have their own website. Out of 300 hotels, 110 hotels (36.70 %) had some information about local tourist attractions, and

190 hotels (63.30%) did not have any information about local tourist attractions. Out of 300 hotels, 40 hotels (13.30%) had some information about tourist activities, and 260 hotels (86.70%) did not have any information about tourist activities.

Table 1.

*Profiles of the hotel websites and the websites created by other platforms*

Types of Province	No. of Hotels	Percentage
Primary	150	50%
Secondary	150	50%
Level of Service		
4 – 4.5 Star	187	62.30%
3 – 3.5 Star	113	37.70%
Hotel Websites		
Hotel own websites	171	57%
Websites on other platforms	129	43%
Information about local attractions on hotel websites and other platforms		
Have some information	110	36.70%
Do not have any information	190	63.30%
Information about local activities on hotel's website and other platforms		
Have some information	40	13.30%
Do not have any information	260	86.70%

N = 300

Hotels that 'do not have their own websites' use websites created by other types of online platforms. Such websites usually have more language options and have their own booking engines. The following platforms found in this study were 1) Hotel mix .com and Booked.net (25.3%), 2) ChiangDao.com, ChiangMai.com, Nakornratchasima.com (7.7%), 3) Google.com (3.75%), and 4) online travel agencies or OTAs (6.3%) such as Agoda.com and Booking.com.

However, some hotels that have their own website also work with some of the first three mentioned platforms, and most hotels work with online travel agencies (OTAs).

The characteristics of information about *tourist attractions* that were found on websites were categorized into 6 groups: 1. websites that provide only names of the places and distances to the places, 2. websites that provide only names and pictures, 3. websites that provide names, pictures and give brief information about the attractions, 4. websites that provide names, distances and locations on the map, 5. websites that provide names, distances, pictures and locations on the map and 6. Websites that provide names, pictures and links to websites of tourist attractions.

The characteristics of information about *tourist activities* that were found on websites were categorized into 5 groups: 1. websites that provide only names of the activities and distances to the activities, 2. websites that provide only names and pictures, 3. websites that provide names, pictures and give brief information about the activities, 4. websites that provide names, distances and locations of activities on the map, 5. websites that provide names, distances, pictures and locations on the map and 6. Websites that provide names, pictures and links to websites of tourist attractions.

When comparing the extent of information on tourist attractions provided by hotels' own websites and websites created by other platforms, it was found that the hotels' own websites provided more in-depth information about tourist attractions than the websites of other platforms. Hotel websites show more pictures and provide brief information on tourist attractions (Table 2. group 3) and hotel websites provide links to tourist attraction websites (Table 2. group 6). However, other platform websites mostly provide names of the places, distances and show locations on Google Maps, however, there are no descriptions or details about the attractions. Hotel websites also provide links to local attractions much more than websites of other platforms. It is evident that hotel websites provide information on local attractions significantly differently from websites created by other platform websites

(sig. 0.000). Table 2. shows the comparison of information about tourist attractions on hotel websites and other platform websites.

Table 2

*Comparison of information about tourist attractions on hotel websites and other platforms*

Information about Tourist Attraction		Hotel own website		Other platform websites		Total No.	Total %
		No.	%	No.	%		
1	Names and distances	3	2.7	2	1.8	5	4.5
2	Names and pictures	7	6.4	2	1.8	9	8.2
3	Names, pictures and brief information	13	11.8	3	2.7	16	14.5
4	Name, distance and location on map	4	3.6	66	60.0	70	63.6
5	Names, pictures, distances and locations	0	0.0	1	0.9	1	0.9
6	Names, pictures and links to websites	8	7.3	1	0.9	9	8.2
Total		35	31.8	75	68.2	110	100.0

Note: Sig. (2-sided) 0.000 (see appendix A)

When comparing the extent of information on tourist activities provided by hotels' own websites and the websites of other platforms, it was found that hotel websites provided more pictures, in-depth information about tourist activities than other platform websites. (Table 3. group 3), and provide links to the tourist activities on other tourism business websites (Table 3. group 6). Other platforms mostly provide names, distances and show locations on Google Maps (Table 3. Group 4), but there is no description or details about the activities. It is evident that hotel websites provide information on local activities significantly differently from websites created by other platform websites (sig. 0.000).

However, it can be seen that even though hotel websites can provide more in-depth information, the number of hotels and other platform websites that provide such information is still very low. Table 3. shows the comparison of information on tourist activities on hotel websites and other platform websites.

Table 3

*Comparison of information on tourist activities on hotel websites and other platforms*

Information about Tourist Activities		Hotel own website		Other platform websites		Total No.	Total %
		No.	%	No.	%		
1	Names and distances	1	2.5	1	2.5	2	5.0
2	Names and pictures	6	15.0	1	2.5	7	17.5
3	Names, pictures, and brief information	8	20.0	1	2.5	9	22.5
4	Names, distances and locations	1	2.5	16	40.0	17	42.5
5	Names, distances and links to activities' websites	4	10.0	1	2.5	5	12.5
Total		20	50.0	20	50.0	40	100.0

Note: Sig. (2 sided) 0.000 (see appendix B)

For the comparison of hotels that have their own websites in primary and secondary provinces, it was found that for the primary tourist provinces, 95 hotels (63.3%) of hotels had their own websites, and 55 hotels (36.7%) did not have their own website. For the secondary tourist provinces, 76 of hotels (50.7%) had their own website, and 74 hotels (49.3 %) did not have their own website. The finding indicates a significant difference at sig. 0.036 between the number of hotels that had their own websites in primary and secondary tourist provinces. Table 4. shows the comparison of hotels with their own websites in primary and secondary provinces.

Table 4

*Comparison of hotels' own websites in primary and secondary provinces*

Types of provinces	Have Own Websites		Do not have Own Website		Total No.	Total %
	No. of hotels	%	No. of hotels	%		
Primary province	95	63.3%	55	36.7%	150	100%
Secondary province	76	50.7%	74	49.3%	150	100%

Note: Sig. (2 sided) .036

For the comparison between hotel websites in primary tourist provinces and secondary tourist provinces that provide information about local attractions, it was found that hotel websites in primary tourist provinces do not provide information on tourist attractions significantly differently from the hotel websites of secondary tourist provinces (sig. 0.150). Hotels in secondary tourist provinces provide more pictures and brief description of tourist attractions, however, hotels in primary tourist provinces provide more links direct to the websites of local attractions than hotel websites in secondary tourist provinces (group. 5).

Table 5

*Comparison of information about tourist attractions on hotel websites in primary and secondary tourist provinces*

Information about Tourist Attraction		Hotel own website in Primary tourist province		Hotel own website in secondary tourist province		Total No.	Total %
		No.	%	No.	%		
1	Names and distances	2	5.7	1	2.9	3	8.6
2	Names and pictures	1	2.9	6	17.1	7	20.0
3	Names, pictures and brief information	4	11.4	9	25.7	13	37.1

Information about Tourist Attraction		Hotel own website in Primary tourist province		Hotel own website in secondary tourist province		Total No.	Total %
		No.	%	No.	%		
4	Name, distance and location	3	8.6	1	2.9	4	11.5
5	Names, pictures and links to websites	5	14.3	3	8.6	8	22.9
	Total	15	42.9	20	57.1	35	100.0

Note: Sig. (2-sided) 0.150 (see appendix C)

For the comparison between hotel websites in primary tourist provinces and secondary tourist provinces that provide information about tourist activities, it was found that the hotel websites in primary tourist provinces do not provide information on activities significantly differently from hotel websites of secondary tourist provinces (sig. 0.197). It was found that hotel websites in secondary tourist provinces provide more pictures and brief descriptions than in primary provinces (Table 6. group 2,3). However, hotels in primary tourist provinces provide more direct links to local tourist activities (Table 6. group 5).

Table 6

*Comparison of information about tourist activities on hotel websites in primary and secondary tourist provinces*

Information about Tourist Attraction		Hotel own website in Primary tourist province		Hotel own website in secondary tourist province		Total No.	Total %
		No.	%	No.	%		
1	Names and distances	1	5.00	0	0.00	1	5.00
2	Names and pictures	1	5.00	5	25.00	6	30.00
3	Names, pictures and brief information	3	15.00	5	25.00	8	40.00
4	Name, distance and location	1	5.00	0	0.00	1	5.00

Information about Tourist Attraction		Hotel own website in Primary tourist province		Hotel own website in secondary tourist province		Total No.	Total %
		No.	%	No.	%		
5	Names, distance and link to activities website	3	15.00	1	5.00	4	20.00
	Total	9	45.00	11	55.00	20	100.00

Note: Sig. (2-sided) 0.197 (see appendix D)

## 5. Conclusion and Discussion

### 5.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study found that there were significant differences between hotels' own websites and the websites created by other platforms in providing information about local tourist attractions and tourist activities. Hotels' own websites provided more in-depth information such as brief descriptions of tourist attractions and activities than other platform websites. Hotel websites also provided links to local tourist attractions and activities. Global online platforms that create websites for hotels such as Hotelmix.com and Booked.net ((Hotelmix, 2023; Booked, 2023) tended to focus on selling hotel rooms worldwide and did not provide detailed information about local tourism. If they included more information and provided links to local attractions and activities, it may encourage visitors to stay longer at the destination and increase the number of visits to local attractions. The inclusion of such detail is particularly relevant to Thai-owned hotels, both at primary and secondary destinations. Out of 300 hotels, there were only 171 hotels that had their own websites and only 35 hotels provided information about tourist attractions and 20 hotels provided information about tourist activities.

This study strongly urges hotels in primary and secondary tourist provinces to create their own websites through which they can provide more information about local tourism attractions and activities in order to encourage potential clients to visit the destinations and to stay longer at their hotels.

## 5.2 Discussion

Based on these results, it can be seen that hotel websites provide significantly different information on tourist attractions and activities from other platform websites. However, not all hotels have websites. It was found that 57% of Thai hotels in this study had their own websites while 43% did not have their own websites and, as a result, depend on other platform websites.

The number of hotels in primary tourist provinces that had their own websites was significantly higher than the number of hotels that had their own websites in secondary tourist provinces. Therefore, local attractions and activities of primary tourist destinations had more opportunities to be promoted online by hotels than those of secondary tourist destinations.

Primary tourist provinces welcome more international visitors and have more experience in online marketing. Even for hotels that have their own websites, only 5 out of 15 hotels (33.33%) provide links to local tourist attractions and only 3 out of 9 hotels (33.33%) provide links to tourist activities. This is considered extremely low based on the fact that currently, the majority of tourists research their trips online (Das, 2023) and majority of tourists check hotel websites prior to making decisions and online reservations (Chubchuwong, 2022).

Hotels which have their own website can provide significantly more in-depth information about local tourist attractions and activities than other platform websites. However, the number of hotels that have their own websites is still very low i.e. 63.30% in primary tourist provinces and 50.70% in secondary tourist provinces. By having their own website, they are able to both provide and obtain information about local tourist attractions and tourist activities at the destination for both domestic and international clients.

International platforms such as Hotelmix.com and Booked.net and online travel agency (OTA) platforms focus on providing hotel room reservation services for hotels worldwide (Hotelmix, 2023; Booked, 2023), thus, they do not necessarily provide detailed information on local attractions or activities.

It should be noted that the data in Table 5 and 6 were not significantly different (higher than 0.05) due to the fact that there was insufficient data to apply Pearson Chi-square comparisons in several categories at the same time

(McClenaghan, 2023). Hence, the results were not significant. However, there were observable differences found in those websites. The websites of hotels in primary provinces provided more links to tourist attractions and tourist activities while the websites of hotels in the secondary provinces provided only pictures of tourist attractions and tourist activities.

## **6. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this research, the author would like to propose the following recommendations for the provincial tourism industry: for the private sector: 1) hotels in both primary and secondary tourist provinces which do not have websites are recommended to create their own websites 2) in addition to details of hotel rooms, facilities and amenities, hotel websites should have a map of hotel and inform distances to local tourist attractions and activities, 3) hotel websites should provide pictures and descriptions of nearby local tourist attractions and activities. If possible, hotel websites should provide links to those attractions and activities. In addition, hotel websites should be user-friendly and be translated into several foreign languages; 4) local tourist attractions and local tourist activities are recommended to create their own websites in order to be linked from hotels or other tourism businesses' websites, 5) hotel businesses and other tourism businesses should have regular meetings and find ways to collaborate in the area of online promotion and publicity. For the public sector: 1) the provincial tourism authority could play a leading role in facilitating meetings between various local tourism stakeholders in order to disseminate updated information on local attractions and activities; 2) the provincial tourism authority should create websites containing updated and detailed information with a complete list of local tourist attractions and activities, whereby local hotels could refer to and copy the link to further disseminate information on their own websites.

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