



Tourists' Overall Satisfaction for Tourism Products of Koh Chang, Thailand

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The aim of this research is to study tourists' overall satisfaction for the tourism products of Koh Chang, Thailand, as the tourist statistics of the destination showed that tourists are visiting Koh Chang every year. The tourism product attributes of attractions, transportation, accommodations, travel agency, restaurants & entertainment and shopping or gifts & souvenirs are studied. In this research the data was collected by a set of questionnaires distributed to 400 tourists both Thai and non-Thai, who had experienced visiting Koh Chang, Thailand. Inferential statistics in the form of Pearson's correlation analysis were used for hypothesis testing.

The findings reveal that the overall satisfaction for attractions is a low positive correlation, a value equal to .337; a moderate positive correlation for transportation with a value of .448; a moderate correlation for accommodation with a value of .441; a moderate positive correlation for travel agencies with the value equal to .586; a moderate for restaurants & entertainments with a value of .528 and a moderate positive correlation of shopping or gifts & souvenirs with the value equal to .536.

Result from hypotheses testing showed that there was a relationship between tourists' overall satisfaction and tourism products of Koh Chang, Thailand including attractions, transportation, accommodations, travel agency, restaurants & entertainments and shopping or gifts & souvenirs. However, the hypotheses testing illustrated a low and moderate positive value of correlation. Recommendations based on the findings suggested that relevant tourism departments need to enhance the infrastructure, strengthen promoting Koh Chang's attractions such as Trat province improving the streets, publicize attractions and cleanliness of attractions; and furthermore, they can give more knowledge using multiple languages to communicate to foreign tourists.

Key words: *Tourists satisfaction, Tourism Product, Tourist attraction, Tourist transportation, Tourist accommodation, Travel agency*

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourist satisfaction is increasingly important for destination management organizations because the satisfaction serves as a reliable standard to evaluate overall performance. A good understanding of tourist satisfaction levels, including the lively change in the level of tourist satisfaction, is a benefit to both the service industries that focus on inbound tourism and the government regulators and private investors that have



a vested interest in the development of high quality tourism infrastructure (Song *et al.*, 2011). Improving the level of tourist satisfaction is likely to contribute to an improved reputation for both service providers and the destination as all. Moreover, the studies about consumer studies show that an improvement in the satisfaction levels may contribute to an increased consumer loyalty, reduced price elasticity, a lower cost of future transactions and improved productivity (Swanson & Kelley, 2001).

Tourism products can be defined as the sum of the physical and psychological satisfaction they gives to tourists whiles their travelling to their destinations. The tourist product focuses on facilities and services designed to meet the needs of the tourist. It can be seen as a composite product, as the sum total of a destination's tourist attractions, transport, accommodations and of entertainment which results in customer satisfaction (Dixit & Sheela, 2001).

The policy to develop Koh Chang to become the second Phuket, this development can be seen through the construction of an airport in Trat. Even though there are a large number of hotel, resorts, and restaurants that have sprung up to attract the tourists, with a sense of responsibility, those businesses pollute as minimally as possible since the government want to position the island as a beautiful spectacle of nature. Koh Chang is well known for the place for those who are beach lovers and nature enthusiasts. There are some nightlife activities on the island due to the development, yet visitors prefer beaches, waterfalls, and neighboring islands. Besides, Koh Chang is a fascinating island that has several fishing villages, a number of naval battle sights, and some opportunities for diving and snorkeling (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2012).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to examine tourist satisfaction toward tourism product offered by Koh Chang, a famous island in Thailand. Tourism products are a mix of tangible and intangible elements. Koteler, (1995) conceptualized tourism product as anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a want or need. It includes physical objects, services, persons, places, organization, and ideas.

Considering tourism as an industry is involved with production and sale processes and a generic product. Compared to other types of product to be consumed, tourism does not mean an individual and tangible product. The tourism product is actually complex, including tangible and intangible characteristics.

Tourism products can be categorized into three main groups: tourism experiences, place of product, and tourism products (O’Fallon, 1994). To begin with, tourism experience is in a level of macro product which includes seeing, using, and experiences by tourists. The second category is place of product. The place of products is the destinations that tourists consume as a part of the tourism experience. Tourism product is the last category and is defined as a generic product, including accommodations, tourist attractions, restaurants, and souvenirs.

In addition, tourism products can be distinguished by certain characteristics; they are not typical. That is, such characteristics establish singularity for a tourism product. As mentioned earlier, tourism as an industry consists not only of the scope of tangible product but also of the intangibles. Tangible products in tourism perspective are airline seats, hotel room, meals, etc or it can be referred to as inputs. Meanwhile, scenery, climate, friendliness, and heritage are considered intangibles.

In this study, the researcher applied the conceptualized according to the concept by Smith & Collire (1996), destination as a tourism product is explained to be complex from what tourists buy, see, experience, and feel. Moreover, it is involved from the time they begin and end their journey, including food, beverages, souvenirs, amusement, and entertainment along the way. Experiences and expectations are another aspect of tourism products, although they are not bought.

Figure1: The tourism product – a total experience

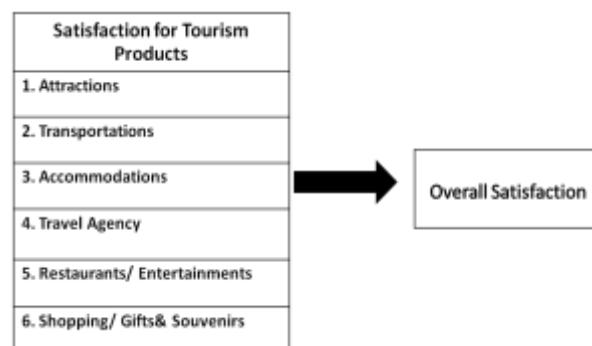


Source: Coloier, A., Craig-Smith, S. & French, C. (1996). *Principles of tourism, tourism product*. South Melbourne: Longman.

III MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND HYPOTHESES

The study places an emphasis on tourists' satisfaction caused by an entire experience of tourists at a destination. It suggests that tourists' satisfaction can be influenced by many tourism products in relation to the destination. The researcher has applied six variables out of ten based on Koh Chang Characteristic itself, and the adviser suggested that there are six important products. This research focuses on Koh Chang's attractions, Koh Chang' transportations, Koh Chang Accommodations, travel agency that provide a tour services of Koh Chang, restaurants & entertainments of Koh Chang, and shopping & gifts or souvenirs of Koh Chang. This research applies the conceptual framework based on the idea of by Coloier *et al.*, (1995). In addition, the ideas created Middleton that a destination serves as the tourism purchase, seeing, experience, and feelings were supported. In this study, the independent variables treated as the tourism product consist of six items as illustrated in the conceptual framework while the dependent variable which is tourist satisfaction is obtained from the Hoyer & MacLinnis (1997).

Figure2: Modified Conceptual Framework of Tourists' Overall Satisfaction for Tourism Products of Koh Chang



IV. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

This section deals with research hypotheses. It roughly explains particular events, behaviors, and phenomena that have already taken place or will take place (Gay & Diehl, 1997). The research aims to examine the level of tourists' satisfaction for Koh Chang tourism products after they have experienced them. As a result, the hypothesis statements are formulated based on the conceptual framework in the previous section as the following:



- H1_o: There is no relationship between attractions and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.
- H1_a: There is a relationship between attractions and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.
- H2_o: There is no relationship between transportations and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.
- H2_a: There is a relationship between transportations and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.
- H3_o: There is no relationship between accommodations and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.
- H3_a: There is a relationship between accommodations and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.
- H4_o: There is no relationship between travel agency and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.
- H4_a: There is a relationship between travel agency and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.
- H5_o: There is no relationship between restaurants & entertainments and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.
- H5_a: There is a relationship between restaurants & entertainments and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.
- H6_o: There is no relationship between shopping or gifts & souvenirs and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.
- H6_a: There is a relationship between shopping or gifts & souvenirs and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.

V. MEASUREMENT

The questionnaire is adopted as a means of data collection from the tourists visiting Koh Chang. Zikmund (2003) stated that the questionnaire is a method to gather the required data by letting the respondents complete it by themselves. In this paper, the questionnaire is developed on the basis of the conceptual framework and empirical studies. There are two independent parts of the questionnaire which are as follows:



Part 1: This part is concerned with demographic factors of the respondents, which include gender, age education level occupation, and country of residence.

Part 2: This part indicates the factors that determine tourists' satisfaction toward tourism products of Koh Chang. A five-points Likert scale is adopted to analyze those factors. Each questionnaire contains five questions about attractions, four questions about transportations, five questions about accommodations, four questions about travel agency, four questions about restaurants and entertainment, and four questions about shopping, gifts or souvenirs. Three questions are for overall satisfaction.

The questions were determined by a five-point Likert - scales as:

A five-points Likert scale is used to determine the scale as shown below.

- 5 = Very high satisfaction
- 4 = High satisfaction
- 3 = Neither satisfaction nor un-satisfaction
- 2 = Low satisfaction
- 1 = Very low satisfaction

VI. RESULT OF HYPOTHESES TESTING AND CONCLUTION

According to the results of the hypothesis testing, all six hypotheses were rejected the null hypothesis. Therefore, it can be concluded as follows: There is a relationship between attractions and the overall satisfaction (H_1). The study found that the Pearson correlation coefficient of hypothesis 1 was equal to 0.337 at a significance level of 0.000 as shown in table 5.13; there is a low positive correlation between attractions and overall satisfaction. The result from the mean score rating and standard deviation of attractions shown the score of "cleanliness of attractions" has lowest. It indicates that tourist who had experienced visit Koh Chang, in the point of view of Koh Chang attractions, were less satisfied with the cleanliness of attraction when they travel to Koh Chang.

There is a relationship between transportations and the overall satisfaction (H_2). the results found that the Pearson correlation coefficient of hypothesis 2 was equal to 0.448 at a significance level of 0.000 as shown in table 5.14, there is a moderate positive correlation between transportations and overall satisfaction. The result of mean score rating found that tourists have less satisfaction with "transportation around Koh Chang



for sightseeing is convenient” which it means that they are not satisfy with the convenience of transportation around Koh Chang.

There is a relationship between accommodations and the overall satisfaction (H_3). The study found that Pearson correlation coefficient of hypothesis 3 was equal to 0.441 at a significance level of 0.000 as shown in table 5.15, there is a moderate positive correlation between accommodations and overall satisfaction. From the calculation mean score rating of questionnaires found that “Adequacy of water and electric supply” has lowest score. It can indicate that water and electric supply of Koh Chang is not adequacy.

There is a relationship between travel agency and the overall satisfaction (H_4). The results show that the Pearson correlation coefficient of hypothesis 4 was equal to 0.586 a significance level of 0.000 as shown in table 5.15, the hypothesis 4 has the highest correlation coefficient but the results still have a moderately positive correlation with travel agency and overall satisfaction. The mean score rating and standard deviation of travel agency show that the lowest mean score is quality of tour guides which means travelers have not satisfy with the quality of tour guide.

There is a relationship between restaurants & entertainments and overall satisfaction (H_5). the results found that the Pearson correlation coefficient of hypothesis 5 was equal to 0.528 at a significance level of 0.000 as shown in table 5.17, there is a moderately positive correlation between restaurants & entertainments and the overall satisfaction. The result of mean score rating and standard deviation of restaurants & entertainments show “reasonable prices of foods and drinks” has lowest score which means the price of food may not satisfy with tourist’s satisfaction.

There is a relationship between shopping or gifts & souvenirs and overall satisfaction (H_6) The study found that Pearson correlation coefficient of hypothesis 6 equal to 0.536 at significant level of 0.000 as shown in table 5.18, there is moderate positive correlation between accommodations and overall satisfaction. The mean score rating of the questionnaire found that price and variety of goods have lowest mean score. It can indicate that tourists unsatisfied with the variety of local and traditional gifts and souvenirs and they may also think that gifts and souvenirs have no reasonable prices.



Table 1: Summary of results from the hypothesis testing (Pearson Correlation)

Null Hypotheses	Significance (2-tailed test)	Correlation Coefficient (r-value)	Result
H1 _o : There is no relationship between attractions and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.	.000	.337	Rejected
H2 _o : There is no relationship between transportations and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.	.000	.448	Rejected
H3 _o : There is no relationship between accommodations and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.	.000	.441	Rejected
H4 _o : There is no relationship between travel agency and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.	.000	.586	Rejected
H5 _o : There is no relationship between restaurants & entertainments and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.	.000	.528	Rejected
H6 _o : There is no relationship between shopping or gifts & souvenirs and overall satisfaction of Koh Chang.	.000	.536	Rejected

VII. RECOMMENDATION

From the data analysis, the researcher found that there are six variables of tourism products of Koh Chang which are attractions, transportations, accommodations, travel agency, restaurants & entertainments and shopping or gifts & souvenirs. For the attractions of Koh Chang, the researcher can conclude that tourists who had experience visiting Koh Chang have a low satisfaction to the attractions because the island is a destination surrounded with sand, sea and mountains, there are many attractions such as diving sites and waterfalls. Based on the research qualitative interview data, most of Thai tourists said that they will never visit other attractions of Koh Chang such as waterfalls and diving site. However, the mean score rating and standard deviation of attractions shows the lowest mean score of the cleanliness of attraction, Koh Chang may not have a clean attractions. The researcher suggests that Koh Chang should have policy to manage and control quantity of waste things. Furthermore, Koh Chang should have a campaign for Ecotourism which it could be concerned to those tourists who visit Koh Chang. The government sector or relative public services should improve public relations such as media advertising, and billboards.

Based on hypothesis 2, the relationship between transportations and overall satisfaction, the results of research showed that the variable has a relationship to overall



satisfaction but in a moderate correlation. From the point of view of tourists, it suggested that travel to Koh Chang was limited because it only has ferries or speed boats of the private resorts. However, the transportation may not be satisfactory to tourists in. The finding found that tourists were not satisfied their experience to the convenience of transportations around Koh Chang. The researcher thinks that Koh Chang should improve facilities around Koh Chang such as roads and street lamps. Furthermore, the public transportation should be improved, government or private sectors should launch new vehicle for the tourists to select. The government sector of Koh Chang and private companies should provide more ways to travel to Koh Chang such as ferry or boats that contain only person separated from vehicles.

The hypothesis 3, the relationship between accommodations and overall satisfaction has shown in the results that the variable has a relationship to overall satisfaction. Based on the moderate positive correlation of hypothesis 3, accommodations of Koh Chang allow for many choices. Moreover, the level of accommodation and the price may be expensive when travelling in the high season, so this may affect the decision of tourists. Based on the finding, the adequacy of water and electricity supply was low mean score, so Koh Chang should concern about this points. The water and electric supply is important to tourists, Koh Chang should improve and develop more electric and water supply. Furthermore, Government or relative public services should improve and control the service quality to raise the global standard to support satisfaction.

Based on hypothesis 4, the relationship between travel agency and the overall satisfaction has shown from the results that the variable the highest relationship because normally Thai services are famous and acceptable. However Koh Chang Travel Agency Corporation should remain their service quality and try to improve some bad point based on the interview and the finding showed that some of the tour guides had a problem with communicating in English language. Moreover, non-Thai tourists come from many countries but the international language is very important to communicate to tourists. The researcher suggests that the corporation should have English training classes for tour guides. Moreover, the private travel agency should concern more about the way to communicate to tourists; they should have training courses for their workers.

Based on hypothesis 5, the relationship between restaurants & entertainments and overall satisfaction has shown the result of two variables has a relationship. Around Koh Chang, there are many kinds of restaurants and entertainments providing tourists most of the main dishes are sea foods. The finding found that tourists have low



satisfaction with the reasonable price of food and drinks. The government should have policy to control prices of goods and its quality. However, restaurants and entertainments owners should remain their quality and try to improve some bad point based on the interview which showed there are some un equilibrium products prices between restaurants.

Finally, shopping or gifts & souvenirs of Koh Chang, the researcher can conclude that tourists who had experience visiting Koh Chang have a relationship to the variable because the price of gifts and souvenirs are not expensive. Furthermore, there are many shops providing tourists, a variety of products. However, the mean score rating shown that there are two main important things that tourists do not satisfy variety of local and traditional gifts and souvenirs, and reasonable prices of gifts and souvenirs. Based on the finding, Koh Chang or relative public should examine that each products are reasonable prices and control the gifts and souvenirs prices. Koh Chang or private company should create more new gifts and souvenirs to provide to tourists. Moreover, the researcher thinks that the shop owners should create a unique interior of their stores to increase more sales and attractiveness to customers.

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