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Agriculture, Extension and Rural Tourism
Community Based Tourism
Agroforestry, Wildlife and Marine related to Tourism
Animal and livestock Tourism
Travelling and Adventure
Environmental Issues in Tourism
Any other agriculture related issues in Tourism

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**FOREWORD**

Agrotourism can contribute to regional development, a priority goal of each country in the region. Very similar to ecotourism, agrotourism emphasizes on cultural aspects of the rural areas that also help in improving the economy of the area, yet promoting agrobiodiversity. Rural tourism also encompasses ethnotourism, project tourism, health tourism, historical tourism, cultural tourism or adventure tourism Therefore, researches relating to rural tourism and agrotourism hope to bring awareness to the farmers, tourists, and people concerned with the fate of both the people in and our mother planet. Furthermore, cultural and biological conservation in the rural areas can be harmonized.

The International Journal of Agricultural Travel and Tourism (AT&T) is a peer-reviewed journal published twice a year by the School of Tourism Development, Maejo University, Thailand. This journal is the second volume (number 2) that publishes original research papers, invited review articles, and short communications (scientific publications) include the following: 1) The Role of Destination Image in Formation of Destination Loyalty at Leisure Farm: Difference between First-time and Repeat Visitors, 2) The Relationships among Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Perceived Value, and Behavioral Intentions in Sea-Kayaking Operations: A Case Study of Phuket and Phang-nga Provinces, Thailand, 3) Investigating an Impact of Collective Partnership in Strengthening Community-Based Tourism Management: Evidence from Pu Muen Nai Tribe Village, Thailand, 4) Exploring Social Enterprises as Partners for Ecotourism Development in the Philippines, 5) Marketing Mix Factors Affecting Tourists’ Decision Making on Adventure Tourism: A Case of Baan Pha-ngam, Na-di District, Pra-chin-buri Province, Thailand, 6) Tourism and Poverty Alleviation in Zambia: Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward, 7) Homestay and Sustainable Community Development, and 8) Poverty and Reduction through Pro-Poor Supply chains: The Role of Hotel Industry.

*September, 2011*
*Editor-in-Chief*
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THE ROLE OF DESTINATION IMAGE IN FORMATION OF DESTINATION LOYALTY AT LEISURE FARM: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FIRST-TIME AND REPEAT VISITORS

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Received: May 20, 2011
Accepted: June 20, 2011

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ABSTRACT

Previous studies have established the positive relationship between destination image and destination loyalty. However, very little attention is given to analyze effects of dimensions of destination image in forming destination loyalty. Moreover, studies about the moderating role of first-time and repeat visitors on relationship between destination image and destination loyalty are limited. This study first reveals the impact of destination image on destination loyalty, and then tests dimensions of destination image in explaining destination loyalty with the moderate effect of first-time and repeat visitors. A group of trained interviewers were stationed at entrances of Yilan Shangrila Leisure Farm and Flying Cow Ranch to sample volunteer on-site participants. A number of 606 usable responses were obtained from a total of 628 self-administered questionnaires. Destination image is positively related to destination loyalty. In testing the positive relationship between destination image dimensions and destination loyalty, “natural and cultural resources” and “social setting and environment” are two dimensions that significantly related to destination loyalty. For first-time visitors, “atmosphere” and “leisure infrastructures” are significantly related to their destination loyalty; on the contrary, for repeat visitors, “natural and cultural resources” and “social setting and environment” are significantly related to their destination loyalty. This study can provide to farm managers implications about how to effectively keep new customers or retain old customers by investing on destination image. Furthermore, farm managers should establish destination image based on their target market.

Key words: Destination image, cognitive image, destination loyalty, leisure farm
INTRODUCTION

Leisure farm becomes one of the rapidly growing markets in tourism industry in Taiwan (Chang, 2003). According to Taiwanese Leisure Farming Development Association (2010), there are 239 legal leisure farms in Taiwan that provide different kinds of activities for visitors to enjoy relaxing life style in the countryside, participate in traditional culture and arts of agriculture, or experience the beauty of natural resources around Taiwan. Nevertheless, farm managers lack knowledge of marketing and management of leisure farms and have insufficient information about agriculture tourists and customers (Chang, 2003; Embacher, 1994; Oppermann, 1996). Managers are eager to realize how to shape destination image for stimulating destination loyalty (Oppermann, 1996).

Many of the previous studies that have tested the positive relationship between destination image and destination loyalty (Rittichainuwat, Qu, & Brown 2001; Ross 1993; Tasci & Gartner 2007). Lin, et al. (2007) proved that overall destination image is an important antecedent of tourists’ destination preferences; moreover, the importance of cognitive image and affective image varied across different kinds of destinations. In fact, sustainable competitiveness should be considered in destination management and marketing. Cracolici and Nijkamp (2009) mentioned that new needs of tourists impose destinations constantly to reconstruct, gain, and dispose of attractive resource able to meet the demand of a shifting market. Moreover, Sharpley and Vass (2006) noted that studies have consistently demonstrated that tourism contributes relatively little extra to farm incomes. Thus, how to shape sustainable competitiveness in farm tourism becomes an important issue for researchers to study. With limited costs and long period of return on investment, it’s hard for managers to invest in new facilities annually for attracting new tourists. It is a need for us to analyze effect of dimensions of destination image on destination loyalty, and take visiting times as moderator in our research model.

On the other hand, the difference between first-time and repeat visitors’ formation of destination loyalty is worth to be explored. Previous studies have pointed out that factors motivating first-time and repeat visitors’ revisit intention are not the same. As mentioned by Morais and Lin (2010), first-time visitors may be mainly influenced by access and processing of information about destination attributes, whereas repeat visitors may pay more importance to the destinations’ psychological meaning. Clarifying first-time visitors’ destination loyalty reveals information about how managers can do to keep new customers; in contrast, knowing repeat visitors’ formation of destination loyalty can help managers to retain old customers. To realize how to effectively keep new customers and retain old customers, this study set first-time and repeat visitors as moderators on the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty.

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of destination image in forming destination loyalty. There are three objectives of this study: (1) establishing the positive relationship between destination image and destination loyalty; (2) realizing differences of dimensions of destination image in explaining destination loyalty; and (3) detecting the moderate effect of first-time and repeat visitors.

Literature review

Definition of destination image
According to Gallarza, Saura, and García, (2002) and Beerli and Martín, (2004); Hunt (1975) is the pioneer in researching destination image, which Hunt defined as follows: “Impressions of a person or persons about a state in which they do not reside.” Crompton (1979) also defined that destination image is an attitudinal concept consisting of the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a tourist holds of a destination.

Beerli and Martín summarized that “image is a concept formed by the consumer’s reasoned and emotional interpretation as the consequence of two closely interrelated components: perceptive/cognitive evaluations referring to the individual’s own knowledge and beliefs about the object (an evaluation of the perceived attributes of the object), and affective appraisals relating to an individual’s feelings towards the object (2004: 658).” Besides, Martin and del Bosque (2008) noted that the cognitive component refers to the beliefs or knowledge a person has of the characteristics or attributes of a tourist destination, while the affective dimension is represented by the individual’s feelings toward the tourist destination. Beerli and Martín (2004) added that the combination of these two factors produces an overall, or compound image relating to the positive, or negative, evaluation of a destination.

**Destination image and destination loyalty**

Tasci and Gartner (2007) noted that some destination image studies treat destination image as an independent variable influencing several customer behavior variables such as intention to visit (Leisen 2001), recommend (Ross 1993), or revisit (Rittichainuwat, et al. 2001). Bigne, Sanchez, and Sanchez (2001) found that tourism image is a direct antecedent of perceived quality, satisfaction, intention to return and willingness to recommend the destination. Chen and Tsai (2007) proposed a more integrated tourist behavior model by including destination image and perceived value into the “quality-satisfaction-behavioral intentions” paradigm, and proved that destination image have both direct and indirect effects on behavioral intentions. Lin, et al. (2007) indicated that cognitive and affective components of overall destination image influence tourists’ destination preferences.

Destination image provide tourists factors for expecting a destination (del Bosque & Martin 2008), perceiving the quality of a destination (Chen & Tsai 2007), and helping them matching self-congruity (Sirgy & Su 2000). Obviously, destination image is emphasized as an effective tool to attract tourists (Kneesel, Baloglu, & Millar 2010). In fact, numerous leisure farms in Taiwan focus on the revisit market segment with the aim of establishing a second home for their customers. Managers of leisure farms are eager to understand how to cultivate tourist destination loyalty. Thus, destination loyalty is placed as the main consequence of destination image.

Um, Chon, and Ro (2006) explored antecedents of revisit intention, and found that perceived attractiveness, rather than overall satisfaction, is the most important indicator. Additionally, Dick and Basu (1994) explained that cognitive, affective, and conative antecedents can stimulate customer relative attitudes and those relative attitudes then enhance customer repeat patronage or increase the consequences of the loyalty relationship in the same way as word-of-mouth advertising. That is, promoting destination image can enhance customer perceptions of the antecedents of relative attitudes toward the destination, thus resulting in customer repeat patronage. Furthermore, Govers,
Go, and Kumar (2007) found that successful marketing communication strategies can significantly influence travel behavior, further demonstrating the influence of destination image on destination loyalty. Based on the reasons mentioned, we hypothesized the following:

H1: Destination image has a positive influence on destination loyalty.

In studying destination image, Pike (2002) noted that many studies conduct factor analysis to classify dimensions of destination image (Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Beerli & Martin 2004; Martin & del Bosque 2008; Qu, Kim, & Im 2011). The importance of destination image is focused by numerous related studies, and emphasize the need for destinations to develop favorable images (Pike 2002). Factors such as “natural environment”, “cultural heritage”, “tourist infrastructures” or “atmosphere” underlie in the cognitive structure of destination image (Martin & del Bosque 2008). Different kinds of destination or tourism own different characteristics and factors in shaping destination image; thus, dimensions of destination image may vary (Table 1).

Table 1. Dimensions of destination image (cognitive image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors/Study destination</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Baloglu and McCleary (1999) / Turkey, Greece, Italy, and Egypt | 1. Quality of experience  
 2. Attractions  
 3. Value/Environment |
| Beerli and Martin (2004) / Lanzarote | 1. Natural and cultural resources  
 2. General, tourist and leisure infrastructures  
 3. Atmosphere  
 4. Social setting and environment  
 5. Sun and sand |
| Martin and del Bosque (2008) / Cantabria | 1. Infrastructures and socioeconomic environment  
 2. Atmosphere  
 3. Natural environment  
 4. Cultural environment |
| Qu, Kim, and Im (2011) / Oklahoma | 1. Quality of experiences  
 2. Touristic attractions  
 3. Environment and infrastructure  
 4. Entertainment/outdoor activities  
 5. Cultural traditions |
| This study / Leisure farm | 1. Natural and cultural resources  
 2. Atmosphere  
 3. Leisure infrastructures  
 4. Social setting and environment |
Different from most image studies take countries, states or cities as study destination, leisure farm was selected as study destination in this study. Our measurement of destination image was modified from Beerli and Martin (2004) with revision by several top managers of leisure farms. Oppermann (1996) defined that farm tourism is a part of rural tourism, the location of the accommodation on a part-time or full-time farm being the distinguishing criterion. Ollenburg and Buckley (2007) also defined farm tourism as “commercial tourism enterprises on working farms. This excludes bed and breakfast establishments, nature-based tourism and staged entertainment.”

After hypothesizing that destination image has a positive influence on destination loyalty, we further test the significant relationship between destination image dimensions and destination loyalty. By such way, managers can realize which part of destination image plays the main role in stimulating tourist loyalty. In fact, each dimension can be seen as an investment of a leisure farm. With limited costs and resources, managers are eager to realize which dimension is the most effective one in attracting tourists (Kneesel, et al. 2010; McCartney, Butler, & Bennett 2008). The significant effect of natural and cultural resources on destination loyalty reveals the importance of conserving original resources of a farm; effects of atmosphere remind managers to shape a good feeling and experience; impacts of leisure infrastructures make managers find ways to keep the attraction of physical facilities and products; moreover, influences from social setting and environment point out the need to provide opportunities or places for social interactions. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H2: There is a significant relationship between destination image dimensions and destination loyalty.

Moderate effect of first-time and repeat visitors

Visitors to a destination comprise both fist-timers and repeaters (Morais & Lin 2010; Um, et al. 2006). Morais and Lin (2010) summarized that first-time visitors are individuals who visited a destination for the first time while repeat visitors are individuals who vacationed in that destination more than once. Lehto, O'Leary, and Morrison (2004) noted that repeat vacations to the same destination are different from regular product repurchases, because the prior trip experiences may never be duplicated exactly. These unique characteristics of destinations emphasize the importance of examining vacationers’ onsite behavior patterns and changes on repeat visits (Lehto, et al. 2004).

In this study, we hypothesize that first-time and repeat visitors play the moderating mechanism of the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty. Morais and Lin (2010) mentioned that first-time visitors may be mainly influenced by access and processing of information about destination attributes, whereas repeat visitors may pay more importance to the destinations’ psychological meaning. Besides, Um, et al. (2006) noted that first-timers’ revisit intentions may be influenced mainly by destination performance as a whole because of their initial stay, while repeaters’ intentions may be influenced largely by promotional efforts to recall their positive memory and by disseminated information on new attractions. That is, as visiting experience accumulates, tourists will take other factors in deciding visiting a visited destination rather than just depend on destination image. Factors that stimulate first-time visitors to revisit a destination may not be effective to stimulate repeat visitors.
To sum up, first-time and repeat visitors will moderate the effect of destination image on destination loyalty. For first-time visitors, the positive effect of destination image on destination loyalty will be strengthened; on the contrary, for repeat visitors, the positive effect of destination image on destination loyalty will be weakened. Furthermore, Morais and Lin (2010) proved that first-time visitors’ intentions to patronize the destination were mainly affected by destination image and that repeat visitors’ intentions to patronize the destination were primarily affected by destination attachment. Given the above, we hypothesized the following:

**H3:** First-time and repeat visitors will moderate the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty.

Specifically, first-time visitors, the stronger will be the positive effects of destination image on destination loyalty.

### Research model

The research model of this is shown in Figure 1. We first detect the direct effect of destination image on destination loyalty, and then analyzing dimensions of destination image in forming destination loyalty. Finally, first-time and repeat visitors are taken as moderators to moderate the effects of destination image on destination loyalty.

![Figure 1. Research model of this study](image)

### METHODOLOGY

The target population of this study comprised visitors to leisure farm in Taiwan, Yilan Shangrila Leisure Farm and Flying Cow Ranch were elected as research settings. A convenience sampling method, which refers to the sampling procedure used to obtain units (or people) that are most conveniently available (Zikmund 2003), was used in the research process. A group of trained interviewers were stationed at entrances of Yilan Shangrila Leisure Farm and Flying Cow Ranch to sample volunteer on-site participants. Finally, 606 usable responses were obtained from a total of 628 self-administered questionnaires.

The study constructs were measured by items from previous studies. The survey instrument was originally prepared
in English and then translated into Mandarin via back-translation method (Parameswaran & Yaparak 1987). The survey instrument was tested with a pilot sample of 60 visitors. There was no compelling reason to make changes in the survey instrument, since visitors did not have any difficulty in understanding the items. In addition, all of the items in our questionnaire were revised by several top farm managers to ensure that our measurement can reflect the real situation. The following information refers to the scale items used to measure the constructs in the study model. All measures used 5-point Likert scales (1 = “strongly disagree,” and 5 = “strongly agree”).

Destination image: Items of destination image are modified from Beerli and Martin (2004) including interview with practitioners. Measurement of destination image of this study is focused on cognitive image. Four dimensions that underline destination image are natural and cultural resources (3-items), atmosphere (3-items), social setting and environment (3-items) and leisure infrastructures (3-items). Destination loyalty: This study adapts the scale from Chi and Qu (2008), and uses two single-item measures to assess tourist destination loyalty as the ultimate dependent construct: tourist intention to revisit a leisure farm and their willingness to recommend a leisure farm.

RESULTS

Sample profile

Descriptive information of the sample for this study showed that 42.2% (n = 257) were male and 57.4% (n = 349) were female. The mean age was 37.1 years, and the majority of respondents were between 25 and 44 years old (56.4%, n = 342). Most of the respondents (56.4%) were from Northern Taiwan. Among the respondents, approximately 61.9% held a university degree. More than half (54.9%) of the respondents’ annual household incomes were between $8,000 and $24,000. About half of the respondents (49.3%) were first-time visitors (n = 299). Besides, the majority of respondents (47.6%) traveled with friends, and 46.7% traveled with family and/or relatives. In addition, 63.4% of the respondents have one-day travels while 28.2% of them have two-day travels.

Measurement reliability and validity analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the overall reliability and validity of the measurement. Table 2 presents the details of the properties of the measurements. The results indicated acceptable psychometric properties (Bentler & Wu 1993). For example, $\chi^2$=314.09, $\chi^2$/df (df=67) =4.68, GFI=0.93, SRMR=0.045, RMSEA=0.078, NNFI=0.97, and CFI=0.98. The composite reliability (CR) of all five constructs used in this study exceeded the minimum requirement for reliability of 0.70, ranging from 0.74 to 0.85. The results of the reliability test indicated that multiple measurement items were highly reliable for measuring each construct (Hair et al. 1998). Also, convergent validity was assessed with the factor loadings in the measurement model. All confirmatory factor loadings exceeded 0.50, and all were significant at the alpha level of .01 (Anderson & Gerbing 1988). Furthermore, average variance extracted (AVE) of all constructs ranged from 0.49 to 0.74, exceeding or approaching the recommended 0.5 threshold (Hair et al. 1998). Discriminant validity was also assessed by comparing the AVE with the squared correlations between constructs (Hair et al. 1998). The maximum squared correlation in all pairs (= 0.459 between natural and cultural resources and atmosphere) was less than AVEs (minimum value of 0.49), ensuring the discriminant validity of the constructs as shown in Table 3.
Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Dimensions/ Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standardized factor loadings</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>AVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCR</td>
<td>Natural and cultural resources</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N1</td>
<td>Diversity of the natural resources</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>0.73**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2</td>
<td>Appealing of the scenery</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>0.79**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N3</td>
<td>Attraction of the farming culture</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>0.82**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>Atmosphere</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Fresh air</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>0.78**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Opportunity for leisure experience</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>0.79**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Clean tourism environment</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.77**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Leisure infrastructures</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Soundness tourism facilities</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>0.76**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Provide beverage and food</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.71**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td>Provide local souvenir</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.65**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSE</td>
<td>Social setting and environment</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>Place for family tourism</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>0.74**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>Place for outdoors teaching</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.79**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>Place for making idol play</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>0.54**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DL</td>
<td>Destination loyalty</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>I will revisit to leisure farm</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>0.84**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>I will recommend leisure farm as a</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.88**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>favorable destination to others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3. Correlation matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural and cultural resources</th>
<th>Atmosphere</th>
<th>Leisure infrastructures</th>
<th>Social setting and environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural and cultural resources</td>
<td>0.678**</td>
<td>0.617**</td>
<td>0.528**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.580**</td>
<td>0.608**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure infrastructures</td>
<td>0.608**</td>
<td>0.466**</td>
<td>0.498**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social setting and environment</td>
<td>0.596**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination loyalty</td>
<td>0.534**</td>
<td>0.538**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$. 

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Destination image and destination loyalty

A structural model was estimated to test H1. This study used the LISREL (version 8.8) package to analyze the full structural equation model with destination image as an exogenous latent variable, destination loyalty as an endogenous latent variable, four dimensions of destination image as exogenous observable variables, and two items of destination loyalty as endogenous observable variables. The goodness-of-fit statistics of the proposed model showed that the model reasonably fits the data ($\chi^2=28.34$, $\chi^2/df$ (df=8)=3.54, GFI=0.98, SRMR=0.019, RMSEA=0.065, NNFI=0.98, and CFI=0.99). For the structure model, the structure parameter estimate was statistically significant ($\gamma=0.72$, $p<0.01$, $R^2=0.51$), which indicated that destination image positively influenced destination loyalty. Thus, H1 was supported. The structural results of the proposed model are depicted in Figure 2.

Dimensions of destination image and destination loyalty

The structural relationships were estimated using four types of destination image and destination loyalty. The following parameter values showed that the structural model provided a reasonable overall fit: $\chi^2=314.09$, $\chi^2/df$ (df=67)=4.68, GFI=0.93, SRMR=0.045, RMSEA=0.078, NNFI=0.97, and CFI=0.98 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1984). Two hypothetical relationships were significant at the 0.05 level, and the structural model results related to hypothesis H2 are depicted in Figure 3. This analysis shows that destination loyalty was positively influenced by natural and cultural resources ($\gamma=0.24$, $p<0.05$), and social setting and environment ($\gamma=0.24$, $p<0.05$). However, atmosphere and leisure infrastructures had no significant effect on destination loyalty ($\gamma=0.18$, $p>0.05$; $\gamma=0.09$, $p>0.05$). Therefore, H2 was partly supported.

The moderating effect of first-time and repeat visitors

To examine the moderating effect of first-time and repeat visitors, a multiple group analysis was performed. Before conducting multiple group analysis, the respondents were split into two groups, first-time and repeat visitors. Then, respondents who first time to visit destination were assigned to the first-time group ($n=299$) and those who over two times to visit destination were assigned to the repeat group ($n=307$). Descriptive information regarding the first-time group showed that 42.8% were male and 57.2% were female. The mean age was 37.7 years old and 71.5% of respondents had at least a Bachelor’s degree. On the other hand, demographic characteristics of the repeat group showed that 41.7% were male and 58.3% were female. The mean age was 36.6 years old and more than half of respondents had a Bachelor’s degree (76.6%).

To statistically test H3, the chi-square difference ($\Delta\chi^2$) between constrained and unconstrained models was assessed with the difference in degrees of freedom ($\Delta$df) (Anderson & Gerbing 1988). Overall, the chi-square difference ($\Delta\chi^2(\Delta$df=1)=6.98) between the constrained model ($\chi^2=57.6$, df=17) and the unconstrained model ($\chi^2=50.62$, df=16) was significant ($p<0.01$). As shown in Table 4, this result indicated that the relationship between destination image and loyalty was significantly different between first-timer and repeater. Specifically, first-time group has the stronger effects of destination image on loyalty than repeat group. Thus, H3 was supported.
Once support for the main moderating effects was found, the next step was further to examine effects of destination image dimensions on loyalty between first-time and repeat group. As can be seen from Table 4, the chi-square difference ($\Delta \chi^2(\Delta df=4)=23.99$) between the constrained model ($\chi^2=450.02$, $df=145$) and the unconstrained model ($\chi^2=426.03$, $df=141$) was significant ($p<0.01$). This result revealed that the relationships among destination image dimensions and loyalty were significantly different between first-timer and repeater. To identify
where the statistical differences in the relationships exist, coefficients for each path were compared between first-time and repeat groups.

First, the difference in the coefficients between natural and cultural resources and destination loyalty was examined. The chi-square difference ($\Delta \chi^2(\Delta df=1)=16.16$) was significant at 0.01 level. This result indicates that the effect of natural and cultural resources on destination loyalty is significantly different across first-time and repeat groups. Furthermore, the difference in the relationship between atmosphere and destination loyalty across two groups was examined. The chi-square difference ($\Delta \chi^2(\Delta df=1)=10.31$) was significant at 0.01 level. This finding indicates that the effect of atmosphere on destination loyalty was statistically significantly different across two groups.

Also, the differential relationship between leisure infrastructures and destination loyalty between first-timer and repeater was investigated. The chi-square difference ($\Delta \chi^2(\Delta df=1)=19.17$) was significant at 0.01 level. First-time and repeat visitors did moderate the relationship between leisure infrastructures and destination loyalty. To check the mode-rating role of first-time and repeat visitors for the relationship between social setting and environment, and destination loyalty, the chi-square difference ($\Delta \chi^2(\Delta df=1)=2.45$) was assessed and found not to be significant at 0.05 level. This result suggests that social setting and environment did not differently influence destination loyalty across first-time and repeat group.

To draw more practical implications, this study examined the path coefficients of first-time and repeat visitor groups in more detail. In Figure 4, both atmosphere and leisure infrastructures had significant effects on destination loyalty. Destination loyalty was not significantly influenced by natural and cultural resources, and social setting and environment. In other words, both atmosphere and leisure infrastructures were important in enhancing customer loyalty, especially atmosphere, for first-time visitors. In contrary to first-time visitors, both natural and cultural resources, and social setting and environment were detected as significant predictors of loyalty for the repeat visitors (Figure 5), whereas atmosphere and leisure infrastructures both did not affect loyalty. That is, to repeat visitors the natural and cultural resources, and social setting and environment were more critical in terms of loyalty than the others’ image.

Table 4. Comparisons of path coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>First-time</th>
<th>Repeat</th>
<th>$\Delta \chi^2(\Delta df=1)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destination image → destination loyalty</td>
<td>0.76**</td>
<td>0.67**</td>
<td>6.98**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta \chi^2$ for one gamma set equal across subgroups (\Delta df=1): 6.98**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and cultural resources → destination loyalty</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
<td>16.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere → destination loyalty</td>
<td>0.63**</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>10.31**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure infrastructures → destination loyalty</td>
<td>0.47**</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>19.17**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social setting and environment → destination loyalty</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta \chi^2$ for all gammas set equal across subgroups (\Delta df=4): 23.99**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$. 
Figure 4. Structural results for first-time visitors

Figure 5. Structural results for repeat visitors
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the role of destination image in formation of destination loyalty at leisure farm, and takes visiting times as moderator. There are three main findings of this study. First, destination image is positively related to destination loyalty. Such finding is same as previous studies (Rittichainuwat, et al. 2001; Ross 1993; Tasci & Gartner 2007). Second, in testing the positive relationship between destination image dimensions and destination loyalty, “natural and cultural resources” and “social setting and environment” are two dimensions that significantly related to destination loyalty. Such finding can be explained by travel motivation of farm visitors. Empirical study of Chang (2003) found that “to be close to nature environment”, “the recreation activities” and “to experience agriculture life” are main reasons for tourists to visit a leisure farm. The significant effect of “natural and cultural resources” and “social setting and environment” on destination loyalty just fit the study of Chang (2003) about reasons to visit a leisure farm.

Third, for first-time visitors, “atmosphere” and “leisure infrastructures” are significantly related to their destination loyalty; on the contrary, for repeat visitors, “natural and cultural resources” and “social setting and environment” are significantly related to their destination loyalty. On the one hand, Garbarino and Johnson (1999) noted that patronizing intentions of first-time visitors are primarily predicted by the image they have developed of a destination, as their decisions tend to have a short-time focus. Besides, Morais and Lin (2010) concluded that first-time visitors’ destination decisions may be mainly based on external cognitive or perceptual evaluations of the destination because of their focus on immediate gratification with a visitation. On the other hand, Morais and Lin (2010) mentioned that repeat visitors may pay more importance to the destinations’ psychological meaning, while Um, et al. (2006) noted that repeaters’ intentions may be influenced largely by promotional efforts to recall their positive memory and by disseminated information on new attractions. Additionally, Gitelson and Crompton (1984) pointed out that emotional attachment to a destination is a critical factor explaining revisit behavior.

Academic implications

This study echoes the argument of many previous studies regarding the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty. Moreover, this is the first study to explore relationships between destination image dimensions and destination loyalty based on perspectives of both first-time and repeat visitors. Empirical results demonstrated that “natural and cultural resources” and “social setting and environment” are two main dimensions that attract repeat visitors. It seems that sustainable competitiveness in farm tourism fits the spirit of sustainable tourism that takes protection of natural and cultural resources as a top priority. Obviously, this study points out directions for leisure farms to maintain sustainable competitiveness: “natural and cultural resources” and “social setting and environment.”

Additionally, first-time and repeat visitors can be taken as moderator to realize potential changes of factors in influencing tourists’ behavioral intentions. As Lehto, et al. (2004) noted, without information about differences between first-time and repeat visitors, it is difficult for planner to provide the most appropriate offerings such as activities and attractions, and for marketers to package and position the destination to appeal most effectively to repeat tourists. Hong, Lee, Lee, and
Jang (2009) also mentioned that as keeping repeaters is beneficial for destination managers and tourism organizations, revisitation has been an area of interest in tourism research. Moreover, since that numerous leisure farms in Taiwan focus on the revisit market segment with the aim of establishing a second home for their customers, findings about the difference between first-time and repeat visitors’ formation of destination loyalty are useful and meaningful.

Managerial implications

Results of this study reveal the importance of farm managers to make a clear position and target market. Different dimensions of destination image will perform different effect and sustainability. Such finding point out the need for managers to emphasize on different dimensions of destination image based on different target market. Fakeye and Crompton (1991) suggested that managers should provide persuasive travel information to make first-time visitors willing to revisit and enhance destination attraction for repeat visitors to make them willing to do word-of-mouth.

Findings of this study reveal ways in position based on different target markets. First, for leisure farms that set first-time visitors as target market, managers should design creative facilities or buildings for tourists to experience fresh and leisure, and develop special meals and souvenirs to attract new customers. Managers can apply local factors to decorate their environment, making facility and environment perform unique attraction. Besides, meals and products can be provided based on seasonal fruits, vegetables or animals. That is, position of leisure farms that focus on first-time visitors should relate to special or unique among other farms. Second, for leisure farms that set repeat visitors as target market, managers should enrich natural and cultural resources of their farm. Managers can plant variety of flowers or trees of their farm and hold different festivals or activities related to seasonal flowers. In designing activities or facilities, managers should make visitors have the opportunity to experience traditional farm culture. Besides, managers can hold activities to make visitors play with family, friend, or classmates. By doing so, managers can help visitors have some memory about playing with others in the farm. That is, position of leisure farms that focus on repeat visitors should relate to nature, culture, and repeat visitors’ memory.

Future research and limitation

The findings of this study should be interpreted within the context of several limitations. On the one hand, managers can collect longitudinal data for analyzing dynamic effects of image on loyalty. Same as previous studies (Morais & Lin 2010), we collect the cross-sectional data to test hypotheses. However, longitudinal data can help researchers set up a dynamic perspective in study. Future research can find ways, such as by information of customer relationship management, to collect longitudinal data. On the other hand, this research model can be applied to test other destination types. Thus, empirical results of leisure farm in this study may not be the same in other type of destinations. Future research can explore the interactive effect of destination image and visiting times in other type of destinations.

REFERENCES


THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SERVICE QUALITY, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION, PERCEIVED VALUE, AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS IN SEA-KAYAKING OPERATIONS: A CASE STUDY OF PHUKET AND PHANG-NGA PROVINCES, THAILAND

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Received: May 20, 2011
Accepted: June 20, 2011

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ABSTRACT

This study was done with the following objectives: (1) to examine tourists’ perception of service quality provided by sea-kayaking operations based in Phuket and Phang-Nga Province, and (2) to examine the relative importance of service quality dimensions on tourists’ satisfaction levels, perceived value, and behavioral intention. The questionnaire used in this study was designed according to related literatures. A self-administered questionnaire survey of sea-kayaking operations in Phuket/Phang-Nga was conducted to collect empirical data whereby from a total of 400 questionnaires distributed, the response rate was 100%. Descriptive analysis, reliability, and multiple regressions were undertaken using SPSS for windows (version 16).

According to the tourists’ perception of service quality in this study, the mean score indicated that improved tangibility, responsiveness, and reliability would contribute most to raising tourists’ perceptions of the service experience which operations would benefit most from concentrating on these areas. These would be the key to increasing tourist satisfaction and reducing tourist complaints. The results from regression analysis showed that service quality variables were all found to be the most important contributors to tourist satisfaction. Prices variable was the most important contributor to tourist satisfaction, whereas “company provide service quality worth the money paid” was the most important contributor to behavioral intention. This study provides some useful insights for managerial action. First, managers can determine relative importance of the five service quality dimensions in predicting customer satisfaction and customer intention as well as which service quality dimension they should pay more attention to.

Keywords: SERVQUAL, satisfaction, sea-kayaking, Phuket and Phang-Nga province
INTRODUCTION

In recent years, adventure tourism and ecotourism have been growth sectors of the international tourism industry (Travel Industry Association of America, 2005), and are major attractions for international visitors seeking new experiences in challenging and scenic environments (Buckley, 2000). It has been said that, “ecotourism has been widely used to describe a form of tourism in natural areas that is based on the knowledge about the responsibility towards the ecological system of the area” (www.tat.or.th). The soft adventure options combined with ecotourism in sea-kayaking provides a wide range of commercially operated outdoor adventure activities involving a combination of adventure and excitement. Adventure ecotourism is expanding at a time when an increasing number of visitors are seeking environmentally-friendly experiences. Thus, many people may find the motivation to come to experience the wonders of nature, and the excitement of seeing the cave sites and native wildlife.

Phang Nga Bay is famed for its beautiful nature with varied marine life, and it is one of the most frequently visited marine national parks of Thailand (www.dnp.go.th). Hong Island and Phanak Island are favorite spots for tourists who can explore the islets closely and even go through small cave-like openings into magnificent lagoons by canoe. Phuket is a well-known and recognized destination for adventure ecotourism activities and experiences. Domestic and international visitors are drawn to Phuket by a combination of unique and diverse natural attractions and a tourism industry that offers a wide range of high quality adventure ecotourism products. Although there is a wide range of adventure activities available, sea-kayaking is clearly one of the most attractive to tourists of every age and gender.

The impact of sea-kayaking will become more evident as the number of participants steadily increases. There are three impacts of sea kayaking, namely, social impacts, environmental impacts, and economic impacts (Hudson and Beedie (2003). Social impact concerns commercial sea-kayaking operations where, currently, participants remain relatively small in number and most journeys are into unpopulated areas. Environmental impact refers to associated with rubbish and other human waste products, and unsetting of local species. Economic impact refers to equipment purchases and repairs, employment of local leaders, fee entry to locations, and travel to and from locations.

The number of studies on sea kayaking service quality is still limited and a definite set of measurement indices for the service quality of sea kayaking service is not available. Some studies explore the perception of the cause of injuries and medical conditions amongst those paddling kayaks in the sea environment. This study attempts to design a scale for measuring the service quality of sea kayaking services and further examines the relationships among service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention to find out which dimensions of service quality are significantly correlated with perceived value and customer satisfaction. The result can provide valuable reference information for sea kayaking service providers to manage their service and enhance their service quality. There are many operators who sell nature tours that offer little in the way of real education on the environment and damage the same environment that they are selling. The industry faces more immediate problems, such as, overcrowding at popular sites during peak times due to lack of control over operators by authority and lack of coordination among them.
Literature review

Sea-kayaking

The kayak was invented by the aboriginal Inuit people of the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions (Hudson and Beedie, 2003). The kayak paddler who always sits uses a paddle with a blade at each end. A shortage of large pieces of wood or bone meant that ancient kayak paddles would have been shorter and thinner than those in use today. Inuit kayaks were first made from wood bark and bone frames with animal skins stretched over them (Hutchinson, 1999). The design of kayaks for sport gradually deviated from their original look. These used for recreation have become unrecognizable from the original Inuit style which is now only retained by sea-kayaks designed for open sea use. Kayaking became a recreational and sporting activity in the twentieth century. Kayaking has grown in popularity as an independent as well as a tourism industry component of water-based experiences. Sea kayaking continues to thrive as a sport and has become a booming industry after an American naturalist founded it in Thailand in 1989 (www.johngray-seacanoe.com). He also popularized canoeing with a kayak paddle in 1983. Phang Nga bay is the largest area of original primary mangrove forest remaining in Thailand (www.dnp.go.th). Phang Nga bay is one of the most frequently visited marine national parks of Thailand. It comprises more than 40 islands with huge vertical cliffs (www.tat.or.th). It covers an area of 400 square kilometers and is located to the northeast of Phuket. The national park is widely known among foreign tourists for its unique seascape. The group of islets has become known as Guilin-on-sea. According to geologists, the area was once above the sea. It provides a great opportunity for tourists to explore the islets closely and even go through small opening of the islets. The area around Phang-nga bay is famed for its nature and beauty with rock art and cave. Two islands were selected for study: first, Hong Island has beautiful sea views and several caves on sea accessible only by kayak. The west of the island features high cliffs and lagoon while the east comprises a bay and a curved white sand beach. Second, Phanak Island is another one island which kayak can go through its small opening on sea at low tide. Tourists will enter a wonderful hidden world of its emerald lagoon which is a favorite spot for tourists.

Service quality

Goods quality and service quality are unlike. When purchasing goods, the consumer employs many tangible cues to judge quality such as color, label, package, and style whereas service quality is abstract and complicated construct that is difficult for the consumer to evaluate compared to goods quality. The characteristics of services make measurement of quality a very complex issue. Most services are intangible, that is, they are difficult to count, measure, record, test, and verify (Bateson, 1977). They have no physical manifestation. “Heterogeneity” (Booms and Bitner, 1981) is difficult to assure because what the firm intends to deliver may be entirely different from what the consumer receives. “Inseparability” (Carmen and Langeard, 1980) which is composed entirely of a delivery experience, cannot be produced at one time and place and then stored for later use at another place, and that quality occurs during service delivery. Because of service intangibility, a firm may find it more difficult to understand how consumers perceive service and service quality (Gronroos, 1982).

Previously, conceptualization and operationalization of service quality (SERVQUAL) was inadequate. In the
marketing literature, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985) conceived that “service quality is the difference between customers’ expectation and their perceived performance of a service.” Zeithaml (1988) defined service quality as “the customer’s evaluation of a product’s overall excellence or superiority”. Gilbert and Joshi (1992) argued that service quality should be according to consumer expectations orientation, since “it acknowledges the importance of consumer behavior in the evaluation of service”. Delivery of high quality service has become an essential marketing requirement as a result of competitive pressure (Ostrowski, 1993). Consequently, understanding and maintaining quality should be the main concerns of businesses today. Both manufacturing companies and service firms should be highly concerned with providing quality and delivery quality service (Akan, 1995). The delivery of high service quality to customers offers firms an opportunity to differentiate themselves in competitive markets, and results in greater customer satisfaction and loyalty, greater willingness to recommend to someone, reduction in customer complaints, and improvement in customer retention rates (Magi and Julander, 1996).

Today, both practitioners and academics consider the evaluation of service quality a critical measure of organizational performance (Yavas and Yasin, 2001). The delivery of high service quality to customers offers firms an opportunity to differentiate themselves in competitive markets, and results in greater customer satisfaction and loyalty, greater willingness to recommend to someone, reduction in customer complaints, and improvement in customer retention rates (Magi and Julander, 1996). Service quality is a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations, while delivering quality service means conforming to customer expectations on a consistent basis (Joewono and Kubota, 2007). Malhotra (2002) proposed that it is not necessary to use customers’ expectation to measure service quality (this study was regarding service quality of a website). Therefore, this study will directly use perceived service quality to measure the service quality of sea-kayaking operations. Consequently, understanding and maintaining quality should be the main concerns of businesses today.

**Customer satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is viewed as an important research topic by both practitioners and academics. From a managerial point of view, customer satisfaction is the primary source of future revenue and is regarded as the key factor in winning market share. In the academic field, customer satisfaction has been a popular topic since the early 1960s, reflected by the constant growth of literature on customer satisfaction. Since satisfaction was introduced as a field of study, a considerable number of studies have focused on this concept. This is because it is conceived as the key to business success in today’s competitive landscape.

Customer satisfaction is defined as “overall affective response to a perceived discrepancy between prior expectation and perceived performance after consumption” (Oliver, 1980), i.e. “primarily referred to as a function of pre-travel expectations and post travel experience” (Reisinger and Turner, 2003). Chen (2008) in defining customer satisfaction stated that it “pertains to a holistic evaluation after a service delivery experience, and acts as a consequence of satisfaction with individual attributes.” Wang, Zhang, Gu, and Zhen (2009) defined tourist satisfaction as “a feeling generated both by cognitive and emotional aspects of tourism activities as well as an accumulated evaluation of various components and features of the
Perceived value

Perceived value as a dynamic variable occurs at different stages of the purchasing process experienced before purchase, at the moment of purchase, at the time of use, and after use. For each stage the valuation made may be different (Gardial, Clemons, Woodruff, Schumann, and Burns, 1994). Recently, perceived value has been of growing interest among marketing researchers who have been examining the relationships among perceived value, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions, as one of the most influential measures of customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions, whereas it has not been given much attention in the tourism literature (Patrick and Backman, 2002). Perceived value not only affects customer choice behavior at the pre-purchase stage but also influences satisfaction and intentions to recommend and repurchase at the post-purchase stage (Parasuraman and Grewal, 2000).

The definitions have similarities and differences which are mainly seen in the linking of customer value to some service. The perspective of customer value involves a trade-off between what the customer receives and what they give up to acquire the product (Hellier et al., 2003). On the other hand, customer value takes the perspective of an organization’s customers by considering what they want and believe that they can get from buying and using a product or service (Woodruff, 1997). Initial conceptualizations of value in the marketing literature were mainly price based. For example, Thaler (1985) argued that consumers’ value perceptions are “the result of a comparison between various price structures, including advertised selling price, advertised reference price and internal reference price.” Monroe (1990) proposed that perceived overall value is “a weighted sum of acquisition (maximum price and actual selling price) and transaction value (gap between the reference price and actual price of product).” Lovelock (2000) defined it as “a trade-off between perceived benefits and perceived costs.” Recent research studies suggest that perceived value may be a better predictor of repurchase intentions than either satisfaction or quality. As the marketplace offers a variety of products with ranging quality and price levels, consumers are becoming more careful in spending their money on high value products. Moreover, perceived value seems to drive their future behaviors such as repurchase intent and word of mouth referrals (Brandy and Cronin, 2001).

Understanding the behavioral intentions of customers after experiencing services is important because they are seen as a prime determinant of a firm’s long term financial performance and is considered a major source of competitive advantage (Lan et al., 2004). Thus, behavioral intentions are important indicators of customers’ future behaviors, trigger future behaviors (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) and defined as “a deeply held commitment to repurchase or re-patronize a preferred product or service in the future” (Oliver, 1997). Many studies have examined the antecedents of repeat purchase intentions. Thus, understanding the determinants of customer retention can facilitate management’s focus on the major factors leading to customer intentions. Quality, perceived value, and satisfaction all have been shown to be good predictors of behavioral intentions (Patrick, 2004).

Boulding et al. (1993) used repurchase intention and word of mouth to evaluate consumer’s post purchase intentions. Repurchase intention is the process of an individual purchasing goods or services from the same firm (Hellier,
Geursen, Carr and Rickard, (2003) and the reason for repurchase is primarily based on past purchase experience. Word of mouth is a process in which consumers who have used a certain product or service pass their experiences through word of mouth to consumers planning to purchase the product or service (Westbrook, 1987). Favorable behavioral intentions encompass three dimensions which are, word of mouth, purchase intentions and price insensitivity, and they combine to form customer loyalty (Olsen, 2007). Meanwhile, Ha and Jang (2010) focused on revisit intentions (hedonic value and utilitarian value), word of mouth, and willingness to recommend as specific forms of behavior in a Korean restaurant.

Behavioral intentions represent as customer’s loyalty which is an important goal for a company’s long term sustainability. Retaining existing customers usually has a much lower associated cost than winning new ones. Furthermore, loyal customers are more likely to recommend friends, relatives or other potential customers to a service by acting as free word of mouth advertising agents (Shormaker and Lewis, 1999).

Behavioral intentions can be defined and assessed by both attitudinal and behavioral measure. The attitudinal measure refers to a specific desire to continue a relationship with a service provider while the behavioral perspective refers to the concept of repeat patronage (Oliver, 1999). The author also indicated that customers can develop an attitude based on prior information without actual experience, so they frequently increase biases for or against providers based on the provider’s image in the marketplace. This attitude is strongly related to the customers’ intentions to re-patronize the service and to be engaged in word of mouth behaviors. Similarly, as the degree of destination intention is frequently reflected in tourists’ intentions to revisit the destination, it impacts upon their willingness to recommend it (Chen and Tsai, 2008).

Cronin et al. (2000) discovered in a cross industrial research that perceived value has positive effects on post purchase intentions, that perceived value positively influences post-purchase intention on the telecom industry in China (Wang et al. (2004), and that perceived value positively influences loyalty in the research of mobile commerce in Taiwan (Lin and Wang, 2006). Meanwhile, Lam (2004) suggested that understanding the loyalty of public transit passengers is important because customer loyalty is seen as a prime determinant of a firm’s long term financial performance and is considered a major source of competitive advantage. Furthermore, Kuo (2003) pointed out that the service quality of online community is positively related to continuous use, referral, and loyalty. Moreover, Lee and Lin (2005) found that the service quality of online shops positively influences post-purchase intention.

METHODOLOGY

A self administered questionnaire survey was conducted to collect data from tourists who participated on a one-day sea-kayaking trip in Phang-Nga in Phuket. The questions in the questionnaire are designed based on a review of the related literature. To have adequate content validity, the survey instrument was revised and finalized according to feedback from a pre-test sample of 30 sea-kayaking tourists. Before the questionnaire was finalized, content and language revisions were made based on suggestions by pre-test subjects, peers, and supervisors.

The questionnaire is composed of five sections. The construct of service quality
was on the five dimensions (tangible, empathy, assurance, responsiveness, and reliability), and was measured by 22 items adapted from Jung-Yu Lai (2006), Pakdil F., Aydin O., (2007), Cronin J., (1992), Tribe J., Snaith T., (1998), Gonzalez M., Comesana L., Brea J., (2007), Lin H., (2010), which dealt with the service quality of hotel, airline, information system, and e-business. The perceived value was measured by two-item measures adapted from Lin H., (2010). Item for the behavioral intentions construct were measured by three-item measures adapted from Gonzalez M., Comesana L., and Brea J., (2007). The first section consists of the demographic profile of the tourists with 4 items, such as, respondents’ age, gender, region of residence, and average monthly household income. In the second category, tourists’ sea kayaking background based on 3 questions. In this study, service quality was measured using only the “perceptions approach” according to the SERVQUAL scale, which represents the third category; the questionnaire includes 22 items pertaining to the service quality of sea-kayaking and uses a five-point Likert scale anchored by 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”. Table 1 shows the research constructs and items included in the questionnaire. Two perceived value items, six overall satisfaction items, and three behavioral intention items representing the fourth category were assessed using five-point Likert scale from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”. The fifth category enables tourists to make comments towards the end of both questionnaires by providing spaces for good and bad impressions of the sea-kayaking trip.

Figure 1. The conceptual model

RESULTS

The questionnaire survey was conducted at Phang-Nga Bay in August 2010. Tourists undertaking one-day sea-kayaking tours were asked about their willingness to take part in the survey, and if they answer yes, then they were asked to complete a pen and paper questionnaire under the guidance of the data collectors. Four hundred questionnaires were distributed and the response rate was 100%.

Demographic profile of respondents and tourist’s background

In the respondents’ profile, 52% were female tourists and about 37.8% were in.
the age range between 26 and 35 years. The respondents, who were from Australia / New Zealand with 36.2%, and 20.5% of the sample, respectively have an average monthly household income between USD 5,000-6,000. Tourists’ sea-kayaking background, 90.8% reported it to be the first time for them to go sea-kayaking in Phuket/Phang-Nga. The respondents indicated that the main reason for choosing sea-kayaking was interesting (56.8%) and 36.5% of the respondents got their information about sea-kayaking from a tour company/travel agency.

Reliability

The measurement’s reliability was assessed by Cronbach’s alpha. The Alpha values for the five dimensions ranged from 0.68 to 0.87. The result of the reliability analysis is presented in Table 1. First, the Cronbach’s Alpha values reported on “tangible” dimension were found to be 0.72. The evaluation of the “empathy” dimension of the quality perception displays a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.81 for the 2 item scale. Reliability analysis was performed on “assurance” dimension of the quality perception. Cronbach’s Alpha was displayed to be 0.80. “Responsiveness” dimension of the quality perception displays a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.87. The evaluation of the “reliability” dimension of the quality perception displays a Cronbach Alpha of 0.68 for the 4 item scale and, thus, just falls short of the 0.7 threshold. After excluding the item “minivan departed and arrived on time”, the quality perception scale would yield a value of 0.76.

Tourists’ perception of service quality in sea-kayaking

Table 1 reports the perception of service quality scores. Except “the destinations were not crowded and unspoiled”, all other perception of service quality attributes had average scores above four, indicating that these attributes were perceived when customers selected sea-kayaking. The five most important attributes were “staffs were always polite” (4.72), “the destinations had beautiful natural surroundings” (4.71), “staffs understood specific needs” (4.64), “staffs gave promptness of services” (4.64), and “staffs show great interest and pleasure in resolving problem” (4.62). The five least important attributes were “staffs were well dressed and appear neat” (4.21), “equipments were clean and up to date” (4.20), “minivans departed and arrived on time” (4.09), “staffs had good language skills” (4.05), “the destinations were not crowded and unspoiled” (3.84), indicating that customers did not perceive much from the sea kayaking operations.

Tourists’ perceptions of service quality attribute influencing tourist satisfaction

The regression results for customer satisfaction are reported in Table 2 showing the main effect of five service quality dimension and tourist satisfaction. Tangible, empathy, assurance, responsiveness, and reliability dimensions were statistically significantly related to tourist satisfaction in sea-kayaking. The results of the regression analysis, the coefficient of determination (Adj. R² = 0.692), and the F-ratio, resulting in a value of 180.654, suggests that the regression model is suitable. Among the five service quality dimensions, “tangible” dimension (Beta = 0.332) carried the highest weight in explaining tourists overall staying satisfaction, followed by “empathy” dimension (Beta = 0.221), “responsiveness” dimension (Beta = 0.178), “reliability” dimension (Beta = 0.119), and “assurance” dimension (Beta = 0.046).
Table 1. Tourists’ perception of service quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Service Quality Attributes</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tangible dimension</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Equipments were clean and up to date.</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Equipments worked properly without causing break downs</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Staffs were well dressed and appear neat</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The destinations were not crowded and unspoiled</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.09*</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The destinations had beautiful natural surroundings</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empathy</strong></td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Staffs understood your specific needs</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The programs had operating hours convenient to you</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assurance</strong></td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Staffs were always polite to you</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Staffs had in-depth knowledge about the products and services offered to answer your questions</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Staffs provided physical safe and secure place</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Staffs provided good introduction details for sea kayaking activity.</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsiveness</strong></td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Company provided enough numbers of staffs are working properly.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>1.07*</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Staffs had good communication skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Staffs had good language skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Staffs gave promptness of services to you</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Staffs gave you detail information about all the service conditions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Staffs responded to your questions</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Staffs provided good introduction details for sea kayaking activity.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reliability</strong></td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Minivan departed and arrived on time (from hotel-pier-hotel)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>1.07*</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Company provided the services as you were promised</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Staffs shown great interest and pleasure in resolving problem to you</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. The itinerary was completely followed</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noted: 1) Perception of service quality level was based on mean scores measured on a Likert-type scale from 1 to 5 (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree); 2) N= 400

Table 2. Regression of tourist satisfaction on tourists’ perceptions of service quality dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Un-standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Model Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>0.561</td>
<td>4.196</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td>F:180.654, Adj. R²: 0.692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible</td>
<td>0.332</td>
<td>8.352</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>0.221</td>
<td>5.290</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assurance</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>2.182</td>
<td>.030*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>0.178</td>
<td>4.319</td>
<td>.000*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>0.119</td>
<td>3.096</td>
<td>.002*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noted: 1) * indicates statistically significant different between groups at p<0.05.
Along the same lines, the regression results for perceived value are reported in Table 3. Tangible and empathy were statistically significant in relation to tourist perceived value in sea kayaking, whereas the relationship among assurance, responsiveness and reliability with perceived value was not statistically significant. The results of the regression analysis, the coefficient of determination (Adj. $R^2 = 0.311$), and the F-ratio, which recorded a value of 36.937 suggests that the regression model is suitable. In the five service quality dimensions, the “tangible” dimension (Beta = 0.356) emerged as the most important dimension for perceived value, followed by “empathy” dimension (Beta = 0.255), “reliability” dimension (Beta = 0.109), “responsiveness” dimension (Beta = 0.079), and “assurance” dimension (Beta = 0.033).

In Table 4, the regression results for behavioral intentions show that empathy, and assurance were not statistically significantly related to behavioral intentions in sea-kayaking, whereas the relationship among tangible, responsiveness, and reliability with behavioral intentions were statistically significant. In the results of

**Table 3. Regression of perceived value on tourists’ perceptions of service quality dimensions value**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Un-standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Model Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>0.659</td>
<td>0.276</td>
<td>2.392</td>
<td>.017*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible</td>
<td>0.356</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>4.338</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>0.255</td>
<td>0.086</td>
<td>2.970</td>
<td>.003*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assurance</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.753</td>
<td>.452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td>0.923</td>
<td>.357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>1.378</td>
<td>.169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4. Regression of behavioral intentions on tourists’ perceptions of service quality dimensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Un-standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Model Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>1.224</td>
<td>0.232</td>
<td>5.281</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible</td>
<td>0.216</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>3.132</td>
<td>.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>-0.036</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>-0.500</td>
<td>.617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assurance</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>0.366</td>
<td>.715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>0.183</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>2.551</td>
<td>.011*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>0.292</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>4.391</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tourists’ perceptions of service quality attribute influencing perceived value**

Along the same lines, the regression results for perceived value are reported in Table 3. Tangible and empathy were statistically significant in relation to tourist perceived value in sea kayaking, whereas the relationship among assurance, responsiveness and reliability with perceived value was not statistically significant. The results of the regression analysis, the coefficient of determination (Adj. $R^2 = 0.311$), and the F-ratio, which recorded a value of 36.937 suggests that the regression model is suitable. In the five service quality dimensions, the “tangible” dimension (Beta = 0.356) emerged as the most important dimension for perceived value, followed by “empathy” dimension (Beta = 0.255), “reliability” dimension (Beta = 0.109), “responsiveness” dimension (Beta = 0.079), and “assurance” dimension (Beta = 0.033).

**Tourists’ perception of service quality attributes influencing behavioral intentions**

In Table 4, the regression results for behavioral intentions show that empathy, and assurance were not statistically significantly related to behavioral intentions in sea-kayaking, whereas the relationship among tangible, responsiveness, and reliability with behavioral intentions were statistically significant. In the results of
the regression analysis, the coefficient of determination (Adj. R² = 0.294), the five service quality dimensions gave an acceptable result in predicting the variance of the tourists behavioral intentions. The F-ratio gets a value of 34.297.

In five service quality dimensions, “reliability” dimension (Beta = 0.292) carried the highest weight in explaining behavioral intentions, followed by “tangible” dimension (Beta = 0.216), “responsiveness” dimension (Beta = 0.183), “assurance” dimension (Beta = 0.014), and “empathy” dimension (Beta = -0.036).

**Table 5. Regression of tourist satisfaction on perceived value**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Un-standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Model Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.560</td>
<td>0.125</td>
<td>20.410</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide worth money paid</td>
<td>0.178</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>5.370</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prices are reasonable</td>
<td>0.273</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>80123</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noted: 1) * indicates statistically significant different between groups at p<0.05

**Table 6. Regression of behavioral intentions on perceived value**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Un-standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Model Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.489</td>
<td>0.162</td>
<td>15.320</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide worth the money paid</td>
<td>0.234</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>5.456</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prices are reasonable</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>3.436</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noted: 1) * indicates statistically significant different between groups at p<0.05

**Perceived value attributes influencing tourist satisfaction**

To identify the perceived value attributes that influence tourist satisfaction in sea-kayaking operations, standard multiple regression analyses were conducted. As shown in Table 5, company provides service quality worth the money paid, and prices are reasonable were statistically significantly in relation to tourist satisfaction in sea-kayaking operations. Based on the Beta estimates, “prices are reasonable” (Beta=0.273) was the most important contributor to tourist satisfaction followed by “company provides service quality worth the money paid” (Beta=0.178). The result of the regression analysis, the coefficient of determination (Adj. R²=0.385), the perceived value attributes gave an acceptable result in predicting the variance of the tourists behavioral intentions. The F-ratio which gets a value of 126.133 suggests that the regression model is suitable.

**Perceived value attributes influencing behavioral intentions**

When a regression was performed on company provides service quality worth the money paid, and prices are reasonable as the independent variable, the model exhibited strong explanatory abilities with an adjusted R² of 0.213. Reliability dimension did not provide significant predictions of
tourist satisfaction. The F-ratio which recorded a value of 54.910 suggests that the regression model is suitable.

To identify the perceived value attributes that influence behavioral intentions in sea-kayaking operations, standard multiple regression analyses were conducted. Table 6 concluded that company provides service quality worth the money paid, and prices are reasonable were statistically significantly related to behavioral intentions in sea-kayaking operations. Based on the Beta estimates, “company provide service quality worth the money paid” (Beta=0.234) was the most important contributor to behavioral intention, followed by “prices are reasonable” (Beta=0.150).

### Table 7. Regression of behavioral intentions on tourist satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Un-standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Model Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with quality of service</td>
<td>0.911</td>
<td>0.207</td>
<td>4.391</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with quality of equipment</td>
<td>0.428</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>6.928</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with quality of food</td>
<td>-0.111</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>-2.101</td>
<td>.036*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with quality of staff</td>
<td>-0.094</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>2.371</td>
<td>.018*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with quality of destination</td>
<td>-0.056</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.951</td>
<td>.342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with safety level</td>
<td>0.228</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>3.934</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>2.429</td>
<td>.016*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noted: 1) * indicates statistically significant different between groups at p<0.05

Tourist satisfaction attributes influencing behavioral intentions

A linear regression analysis was performed on these six variables using tourist satisfaction as the independent variable. The model exhibited an adjusted $R^2$ of 0.405 indicating that the model was useful in general. The “satisfied with quality of staff” variable was not significant predictors of behavioral intentions. The F-ratio which recorded a value of 46.208 suggests that the regression model is suitable.

To identify the tourist satisfaction attributes that influence behavioral intentions in sea-kayaking operations, standard multiple regression analyses were conducted. Table 7 concluded that satisfied with quality of service, satisfied with quality of equipment, satisfied with quality of food, satisfied with quality of destination, and satisfied with safety level were statistically significantly related to behavioral intentions in sea-kayaking operations whereas satisfied with quality of staff was not statistically significant in relation to behavioral intentions. Based on the Beta estimates, “satisfied with quality of service” (Beta=0.428) was the most important contributor to tourist satisfaction, followed by “satisfied with quality of destination” (Beta=0.228), “satisfied with safety level” (Beta=0.124), “satisfied with quality of food” (Beta=-0.094), “satisfied with quality of staff” (Beta=-0.056), and “satisfied with quality of equipment” (Beta=-0.111).
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined tourists’ perceptions of sea-kayaking operations and the key attributes affecting tourist satisfaction and behavioral intention. The findings of the study suggested that empathy and assurance dimensions were two pivotal aspects to sea-kayaking operations’ success. The perception of service quality along all dimension being rated the strongly agree level. The mean scores indicated that improved “tangible” in “equipment were clean and up to date”, and “destination were not crowded and unspoiled”, “responsiveness” in “staffs had good language skills”, and “reliability” in “minivan departed and arrived on time” would contribute most of raising tourists’ perceptions of the service experience, that is operations would benefit most from concentrating on these areas.

Our objective was to examine the relative importance of service quality dimensions on tourists’ satisfaction, perceived value, and behavioral intentions in sea-kayaking operations. In the results of regression analyses, service quality variables were all found to be important contributors to tourist satisfaction which explained 69.2% of variance in satisfaction, 31.1% of variance in perceived value, and 29.4% of variance in behavioral intention. The relatively high adj. R2 values confirmed the key role of service quality for the success of sea-kayaking operations. Among variables tangible, responsiveness, and reliability, all were significant predictors of behavioral intentions. To ensure they revisit, sea-kayaking operations should develop their ability of staffs and facilities which are provided at the appropriate environment. The perceived value variables showed the importance of reasonable prices in influencing behavioral intention, and provide worth money paid in influencing tourist satisfaction.

The limitations of this study as highlighted by the following issues are: First, the questionnaires were done only in English. Future research could allow for other languages, such as Russian and Chinese. Second, only 30% of sea-kayaking operations participated in collecting data on the boat in this study. Future research could provide for a much higher percentage of participation. Third, sea-kayaking operating schedules of operators were too similar resulting in overcrowding at sites. Fourth, this study was conducted...
in the off-season in Phuket/Phang Nga, so further studies need to determine if the cause and effect relationships in this tourist satisfaction vary with the seasons. Despite these limitations, this study presents an effective framework for investigating tourists’ satisfaction for a particular destination. The methodology and the findings are of value to the tourism industry and to researchers of tourist behavior.

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INVESTIGATING AN IMPACT OF COLLECTIVE PARTNERSHIP IN STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM MANAGEMENT: EVIDENCE FROM PU MUEN NAI TRIBE VILLAGE, THAILAND

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Received: May 20, 2011
Accepted: June 20, 2011

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed at constructing a prototype for developing Eco-tourism management by using Community-Based Tourism (CBT) management concept and applying Business to Business (B2B) marketing strategies to maintain tourism market for the community and securing the sustainability of Eco-tourism business. Both qualitative research stressing participatory action and quantitative analysis were used in this study.

Findings revealed that Eco-tourism operators would be able to provide marketing perspectives and to create a marketing channel for community-managed tourism. The development of Eco-tourism marketing from the cooperation between local community and Eco-tourism operators had led to the establishment of linkage between the community and the relevant external business organizations. As the research involved with micro level development and its locally-specific nature, findings may have limitation for direct application in other Eco-tourism contexts.

This research had generated concrete benefits for the local community in social, economic, cultural, and environmental aspects. Collaboration among community, Eco-tourism operators and researchers should be activated at the initial period of CBT research and development project to permit the joint determination on tourism development directions. This research ventured into the application of organizational marketing principles in the CBT model to establish relationship between relevant external business enterprises and community enterprises which allowed two parties to jointly develop Eco-tourism management plans and activities for mutual benefits and sustainable business operations.

Keywords: Community-Based Tourism management, participatory action, Eco-tourism
INTRODUCTION

Eco-tourism typically involves travel to destinations where nature and cultural heritage are primary attractions appealing to ecologically and socially conscious individuals (Weaver, 2001). The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) initialized the national Eco-tourism policy in 1996 as “Community Based Eco-tourism (CBT)” to encourage natural resources conservation to generate income and to support culture conservation of local community (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 1997). This type of tourism is managed and owned by the community, for the community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about community and local ways of life (Suansri, 2007).

During 1998-1999, the Thai government had promoted Thailand to be a tourism country under the “Amazing Thailand” campaign and then in 2007, the supported research and development on homestay with CBT management and initiated Thai homestay certification standards for community project and service provider (The Thailand Community-Based Tourism, 2010) to ensure that homestay participants enjoy positive experiences during their stay in Thailand. The Office of Tourism Development of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports has developed certification standards covering eight aspects of the Thai homestay tourism experience: 1) accommodation, 2) food and nutrition, 3) safety, 4) management, 5) tourism services, 6) environment, 7) added value, and 8) marketing. The index provides a tangible means of rating the quality of Thai homestays and the services provided. Thai homestay is a special tourism product that enables visitors and tourists to experience, up close and personally the local way of life in rural communities of Thailand. Host families warmly welcome guests into their homes and are delighted to share and exchange knowledge and insight on Thai culture, ways and traditions. The programme is new to Thailand but it has been enthusiastically received by both travelers and villagers. Participation in a homestay programme is generally a village initiative. Homestays provide villagers with an opportunity to earn income that normally eludes them in the more sophisticated travel industry. It also enables them to meet outsiders they often see only from a distance and to experience a wider world through sharing their lives with others. However, Community-Based Tourism is a type of service business that rely on principles of marketing mix in developing the mode of service (Thongma, 2009) composing of eight business components as follows: product, price, place, promotion, people, physical, evidence, and procedure in giving service process and partnership. All of those eight components should conform to the product along with the potentials of the business guide-lines. Therefore, marketing management does not depend on considering or choosing the ways/methods/ best guide-lines but on choosing a way or suitable strategy to the type of need/demand and behavior of the market/clientele that always suit with the product and presentation of the business, (Samerjai, 2005; Thongma, 2009).

In the Research and Development on CBT and Thai homestay it still needed to improve community-based management, marketing mechanism and thorough understanding of CBT concept by tour operators who relate with communities based-tourism. The achievement of community–based tourism management consists of key elements including community, visitors and Eco-tour operators who come to play a role directly with the community by arranging interesting tour program and leading tourists to visit and participate in the tour activities of the community. They also prepare professional guides who understand Community-
Based Tourism concept, guide visitors, and work with the community well, in preparing tourism activities that suit the various behaviors of tourists from different nations. The community needs the specialist Eco-tour operator who can provide this information and unite in developing suitable and attractive tourism activities and reasonable fees to the community, travel agencies and visitors. Running business in the form of B2B is suitable for the community because it has less experience in marketing and communication with consumers (visitors) is one barrier. The Eco-tourism operators who understand the CBT concept, being fair and not exploiting the community will find well, suitable consumers (tourists) to visit the community. Thus, this research has assisted the community to approach Eco-tourism operators that understand the development project. Participatory community-based Eco-tourism concept, qualitative research method and participatory action research (PAR) were conducted to prepare the readiness and better understanding of local stakeholders toward community based management and Eco-tourism by allowing stakeholders to participate in the research activities through learning by doing, and creating value added from their existing local knowledge and agro-ecological practices.

**Purpose**

This research aims to construct a development model for Eco-tourism management by using Community-Based Tourism (CBT) management concept and applying Business-to-Business (B2B) marketing strategies. Specifically, it aims to create the link between local community and Eco-tourism operators in order to maintain tourism market for the community and to secure the sustainability of Eco-tourism business.

**The study area**

The research area is located in Pu Muen Nai village, Mae Ai district, Chiang Mai in upper north of Thailand. The village is in Fah Hom Pok National Park area with latitude 20°1’32.83”N, longitude 99°10’7.68”E and its height is between 1,200-1,300 MASL. Temperature is highest in March and April and lowest in December and January. The average temperature is 25°C. Most of the people at the village are Lahu Na (Black Lahu). They immigrated from the south of China via Myanmar to Thailand about 40 years ago. There are 46 households and the total population is about 250 people. All of the residents are Christians and there is one church in the village. This research had been conducted during April 2009 – April 2010.

As mentioned on transect walk and in-depth interview from key informants, it was shown that this village has abundance of natural resources and natural attraction. Tea plantation is the main crop and it takes a rest during December to March each year. The villagers will lack income during this period. Most of them go working as laborers in the city and return to work at the farm in the season. But some of them migrate to work permanently in the city and become a problem with social circumstance. With the tourism potential of the village, the area can be developed to be an Eco-tourism site. Thus, Eco-tourism may be an alternative option of supplemental occupation for the villagers, especially in the high tourist season which is the off-tea farm season.

**Research framework**

Eco-tourism management in Pu Muen village was integrated by using the Eco-tourism community management concept as a prototype. This research had focused on participatory action research of local community and stakeholders in the area. The leader, the community representatives
and the Eco-tourism operator joined to be the researchers in this project. They had played roles to analyze the problem, study the solution, take action to resolve the problems, implement and evaluate together through PDCA (Plan – Do–Check–Act) process. However, the tourism must originate from the needs of the community. The area of the community should have the potentials to attract tourists such as their local culture, nature, the availability of community and strong leadership. Building the process of knowledge and understanding of Eco-tourism, tour service arrangements by community itself are the essence of Community-Based Tourism which are included in the preparation of hospitality, meal, tourism activities, codes of conduct and local guides, etc., (The Thailand Community-Based Tourism, 2010). This research had emphasized the community in the action learning with a study visit to exchange with other Eco-tourism management community and arranged marketing by coordinating with Eco-tourism operator agencies to lead tourists to visit and join the tour activities program. The evaluation form was prepared for the visitor to evaluate the tourism management skill of the community to gain the Thai Homestay Certification Standard certified by Office of Tourism Development, Thailand. This research had provided the assessment of the member who participates in homestay using the simple criteria with key elements of the Thai Homestay Standard Thailand as follows: 1) the availability of accommodation, 2) rest room and 3) host. Furthermore, this research also evaluated the tourism impact in terms of economic, social and environment aspect. (Figure 1)

Figure 1. The study area
Investigating an Impact of Collective Partnership in Strengthening Community-Based Tourism Management: Evidence from Pu Muen Nai Tribe Village, Thailand

T. Promburom, et. al.

**Figure 2.** Transect map of Pu Muen Village, Chiang Mai, Thailand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transect</th>
<th>The National Park area</th>
<th>The National Park area</th>
<th>The area around the village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elevation</td>
<td>&gt;2,000 MASL</td>
<td>&gt;1,500-2,000 MASL</td>
<td>1,500-1,200 MASL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural resource</td>
<td>Hill Evergreen Forest</td>
<td>Hill Evergreen Forest</td>
<td>Hill Evergreen Forest, waterfall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plants</td>
<td>Hill Evergreen Forest</td>
<td>Hill Evergreen Forest</td>
<td>Tea and Fruits such as Avocado, Persimmon, Plum and Peach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td>Species of birds, wildlife, rare wildlife</td>
<td>Species of birds, wildlife, rare wildlife</td>
<td>Cattle, Species of birds, wildlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>Wildfire</td>
<td>Wildfire</td>
<td>Limited land for farming, Tea leaves take a rest in winter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3.** Research framework of Eco-tourism participatory management in Pu Muen Nai village, Chiang Mai Thailand

1. The local community needs to have tourism.
2. Survey the potential of the area and community.
3. Building the concept, understanding and viewpoint to local people in Eco-tourism.
4. Preparation the community based tourism management.
5. Public relation of marketing with tour agencies and involved organization.
6. Operated the tour in the area.
7. Evaluate by visitors and improved the result. Prepare to access the Thai Home Stay Standard Certification.
8. Evaluation of the tourism in the economic, social and environment.
METHODOLOGY

This research used a qualitative and qualitative mix-method. Qualitative research stressing participatory action undertaking and supplemented by quantitative analysis were used in this study. The research applied community-based Eco-tourism concept using participatory action research (PAR) that cooperated among research, action and participation to bring better understanding through PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act) learning process by participation of researchers and stakeholders within the community, that are useful for identifying the problems and requirements of the community to choose as alternative solution (Figure 4).

Research Design

Stage 1: Survey the Eco-tourism destination potential of the area and community
- Examine the national park regulation on running homestay village in the national park area by interviewing Vice Director of Fah Hom Pok National Park Bureau at the initial stage of this research.
- Identify the potential area following the Eco-tourism potential attraction indices of the Office of Tourism Development, Thailand including natural attraction, abundance of natural resource, relevance of culture and natural resource and safety of natural route indices by weighted scores.
- Identify the readiness of community-based management by conducting focus groups with villagers and stakeholders.
- Observe the communities’ attitude and readiness by direct observation

Stage 2: Provide concept and understanding the viewpoint of Eco-tourism to local people
- Transfer knowledge of sustainable tourism, Eco-tourism and Community-Based Tourism and homestay concept to community and stakeholders involved in tourism management by sharing experience and brainstorming with all villagers.
- Transfer knowledge with emphasis on action learning by conducting study visit to other successful highland homestay villages.
- Set up the village tourism committee to be a representative in managing Eco-tourism in their village.

Stage 3: Prepare the Community-Based Tourism management including attraction, accommodation and accessibility
- Survey attractive nature trails and arrange tour programs on nature and culture attractions by brain storming with the tourism committee and tour operators.
• Gather local wisdom such as tradition, history, belief, culture, social context by observation, in-depth interview and focus group with key informants. The qualitative data were analyzed by content analysis to create tourism value from folk-tales.

• Develop learning process concerning Community-Based Tourism management from practical experience. Empower the local community by allowing the villagers play roles as follows: determining business directions, decision making in the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating activities related to the Community-Based Tourism business using the discussion forum with stakeholders in drawing the ideas and opinions from both community members and other stakeholders for such business affairs as rules setting for tourism activities, marketing plan, activities and events organization, tour routes development, and pricing service. Garrod (2003) mentioned that the best Eco-tourism project tends to aim for the “involvement” of local people. The best practice in incorporating local participation in the planning and management of Eco-tourism require effective leadership, conservation need, and the participation of the local community at all stages of the project cycle (especially monitoring and evaluation).

• Develop local community transportation for the journey to the village.

• Develop homestay standard for tourists accommodation in this village by using the criteria of Homestay Standard Thailand (Office of Tourism Development, 2010) which include bedroom environment, meal, safety, toilet condition, host readiness and house cleanliness by weighted score.

• Transfer knowledge with emphasis on training like training local tour guides and promoting tribal music and handicrafts by local persons.

Stage 4: Run public relations of marketing with tour agencies and involved organization

• Develop marketing media such as tourist guide book, brochures and videos promoting tourism in the village and circulate to marketing channels such as website, email and to tour operators and involved organizations.

• Invite tour agencies to explore the tour program in the village.

Stage 5: Operate tour in the area

• Contact tour operator to do marketing and manage tour program in the village.

• Take tourists to visit and stay with community.

Stage 6: Evaluate tour program and management by visitors for improvement and gaining the Thai Homestay Standard Certification

• Develop a questionnaire for tourists to evaluate the tour program (using 3 rating scale, rate 1= dissatisfied 2= neutral and 3 = satisfied). Use data from questionnaire interview of samples of homestay service users for the evaluation of tourists’ satisfaction.

• Conduct focus groups with stakeholders and the tourism committee to discuss and evaluate the tour program management.

• Apply Pu Muen homestay village to The Thai Homestay Standard to get certificate standard of the Thai homestay tourism.

Stage 7: Evaluate the tourism in economic, social and environment aspects.

• Evaluate the project impact within one year after running the Eco-tourism program in the village in terms of
RESULTS

A prototype of Community-Based Tourism management was designed from the participatory action research to drive the development of tourism management activities. The community was prepared to get involved with the activities to equip villager’s readiness in tourism administration and management and inter-organization marketing strategy to build the relationship between the local community and the Eco-tourism operators where tourism marketing activities are moved to the community. The findings revealed that the Eco-tourism operators should be able to provide perspectives on Eco-tourism creating a marketing channel for community managed tourism. The development of Eco-tourism marketing through the cooperation between local community and Eco-tourism operators has led to the establishment of linkage between the community and relevant external business organizations and the community learned from exchange of marketing ideas with tourism business entities. The community also learned how to use the tourists’ evaluation results and the practical experience in improving the management and administration process of community organization and for working in continuity with relevant external business organizations. The involvment of community organization, Eco-tourism operators and researchers from the beginning of this research project development was constructive for the good inter-relationships among participants. Researchers and Eco-tourism operators have played important roles in building concept knowledge and understanding for the community members to become capable of running sustainable Community-Based Tourism business, and in providing accurate and real information/data as basis for community decision making. The community organization’s members have enacted their roles and power in joint decision making and solving problems through the negotiation and discussion forum in order to assure the direct communication for mutual understanding in working together.

This research has generated concrete benefits for the local community in social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects as summarized below.

Economic aspects in the past year (April 2009-2010) a total of 85 tourists had stayed at homestays in the community, most of them were foreign visitors from European countries, approximately each of them stayed for two days and three nights per each stay. The homestay generated additional income of 160,000 baht per year for the community. The average income earned from visitors was 1,800 baht/tourist/visit.

Regarding social and cultural aspects, a village tourism fund was established from collecting 10% of local tourism income. A part of this fund will be used for social activities for village development as contribution of tourism benefits to the whole village community. Local villagers and youth become aware of the importance of dressing traditional tribal costumes; and the tribal dance as cultural expression which was performed once a year previously but now is performed more often as presentation to tourists. This helps building the pride in tribal identity. The rise of traditional tribal music conversation has been movement when the older folks begin to teach and transfer the arts of playing tribal musical instruments to other community members and village youth group. The tribal handicraft product that had disappeared for 30 years was re-activated by teaching the skill of the same tribe but different area to enable the village women
Figure 5. The benefits of developing participatory eco-tourism management in Pu Muen Nai village

Figure 6. The partial eco-tourism income contributed to village tourism fund
to produce souvenirs for selling to make extra income. Consciousness has been built concerning joint ownership of resources, leading to the formation of organization for managing tourism activities, and playing roles in setting directions and making joint decision for tourism development in the community. Cultural exchange has been made with foreign visitors.

*When it comes to community organization aspects,* community decentralization transferred to the villages by establishing tourism management committee empowered them on decision making in the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating activities related to the Community-Based Tourism business. Arranged meeting by the committee and representatives of the community joined in decision making. The community feels ownership and has authority and role to manage tourism by the community itself. The community has some philosophers/intellectual in variety of skills.

*With regard to environmental aspects,* surrounding village has been improved in terms of cleanliness and hygiene and the homestay units have been maintained in cleaner, better hygienic conditions. This research project encouraged the villagers to build awareness on conservation of the animals. The tangible outcomes of this conservation effort were, for example local birds and the endangered species of big-headed turtle in the area will create a tourist attraction.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The research has given a body of technical knowledge and a prototype or guideline for further research and development of sustainable Eco-tourism, specifically the notion that development can be realistic only with the serious cooperation among the three parties, namely, researchers, Eco-tourism operators, and the community members who form the organization, in the following natures:

- Researchers act as an instrument in transferring the knowledge on Eco-tourism management and as a catalyst in negotiation process among stakeholders.

---

**Figure 7.** The mechanism to do research and development for CBT in Pu Muen Nai village
Table 1. Summary of guideline for research and development of participatory Eco-tourism management in Pu Muen Nai Community, Thailand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline for research and development</th>
<th>Observation / Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research questions</td>
<td>Research questions should identify by the community’s participation at initial stage. The community also needed to solve the problem by themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of the area</td>
<td>There are limitations of transforming villages located in the territory of National Park into Eco-tourism villages due to the restrictions of the National Park law or regulation. Researchers mentioned on the question, are there any potential of the area to be developed to Eco-tourism site?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of the community</td>
<td>Researchers mentioned on the questions, does the leader cooperate in this project and he has the potential to be a leader? ; does the community cooperate and participate in sustainable tourism development? Villagers should have viewpoint to develop the community to be Eco-tourism site and being sustainable tourism development and run tourism organization among themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of the researcher</td>
<td>Researchers should ask themselves and mentioned on the questions, do the researchers have any knowledge and understanding of the Eco-tourism pattern or sustainable tourism to develop the community?; do the researchers have patience and sacrifice to run participatory workshop with community?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The preparation of the community in the tourism development | To empower community, the village organization should establish to manage tourism and participate research and development. Researcher provided the knowledge/understanding of roles and responsibilities to each department in the village tourism committee. The committee should prepare of regulatory rules for working together between members.  
Villagers established the tourism fund and purposed to use the fund for tourism development and social activities of the village. Community had the opportunity to exchange ideas with other tourism communities and had opportunity to study visit in other areas with similar context to experience wide vision and discussion. The village tourism committee prepared the regulations for visitors who come into the village to create orderliness in the community and visitors themselves aware of difference culture and respect mutually.  
Villagers and stakeholders prepared information of the journey to the village and accessed to the tourist attraction. Full information should provide by researcher to facilitate the community and stakeholder’s meeting in order to make decision on based-information  
Community and stakeholders surveyed routes and prepared the tourism activities which were concerned with their own culture and way of life. Community participates in awareness conservation of natural resources and their own culture.  
Researchers and stakeholders provided the knowledge of the safety and risk assessment of the tourism activities to community. Researchers provide the knowledge of role and hospitality aspect to homestay’s host. Researchers and stakeholders trained the local guide in safety precaution, interpretation and how to service visitors. Researchers and stakeholders surveyed and collected the village data in terms of general socio-economic and historical village, social, culture, way of life and agriculture for preparation of agriculture activities and stories to create value-added tourism.  
House/room accommodation was provided in this project, the availability of house/room accommodation should evaluate by the joint assessment from the third-party for being neutral. |
Table 1. (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline for research and development</th>
<th>Observation / Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tour operator led some visitors to visit the village when the community had certain level readiness. The tour program and CBT’s readiness was evaluated by visitors. Community used the evaluation result of visitors and stakeholders to improve the performance and arranged the meeting between the committee and stakeholders from time to time to archive improvement and create common understanding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing (4P)</td>
<td>Researchers participate community by preparing marketing medias to release tourism information of the village such as DVD, brochures, posters and visitor manual, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tour operators should have a role and join meeting with community and being intermediary for fairly service charges pricing. Eco-tourism agencies must understand the sustainable tourism and Community-Based Tourism concepts. Do not exploit the community and create a fairly common for sustainable tourism development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To find united front with Eco-tour agencies which organize the Community-Based Tourism program to joint research and run marketing for the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation the effect of tourism both positive and negative</td>
<td>Economic, social, culture and environment aspects should observe when finished project. Community and stakeholders should collaborate and find out the solutions to control ecotourism impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request to be evaluated of Thai Homestay Standard</td>
<td>Community and stakeholders provided the readiness homestays to be certified the standard along with Thai Homestay Standard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eco-tourism operators serve as a mechanism driver for extension of tourism marketing knowledge and as a market channel for community tourism business.

Community organization represents a tourism business owner that must push for tourism product development or tourism services supply to meet the demand from Eco-tourism market.

Collaboration among community, Eco-tourism operators and researchers should be activated at the initial period of CBT management research and development project to permit the joint determination on tourism development directions. The constant working together process will be a good strategy for building good interaction among the colleagues. Meanwhile the sincerity and fairness on the part of researchers and Eco-tourism operators toward the local community will be reciprocated by the respect and the trust from the latter part, and this relationship is an important mechanism for cooperative works between external agencies and local people in the highlands to assure strong and sustainable Eco-tourism development from the cooperative efforts. In addition, Gunn (1994); Byrd (2007) stated that one main key to the success and implementation of sustainable tourism development in a community is the support of stakeholders, (e.g. example citizens, entrepreneurs, and community leaders). For any type of stakeholder involvement to be successful, the involvement needs to posses the following five elements: fairness, efficiency, knowledge, wisdom, and stability, (Nicodemus 2004; Susskind & Cruikshank 1987; Byrd, 2007). Proper stakeholder involvement has multiple outcomes depending on the process used and the stakeholders. The outcomes of involvement include an increase in trust between all parties and a reduction in conflict and law suits (Beierle 1998; Carmin, Darnall, & Mil-Homens 2003; Simrell King & Feltey 1998; Byrd, 2007).
There is a need for these organizations to communicate with the local community as well as the visitor. Educating and informing the local community will strengthen the tourism industry. It will also allow for a stronger understanding of the tourism impacts that the community perceives and the actual impacts that result from tourism. To develop sustainable tourism, destination management organizations (DMOs) must begin to develop the whole product and include the interests of all stakeholders. Including the interests of stakeholders will help to reduce conflict. Including the interests of the stakeholders cannot keep conflict between stakeholders from occurring, but it can provide the parties a mechanism to discuss their disagreements in a constructive manner. Stakeholders need to be made aware of the other interests in the community so that they can understand the reasoning behind tourism policies and developments (Byrd, 2007).

This research applied marketing principles in the CBT model to establish a relationship between the relevant external business enterprises and the community enterprise which enables the two parties to jointly develop Eco-tourism management plans and activities for mutual benefits and sustainable business operations. Then, the guideline for research and development by participating Eco-tourism management with stakeholder in this research is shown in Table 1.

However, this research involves micro level development and it is local-specific, its findings may have limitation for direct application in other areas that have different context but may be used as a case study for adaptive application in other places. However, there are certain important factors to ensure the success. Firstly, the community must be prepared and have the desire for tourism activities to take place in the community area. Secondly, the community leaders should have strong leadership. Third, the participating community members, the researchers and the Eco-tourism operators in the development of CBT business must have the right knowledge and understanding about the concepts of sustainable Eco-tourism development. Finally, the candidate area for CBT development should have potentials and good enough attractive features for the development.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Chiang Mai University for granting research fund. A warm thank you is extended to Faculty of Business Administration, Chiang Mai University and all Pu Muen Nai Villagers.

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 Responsible Ecological Social Tour – REST.


EXPLORING SOCIAL ENTERPRISES AS PARTNERS FOR ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES

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Received: May 20, 2011
Accepted: June 22, 2011

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the potential contribution and relevant issues when utilizing social enterprises as an institutional strategy for ecotourism development and promotion in the Philippines. The first stage of the research examines the institutional strategies to implement the Philippine National Ecotourism Strategy (NES) of 2002. The examination aims to identify indicative problems brought by the choice of institutional arrangements using perspectives from strategic management and public policy analysis. The paper will then examine how social enterprises can address these gaps and determine organizational issues to establish the feasibility of social enterprises in developing and promoting ecotourism. The first stage of the research revealed the following indicative problems from the choice of institutional arrangements in the NES: quality and availability of resources, operational definition of ecotourism, public agencies as implementing bodies, and cooperation among sectors. To address these issues, attributes of the social enterprise was defined to specifically address the indicative problems. The attributes are expected to be part of a research agenda to further develop a practical social enterprise model for ecotourism. It is hoped that the attributes of the proposed social enterprise in ecotourism may lead to the development of a practical social enterprise model that can be readily used by tourism professionals and stakeholders for ecotourism development and promotion.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Social Enterprises, Tourism Development

INTRODUCTION

In the context of needed approaches to manage the tourism for development, the National Government of the Philippines has set steps to position the country as a world-class tourism destination. One such program was the launching of a National Ecotourism Strategy (NES) that paved way to plans and programs on how to develop and benefit from ecotourism under the guiding principle of sustainable tourism development. Though the aims of the NES has shaped how ecotourism should be viewed by the related programs, the institutional strategies for development and promotion need to be reviewed to determine indicative problems that can arise from the adopted scheme. Although the effectiveness of the NES is yet to assessed, this analysis should be viewed as a proactive step on how potential issues
can be addressed in a timely manner. The assessment of the NES aims to look at how social enterprises can contribute to ecotourism development and promotion. A previous study which also involved eco-enterprises and even ecotourism projects, featured potential business models that facilitate environmental stewardship while doing business and taking care of its host community. This served as the inspiration for extending the learnings from this study to ecotourism development in order for communities and the Philippines in general to fully benefit from ecotourism. At the end of the article, propositions are cited which could serve as a research agenda towards developing a social enterprise model for ecotourism development.

Ecotourism development in the Philippines

The purpose of tourism has evolved over time, from being a venue for interaction among people from different places to being a significant component of conservation and economic development strategies. The concept of tourism is relatively easy to visualize but difficult to define with precision because it has changed meaning depending on the context of analysis, purpose and use (Hall & Lew, 2009). Ecotourism, in particular, is continuously redefined to show that ecotourism can be developed for many different types of areas (Bjork, 2007). In the Philippines, ecotourism was viewed by the Department of Tourism (DOT) as a form of tourism that can sustainably use natural and cultural resources while providing employment opportunities for local communities (DOT and Department of Environment and National Resources (DENR), 2002). Ecotourism was defined as such since the tourism industry in general has been as recognized by nations and local communities as a source of employment and livelihood opportunities (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006).

The NES views ecotourism as a direct response to real needs and circumstances in the country as the Philippines is considered a biodiversity hotspot. Acknowledging issues on sustainability and the need for feasible approaches in addressing these issues, the NES was prepared, together with the DOT, DENR and the New Zealand Agency for International Development (DOT and DENR, 2002). In this context, ecotourism for the Philippines is agreed to be founded on the following pillars that will facilitate the promotion and development of ecotourism:

- Sustainable management of natural and cultural resources;
- Environmental education and conservation awareness;
- Empowerment of local communities; and
- Development of products that will satisfy visitor needs and position the Philippines as a globally competitive ecotourism destination (DOT and DENR, 2002)

In addressing national concerns, it is imperative to layout the strategic direction and approaches of a development plan prior to the execution of strategies. The NES was prepared to provide an integrated management plan to pave the way for a comprehensive direction for ecotourism by adopting “top-down, bottom-up” strategies and creating networks that link key sites and facilitate sharing of relevant information (DOT and DENR, 2002). These actions were discussed in the National Ecotourism Program (NEP) which encompasses the development, management and protection of identified ecotourism sites; product enhancement and development; environmental education and information campaign; and support programs for community stewardship and livelihood development (DOT and DENR, 2002).
Still, there were constraints identified by the NES that inhibit the institutions involved in promoting and developing ecotourism. These issues were grouped in the following areas: planning, implementation and operation, and marketing (DOT and DENR, 2002).

The institutional framework for ecotourism development was provided for by the National Government of the Philippines through Executive Order (EO) 111 to address concerns identified by the NES. As stated in EO 111, the NES recognizes the importance of institutional partnerships among three primary sectors—government, business and civil society—in the form of the following institutional arrangements:

- National Ecotourism Development Council (NEDC) which will provide the policy direction;
- National Ecotourism Steering Committee (NESC) which acts as the working committee of the NEDC;
- Regional Ecotourism Steering Committees (RECS) which are responsible for implementation of the NES at the regional level; and
- Ecotourism Technical Working Groups (ETWGs) which are responsible for providing technical and administrative assistance (DOT and DENR, 2002).

These institutional arrangements are headed by public agencies, with the DOT and DENR as lead implementers.

**Gaps in the National Ecotourism Strategy**

The NES is yet to deliver significant and verifiable results as a means to develop beneficial ecotourism. However, literature on strategic management and public policy in tourism development has already presented indicative problems that render the NES inadequate in addressing ecotourism development issues. In the Philippines, issues on declining biodiversity and degradation of the environment as a result of so-called ecotourism plans that give too much emphasis to economic gains remain unaddressed and have been going unchecked in different destinations in the country even after the NES was published in 2002. Because of incentives provided by an image of sustainable practices, a number of nature-based developments in pristine locations in the Philippines are referred to as ecotourism projects despite the inclusion of aims of attracting to a wide customer base even with little or no awareness of its impact on the environment. Such cases are rarely recognized by the media and researchers who are not aware that sustainable use of natural resources as well as cultural resources goes hand-in-hand with profit generation for any ecotourism development project.

Although case studies have yet to be developed to document these inconsistencies, several encounters by the author with local tourism planners and tourism offices, which were validated by tourism literature, have led to propositions which can be studied to enhance development strategies in general and explore applicability of certain strategies in particular. These propositions that need to be investigated are quality and availability of resources, operational definition of ecotourism, public agencies as implementing bodies, and cooperation among sectors.

**Quality and availability of resources**

The NES aims to address the need for sustainable tourism practices while generating economic benefits through tourism. As a strategic plan, there were constraints which were explicitly identified by the NES that limit the potential of its institutional strategies in promoting and developing ecotourism. These issues were previously grouped in the following
processes: planning, implementation and operation, and marketing (DOT and DENR, 2002).

Alternatively, these constraints can be further looked into in terms of the quality of resources which impede the realization of the goals of the NES. A resource-based perspective looks at the organization as a bundle of resources (Harrison & Enz, 2005). Doing so can imply solutions on the kind of resources to acquire, develop, manage or discard regardless of what point of the process are they causing problems. Using a resource-based perspective, institutions can be viewed as a bundle of resources, hence constraints can be associated with quality or availability of resources. Treating the identified NES constrains this way would then lead to the following problematic resources: reliability of human resources, quality of organization resources in generating viable ecotourism products, and the availability of mechanisms that enable other stakeholders to actively participate and directly benefit from ecotourism.

**Operational definition of ecotourism**

Tolerance of activities which are not consistent with ecotourism can be partially attributed to the difficulty of defining what ecotourism really is. Tourism is difficult to define with precision because it changes meaning depending on the context of analysis, purpose and use (Hall & Lew, 2009). This phenomenon is a complex field and the difficulty of defining it is not just an academic issue, as failure to define a policy field on tourism can severely limit the capacities of the government and public agencies to effectively undertake action (Hall, 2009).

Ecotourism is continuously redefined to show that it can be developed for many different types of areas (Bjork, 2007). However, further studies have shown that the term is difficult to define. Ecotourism is a travel phenomenon with rampant contraction and paradoxes (Higham & Luck, 2007). Despite this, there is general understanding that ecotourism is a form of sustainable, nature-based tourism.

The major challenge of ecotourism today is how to translate the meaning of ecotourism into relevant and usable principles and criteria (Bjork, 2007). Sustainability covers at least three dimensions—economic, socio-cultural and environmental (Hall & Lew, 2009). As part of ecotourism, defining sustainability is already a challenge for tourism professionals in general. For ecotourism, paradoxical concepts need to be reconciled prior to implementation. One such issue is between development and preservation which are paradoxical concepts in a one-dimensional scale but are invoked when defining ecotourism. In this light, a multidimensional approach is necessary to transform this relationship (Bjork, 2007) and address the concerns of ecotourism development and management with a usable platform.

**Public agencies as implementing bodies**

Though institutional arrangements were provided to implement the NES, the very nature of public agencies as implementing institutions limit their functions to advising, enabling and facilitating, rather than focused and direct actions that address problems leading to recognizable results. This limitation is implicitly acknowledged in the NES where:

The EO 111 bodies (NEDC, NESC, RECs and ETWGs) will not themselves seek to become the sole implementing agents of ecotourism but rather they will achieve their goals by encouraging and guiding LGUs (local government units), national government agencies and other stakeholders to develop ecotourism. In addition, they will advance the cause of
ecotourism by promoting actions by the private sector, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), and other interest groups from tourism and environment sectors (DOT and DENR, 2002).

This issue is further aggravated by the nature of public agencies being subject to dominant forces and influences in the society whose goals may or may not be consistent with the interests of identified beneficiaries of ecotourism development. The actions of EO 111 bodies are government initiatives which constitute public policy. As such, the economic, social and cultural characteristics of society as well as the formal structures of government and other features of the political system influence public policy (Hall, 2009) rendering the NES and its institutions incapable of focus due to multiple, and often times conflicting interests.

Aside from the limited functionality of public agencies, issues on the reliability of the Local and National Government, whether they can deliver their promises, consistently erode the acceptability for such initiatives. For less-developed countries like the Philippines, there is reservation on the capacity of the government to implement its plans even with the assistance of outside consultants in preparing the NES and NEP. This reluctance is put clearly by Harrison (2001) when he wrote:

Formulating plans for tourism is relatively easy, especially if funded by international aid agencies and carried out by overseas consultants, who often use the same template for producing ‘Master Plans’ for quite different societies, but there is no guarantee that once money is paid and report presented, the plan will be successfully implemented. . Governments in less developed countries often lack the will to implement policies. In particular, consultants and governments often fail to consider social and cultural implications of their recommendations, leaving such matters, if they are considered at all, to the end of the process.

**Cooperation among sectors**

There are indications that the participation of different sectors is one of the factors for success in tourism development (Koscak & O’Rourke, 2009). Society at present has realized that forming partnerships could be a viable solution to business and social issues (Sebastian, 2010). Waddell (Waddell, 1997) recognizes the benefit of basic collaboration between government, business sector and civil society, as sectors have different interests and with respective functional limitations. Through collaboration, the limitations of the NES institutional strategies can be complemented by the strengths of other sectors that have a stake on ecotourism development.

However, it is very difficult to achieve sustainable development in a community using ecotourism without the cooperative effort of all actors and identifying clear, tangible benefits in the process (Nowaczek, Moran-Cahusac, & Fennell, 2007). For a community to respond to tourism, Harrison and Price (1996, as cited in Harrison, 2001) noted that degree of involvement and how local and outside institutions articulate with one another are what matter, rather than how far development is either ‘top-down’ or ‘bottom-up.’ Moreover, benefits should be obvious as non-realization of expected benefits, as well absence of development and management, have been attributed to poor coordination among ecotourism stakeholders (Bjork, 2007). Hence, functioning institutional arrangements that allow involvement and expression of ideas, opportunities for generation of tangible benefits and impacts, and presence of management need to be in place in order to initiate action from other
sectors.

The existing inter-sectoral approach for ecotourism development needs to be revisited to determine where business and civil society can be further tapped so unique resources from these sectors can be harnessed. Table 1 presents a summary of the action plan where business and civil society, as part of the private sector, are mandated to participate in the NES through the NEP.

Sharing of resources is implied in the action since assignment of responsibilities appears to be based on resource and expertise that the sectors are known to possess. However, there is no indication on how benefits from these collaborations will be harnessed such that the limitation of lead implementers, which are public agencies, will be complemented by the strengths of supporting agencies. Moreover, resource acquisition and development issues are only partially addressed and mechanisms for stakeholder participation are yet to be provided for in the action plan.

Although the effectiveness of the NES's institutional strategies based on the action plan are yet to be verified, this should not stop policy makers from ensuring the benefits of ecotourism development in the Philippines. However, a different approach is needed that can address potential gaps of the NES since the current scheme presents potential problems. Strategies to fill in this gap must focus on acquisition and development of resources, particularly human and organizational assets that can generate tangible and identifiable benefits to different sectors to encourage collaboration. In addition, these strategies must take a form where ecotourism can actually be put into practice rather than just be a vague concept included in proposals for promotional purposes. Moreover, the implementation of these strategies must be undertaken not only by public agencies but primarily by bodies where tangible results can be obtained and participation from local stakeholders is valued.

The NES recognizes the importance of institutional partnerships among three primary sectors in the form of the following institutional arrangements embodies in EO 111 (DOT and DENR, 2002). The strategy, however, needs to be enhanced to address the issues raised previously while still considering sustainability concerns. The institutional strategies to address ecotourism development require a more imaginative, intersectoral approach. Intersectoral approaches allow access to resources unique to each sector to produce creative solutions that neither sector can develop on its own. It should also be multidimensional as to resolve the paradox of ecotourism, particularly between generation of profits and conservation.

**Filling the gaps: social enterprises for ecotourism development**

The business sector is an explicit partner in the NES. They comprise organizations engaged in the profitable production of goods and services (Waddell, 1997). A strategy involving business enterprises has the potential to address resource requirements previously identified in this paper. The operating sectors of tourism are mostly businesses who contribute their inputs to come up with a tourism product, hence they are able to capture tourist expenditures which serve as resources for employment and stimuli for other forms of livelihood.

However, complete reliance on the business sector creates threats for sustainable tourism practices in general and the achievement of goals of the NES in particular. Relying on the conventional business-led model for tourism development may lead to prioritization of
economic returns over other attributes of sustainability. Yunus (2007) warned that businesses cannot solve all social problems and criticized the business sector, even for enterprises who claim to advocate the concept of a triple bottom line and corporate social responsibility, because they continued to succumb to protecting their profits in the end when push came to shove.

Table 1. Implementing agencies with Potential Business and Civil Society Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program and Activities</th>
<th>Form of intervention</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs on key ecotourism sites, product development, marketing and promotions, education and advocacy, support programs, and national ecotourism fund</td>
<td>Private sector as funding agencies</td>
<td>Short-term to Long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define ecotourism products in the key sites</td>
<td>Local tourism councils as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td>Short term 2002 – 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish banner sites as images for marketing Philippines</td>
<td>Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forge tie-ups with international wholesalers and tour operators to sell the Philippines as ecotourism destinations</td>
<td>Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize special events to reinforce market image</td>
<td>Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop model ecotourism projects</td>
<td>NGOs and Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage participation in developing ecotourism programs</td>
<td>NGOs and Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilize the media support to promote a positive image as an ecotourism destination</td>
<td>Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop modules for identified training needs</td>
<td>Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote small and medium scale businesses and assess the need for business enhancement</td>
<td>NGOs as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td>Medium term 2002 – 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake continuous training for local ecotourism guides and resource management staff</td>
<td>Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote the use of internationally recognized ecotourism icons/symbols</td>
<td>Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a system for classifying and grading of activities</td>
<td>Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement training programs</td>
<td>Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage projects for funding support</td>
<td>Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tap other potential sources to sustain National Ecotourism Fund</td>
<td>Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote ecotourism investment in the area</td>
<td>Local tourism councils as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td>Long term 2002 – 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upgrade standards for accreditation to assure a high quality visitor experience and compete globally</td>
<td>Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulate new rules and regulations and lobby for legislation to improve delivery and management of ecotourism</td>
<td>Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a cadre of multi-disciplinary and experienced national consultants</td>
<td>NGOs and Private sector as supporting implementing agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Ecotourism Strategy (DOT and DENR, 2002).
Nevertheless, an enterprise strategy has been proven to enhance environmental stewardship when managed properly and supported adequately. This was demonstrated by Salafsky, Cordes, Parks and Hochman (1999) in a study of eco-enterprises from the Pacific, South Asia and South East Asia. The key hypothesis of their research was that if local people directly benefit from a business that depends on the biodiversity at a given site, then they should have the incentive to act to protect it against both internal and external threats to its destruction (Salafsky, Cordes, Parks, & Hochman, 1999).

The study that involved 20 projects – six of which were engaged in ecotourism – revealed that an enterprise strategy works provided that enterprises remain viable, has links with biodiversity, able to generate cash and non-cash benefits, and enables its stakeholders to take action. It was also emphasized the enterprise strategy must never work on its own, suggesting that other sectors must also participate in order for enterprise strategy to be successful (Salafsky, Cordes, Parks, & Hochman, 1999). These conclusions demonstrate the potential of enterprises in addressing the gaps left by the institutional strategies of NES as well as the threat from employing a business-led approach in developing and promoting ecotourism.

The insights from the study of eco-enterprises spells out the need for an alternative business model that is consistent with sustainable practices, particularly environmental protection and community empowerment, which can provide livelihood and employment opportunities at the same time. Such enterprises are consistent with the concept of social enterprises. Social enterprises include the pursuit of social objectives where a significant portion of organizational income is derived from trading activities (Deakins & Freel, 2009).

These forms of enterprises make clear their philosophy of making profits as explicitly as their statement of advocacy to effect social change currently on the rise (Sebastian, 2010). To address social problems, social enterprises often break with conventional business models to find new and more sustainable ways of improving the world around them (Social Enterprise Coalition). To come up with a social enterprise strategy for ecotourism, its attributes are described by addressing the gaps left by NES institutional strategies.

Addressing quality and availability of resources

Social enterprises still retain the trading qualities of the business sector, albeit a substantial portion of their existence is set to satisfy social and public interest. Since businesses place high value on efficiency (Waddell, 1997), they are in a position to maximize the economic value from ecotourism as well as improving human resource as inputs in conducting the business of ecotourism. This claim is reasonable since human resources are critical for their success. In tourism, it is often the people employed by the organization that can make a real difference to its success (Evans, 2009). In addressing organizational resources, this will require similar tools and techniques to better understand marketing and the value creation process of tourism products.

Operationalizing ecotourism

Social enterprises for ecotourism development must have a unique purpose. By convention, tourists ultimately define what the business of tourism is hence the business purpose is to create a satisfied customer (Drucker, 1954 as cited in Haywood, 2000). But with social enterprise, the pursuit of creating customer satisfaction through trading activities must go hand-in-hand with community
empowerment since this is a requirement for continuous environmental protection. Moreover, for ecotourism to be present, enterprises must make reasonable efforts to ensure its operations are sustainable (Weaver, 2001). Although the inclusion of sustainability in the business purpose of a social enterprise is still vague, its integration on the strategic direction of the enterprise allows for more definite indications of success to be realized.

Social enterprises as implementing bodies

The limited functionality of public agencies coupled with issues on the reliability to implement is one of the weakness of the Local and National Governments as implementing bodies. These are essentially brought about by multiple interests being served by the government and the absence or lack of motivation of public agencies and government instrumentalities. On the other hand, social enterprises as business concern have a smaller pool of stakeholders. Stakeholders are often limited to those with immediate stake since these are smaller units of the economy compared to the local and national government. Hence, interests are limited to stakeholders that define the purpose of social enterprises thereby allowing a more focused operation in delivering results.

Although social enterprises can deliver direct and immediate results, public agencies are still needed to ensure that the strategies and outcomes of social enterprises for ecotourism are still consistent with the achievement of the goals of NES.

Cooperation among sectors

Among the qualities of the enterprise strategy in the study by Salafsky, Cordes, Parks, & Hochman (1999) is the provision of a venue that allows stakeholder action. Unlike public agency-led institutional strategies, social enterprises are grounded on the community. To do so, social enterprises for ecotourism should be organized as community-based organizations where planning and development is brought to the community level. This necessitates widespread local involvement and support for tourism plans to increase community buy-in and encourage members of the local community to take ownership of the process and outcomes (LinkBC). Being community-based, this form of social enterprise also necessitates mechanisms on how success can be shared since success has a relational meaning based on the act of sharing or helping (Urgel, 2008).

Research agenda towards a social enterprise model for ecotourism development

The discussion on the attributes of social enterprises aims to prepare for suggestive problems due to the chosen institutional strategy to implement the Philippine NES. A social enterprise strategy can complement the NES by addressing indicative gaps. The social enterprise as a business concern provides for incentives to develop human resources. This attribute also allows the social enterprise to be a suitable subject of much-researched solutions to maximize the economic value of ecotourism and incorporate sustainable tourism practices. With the leaner and more-focused organization and structure of social enterprises, direct and immediate results can be expected. Finally, by modifying the organization so the social enterprise will be community based, collaborations among local communities and sectors can be encouraged to be able to reap the benefits of ecotourism which is desired by the NES.

The discussion in this paper should be viewed as proactive steps since the results
of the NES is yet to be completely documented and officially validated by researchers and authorities. Although a more solid model is needed before a Social Enterprise Model can be created, it is hoped that the following attributes may serve as stepping stones for a more practical model. Research is needed on these attributes to form a framework that can be readily applied by tourism professionals and stakeholders.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate on marketing mix factors affecting tourists’ decision making on adventure tourism at Baan Pha-ngam, Na-di district, Pra-chin-buri province, Thailand. The sample size was 400 Thai tourists, whom have experienced on adventure activities at Baan Pha-ngam. The four perspectives of marketing mix model consists product, price, place and promotion. Convenience sampling and self-administered questionnaire were techniques used for data collection. Statistics for data analysis were descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test and One-way ANOVA).

The results showed that most respondents were female (57%), age between 21-40 years old (82.5%), income between 10,000-20,000 Baht per month (51.5%), employee in private company (59.5%) and have Bachelor’s degree (70.5%). Considering from mean scores, the priority of respondents’ decision making was based on product, place, price and promotion, respectively. For hypothesis testing using t-test and One-way ANOVA, at significant level 0.05, the respondents with different gender and income levels were indifferent in their decision making based on marketing mix factors. However, respondents with different age, occupation and education levels were significant different in their decision making. Foreign tourists were excluded from the study. Baan Pha-ngam management should improve and preserve their products, especially forest and surrounding sceneries in response to tourists’ priorities. For business sustainability, they should well preserve the surrounding forest and sceneries. The research findings help adventure business to better respond to tourists’ priorities.

Key words: Marketing mix, decision making, adventure tourism, Thailand
INTRODUCTION

During the past decade, one of the major strategic industries of Thailand is tourism, which accounts around 7% of its Gross Domestic Products (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2010). Several campaigns have been launched by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to promote Thailand’s tourism both inbound and domestic, such as, “Amazing Thailand,” “Unseen Thailand,” etc. The aims are for economic growth and income distribution to provinces of Thailand.

Adventure tourism has also been promoted by TAT, since Thailand is rich with natural resources, such as, mountains, cliffs, trees, waterfalls, rivers, creeks, etc (Thailand Authority of Tourism, 2001). These create vast opportunities for adventure activities, i.e., trekking, mountain biking, top-roping, abseiling, kayaking, etc. Many provinces in Thailand have these natural resources including Baan Pha-ngam in Na-di district of Prachin-buri province.

Baan Pha-ngam is in the eastern part of Thailand, which is around 180 kilometers from the capital city of Bangkok. It is on the mountain top of Tablan national park, which is surrounded by mountains and valleys. With this environment, there are many adventure activities around Baan Pha-ngam, such as, “Pha-ngam Flying,” “Water Challenge”, “Pha-ngam Sky Coaster,” “Tarzan Tour,” “Pha-ngam Mountain Biking,” etc. The most popular adventure activity of Baan Pha-ngam is abseiling, where tourists have to attend a lecture and drill before the actual abseiling at the natural cliff. In recent years, adventure tourism at Baan Pha-ngam has been getting more and more popular among tourists from Bangkok.

The objectives of this study are to investigate on marketing mix factors affecting tourists’ decision making on adventure tourism at Baan Pha-ngam and to identify problems or obstacles in developing adventure tourism at Baan Pha-ngam. The findings and practical suggestions from this study would be beneficial for stakeholders, such as, related government agencies, local governments, businesses, tourist guides, and local people, for correctly response to tourists’ needs as well as for a sustainable development of natural resources and adventure tourism at Baan Pha-ngam.

Literature review

There are no clear cut definitions of adventure tourism, ecotourism, nature tourism, commercial expeditions, outdoor recreation and outdoor education (Weaver, 1998; Fennell, 1999; Buckley, 2000; Newsome et al., 2001). However, adventure tourism for this study and as defined by TAT is a soft adventure tourism which required equipment and facilities during participating in the activity. This outdoor activity consists of challenges, excitements and fun that use tourism natural resources in a sustainable manner (Chiangmai University, 2002). Outdoor activities include trekking, nature education, bird watching, boat sightseeing, kayak, mountain biking, mountain climbing, tent camping, hang glider, white water rafting. The purposes are to develop tourists’ perceptions and understandings regarding natural environment and economy, to provide experience and value propositions to tourists, to improve quality of life of local communities, and to preserve and sustain the quality of tourist site’s natural environment (Boonlert Jittangwattana, 1999).

Marketing mix refers to factors that manager or business owner can control to influence consumers in decision making on adventure tourism. These factors are summarized into 4Ps consisting of Product, Price, Place and Promotion.
Marketing Mix Factors Affecting Tourists’ Decision Making on Adventure Tourism: A Case of Baan-Pha-ngam, Na-district, Pra-chin-buri Province, Thailand

P. Suppapanya and S. Banjongsiritas

(Kotler et al., 2006). Product refers to aspects such as the firm’s portfolio of products/services, the newness of those products/services, their differentiation from competitors, or their superiority to rivals’ products/services in terms of quality. Price refers to the product’s/service’s list price or any incentive sales promotion such as quantity discounts, temporary price cuts, or deals. Place refers to delivery of the product/service measured by factors such as distribution, availability, and convenience. Promotion refers to advertising, detailing, or informative sales promotions such as features, displays and discount.

Tourists or consumers have gone through a number of decision making stages before making decision on purchasing. Herbert Simon (1977) proposed three-stage decision making process consisting of intelligence (recognition of the problem and gathering information), design (comparing the alternatives) and choice at which the final decision is made. Kotler et al. (2006) proposed a five-stage decision making process, which are need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behavior.

METHODOLOGY

The sampling frame is tourists, whom have visited and joined a least one adventure activity at Baan Pha-ngam during January-February 2009. Convenience sampling was used to draw the sample to reach the size of 400 and self-administered technique with a structured questionnaire was used for data gathering from the tourists.

The questionnaire consists of 5 parts. Part one is tourist demographic information consisting of gender, age, marital status, income, occupation and education level. Part two is information on tourist’s behaviors such as what media channel make tourist aware of Baan Pha-ngam, who influences tourist’s decision making, etc. Part three is the question regarding marketing mix factors, which consist of four dimensions including product, price, place and promotion. The five-point Likert’s scale was used to voice tourist’s opinion on the importance of each factor in decision making (highest important, high important, medium important, low important and lowest important). Part four is the question regarding repeat visit. Part five is the question on what are the top three obstacles to tourist’s decision making to come to Baan Pha-ngam.

Data analysis involves both descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean and standard deviation as well as inferential statistics such as t-test, On-way ANOVA and Scheffe’s analysis.

This study propose five hypotheses regarding the association between tourists’ demographic characteristics and the importance of marketing mix factors affecting decision making in visiting Baan Pha-ngam as the following:

H1: Tourist’s gender is significantly associated with the importance of marketing mix factors in making decision to visit Baan Pha-ngam

H2: Tourist’s age is significantly associated with the importance of marketing mix factors in making decision to visit Baan Pha-ngam

H3: Tourist’s personal income is significantly associated with the importance of marketing mix factors in making decision to visit Baan Pha-ngam

H4: Tourist’s occupation is significantly associated with the import-ance of marketing mix factors in making decision to visit Baan Pha-ngam.
H5: Tourist’s education significantly associated with the importance of marketing mix factors in making decision to visit Baan Pha-ngam.

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics

Table 1. Tourist's demography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourist’s Demography</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 20 years old</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 years old</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 years old</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 years old</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 50 years old</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 5,000 Baht</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,001-10,000 Baht</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,001-20,000 Baht</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 20,000 Baht</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government officer</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private company worker</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business owner</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freelance</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school or lower</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational degree</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher than Bachelor degree</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Behaviors

The two major information sources that respondents use for acquiring information on Baan Pha-ngam before making decision are word-of-mouth from friends or colleagues and the Internet. Around 88% of respondents acquire information from these two sources. Further in Table 2, when the respondents were asked who influence you in making decision on visiting Baan Pha-ngam, most of respondents were equally influenced by family (37.3%), colleagues (31.8%) and friends (30%).
Table 2. Tourist’s behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Source</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends/Colleagues</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Importance of marketing mix factors to tourist’s decision making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing Mix Factors</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty of the natural environment</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience for traveling to Baan Pha-ngam</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety of adventure activities</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge of adventure activities</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of adventure activities</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard of safety equipment for activities</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses for traveling to Baan Pha-ngam</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price suitability for adventure activities</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price options for adventure activities</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience for booking via phone</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience for booking via Internet</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability for buying the packages at tourism exhibition</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various communication media &amp; channels by TAT</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various communication media &amp; channels by Baan Pha-ngam</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discount for adventure activities</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remark: TAT = Tourism Authority of Thailand
Importance of marketing mix factors

From Table 3, the respondents gave the highest mean score on product aspect (3.99) of marketing mix factors when they make decision on visiting Baan Pha-ngam for adventure activities, followed by place (3.43), price (3.24) and promotion (3.20), in descending order. Considering further down to factors under the top two aspects, under product aspect, the three most important factors were the beauty of the natural environment (4.21), challenging adventure activities (4.07) and variety of adventure activities (4.06). On the other hand the top two factors under place aspect were convenience in booking via phone (3.62) or via Internet (3.57).

Test of hypotheses

Inferential statistics for testing the relationships between different genders (H1) and different important levels or mean scores of marketing mix factors affecting tourists’ decision making was t-test. From Table 4, the results show that tourists with different gender have no significant differences in their mean scores for all marketing mix dimensions.

One-way ANOVA statistical analysis was used for testing hypothesis two (H2) to hypothesis five (H5). For the second hypothesis (H2), tourists in different age groups have significant differences in the mean scores for product, price and promotion dimensions, excepting place dimension. In product dimension, the results of multiple comparisons using Scheffe’s analysis to compare between the two mean scores show that tourists in higher than 50 years old group have higher mean scores than 41-50 years old group, at significant level 0.05. In price dimension, tourists in 41-50 years old group have higher mean scores than less than 21 years old group, 21-30 years old group and 31-40 years old group, while tourists in higher than 50 years old group have higher mean scores than less than 21 years old group, 21-30 years old group and 31-40 years old group. In promotion dimension, the results show that tourists in 41-50 years old group have higher mean scores than less than 21 years old group and 21-30 years old group, while tourists in higher than 50 years old group have higher mean scores than less than 21 years old group, 21-30 years old group and 31-40 years old group. The results of the third hypothesis testing (H3) show that tourists with different personal income levels have no significant difference in their mean scores for all marketing mix dimensions.

In the fourth hypothesis testing (H4), tourists with different occupation have significant differences in their mean scores for two marketing mix dimensions consisting price and promotion dimensions. However, there was no association between different occupation and different mean scores for product/service and place dimensions. When further conduct multiple comparisons using Scheffe’s analysis in price dimension, tourists who is business owner have higher mean scores than tourists who work in private company, as government officers and student. The results of multiple comparisons for promotion dimension show that tourists who is student have lower mean scores than government officer and business owner.

For the fifth hypothesis testing (H5), tourists with different education levels have significant differences in their mean scores for only product dimension. When further conduct multiple comparisons using Scheffe’s analysis for comparing between the two mean scores, tourists with education level higher than Bachelor’s degree have higher mean scores than tourists with Bachelor’s degree and Vocational degree, at significant level 0.05. However, other three marketing mix dimensions including price, place and promotion, there were no significant differences in their mean scores.
Table 4. Hypothesis testing for tourist’s demography and marketing mix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t-test</td>
<td>F-test</td>
<td>F-test</td>
<td>F-test</td>
<td>F-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(p-value)</td>
<td>(p-value)</td>
<td>(p-value)</td>
<td>(p-value)</td>
<td>(p-value)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>0.890</td>
<td>2.478*</td>
<td>1.413</td>
<td>1.742</td>
<td>4.674*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.375)</td>
<td>(.045)</td>
<td>(.240)</td>
<td>(.127)</td>
<td>(.004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>1.796</td>
<td>3.251*</td>
<td>1.538</td>
<td>4.650*</td>
<td>1.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.074)</td>
<td>(.013)</td>
<td>(.206)</td>
<td>(.000)</td>
<td>(.382)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>0.401</td>
<td>1.080</td>
<td>.927</td>
<td>2.369*</td>
<td>1.746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.689)</td>
<td>(.367)</td>
<td>(.429)</td>
<td>(.041)</td>
<td>(.159)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>1.011</td>
<td>3.835*</td>
<td>1.105</td>
<td>2.860*</td>
<td>2.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.313)</td>
<td>(.005)</td>
<td>(.348)</td>
<td>(.016)</td>
<td>(.080)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* At statistical significant level 0.05

Table 5. Opinion on repeat visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will visit again</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will not visit again</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Repeat visit

Table 5 shows tourists’ opinion when they were asked whether they will come to visit Baan Pha-ngam again? 74.5% of tourists stated that they will visit Baan Pha-ngam again. The reasons for their revisit were variety and excitement of adventure activities, the beauty of natural environment, want to experience seasons at Baan Pha-ngam, variety of lodgings, not far from Bangkok and have good services. However, 25.5% of tourists will not visit again due to unexciting adventure activities, old lodges, difficulties in transportation around adventure sites and high cost of adventure activities.

Obstacles

When the tourists were asked on what are their major obstacles in visiting Baan Pha-ngam, the top four obstacles were inconvenience of the accommodations, lack of public relations or communications, difficulties in traveling around the adventure sites and high cost of adventure activities, see in Table 6.

Table 6. Obstacles on decision making to visit Baan Pha-ngam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacle</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenience of the accommodations</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of public relations</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties in traveling around adventure sites</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High cost of adventure activities</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of guide/coach during adventure activities</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety of the visiting sites</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION

This study shows the effect of marketing mix factors on tourists’ decision making of taking adventure tourism at Baan Pha-ngam, Na-di district, Pra-chin-buri province, Thailand. Most of respondents are women, age between 21-30 years old, personal income between 10,000-20,000 baht per month, working in private company and holding Bachelor’s degree. More than 85% of respondents know about adventure tourism at Baan Pha-ngam through word-of-mouth and internet. Considering the mean scores, the respondents’ priorities in decision making on taking adventure tourism at Baan Pha-ngam were product, place, price and promotion, respectively. From hypothesis test, the respondents with different gender and income levels were not significantly different in their decision making based on marketing mix factors while respondents with different age, occupation and education levels were significantly different in their decision making.

According to the importance of marketing mix factors, adventure tourism operators should heed on preserving the natural beauty of the environment and surrounding areas, creating challenge adventure activities, maintaining variety of adventure activities and providing convenience to tourists in booking for adventure tourism. Limitation of this study is that foreign tourists were excluded from the sample size due to time constraint, giving their major contributions to Thailand’s tourism income. Therefore, recommendations for further research are to include foreign tourists into the sample so we can sense their needs and respond accordingly and to conduct similar survey in other adventure tourism areas for the improvement of this promising and growing type of tourism.

REFERENCES


The role of tourism in alleviating poverty has been widely acknowledged based on the argument that tourism has pro-poor advantages over other traditional industries. However, poverty still persists in most communities with significant tourism resources. If tourism is to successfully alleviate poverty, identifying and examining tourism opportunities and challenges is critical.

This paper identifies and examines the tourism opportunities and the major challenges hindering tourism from alleviating poverty in Zambia. The paper also proposes the way forward in using tourism to alleviate poverty in the country.

Data were collected from the National Development Plan 2006-2010 (2006), the United Nations (2007) Report on Zambia, the Ministry of Tourism publication and other publications. Personal experiences of the first author and 52 online comments (mostly from Zambians) on the article published by the first author in Lusaka Times were the other sources of data. The data collected was analysed using content analysis technique.

Findings indicate the following as key opportunities for Zambia such as political stability, central location, ‘undiscovered and undisturbed wildlife’, the 7th Natural Wonder of the World (the Victoria Falls), historical and cultural heritage, among others are not fully utilized. The challenges were identified and are discussed in the findings section.

The paper attempts to identify and examine the tourism opportunities that have not been fully utilized to alleviate poverty in Zambia. Also, the challenges are examined and the way forward is proposed. The study is valuable to tourism policy makers, development practitioners and other tourism stakeholders in Zambia.

Keywords: Poverty alleviation, tourism, Zambia
INTRODUCTION

Poverty is the denial of people’s choices and opportunities that are most basic to human development. Simply put, poverty is the negative analogue of human development. Many humans especially those in developing and less developed countries have been denied choices and opportunities to access food, nutrition, health, education and literacy, safe water and sanitation, clothing and shelter. Zambia Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper 2002-2004 (2002) describes poverty as a multi-dimensional problem that needs a multi-dimensional approach in tackling it. “Poverty means a lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a clinic or school to go to; not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit, it means insecurity, powerless and exclusion of individuals, households and communities” (IMF & IDA 1999).

To fully understand the relationship between tourism and poverty alleviation, it is important also to understand what tourism is. The 1963 United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism defined tourists as temporal visitors who spend more than 24 hours in a destination other than their normal place of residence. The pull factors for their travel should be holidaymaking, recreation, health, study, religion, sport, visiting friends and families, business or meetings (Sinclair 1998). This paper therefore, adopts this definition. Theoretically, tourism is an economic activity, which belongs to the invisible trade section of the balance of payments. Tourism is viewed as an export service product to foreign countries from which the tourists originate. In terms of local and domestic tourists, tourism is accounted for within the internal trade regime and captured from the relevant sectors.

In 1991 the World Trade Organisation (WTO) adopted the Global Code of Ethics in which emphasis was placed on the fight against poverty in developing countries. In the same year, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development called on governments to “maximise the potential of tourism for eradicating poverty by developing appropriate strategies in cooperation with all major groups, and indigenous and local communities” (United Nations 1999). In 2001, WTO working in collaboration with United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) published a report Tourism in Least Developed Countries. This report sought to “support the development of tourism as one of the driving forces in the refocusing of economic development strategies for developing nations”. In 2002, at the World Summit on Sustainable Tourism held in Johannesburg, South Africa, the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) launched Tourism and Poverty Alleviation. At this summit tourism was identified as one of the few development opportunities for the poor and constituted a call for action (WTO 2002). Since this launch, there have been a number of interested stakeholders, organisations, individuals, governments and scholars coming on board to try and investigate how tourism can be used to alleviate poverty in developing countries.

In the wake of economic restructuring and globalisation many nations, especially developing ones, are in a hurry to redefine and build their economies. To reduce economic costs and increase its benefits, many international aid agencies and donor governments have also recognised the positive impact tourism can bring to a country by creating economic opportunities and contributing to the general quality of life of residents. According to
the estimates from the World Development Report 2000-2001, almost half of the world’s six billion people live on less than US$2 a day, and a fifth live below the international poverty line of less than US$1 a day (World Bank 2000a, pp. 3-4). Sachs (2005), a poverty guru, points out that global poverty is very serious; eight billion people die every year because they are too poor to live, and 20,000 people die every day due to untreated diseases.

While the numbers of those living below the poverty line in some countries of Asia, the Caribbean, and South America may have declined after this report was completed, the poverty rates continue to rise in many countries. In particular, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, where 24.3% and 43.5% of people respectively, continue to survive on less than US$1 a day. The situation is even more serious in Africa; “indeed, there has been a substantial and often worsening of poverty in Africa and comparisons with poverty indicators from other developing regions indicate that poverty is becoming Africanised” (Gerosa 2003). Similarly, Ashley and Mitchell (2005, p.1) argue that “African poverty is centre stage in contemporary development debates – because it’s bad and getting worse. Africa is the only continent to have the distinction of experiencing a consistently worsening rate of poverty since 1990 – flying in the face of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The search in African for ‘pro-poor growth’, that’s growth which benefits poor people, is urgent”.

Notably, while poverty levels still persist in developing countries and Africa in particular, in terms of tourism some of these countries have witnessed tremendous growth. Ashley and Mitchell (2005) note that “whilst Africa contributes little to global tourism figures, tourism contributes significantly to African economies. For example, by 2003 tourism accounted for over 11% of total African exports, and 20% to 30% of exports, for most countries that exceeded the modest threshold of half a million foreign visitors a year. As a matter of fact, tourism is disproportionately important to Africa, compared to other continents. Africa accounts for just 1.6% of World GNP but 4.1% of all international arrivals”. Though this growth and development of tourism in developing countries may seem small compared to Europe and North America, it has been rapid in the last decade. According to the World Tourism Organisation, tourism growth in developing countries, mainly in Asia and Africa, has been very strong. For instance, “Asia (+13%) was the first region to recover and the strongest growing region in 2010. International tourist arrivals into Asia reached a new record at 204 million last year, up from 181 million in 2009. Africa (+6% to 49 million), the only region to show positive figures in 2009, maintained growth during 2010, benefiting from increasing economic dynamism and the hosting of events such as the FIFA World Cup in South Africa. Results returned to double digits in the Middle East (+14% to 60 million) where almost all destinations grew by 10% or more” (UNWTO 2011).

Debatably the above statement may be true, but this rapid growth is unjustifiable if it does not contribute to poverty alleviation for the people in developing countries. If this growth really represents the true picture of the situation and there is no improvement in the living standards and quality of life of the poor then there must be a problem in the way tourism development and investment is planned and implemented in these countries.

**The post-colonial economic and poverty situations in Zambia**
Alwang et al. (1996) argue that poverty in Zambia is pervasive; however, rural areas suffer more from the prevalence of severe poverty than urban areas. After attaining independence from Britain in 1964, Zambia inherited a ‘mono-cultural economy’ driven by a single export commodity - copper. From 1964 to the middle 1980s copper exports sustained the whole economy, accounting to 90% of the country’s foreign income. After 1980, Zambia’s economy started feeling the effects of depending on a single-product export. As with any country dependant on a single-product export the country’s copper-led economy began to spatter to such degree that by 1983 the country’s economy was firmly set on a downward spiral, with copper prices at the London Metal Exchange and the New York Stock Exchange witnessing unprecedented downturns (Muuka et al. 2006). Garenne and Gakusi (2006) also confirm this by arguing that the main reason for the major economic downturn in Zambia after independence can be found in the international copper prices, the Zambian production system and it’s over reliance on the copper itself. The copper price crises made Zambia’s economic situation unbearable and the government turned to borrowing money from a number of lending institutions (e.g. the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund). Furthermore, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) initiated by the World Bank in more than 30 Sub-Saharan African countries, were adopted in an attempt to boost Zambia’s economic performance.

Freedom fighters (e.g. former first Republican President Dr. Kenneth Kaunda) argue that the downfall of Zambia’s economy after independence could be attributed to the country’s involvement in the fight for colonial liberalisation for other countries in Southern Africa. In fact, after attaining independence from Britain in 1964, Zambia spent huge sums of money assisting South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, and others to fight colonialism. Teye (1986, pp. 590) agrees with Dr. Kaunda by pointing out that “the decade between 1957 and 1967 is notable for the rapid decolonisation of Sub-Saharan Africa……Rhodesia’s 1980 Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) had an adverse impact on all sectors of Zambia’s economy. Due to historic ties with Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and involvement in liberation war, Zambia operated for 15 years under Rhodesia’s international isolation and United Nations trade sanctions”.

However, scholars such as Rakner (2003) and Zimba (2006) agree with the above arguments but add that apart from rendering assistance to fight colonialism, Zambia’s poor economic performance after independence is attributed to a lack of coherent strategy for economic growth. They believe that the political elites had no proper long-term policies (aimed at alleviating poverty in the country) and the government over-relied on and accepted the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank’s (WB) imposed economic decisions. Towards the end of the 1980s Zambia’s economy had even become worse, to such an extent that people demanded political changes to save the rapidly deteriorating economy. In 1991 Zambia had a historical political change, from one party participatory democracy to a multi-party participatory democracy, and ushered in a new government formed by the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy.

The 1991 political change was perceived as the answer to the economic woes that the country had been experiencing. But little did the masses realise that Zambia was now heading for more hard times than ever before. The new government brought about a liberalised,
private sector driven economy and continued borrowing from the WB and IMF under strict bank-fund lending requirements called conditionality (Muuka et al. 2006). Garenne and Gakusi (2006, p. 1771) argue that when Dr. Chiluba formed the new government in 1991, “large parastatals were sold to the private sector, the kwacha was left free to fluctuate and was devaluated several times, and prices were liberalized”. Five years later, under the new government, Zambia’s economy had even become more difficult to manage and the poverty levels were soaring high. Some political and economic commentators attributed this situation to an increase in population and the effect of HIV/AIDS that had hit the Sub-Saharan African region. Although the Movement for Multi-party Democracy government tried to smooth economic performance and reduce poverty levels by adopting privatisation and a diversification strategy to introduce industries other than a mono-product copper driven economy, the situation had not improved as anticipated. By the end of 1999, Zambia was listed amongst the ten poorest countries in the world.

By the year 2001, the poor economic conditions had continued its downward spiral and poverty levels continued soaring. The Zambian people therefore, changed government leadership through the 2001 tripartite elections and the New Deal government was ushered in. This government was charged with responsibility to turn Zambia’s economy around; one may argue that since the change of government leadership in 2001, the country has witnessed some fractional improvement in the economic development and in GDP annual growth (e.g. 2006: GDP 5.8%, and 2007: GDP 6.2% 2008: GDP 6.8%, 2009: GDP 6.1%, 2010: GDP 6.4). However, surprisingly, poverty levels still remain high especially in rural areas. The Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) has observed that “poverty levels in Zambia are still on the increase”. CSPR information and programmes officer Patrick Nshidano observed that, “an average of 85 percent of people in rural areas, and 34 percent in urban areas, are still living under the poverty datum line” (QFM News 2011).

Though Zambia’s economy is still dependant on copper exports, the current Zambian government has put emphasis on diversification and promotion of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to reduce poverty levels. Mainly the country is moving away from the tradition of a copper – driven export economy to non-traditional exports (NTEs). This non-traditional export strategy has seen such industries as agriculture, tourism; manufacturing and construction receive more support than before. The government is taking these measures to avoid the repeat of what happened in the past with over reliance on copper. One industry within the NTEs that can turn Zambia’s economy around, but has not yet been developed to its full potential, is tourism. Teye (1986) indicates that due to the unstable copper prices, Zambia developed interest in tourism development in order to diversify her economic base. Though tourism is an important activity in Zambia, tourism still remains a potential sector in the Zambian economy (Husbands, 1989). Muuka et al. (2006) state that apart from its role as an NTE option, tourism has great potential of generating much needed foreign income and quickly creating direct and indirect employment. Furthermore, its cost per job is lower than other industries. For a country like Zambia which is politically stable and endowed with abundant natural and cultural tourist attractions, tourism can make a meaningful contribution to the economic development and poverty alleviation.
The development and current state of tourism in Zambia

Zambia is endowed with an abundance of natural, cultural and heritage tourism resources which have not been fully exploited. Thus, one would argue that the country’s tourism marketing slogan is “Zambia, the Real Africa”. If Zambia’s tourism industry can be given the required support and develop to its full potential, its contribution to poverty alleviation could be great. The country’s tourism industry is mainly based on wildlife, natural and cultural heritage resources. Arguably, despite having so much tourism potential, Zambia still has not fully realised the benefits of developing the industry to its full potential and poverty continues to plague communities, even those living near areas rich in tourism resources.

Since independence, up until after 1996, Zambia’s tourism industry was just classified as a social sector. Other scholars like Teye (1988) state that tourism was not recognised as a sector worthy of development until 1965, after Zambia gained her independence. Arthur (1968) affirms that in 1965 Zambia developed the first National Development Plan; in that plan it projected 155,000 foreign visitors and US$6 million receipts by 1970, basing its estimation on tourist arrivals and revenue during the early 1960s. Accordingly, Zambia Central Statistical Office’s 1967 records show that in 1965 Zambia received 117,800 foreign visitors, a far greater number than 81,400 visitors the same year for Kenya, which had and still has a well-developed tourism industry (United Nations 1969). Actually the United National Independence Party (UNIP) national policy of 1974 to 1980 emphasised tourism as one of the vehicles for economic diversification (UNIP 1974, p.35). Despite all these efforts by the Kaunda government, everyone who has followed tourism development in Zambia would agree that it was only after 1996 that the government in power realised the important contribution that tourism could make to the economy. They started developing the first national tourism policy in 1997.

To ensure proper implementation of the tourism policy the Ministry of Tourism had to undergo restructuring and alignment for sustainable tourism development planning and management. The Ministry was first restructured in 1999, through the government restructuring program, which also included the alignment of some Statutory Boards under the Ministry (e.g. Zambia Wildlife Authority and National Heritage Conservation Commission). In 2002, the Ministry of Tourism was merged with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources to become the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources. The combination of the environment and tourism is a deliberate policy by the government of Zambia to ensure sustainable tourism planning and development. The Department of Environment takes the role of environmental policy formulation, implementation, coordination, and monitoring; while the Department of Tourism assumes the role of tourism policy formulation, implementation, coordination and monitoring. The mission statement for the tourism sector is ‘to contribute sustainably to the economic well-being and enhanced quality of life for Zambians through Government led, private sector driven, quality product developments that are consistent with the protection of the unique natural and cultural heritage’ (Ministry of Tourism 1999).

Tourism and Poverty Alleviation in Zambia

The government’s long vision for the tourism sector is “to ensure that Zambia
becomes a major tourist destination of choice with unique features, which contribute to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction” (Zambia PRSP 2002-2004 2002, p.66). Surprisingly, the contribution of tourism to poverty alleviation in Zambia has not been felt by the poor people in the country. The problem is that the government has not formulated and implemented tourism programs that are aimed at alleviating poverty. So far, the government has taken up a ‘generic development system’, where tourism is being developed in a general sense so that the operators benefit more and the benefits are not shared equally among the local people. A good example would be Livingstone, the tourist capital of Zambia. For a long time Livingstone has been the only recognised town in Zambia as having tourist attractions and activities. It is a must visit town for both international and local tourists. On the contrary, the people in this town still live on less than a dollar per day and their livelihood has not improved (United Nations 2007). Though tourism development in Zambia has witnessed a steady growth, especially in the past decade, the development level has been at a slow pace compared to other countries in the same region, such as South Africa. From the economic point of view the sector has been placed third after mining and agriculture as one of the most important industries in the country. Tourism in Zambia has a lot of opportunities to act as a poverty reduction tool, even when there are challenges facing the tourism sector.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is therefore threefold. Firstly, the study identifies and examines tourism opportunities (underdeveloped tourism resources) in Zambia. Secondly, it identifies and examines the major challenges hindering tourism from alleviating poverty in Zambia. Thirdly, based on the examination of the opportunities and challenges, the authors propose the way forward for Zambia in relation to using tourism to alleviate poverty in the country.

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected from the National Development Plan 2006-2010 (2006), the United Nations (2007) Report on Zambia, the Ministry of Tourism publication and other publications by scholars such as Alwang et al. (1996), Garenne and Gakusi (2006), Teye (1986), Rakner (2003) and Zimba (2006). In addition, the first author, being a national of Zambia and having worked with the Ministry of Tourism for years, has invaluable personal experiences and observations on the state of tourism in Zambia which were incorporated in this paper. Lastly, 52 online comments (mostly from Zambians) on the article about marketing Zambia published by the first author in Lusaka Times, one of the leading local newspapers in Zambia, were analyzed and utilized for this study. The data were analysed using the content analysis technique. The findings from the analysis are presented and discussed in the section that follows:

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section firstly presents and discusses the opportunities, followed by the challenges of alleviating poverty through tourism. The section ends with the way forward proposed by the authors.

Opportunities for using tourism as a poverty reduction strategy

Zambia has great opportunities for using tourism to alleviate poverty. They include: (a) safe, secure and political stability, (b) Zambia’s central location, (c)
‘undiscovered and undisturbed wildlife’, (d) Zambia is home to the 7th natural wonder, (e) many tourist sport and adventure activities, and (f) rich historical and cultural heritage.

**Political stability and safety**

Muuka et al. (2006) indicates that some tourists have been visiting Zambia out of curiosity about its rather unique distinction, by perceived African standards. Since its independence on 24th October, 1964, Zambia has never experienced nor suffered the indignities of civil war or serious internal or external conflicts. Though a number of its neighbors have been involved in civil wars, Zambia is politically stable. Zambia can capitalize on this advantage and use it in promotion materials in order to increase the inflow of tourists and in turn, tourism’s contribution to the well being of people. It is important to note that even though Zambia is politically stable, conflicts happening in neighboring countries could tarnish the name of a ‘haven of peace’. This is because tourists may generalize conflict situations in Africa to all countries on the continent due to the influence of the exaggerated media reports. So, joining other countries in ensuring peace on the African continent is vital even when there is political peace and safety in Zambia. Alleviating poverty should be made a priority because poverty fuels political unrest and terrorism.

**Zambia’s central location**

Zambia is a landlocked country, centrally located at the northern edge of Southern Africa. Its central location offers visitors to Southern Africa a chance to visit the country with relative ease. Zambia can also use this opportunity to ensure that tourists who visit neighbouring countries also visit Zambia. This is shown by the fact that during the 2010 World Cup hosted by South Africa, Zambia was the 4th highest visited country on the African continent with a total number of 1,852 visitors (South Africa Tourism 2010). Being centrally located in Southern Africa (the region leading in tourist arrivals on the African continent), Zambia could market itself much more easily. However, occupying a strategic central location may not guarantee success in tourism, if tourism products and service are not of high quality and highly competitive on the local and international markets. The central location is just an added advantage after tourism product quality has been improved to meet or exceed the expectations of tourists.

(c) ‘Undiscovered and undisturbed wildlife’

Zambia boasts of ‘undiscovered and undisturbed’ wildlife with 19 National Parks and 34 Game Management Areas, the country is one of the finest safari destinations in Africa. It is a birthplace for walking safaris and tourists have a chance to get close to nature. Kafue and South Luangwa National Parks are two of the largest of Zambia’s 19 national parks and they are part of the largest wildlife sanctuaries in Africa. Kafue National Park is Zambia’s oldest and largest national park and is the second largest wildlife park in the world. The Lower Zambezi National Park and the South Luangwa National Park offer a combination of spectacular river line sceneries and abundant and diverse game for viewing. South Luangwa is Zambia’s second largest national game park covering an area of 9,050 square kilometers. This park has the largest concentration of wildlife. Between 1969 and 1973, the United National Development Program (UNDP) carried out a major survey of the South Luangwa National Park and reported the following estimated animal populations in the park: 14,000 hippopotamus, 60,300 crocodiles, 100,000
elephants, 21,000 buffalos, 2,800 rhinos, numerous birds, other reptiles and mammalian (UNDP/FAO 1973).

Although Zambia’s wildlife appears to indicate success in bio-diversity conservation, it is important to evaluate why the poor local communities bordering these ‘wonderful’ wildlife resources do not benefit from tourism. It would appear that Zambia has already achieved its wildlife conservation goal, but what remains a great challenge and perhaps a threat to such an achievement is the occurrence of severe poverty. It may imply that poverty alleviation goals have not been achieved, yet conservation and poverty alleviation should go hand in hand. Otherwise, poverty could potentially endanger protected wildlife and lead to its loss. Local communities can only support conservation efforts if protected areas generate meaningful benefits. Needless to say, conflicts between local residents and the management of wildlife protected areas are common and are attributed to the lack of sustainable benefit accruing from protected resources. The poor often expect such resources to be utilized in the development of communities faced with poverty.

(d) Zambia is home to the 7th Natural Wonder of the World ‘The Victoria Falls’

There are a number of high water falls around the world; among them is the Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River. Known by the locals as ‘Musia-o-Tunya’ or “Shungu na Mutitima” which translates in English as ‘The Smoke that Thunders’, the Victoria Falls are inspiring and awesome waterfalls, classified as a world heritage site and the world’s seventh natural wonder. When they were first sighted by the European explorer Dr. David Livingstone in 1857 he described them as “…scenes so lovely must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight”. Holub 1881 also spoke of them: “Truly it is a scene in which a man may well become aware of his own insignificance!”.

Another European explorer, Selous in 1881, described them as “one of, if not the most transcendentally beautiful natural phenomena on this side of paradise.”

(e) Many tourist sport and adventure activities

Zambia also offers a wide range of adventure and sports activities that include Bungee Jumping. The Victoria Falls Bridge offers one of the highest bungee jumps in the world, plunging oneself down 111 metres onto the Zambezi River. This is the world’s most spectacular breath taking activity. Second, Abseiling on the Batoka Gorge on the Zambezi River offers a thrilling experience. Third, the Gorge Swing, a free-fall breath taking gorge swing for 50metres off the edge of the Batoka Gorge offers a unique and memorable experience. Although Zambia is a land locked country, there are many water-based activities on rivers and lakes. They include: fishing, kayaking white water rafting, river cruises, canoeing and sailing. Other activities include, White Water rafting on Zambezi River, Jet Boating, and Helicopter Flights, Fishing, Horse and Elephant Riding, Game Drives, and Boat and Canoe Safaris. These activities are a potential tool for tourism development. However, it is important to identify participation/user rates in these activities by local Zambians and other African visitors. This is important to know because generally most Africans regard tourism and its activities as a business for foreigners from far off countries. This appears to be a major challenge for some African countries trying to develop a vibrant domestic/local tourism industry. As a consequence, attention is often focused on developing international tourism associated with high leakages and
low linkages at destinations and hence minimal impact on the poor.

(f) Rich historical and cultural heritage

Heritage and cultural tourism is one of the rapidly growing tourism niches around the world, usually associated with tourists who stay longer and spend much time at their destination. Zambia, like any other country in Africa has great stories to tell, from the life of Bushmen, African Great Trek, slavery, scramble for Africa, colonization to modern Zambia. Visitors will learn a lot from its rich history and the local people are willing to share Zambia’s rich cultural heritage. Historically, Zambia is a country that was formed due to the movement of people from North Africa, Southern Africa, Eastern Africa and the West of Africa, creating a country with a diverse cultural heritage boasting more than 70 different tribes. So as to not forget where this multi-faceted people originated, a number of cultural festivals are held annually dating from far back in time. Annual festivals are potential tourist attractions for cultural and heritage lovers. The major annual festivals and their full description are presented in the following sections:

- **The N’cwala Ceremony by the Ngoni people (February)**: This ceremony is performed by the Ngoni people of Eastern Province, at Mutengeleni village. It is held to offer religious thanksgiving. The ceremony is very significant to the Ngonis as it authorizes people to start eating their fresh produce of the year. The ceremony is characterized by singing, traditional dancing, paying homage to the paramount Chief and performing traditional rituals.

- **The Kuomboka Ceremony by the Lozi people (Feb/March)**: Moving the King annually from one palace to the other is something many people would never think of, but this has been the way of life for the people in the western part of Zambia. This is one of the most famous and colourful ceremonies dating far back in time. Back in time paramount Chief Litunga of the Lozi, established his Headquarters at Lialui, later it was discovered that during the rainy season, the palace was submerged into waters of the overflowing Zambezi River. He was then quickly evacuated to another palace on the higher lands called Limulunga, after the rain season the King was taken back to Lialui. Like the N’cwala ceremony of the Ngonis, the Kuomboka is also characterised by singing, traditional dancing, paying homage to the King and performing traditional rituals.

- Other annual festivals are: The Mutomboko Ceremony by the Lunda people (July) and Likumbi Lya Mize by the Luvale people (July/August). These are the opportunities for cultural heritage tourism that have not been fully utilized in Zambia. Overdependence on wildlife tourism has been the norm in Zambia and little attention is paid to the development of a sound and sustainable cultural heritage base to support the wildlife tourism sector. However, should traditional performances be earmarked for development, then caution should be taken so that they do not become staged demonstrations, as tourism has been criticized for affecting cultural performances and making them devoid of traditional meaning. If Zambia plans to develop this neglected tourism niche, traditional performance should be done according to traditional standard not just to please tourists/visitors.

Despite numerous tourism opportunities/potentials discussed above, these have not been fully utilized and also tourism has not been effective in alleviating poverty among most Zambians living in areas with such opportunities. This implies that there are major challenges and the way forward is presented in the following sections.

...
challenges that Zambia needs to address if tourism resources or tourism is to become an important strategy in the alleviation of poverty that still plagues most of her rural societies. The following sections present and examine the challenges in light of poverty alleviation.

(1) Underdeveloped tourism infrastructure

Zambia’s tourism infrastructures, including airports, telecommunications, accommodation and roads to tourist attractions are largely underdeveloped (National Development Plan 2006-2010 2006). This challenge is not only unique to Zambia but also other developing and less developed countries face the same challenge.

(2) Limited tourism product base

It is known that nearly all the tourism resources of Zambia are nature based, specifically wildlife (National Development Plan 2006-2010 2006). Although wildlife remains a significant tourist attraction in most African countries, it is not a good idea to solely rely on wildlife. A diversified tourism base is essential for development as not all tourists are interested in wildlife. Cultural and heritage tourism is one of the emerging segments that Zambia has to develop and fully utilize. The cultural/traditional performance described earlier needs more support in order to broaden Zambia’s tourism base.

(3) Inadequate marketing of Zambia as a tourist destination

The marketing of tourism in Zambia done by Zambia National Tourist Board (ZNTB) has been ineffective because it neglects the local market in pursuit of international markets. Also, Zambia’s marketing efforts remain focused on a few stakeholders who market their own products. An interregional marketing league is lacking and generally marketing for tourism in African countries has remained the responsibility of single countries, yet this is the most expensive way of doing tourism business. The formation of an interregional marketing league may perhaps do better.

Zambia focuses all its marketing efforts on international tourism. Although international tourism is important, it is often associated with low linkages and high leakages due to the high involvement of foreign companies and also tourists’ demand for imported goods. There is a need for the Zambia Tourism Board to shift its marketing efforts towards local tourism development. There is a lack of accurate tourism figures on who visited Zambia and whether they intend to come back, if yes, when? If no, why not? Such information is missing. Mabvuto-Ngwira (2011) comments that, “with all their international marketing efforts ZTB has never given this nation annual figure of tourists who come due to their international marketing efforts”.

(4) Some tourism documents stop at describing problems

Policy or tourism plan documents simply describe tourism problems and do not offer concrete strategies that need to be implemented. Examples of the descriptive statements from the National Development Plan 2006-2010 (2006) include the following:

1 - “There is lack of interest and limited participation among local communities. From the time tourism was identified as a catalyst to rural development, the interest of the local communities have not been fully incorporated”

2 - “There is a dearth of well trained human resource in the tourism sector due
to inadequate resources and training facilities”.

3- “Zambia is generally perceived as a high cost destination. The high costs are attributed to various factors, such as limited international carriers and domestic flight connections; limited hotel accommodation; and inadequate dependable health facilities” (National Development Plan 2006-2010 2006, pp. 106).

These are some of the challenges outlined in the National Development Plan. However, from a development perspective, no concrete strategies are suggested to overcome them. Also, in the whole National Development Plan of approximately 400 pages serious tourism issues are outlined in less than 6 pages with no comprehensive analysis or recommendations.

(5) Inadequate resources for the long term development of the tourism industry

Like any other developing country, Zambia suffers from inadequate resources for tourism development. Government funding of the tourism sector has been inadequate to bring about tangible results (National Development Plan 2006-2010 2006, pp. 106). However, the real problem may not be inadequate resources but lack of proper use of the available resources, as this seems to be the case in most developing countries. Many of the financial resources in poor countries continue to be spent on purchasing modern military equipment instead of being used as investment in priority sectors such as tourism and agriculture etc. that have the potential to benefit the poor. Also, heavy spending on government ministers is one of the causes of inadequate finance resources in most poor countries. Inadequate resources are a symptom of a complex problem in Zambia. Surprisingly, most developing countries keep treating mere symptoms without diagnosing the actual problems of a lack of resources.

(6) Lack of interest and limited participation among local communities

Local communities’ interest and participation is important in using tourism for poverty alleviation. In Zambia, the National Development Plan 2006-2010 (2006) acknowledged that local communities lack interest and their participation in tourism is limited. The reasons why locals are not interested in tourism and their limited participation need to be investigated and the best solution found. From personal experience, the following are some of the causes of lack of interest and participation among local communities. Firstly, local communities of the developing countries lack adequate knowledge about tourism. This is exacerbated by high levels of illiteracy rates that hinder acquisition of tourism knowledge. Secondly, local communities lose interest in tourism if it does not benefit them, but causes negative impacts. As Zambia is largely dependent on wildlife tourism, the establishment of protected areas to conserve wildlife is most likely associated with negative impacts on locals such as loss of land to protected areas, loss of crops and livestock to wildlife, among others. Such uncompensated costs usually lead to a loss of interest in tourism by local residents. One of the best ways of winning back their support and interest is to strengthen the revenue sharing systems and allocate such revenue to the development of local poverty projects.

(6) Limited well trained human resource

Limited well trained human resource in Zambia (National Development Plan 2006-2010 2006, pp. 106) is a hindrance
to using tourism as a tool for poverty alleviation. The lack of, or limited trained human resources at the destination country implies that expatriates or foreign companies have to dominate the tourism businesses which results in low linkages and high leakages because most of the profits are repatriated out of the destination leaving it poorer but with a ‘booming’ tourism industry. Such can be described as poverty amid plenty which is common in developing countries, Zambia inclusive.

7. Zambia is perceived as a high cost destination

The problem of being a high cost destination is not unique to Zambia. Most countries on the African continent experience the same problem due to costly transport, health, and accommodation facilities. The high cost may not be a serious obstacle if local tourism products and services are of high quality that meets or exceeds tourists’ expectations. Tourists are mostly likely to pay high prices provided they get value for money. The perception among tourists that Zambia is a high cost destination could be an indication that perhaps they are not satisfied with the level of tourism products and services and as such they feel they are spending a lot yet not getting value for money. Even if a destination is cheap it may be branded as costly by tourists if they are not satisfied with the quality of tourism being offered to them.

CONCLUSION

The Way Forward and Concluding Remarks

For a nation with a long history of mono-commodity export products for its much need foreign earnings like Zambia which has mainly depended on copper, there is a negative spiral effect when prices at the world markets tumble. This is exactly what has happened to Zambia many times and the country now cannot afford to live in the same old economic way, when there is a great opportunity offered by the tourism sector. With Zambia’s abundant and diverse natural and cultural resources, we are convinced that the tourism sector is a tool for spurring economic growth and development. But more investments to upgrade and develop infrastructure are needed to spur tourism growth.

The government in collaboration with all stakeholders (donors, NGOs, Banks, tourism operators and the Zambian general public, etc.) should formulate and implement tourism programs and plans that are aimed at satisfying the tourist, but at the same time at alleviating poverty. Tourism commercial ventures should give 5-10% of their pre-tax earnings to the development of the poor local communities in which they operate. The primary goal for Zambia’s tourism development is to achieve a broad base which sustains the living standards of the Zambian people. This will require concerted efforts to tackle the intolerable enemy called poverty that continues to plague half of Zambia’s population.

While the government has the responsibility of spearheading and creating an enabling tourism business environment, the private sector and all other stakeholders should have a vital role to play in working towards overcoming the constraints facing the tourism industry and also the country at large. To ensure that tourism contributes to economic development and the benefits trickle down to the poor people, there is a need for Zambia to mobilise its resources (monetary, human, natural and cultural) and use them efficiently and effectively. Tourism research and human development is
critical to the success of tourism development in any nation. Timothy (1998) noted that there is a significant lack of research on tourism in developing countries. Zambia should strive to overcome this obstacle if tourism is to be used effectively in alleviating poverty. This can be achieved by the government providing research grants to researchers to engage in projects focusing on Zambia’s tourism and poverty alleviation issues. In addition, Zambia’s universities should concentrate on training students on the research aspects through offering more and higher quality research based degrees such as Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees.

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creation through citizenry participation and technology advancement’.


HOMESTAY AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Received: May 20, 2011
Accepted: June 22, 2011

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ABSTRACT

Homestay accommodation has become increasingly important for community tourism development. The Thai government has promoted homestay accommodation as part of community-based tourism in order to enhance the quality of local people’s lives and also to strengthen their potential of being self-sufficient. Therefore, the focus of the study is to critically investigate the homestay management in Northern Thailand to illustrate its compatibility with the concept of sustainable community development. The study was conducted by utilising a primarily qualitative approach. Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay in Chiang Mai was selected to be a case study based upon its potential of being a model of best homestay practice to conduct participant observation and interviews.

The findings reveal the significance of Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay management in terms of its local participation and the fair distribution of the benefits of homestay. Furthermore, the involvement of both public and private sectors in supporting homestay and sustainable community tourism is recognised as being critical. This study presents an original insight into the relationships between homestay businesses and sustainable community development. This is of value to the further homestay research in developing the best practice model of homestay in Thailand.

Keywords: Homestay, sustainable community development, tourism impacts, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom of Thailand has recently proclaimed tourism as a nationally important agenda. Tourism has been utilised as a significant means to enhance the socio-economic, cultural and environment well-being for community development based upon both the variety and diversity of tourist attractions in terms of Thailand’s natural and cultural resources, as well as the hospitality of Thai people. However, the problem of poverty has still been critical in many parts of the country. Therefore, in an attempt to reduce this problem, the Thai government has pro-
moted tourism for poverty alleviation from the grassroots. In particular, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports has considered the significance of homestay accommodation as a focal point in order to enhance the quality of local people’s lives. The principle of running homestay accommodation for tourists is to add an extra income to support the villagers apart from their main career. Yet, many problems have occurred since the emergence of homestay accommodation in many areas of the country due to a lack of understanding of the concept of homestay. Moreover, community organised homestays have still run their businesses in such a way that seems not to serve sustainable tourism and the community development.

**Sustainable development in rural community**

George, Mair and Reid (2009) summarise that rural tourism should be situated in rural areas with small scale enterprises in contact with nature and heritage as well as with traditional societies and traditional practices. It should be developing slowly and organically in connection with community families. It will also often be very largely controlled locally and developed for the health of the area in the long run. Furthermore, its development should help sustain the particular rural character of an area and in that sense its development should be sustainable in its utilisation of resources. Therefore, rural tourism should be recognised as a potential tool for conservation and sustainability rather than as an urbanizing and development tool. Sorensen and Nilsson (2005) also argue that the importance of rural tourism has arrived on the political-economic agenda with the expectation being that tourism business can alleviate the consequences of a decrease in traditional means of rural employment. However, Jamrozy (2008) argues that countries and regions with considerable natural and cultural resources look towards tourism when stimulating their sustainable development activities.

The concept of a community-based tourism approach has also been considered as a means to achieve the sustainability. Hatton (1999) suggests that ‘community-based tourism is socially sustainable. This means the tourism activities are developed and operated, for the most part, by local community members, and certainly with their consent and support’. While Scheyvens (2002) concludes that communities which decide to be involved in tourism require the opportunity to participate in an active and equitable approach. Community involvement in planning and development is perceived as crucial to the overall sustainability of tourism. Based on several commentators, sustainable tourism should permit members of the community living in a tourist destination to participate in decision-making about tourism activities which affect their living (Bramwell and Sharman, 2000).

**Homestay context**

Homestay is a specialist term used variously. Lynch (2003) points out that ‘homestay is a type of accommodation where visitors or guests pay directly or indirectly to stay in private homes, where interaction takes place to a greater or lesser degree with a host and/or family who usually live upon the premises and with whom public space is shared to a greater or lesser degree’. While in community-based tourism, the concept of homestay is applied as a tourism segment that encourages interactions between host families and tourists and which acts as development means to raise awareness based upon cultural exchange and respect for the host’s culture whereby emphasize is placed on providing generosity and hospitality of excellent services (Jamil and Hamzah, 2007). Likewise, the Thai government through the Ministry of Tourism
and Sports, has identified a homestay as ‘one type of tourism which tourists will stay with the host’s family in the same house as well as they will learn about the nature, Thai way of life or Thai culture. A homestay has to provide services and facilities appropriately. In addition, it needs to be registered to the Office of Tourism Development.’ (Translated from OTD, 2008).

In terms of previous homestay studies, research by Lynch (2003) concerning conceptual relationships between hospitality and space in the homestay sector by conducting qualitative observations in the field has identified as significant. His results recognised the emotional significance of the home setting and identified it as an unacknowledged performative player in the hospitality experience. Research by Oranratmanee (2008) on the rural homestay and its relationships between space, social interaction and meaning in Northern Thailand is also significant. The evidence from her three case studies has shown that there are important social and cultural distinctions and that strong relationships were formed between the spatial characteristics of rural houses and the social interactions produced within them. Hamzah (2008), meanwhile, has studied the homestay programme in Malaysia which is gradually evolving into a mainstream tourism product that is being aggressively promoted by the government as form of catalyst for revitalising the rural economy. For the homestay providers, the income from the homestay programme has been minimal; however, his research clearly signals warnings against the over-commercialisation of the homestay programme by tour operators. Building upon this work, this study attempts to fill the gaps of such evidence by focusing on the critical investigation of the compatibility of homestay businesses with the concept of sustainable community development in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand.

**METHODOLOGY**

The qualitative approach developed for this study was appropriate to provide the evidence according to the nature of the homestay which was concerned with many various social aspects, environmental concerns, cultural phenomenon as well as economic matters and management problems. Hence an in-depth understanding of such circumstances was considered essential. Accordingly, Chiang Mai province was selected as the specific area for this study located in northern Thailand with its reputation for being one of the famous tourist destinations. Homestay experiences have been recognised as an interesting accommodation for this particular area. Thus, Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay was selected to be a case study based upon its potential of being a model of best homestay practice to conduct participant observation and interviews in terms of human resources, marketing and financial management during October–December 2008.

**Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay Management**

A small village surrounded with a green environment namely Ban Mae Kam Pong village, it is located in Moo 3, Huey-Kaew sub-district, Mae-On district, Chiang Mai province, Thailand which is approximately 50 kilometres far from Chiang Mai town to the north east. The village can be accessed all year round by using either the highway number 1317 or the highway number 1014. Ban Mae Kam Pong village comprises of one hundred and thirty-two households built on the mountainside near the stream and the population in the village is Lanna people of approximately 417 people. It is divided into six pangs which referred to a cluster of houses: Pang Nork, Pang Klang, Pang Khon, Pang Ton, Pang Nai 1 and Pang Nai 2. The village has been governed by the village’s committee and under the leading role of the village leader who is commonly
called in the local language as ‘Pho-Luang’ elected by the villagers’ votes.

Many villagers have been encouraged to be a volunteer in community tourism and thus many various types of activities have been developed. Villagers who have different skills and different interests can select activities which they are willing to participate. A local guide group has also been formed in the village to facilitate tourists while visiting the village, especially for trekking activities. Bai-Sri is a traditional welcome ceremony of Northern Thailand. In order to serve tourism needs, a Bai-Sri group has been set up in the village. A traditional musical group has performed regularly both single plays and also along with the traditional dances. This latter group composed of many female children and teenagers in the village who have also been trained by the professional performers from the government sector. While tea pillow products have proved to be very attractive souvenirs for tourists and a tea pillow group has been started in order to serve the tourism market needs. Moreover, a traditional massage group and an herbal group have also been established to support community tourism in the village (see Figure 1).

Apart from that, a homestay group is possibly the most remarkable in terms of their involvement in tourism. Three households began running homestay businesses in the village and officially opened in December 2000, followed by another four houses in the next few years, and now eighteen households are currently providing homestays. It is first and foremost an economic benefit concern; however, all of the homestays are still located in merely three areas: Pang Ton, Pang Nai 1 and Pang Nai 2 (see Figure 2). Other areas have not provided for homestays due to the distance from tourists’ attractions and the limitations of the households themselves.
Homestay development and management has been a key challenge for this community because of its prominent potential for the villagers and its resources. In terms of human resources management, to be capable homestay hosts, the villagers have been firstly provided an understanding towards both tourism and homestay contexts. The more villagers perceive the positive attitudes towards community tourism, the more offensive problems against it may be decreased. In an attempt to achieve this objective of human resources development, the government has also played an important role to support the village through many educational training schemes such as the hospitality programmes, the Basic English course and field-trips. Yet, there is an argument that the villagers have to realise that community tourism and homestay businesses should be supported as the extra income rather than the main source of it.

Furthermore, the awareness of local people concerning the impacts of tourism upon the community should be taken into account. In terms of marketing and financial management, both domestic and inter-national tourists are the target groups of Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay. Based on the membership of Homestay Standard Thailand project, information of Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay has been provided in Thai version through the official website: http://homestaythai.tourism.go.th organised by the Department of Tourism. In addition, the village with the cooperation of the private sector has recently developed its own website in bilingual Thai and English versions at: http://www.mae-kampong.com. Reservations are preferable for homestay by direct contact at the village or using travel agents. However, online reservations have not provided due to the limitation of the staff and the technology provided in that area. The homestay price has been set up with an inclusive price for all tourists which including an accommodation, meals, the village’s activities, service charge and a donation to the village.

The revenue from homestay has been managed by the homestay leader. The benefits will be distributed among stakeholders. Some amount of money is directly paid to a homestay host and some will be provided to the related activities including the managerial issues. While the rest will be accumulated in the village’s account for any further development as
well as another remaining will also be deposited in the village’s Co-operative. Yet, by pooling some benefits into a co-operative system, every member will benefit from the dividend per share. It has been recognised as one of the more effective methods of financial distribution which may lead to the reduction in the conflict between villagers. The argument, however, has also been on the efficiency of management processes by one person, particularly the homestay allocation and the transparency issues.

Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay and Homestay Standard Thailand 2008

The Department of Tourism is the direct agent which has responsibilities on the development of servicing standards in tourism and tourist attraction site in order to initiate economic, social and cultural advantages and sustainable tourism in Thailand. The reason for the government to support homestay projects is to create the jobs and generate income to the communities as well as to strengthen their potential of being self-sufficient. Additionally, to promote the development of homestays as a part of community-based tourism, local participation has been encouraged as well as the fair distribution of benefits from tourism has also been considered.

Accordingly, the Homestay Standard Thailand 2008 was developed from the prior one launched in 2004 with the limitation of some previous homestay standards indicators. Such criteria for homestay assessment have been categorised in terms of ten standards: accommodation, sustenance services, safety, host’s hospitality, tourism activity, natural resources and environment, culture, value added, management, and public relations.

Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay has been involved in this project since its inception. It has continued receiving the Thai Home Stay Certification Standards with high scores for every round of assessment. For example, the results of the latest assessment showed that four aspects covering: host’s hospitality, tourism activity, value added and public relations were evaluated with very high scores whilst five standards regarding accommodation, sustenance services, safety, culture and management were evaluated with high scores. The moderate score of assessment was on the natural resources and environment standard. However, some criticism of the Homestay Standard Thailand Committee has been worth considering in terms of the homestay deposit, waste management, carrying capacity, and the consideration of the impacts of some types of tourism activities invested in the village.

Impacts of Tourism and Homestays upon Ban Mae Kam Pong Village

Tourism has been widely claimed to be a very useful activity for community development. In a sense, therefore, tourism is both a community resource and also a community responsibility. In terms of Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay, tourism seems to be increasing its role in the village rather than it was in the past. Accordingly, the significant issue is the consideration of tourism impacts in terms of socio-economic, cultural and environmental impacts. Tourists have played an important role in this matter. In particular, international tourists have generated substantial revenue to the village with multiplier effects whereas domestic tourists have also stimulated the economic flow into the village. These benefits have been directly provided to individuals, community and also the entire country.

Tourism can provide the basis and rationale for investment in infrastructure. Hence, it is noticeable that the physical aspect of the village has been developed, particularly the concrete road towards the
village which has made the village easier to be accessed by tourists even though it is in a remote area. Besides, tourism is also recognised as one of the most labour-intensive industries, so it has the potential to contribute towards job creation. Therefore, many villagers have become involved in tourism activities and earned extra money. Women and children also have a good opportunity to participate and contribute to the community tourism. Moreover, homestay has the potential to help develop greater social interaction in a family through the leading role of women in providing services to guests accompanied by other members in the family. Consequently, participation in community tourism may reduce the ‘generation gaps’ between the elders and the youth in the village. Conversely, the way of life of some local people has also been affected by tourism negatively both from the tourists’ behaviour and the evidence of becoming more commercialised of running tourism and homestay in the village.

The local culture of Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay has been slightly changed because of the development of community tourism and homestay activities. Many valuable local traditions have been revitalised by the responsiveness of the villagers. These rituals may serve both for the local identities and also for tourism purposes. By contrast, some tourists’ behaviour will lead to cultural change in the village, though the culture of people and communities is dynamic. In particular, the issues of social interactions and some customs of international tourists have been largely criticised for their effect on the local culture both in short-term and long-term consequences. The important point to be considered is that such inevitable changes in the village possibly happen earlier than usual and their effects may last longer. However, it is worthwhile considering that there are some solutions that may help reduce the impacts. Although, it may be impossible to change such tourists’ behaviour in the way as the local people’s desire, some regulations and acknowledgements concerning the particular issues are needed to be informed.

Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay has affected by the situation of utilising its natural resources for tourism purposes. In an analysis of the positive consequences, the raising awareness of natural resources conservation of the villagers may also be the effect of tourism in the village. Many projects have been seen to support this objective and have been operated by the dwellers associated with some external supports. While Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay has still encountered some negative impacts. Waste management has been critically considered according to the increasing numbers of tourists both in their volume and their occurrence. Yet, it is notable that many households have recycled some products while they realise that it may help reducing the volume of garbage in the village. However, there is also evidence that many villagers have still chosen the method of waste disposal by burning it in the open-air areas which its consequence seems to annoy the people and ruin the tourism atmosphere. Some new construction may lead to the visual pollution which it seems incompatible within the particular area. Furthermore, the issue of overloading the homestay carrying capacity has also affected the community tourism climate from being a small peaceful and picturesque village.

CONCLUSIONS

Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay has shown the evidence that the villagers have the potential to provide quality homestay services. This homestay has continuously received the official standards certification from the government sector for many years which may imply its value of being a better alternative accommodation in Chiang Mai. In the analysis of the home-
stay success, the high degree of local participation and the strong leadership of the homestay leader were remarked upon. The marketing channels have been supported by the government; however, the homestay has also developed its own website for promoting tourism and homestay activities. In addition, Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay had the connection with some travel agents and thus the volume of tourists seemed to be guaranteed. The financial management of this homestay was claimed to be more effective than others. However, like many businesses or activities, Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay has encountered some difficulties in running its activities successfully.

Nevertheless, inevitable impacts have occurred on socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues towards Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay. International tourists have generated revenue in terms of the foreign currency whereas the domestic consumption has stimulated the economic flows in the community and also the entire country. The benefits from tourism have become the supplementary income for the villagers and also the children. The infrastructure of the village has been developed as well as the increasing of local employment in tourism and homestay activities. Moreover, greater social interaction in a family perhaps has been established. For the cultural and environmental aspects, the preservation of natural resources as well as local culture and traditions has been considered.

Conversely, Ban Mae Kam Pong Homestay seemed to be more commercialised and changed due the concept of homestay promoted by the government. Some villagers have experienced a change in their way of life affected by the emergence of tourism and homestay in the village. It has been widely argued that such cultural changes have been significant in this village context. Additionally, much pollution such as waste problems and visual pollution has been increasing according to the growth of community tourism. The carrying capacity of the village still needs to be carefully considered in order to reduce the negative consequences and to reach the purpose of sustainable community development.

REFERENCES


POVERTY REDUCTION THROUGH PRO-POOR SUPPLY CHAINS: THE ROLE OF HOTEL INDUSTRY

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Received: May 22, 2011
Accepted: June 22, 2011

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to discuss how hotel industry can contribute to sustainable development of tourism destination through collaboration with trading partners in supply chain, and to introduce a concept of pro-poor supply chain management (PSCM). Review of literatures on socio-economic impacts of hotel industry and on the concept of pro-poor supply chain management as well as semi-structured interviews was conducted with hotel managers, researchers, NGOs workers, and executives of hotel association, to obtain their views on the concept of PSCM in the context of hotel industry. Subsequently, the data were used to illustrate how the industry can enhance and sustain benefits from tourism for all stakeholders. The literature and interviews showed that tourism may cause economic disparity and leakage of income from the destination. Many examples have shown that benefits of tourism can be reaped out more effectively, if hotel industry strengthens their cooperation with customers and suppliers. The concept of PSCM was perceived as a feasible strategy to enhance local employment and local sourcing of goods and services from people who live in and around tourism destination. However, further supports should be provided by institutional partners to strengthen the linkages between hotel and economic activities in neighboring areas. The paper illustrates how the concept of PSCM can be utilized by hotel industry in order to enhance livelihood of people who live in and around tourism destination.

Key words: Hotel industry, supply chain management, poverty reduction

INTRODUCTION

Tourism provides opportunities to harvest economic benefits. The arrival of visitors brings about investment and setting up of enterprises to supply tourist’s needs and satisfaction. This in turn generates jobs and income to the local people who live in and around the destination. Further, if tourism firms
source goods and services from small-scale and community enterprises, the income will be more distributed to poorer people, resulting in their better livelihood and increased tax revenues used for developing public facilities and social welfares (e.g. school, security, health-care). Ultimately, the improved well-being reduces risks to social problems stemmed from poverty, such as under-education, crime, health care, and corruption. Tourism can also stimulate local people to enjoy economic benefits of their identity and traditional events. Cultural attractions, such as, recipe, craft, dance, massage, may be adapted in accordance with tourists' preferences so as to attract visitors, thereby increasing willingness among local people to preserve historical and cultural heritages. Meanwhile, this can bring a common feeling of host, which strengthens community bond and participation in other public affairs of the destination.

Despite the wide range of economic benefits, tourism enterprises are often criticized as lacking contribution to local economy. Income from tourism is largely leaked from local economy due to the use of skilled labour and products imported from outside tourism destination. In some cases, the disparity and social inferiority induce poorer people to commit crime in exchange of more earning and spending as elite people. This may lead to unfavorable behaviors, for example, cheating the tourist, pickpocket, trafficking, illegal prostitute, and bribery. As a result of the increased news on crime, reputation of the destination may be harmed, thereby decreasing the visitors who are the customers of tourism enterprises. In addition, tourism can be linked to agricultural and folk arts (e.g. music, and craft, festival). If measures are not taken to integrate tourism with other sectors, market opportunity may be lost, while locals wisdoms which can be a source of tourism attraction will be replaced with the lifestyle brought from outside.

Pro-poor supply chain management (PSCM) is a management initiative for firms to contribute to local economic development. The basic concept implies that firms collaborate with upstream and downstream trading partners to take into account of income distribution, with the objectives to gain market differentiation, improve corporate social responsibility (CSR). This research aims to illustrate how PSCM practiced by hotels can result in better livelihood of people who live in and around tourism destination. In the paper, the first part begins with reviews of literatures on socio-economic impacts of tourism, and hotel industry in particular. The second part introduces the concept of PSCM that may be applied in hotel industry, based on insights from literatures and opinions gained from academia and practitioners relating to CSR to hotel industry. The last part ends with concluding remarks.

Socio-economic impacts of tourism

Tourism provides opportunities for benefits and pitfalls. The income from tourist influx could raise appreciation among local people on the merits of natural beauties in their hometown. This gratitude may stimulate them to engage in environmental activities to avoid degradation of tourism attractions. On the other hand, environmental impacts can be arisen from inappropriate behavior of various stakeholders involved in tourism activities. The adverse effects are, for example, land encroachment, littering and excessive wastes, illegal sewage disposal, and over-use of resources (e.g. water and electricity). These environmental problems can destroy the good image and attractiveness of tourism destination where all stakeholders depend upon. In tourism destination that did not develop measures to minimize the negative impacts of tourism, the number of visitors to the destination may be reduced, leading to the case of ‘tourism destroys tourism’.
Similarly, from the perspective of economic development, tourism provides opportunity to local people who live and around the destination to gain better livelihood. Among a number of publications, Bull (1993) refers tourism as an income generator, and a potential mean to bring foreign exchange. The arrival of visitors stimulates investors to set up enterprises for supplying tourist’s needs and satisfaction during the tourist's trip. This in turn generates jobs and income to local labour. Further, if tourism firms source goods and services from small-scale and community enterprises, the income will be more distributed to poorer people, resulting in their better livelihood and increased tax revenues used for developing public facilities and social welfares (e.g. school, security, health-care). Ultimately, the improved well-being reduces risks to social problems stemmed from poverty, such as under-education, crime, health care, and corruption.

Tourism can also stimulate local people to the economic benefits of their identity and traditional events. Cultural attractions, such as, recipe, craft, dance, massage, may be adapted in accordance with tourists' preferences so as to attract visitors, thereby increasing willingness among local people to preserve historical and cultural heritages. Meanwhile, this can bring a common feeling of host, which strengthens community bond and participation in other public affairs of the destination.

Despite the wide range of economic benefits, tourism enterprises are often criticized as lacking contribution to local economy. Many literatures pointed out that income from tourism is largely leaked from local economy due to the use of skilled labour and products imported from outside tourism destination. Pleumarom (1999), for example, found that 70 percent of income from tourism in Thailand flows back to investors and workers, while local residents are not much engaged to reach employment and trading opportunities. Further, the economic growth can also have adverse effect by creating large economic gap among people in the destination. In some cases, the disparity and social inferiority induce poorer people to commit crime in exchange of more earning and spending as elite people. This may lead to unfavorable behaviors, for example, cheating the tourist, pickpocket, trafficking, illegal prostitute, and bribery. As a result of the increased news on crime, reputation of the destination may be harmed, thereby decreasing the visitors who are the customers of tourism enterprises. In addition, tourism can be linked to agricultural and folk arts (e.g. music, and craft, festival). If measures are not taken to integrate tourism with other sectors, market opportunity may be lost, while locals wisdoms which can be a source of tourism attraction will be replaced with the lifestyle brought from outside.

In sum, tourism may create benefits and pitfalls depending on how stakeholders of tourism manage the impacts, and this varies in each tourism destination. Those potential impacts imply that while everyone involved in the destination maximize benefits reaped from tourism destination, appropriate control should be taken to minimize the downsides that may occur at same time. In the next part, these impacts are further illustrated in a specific context of hotel industry.

The roles of hotel industry in livelihood of local people

Tourism is an economic sector that includes many related industries, and hospitality industry is one of the key components. The outcomes of tourism can thus be enhanced and controlled by involving hospitality businesses, such as tour operator, and tourist mobility, accommodation. In this paper, the focus is placed on tourist accommodation which is termed here as ‘hotel industry’. This refers
to a variety of lodging establishment providing lodging facilities for overnight stay and services to suit different budgets and needs. This can be campsite, bungalow, guesthouse, motel, hostel, hotel, and serviced-apartment, etc.

Conventional analysis of tourism focused on economic growth. The indicators such as tourist arrivals, foreign exchange receipts, and investments are emphasized, with little attention on measuring tourist spending reach to local people. More recently, value chain analysis has provided a perspective for further understanding in the impacts of an industry. This section employs this perspective to describe economic and social benefits that are contributed by hotel industry.

Accommodation is an essential component of a trip, and largely accounts for tourist’s expenditure. One of the characteristics of hotel industry is that it has potential links to destination’s economy by creating job, and demand for other economic sectors, such as, construction, furniture, agriculture, fishing, and food processing. Further, hotel can contribute to livelihoods of poor people in peripheral area who do not directly benefit from tourist expenditure by helping them better access to marketplace.

However, these potential benefits may not be reaped out effectively. Nicholson (1997) and Kontogeorgopoulos (1998), for example, argue that the priority in employment may not be given to local resident, while local products may not be sourced for hotel supply. Similarly, according to Wilkinson and Pratiwi (1995), middle class and investor are the most obvious beneficiaries of tourism. Hotels tend to source from a big wholesaler rather than small enterprise operated by poorer people. This can be because the small enterprise may not capable to supply goods according to hotel’s preferences in terms of delivery, quality, and reliability. Economic benefits are often in hand of the middle class and local elite, or leak out for products bought in from outside. As a result, economic disparity can increase in the destination and surrounding region. This is the issues that were addressed in the Manila Declaration on the Social Impact of Tourism 1997, with recommendations on greater involvement in the hinterland of tourism destination.

In contrary, if hotels give an effort to strengthen their linkages with local and community enterprise, farmer and households in rural area can earn more income from supplying hotels with their products. According to Mitchell and Faal (2008), the element in tourism value chain that has much pro-poor impact is the supply of food and crafts. If hotels’ suppliers attempt to source more agricultural products (fish, fruit, flower, and vegetable,) from villager (informal sector), tourism development can be more beneficial to local economy. Also, hotel has potential to increase tourist spending by offering souvenirs (e.g. handicraft) in a shop in hotel, and to work with tour operator in promoting excursion that organized by farmers and villagers. There are already some examples such as Luang Prabang in Laos, where one third of the income poor people derived from tourism comes via linkages with business supplying food and other goods to hotels (ODI, 2006).

In terms of socio-economic impacts, the income that flow into hands of the poor can also help in reducing risk of social problems such as uneducation, drug, and crime, thereby providing safe surroundings for tourist. Improved wellbeing has also impact on positive attitude toward the visitors, resulting in hospitable behaviour given by host communities. In addition, the linkages
between hotel and rural community can bring pride and valuation of traditional arts in the eyes of local people, creating sense of ownership and willingness to preserve it (Calabrese et. al, 2002).

To summarize, different from the environmental impacts, the economic and social impacts are not evidently linked to the attractiveness of the destination. However, the economic leakage and disparity can largely affect livelihood of people living in and around the destination. Many examples have shown that benefits of tourism can be reaped out more effectively, if hotel industry strengthens their cooperation with customers and suppliers. Accordingly, the social and economic issues are increasingly being addressed in tourism industrial standards particularly in terms of local employment and local sourcing of goods and services. However, practical challenges remain in putting the standards into practice.

**Conceptual perspective of pro-poor supply chain management**

Many management practices were initiated to assist business organization to contribute to sustainable development. Pro-poor supply chain management (PSCM) is among the initiatives to enhance firm’s social and environmental responsibilities. The basic idea is that firm can collaborate with customers and suppliers to increase profitability, income distribution, and protection of good tradition and local wisdom. These roles in turn can yield some benefits for the firm in terms of cost efficiency, market differentiation, and relationship with interest groups.

Similar to retail shops, hotels assemble purchased goods before selling them to their customers or guests. They are thus positioned between buyers (tourist, tour operator, and travel agency) and suppliers of various products. These direct contacts with customers and suppliers provide opportunity for hotels to interact with trading partners and convince them to conduct environmental and social activities. PSCM can be, for example, assisting local people to become a vendor of food and craft products to hotels, integrating environmental characteristics in sourcing hotel supply, working with supplier to produce goods and services based on local natural and human resources, and to publicize these contributions of these activities through cooperation with tour operator.

Despite the potential roles of hotel in supply chain, publications on PSCM in hotel industry are indeed scanty. A number of publications, however, reported the application of PSCM in tour operator industry. Although outbound tour operators in developed countries have contracted with thousands of hotels and other service providers, the conducted tour is not only one form of tourism. In many tourism destinations, majority of visitors are independent tourists who design and conduct their own itinerary. In some tourism destinations (such as camping area), the conducted tour can hardly be seen. Also, many hotels are not contracted with tour operator, those contracted hotels may sell directly to tourist without paying commission to the intermediaries. These facts indicate that, hotel’s supply chain also has a role to play in enhancing sustainable development in tourism destination. Meanwhile, the experience of SSCM from tour operators may not be completely fitting with the context of hotel industry. Thus, better understanding of PSCM in hotel industry should be enhanced by research community.

The relatively lack of literature implies that the proliferation of PSCM practice may not be straightforward. Large and luxurious hotels, for example, may have purchasing power and greater
capabilities to collaborate with suppliers, but it may not be a priority for their decision-makers. The hotels that proactive in environmental activities could not easily impose suppliers to adjust their products in line with the principles of sustainable development. Suppliers themselves may not share the same vision with hotels, while having choices of buyers available apart from the hotels. Hotels may also deem that the distribution of income is not their responsibility, as they have contributed to job creation and paid tax to local authority. Besides, hotels that are initiating SSCM activities may face some obstacles toward greater engagement. The issues regarding barriers and conditions that enable firm to adopt and implement PSCM have not been adequately addressed by previous studies. Given the challenges and the gap in literatures, it is pertinent to conduct a research with special focus on facilitation aspect of SSCM. In addition, a study of PSCM from service-providers operated in tourist-recipient countries (e.g. Thailand) could also provide some perspectives on PSCM that are promoting among tour operators in tourist’s countries. Besides, valuable insights could also be gained from a study on transition from CSR practices currently practiced toward the collaboration on socio-economic and cultural issues so as to enhance livelihood and sustain attractiveness of tourism destination.

**Supply chains in hotel industry**

The literature review showed that the Porter’s concept of value chain has been used to describe supply chains in tourism sector. According to Poon (1993), tourism firms consist of many related industries. As described in previous chapter, tourism can be considered as a social phenomenon that creates opportunities for consumption and production for industries that provides goods and services for tourist. A main industry in tourism sector is tour operators who play the role of dealer or wholesalers in the sector. The original raison d'être of tour operating was the difficulty of making arrangements in far-flung places, with problems of language, currency and communication. Tour operators typically combine travel components to create a holiday. In particular, they buy different products, such as hotel rooms, airline seats, transfer facilities, in bulk, package them for sale, and/or organize the trip (conducted tour). Two types of tour operator can be distinguished; inbound tour operators who organize domestic tour operation for incoming foreign tourists; outbound tour operators who organize the trips to tourism destination in foreign countries. The advent of the internet has increased communications between tourist and service providers (e.g. hotel), and led to rapid increase in do-it-yourself (DIY) holidays. However, tour operators still have some of their competences in arranging tours for those who do not have time to do the DIY, and specialize in large group-tour, specific tourism destinations and activities or events, otherwise too difficult or expensive to organize. Travel agencies provide the tour package with retail price, and sometimes options for self-packaging. Different from the operators, they carry no stock and their main role is just to provide a convenient network of outlets for the travelers. Travel agents are mainly divided into two categories; outgoing travel agents and incoming travel agents. Outgoing travel agents are located in the tourist generating countries whilst incoming travel agents are at the destination and may handle only airport transfer services. Other members of supply chain in tourism sector are the service providers, including transportation, accommodation, restaurant, excursion, recreation park, sport and spa services, etc. Although examples of supply chain management practiced in tourism sector are not often found, there is a body of literatures discussing how activities performed by the tourism-related industries
are exchanged. An important feature that shapes distinctive characteristic of supply chains in tourism is that customer in this sector can either arrange their travel plan with tour operator / travel agency or arrange it themselves (independent traveling), which allows them to be flexible in their trip arrangement. Meanwhile, the service provides (such as tour operator and travel agency) may be operated by the same firm. This results in many possible configurations of supply chain that can be distinguished. The structures of the chain are outlined by the figure below, showing supply chains of different industries in tourism sector.

![Configurations of supply chains in hotel industry](image)

**Figure 1.** Configurations of supply chains in hotel industry

Traditionally, a supply chain tended to start with the tourist who books a trip via a travel agency, and the trip is organized by the tour operator who in turn has dealt with the transport, accommodation, excursions held at tourism destination. It was the impact of internet (e.g. Wynee et al., 2001) and online-reservation systems (e.g. Duliba and Kauffmann, 2001) that enabled tourist to access to tourism firms directly. Since the late 1990s, the information technology has largely taken over the traditional way of marketing, booking, and sales. Tourist can individually books a part or the whole trip package via internet without using any intermediary (Gisolf, 2000). As a result, the role of distributors, to some extent, has been taken by the producer or service providers. Therefore, supply chain management in tourism
sector should not be viewed using one prototype with tourist and travel agency at the starting points of the chain.

In addition to the tourism-related industries outlined above, local authorities may be also considered as a main actor in the sector. This is because governmental agencies and other organizations have an important role to play in developing and governing the tourism destinations where the tourism businesses depend upon. Meanwhile, the local agencies also need the information and cooperation from the industrial actors in maintaining attractiveness of tourism products, such as natural beauties, cultural places, and hospitality. This reflects an important nature of the sector in which there is high level of interdependence between tourism firms and stakeholders in the destination. It is thus clear that the supply chain management in tourism firm is closely linked to the network of stakeholders, especially in tourism destination.

To exemplify supply chain of a particular industry, this section illustrates how partners in hotel industry are working together and may contribute to better livelihood of local people in and around tourism destination. As a tertiary industry (e.g. retail industry) which does not produce homogenous goods, hotels mainly purchase products from agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Like a big house, hotel’s operation involves a variety of products and services; such as cleaning stuffs, laundry service, food and beverage, retail shops, handicrafts, transit/excursion), which utilize large quantities of resources. Thus, hotels have opportunities to promote sustainable production and consumption. For example, hotel can support suppliers to deliver environment-friendly and locally-produced products and reused-recycled packaging, assist local communities to become involved in hotel’s supply, and collaborate with tour operators to develop green packages or community-based tourism. Such abilities imply that the industry can be expected to streamline its supply chain to enhance benefits from tourism more broadly and sustainably.

Meanwhile, the existence and competitiveness of hotel business are closely inter-related to sustainability issues in the destination. Among other tourism-related industries, hotel industry comprises the large segment of the businesses in the destination. In term of regional economy, it is widely recognized that hotel’s consumption can generate market for local production which may employ women young and unskilled labor, resulting in reduction of poverty and disparity that cause social problems in the destination. The pro-poor supply chain initiatives in Gambia, South Africa and the Caribbean, for example, illustrate how hotels and local stakeholders play role in alleviating poverty and crime. Also, hotels can provide a source of foreign income and municipal tax revenue, which in turn bringing social welfares in terms of public services, as well as supporting the preservation of cultural and natural heritages which the hotel business depends upon.

The figure below illustrates the potential role of hotel industry in PSCM, as playing the intermediary role in supply chains, and having direct relationships with other stakeholders in tourism destinations.

From the experiences of PSCM in manufacturing sector, it can be assumed that PSCM in hotel industry may be implemented by activities, such as selecting their suppliers on the basis of responsibilities, ensuring that suppliers adhere to environmental management, and sourcing local products with less packaging. Similarly, the benefits that could be expected to gain from PSCM are, for example, lower operating costs and waste
through more efficient use of materials, ability to demonstrate to other stakeholders the importance that the hotels place on sustainability issues, and more memorable experiences for their guests by providing visitors local-based products and services.

Figure 2. Hotel supply chains and networks (Adapted from Sorensen, 2004)

Despite of the feasibility of PSCM in hotel industry, the lack of literature on SSCM in hotel industry implies that the establishment of sustainable hotel supply chains is not straightforward. Some hotels may interest to adopt SSCM, but still the practice may not be a priority to do so. Also, hotels may not easily persuade their suppliers to initiate more responsible practice, as they may not share the same vision or may have greater choice of buyers. Hotel’s ability to develop sustainable tourism package with tour operator is also depending on local facilities and promotion from public agencies. Meanwhile, there are a range of organizations having roles to play regarding sustainable tourism, such as local community, business associations, and international NGOs. These issues imply that action researches are needed in order to study practical application of PSCM in hotel industry.

CONCLUSION

Hotel industry has a potential role to play as intermediate actor to promote production and consumption that contribute to generation of jobs to local people who also own tourism attractions in the destination. The distributed income does not only enhance their livelihood and reduce social problem stemmed from poverty, but can also enhance and sustain attractiveness of the destination where the hotel business depends upon. PSCM is an innovative practice for hotel’s profitability through the contribution to local economy. The practice is referred as a systematic approach to organize a hotel in such a way to improve competitive advantage and social responsibilities over its product life cycle. The basic concept of this practice implies that hotel collaborates with trading partners with the objectives to gain the long-term improvements in its triple bottom lines. As a strategic management practice, PSCM is contingent to capability building, and facilitation measures provided by chain members and societal partners. It is crucial that knowledge institution have to provide practical information and illustrate viable benefits from PSCM to hotel decision-makers and actors in public policy network.
REFERENCES


Guide to Authors

1. Submission of Manuscripts
   Three (3) hard copies of manuscripts should be sent to the Editor-in-Chief. A soft copy of the article in RTF or MS Word compatible format should also be submitted with final revised version of manuscript.

2. Preparation of Manuscripts
   The following instructions should be observed in preparing manuscripts. Articles that do not conform to these instructions may be returned to their authors for appropriate revision or may be delayed in the review process.

   2.1 Readability
   Manuscripts should be written in clear, concise and grammatically correct English (British or American English throughout). The editors cannot undertake wholesale revisions of poorly written papers. Every paper must be free of unnecessary jargons and must be clearly readable by any specialist in Tourism management related disciplines. The abstract should be written in an explanatory style that will also be comprehensible to readers who are not experts in the subject matter.

   2.2 General format
   Articles should be typed double-spaced on one side of A4 paper using Times New Roman font. Margins of 3 cm should be allowed on each side. The order of the manuscript should be as follows: Title, Author(s), Abstract, Keywords, Main text (Introduction, Review of Literature, Definitions (if any), Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion), Acknowledgements (if any), References, Appendix (if any). This structure of the main text is not obligatory, but the paper must be logically presented. Footnotes should be avoided. The main text must be written with font size 12, justify, first indent 0.5 cm. Within each main section, two levels of subheadings are allowed and the titles must be with bold, bold and italic, italic respectively.

   The manuscript should contain the following information:
   a. **Title**
      Title should be brief and informative. The title should reflect the most important aspects of the article, in a preferably concise form of not more than 100 characters and spaces. Font size 14, capital letters, center alignment.
   b. **By-line**
      Names (size 11), e-mail and addresses of the authors. Phone and fax number should be also given (size 11, italic). No inclusion of scientific titles is necessary. In case of more than two authors, the corresponding author should be indicated with * in superscript. Authors from different institutions must be labeled with numbers in superscript after their names.
   c. **Abstract**
      A summary of the problem, the principal results and conclusions should be provided in the abstract. The abstract must be self-explanatory, preferably typed in one paragraph and limited to maximum of 250 words. It should not contain formulas, references or abbreviations.
   d. **Keywords**
      Keywords should not exceed five, not including items appearing in the title. The keywords should be supplied indicating the scope of the paper. Size 10, italic, justify.
Authors should include Abbreviations and Nomenclature listings when necessary.

e. **Introduction**
   The introduction must clearly state the problem, the reason for doing the work, the hypotheses or theoretical predictions under consideration and the essential background. It should not contain equations or mathematical notation. The Introduction should also contain a brief survey of the relevant literature, so that a non-specialist reader could understand the significance of the presented results. Section numbering and headings begin here.

f. **Materials and Methods**
   The Materials and Methods should provide sufficient details to permit repetition of the experimental or survey work. The technical description of methods should be given when such methods are new.

g. **Results**
   Results should be presented concisely. Only in exceptional cases will it be permissible to present the same set of results in both table and figure. The results section should not be used for discussion.

h. **Discussion**
   Discussion should point out the significance of the results, and place the results in the context of other work and theoretical background.

i. **Acknowledgement (if any)**
   Acknowledgement should be placed in a separate paragraph at the end of the text, immediately before the list of references. It may include funding information too.

j. **References**
   Publications cited in the text should be listed in a separate page of references. In the list of references, the arrangement should be alphabetical; all co-authors should be cited. The following style should be adhered to in writing references:


i. Tables
All Tables should be typed on a separate page and numbered consecutively according to their sequence in the text. The text should include references to all tables. Vertical lines are not allowed but horizontal lines should be used to separate headings and to demarcate the limits of the table. A short descriptive title should be given at the top.

m. Figures
This should be produced with a good printer. The title of each figure should be given at the bottom. One original plus three copies should be sent.

n. Photographs
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