

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study, a summary of the findings, discussions of the findings, conclusion, and recommendations for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this research was to describe the factors that bring foreign tourists to travel in Ayutthaya province. This includes its physical environment, facilities, services, etc. Moreover, other purposes are to evaluate the foreign tourists' satisfaction while traveling in Ayutthaya province, to investigate the problems that foreign tourists face while traveling in Ayutthaya, using services and facilities and to find out their suggestions to improve the quality of Ayutthaya's tourism management.

The samples of this study were 150 foreign tourists who travelled and used the services and facilities of Ayutthaya. Hence, the local people were not investigated in this research.

A self-administered questionnaire with 42 questions was used as a tool in collecting the data. Both close-ended and open-ended questions were used to find out the factors and behavior of the respondents affecting their satisfaction. Moreover, the Likert scaling technique was employed to reflect the degree of satisfaction.

The data collection took place from December 15th, 2008 to January 15th, 2009 between 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. All the subjects completely stated their opinions and all questionnaires were returned at that point.

The data was edited, verified and analyzed by using SPSS program version 15 and shown in terms of percentage and frequency distribution.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The result of the research findings can be summarized as follows:

Research question 1: To what extent are foreign tourists satisfied with services and facilities provided in Ayutthaya province?

Finding: From the research, foreign tourists' satisfaction with services and facilities in Ayutthaya is high. From the result, the tourists agreed that:

- the transportation to Ayutthaya is convenient ($\bar{x} = 3.90$)
- the price of the accommodation is reasonable ($\bar{x} = 3.99$)
- Ayutthaya is a clean city ($\bar{x} = 3.99$)
- it is easy to get around Ayutthaya ($\bar{x} = 3.97$)
- there are plenty of good restaurants ($\bar{x} = 3.99$)
- there is a good variety of attractions ($\bar{x} = 4.00$)
- most of the tuk-tuk chauffeurs are nice and helpful ($\bar{x} = 3.89$)

About the local people and the activities in Ayutthaya, foreign tourists have a high level of satisfaction as follows:

- they like Ayutthaya's local people because of the hospitality ($\bar{x} = 3.99$)
- the weather is pleasant for sightseeing ($\bar{x} = 3.86$)
- there is a rich cultural life ($\bar{x} = 4.04$)
- riding an elephant around the city is safe and fun ($\bar{x} = 3.86$)
- cruising in the ferry along the river in the evening is fantastic ($\bar{x} = 3.87$)
- they like travelling in Ayutthaya in the daytime more than in the nighttime ($\bar{x} = 4.01$)

- they like to ride bicycles and tuk-tuk around Ayutthaya rather than other methods of transportation ($\bar{x} = 3.89$)
- they love tasting new Thai food ($\bar{x} = 4.03$)

Research question 2: Which characteristics of Ayutthaya province affect foreign tourists' satisfaction?

Finding: Most of the respondents stated that there are many characteristics of Ayutthaya province that attract the tourists as follows:

- historical sites
- convenient transportation to Ayutthaya
- hospitality of the local people
- reasonable price of the accommodation
- cleanliness
- safety
- pleasant weather
- plenty of good restaurants and various kinds of food
- variety of attractions and activities
- rich cultural life

Research question 3: What problems do foreign tourists face when traveling Ayutthaya province?

Finding: There are some problems that the foreign tourists face. From the survey, the problems are as follows:

- crowded sightseeing ($\bar{x} = 3.77$)
- facing cultural shock, for example, noise ($\bar{x} = 3.90$)

5.2.1 Personal Data of the Respondents

The results obtained showed the majority of subjects were female. The age range between 25-34 is the highest number of the respondents. Most of them were single and had a bachelor's degree. Regarding their income, the largest group had income between 1,000 – 1,500 US\$ per month. More than half of the respondents stay in Ayutthaya between 1-4 days. To travel is the most popular purpose for foreign tourists. In addition to this, foreign tourists always consider the transportation before visiting Ayutthaya.

5.2.2 General Opinion toward Traveling in Ayutthaya

Most foreign tourists were satisfied with the historical environment in Ayutthaya province such as the weather, and the cleanliness of the city, but they think some sightseeing sites are a bit crowded.

For the facilities, they seem satisfied with many things of Ayutthaya. They like the transportation to Ayutthaya which has many methods such as bus, train, passenger van, etc. Moreover, they like the accommodation available in Ayutthaya because of its safety. The foods and restaurants are various according to foreign tourists preferences, for example, the authentic noodle, grilled big prawns at the prawn market, riverine fish menu, etc.

5.3 DISCUSSIONS

The overall result of this study showed that foreign tourists were satisfied with the history and the facilities of Ayutthaya. However, there are some points or aspects that need to be discussed later.

5.3.1 Personal Data of the tourists

The results of the research showed that historical places attracted the highest numbers of the respondents. From the statistic of the Tourism Authority of Thailand showed that the numbers of tourists are increasing continuously.

Year	Numbers of visitors	Numbers of tourists	Numbers of travellers	Income (million Baht)
2003	2,711,607	447,412	2,264,195	3,656.90
2004	3,023,933	582,661	2,441,272	4,475.07
2005	3,260,589	625,674	2,634,915	4,781.09
2006	3,373,929	773,530	2,600,399	5,118.30
2007	3,780,702	1,095,500	2,685,202	6,549.53

Note. Tourism Authority of Thailand (Central region 6)

Another interesting point from the results of the findings showed that most of the tourists' age range is 25-34 years old which is 28%, followed by tourists' age range of 15-24, at 23.3%. This fact showed that the majority of tourists of Ayutthaya province are the teenagers and middleaged people.

Apart from the above mentioned points, another interesting point was about the income of the respondents. Almost half of the respondents (43.3%) had a monthly income in the range of 1,000-1,500 US\$. This amount of money is actually quite high compared to Thai residents' monthly income. With high monthly income like this, they can afford to pay for comfortable and convenient accommodation during their stay in Ayutthaya.

5.3.2 General Opinion About Services and Facilities in Ayutthaya Province

The result of the findings showed that most foreign tourists were satisfied when travelling in Ayutthaya. The key factor that brings them here is the historical sites that have the prosperous history behind them. However, according to the Four Ps marketing concept – *product, price, place, promotion* by Kotler (1984), it is very interesting to discuss the results of the findings toward Four Ps marketing concept about the tourism in Ayutthaya.

The first P is product. According to the results, the major product of Ayutthaya is the historical sites. Most of the sightseeing in Ayutthaya province are the ancient remains, for example, temples, museums, and palaces which are considered the most important source of tourism. Moreover, the fact that Ayutthaya used to be the old capital city of Thailand reinforces the human civilization and prosperity in culture. Because of this reason, Ayutthaya was honorably selected by Unesco to be a World's cultural heritage site in December 13, 2000.

Besides, there are many hotels and restaurants which are considered to be a part of the convenience which always welcomes and serves the tourists. Another product that is gradually becoming an important resource of Ayutthaya province is the skillful personnel.

The second P is price. According to the result of the finding, 43.3% of the respondents think that the price of the accommodation in Ayutthaya is reasonable and it is a good value for money. Moreover, 39.3% of the respondents think that Ayutthaya is the best place to purchase package tours. Hence, the price is not a problem for foreign tourists while staying and travelling in Ayutthaya.

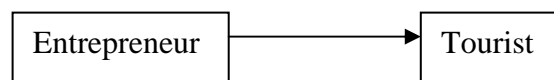
Price is the amount of money that tourists need to pay to exchange for the value and the benefit of purchased products. Therefore, price is the indicator that makes products valuable. The products in Ayutthaya have reasonable prices that the tourists can afford. The advantage of the prices in Ayutthaya is that they do not change along with the travel season. Prices are stable no matter whether it is the peak season or low season. Besides, prices are not so high that tourists cannot afford them nor so low that tourists regard the products as worthless.

The third P is place or distribution channel. It has been defined by Kotler and Armstrong (1994b) as "the set of firms and individuals that take title or assist in transferring title, to the particular good or service as it moves from the producer to the final consumer" (p.277)

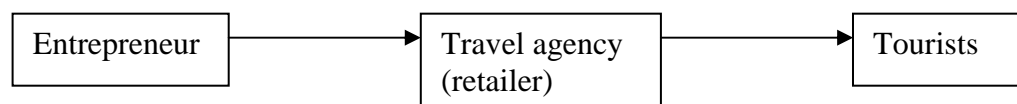
There are three types of distribution channel in Ayutthaya. Some hotels create their own websites so that customers can reserve hotel rooms by themselves. This is the direct channel. Some entrepreneurs promote their hotels to travel agencies and some use tour wholesales. The tourism entrepreneurs of Ayutthaya are always trying to understand the distribution channel that is suitable for the tourists.

The distribution channel of the entrepreneurs of Ayutthaya can be divided into 3 types as follows:

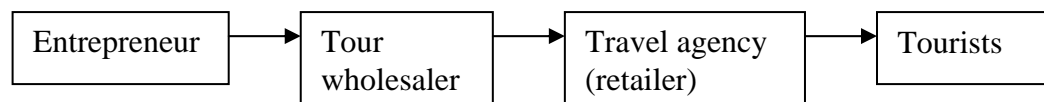
1. Direct channel



1. One level channel



3. Two level channel



The entrepreneur will consider which distribution channel use by checking the customers' needs.

The fourth P is promotion. Promotion is the way in which the tourism organization communicates in an effective way with its target customers. Also, promotion is the way to promote the relationship between the producer, the seller, and the customer. According to Swarbrooke and Horner (1999), there is a variety of marketing communication techniques which have different effects on consumer behavior. As for Ayutthaya province, the methods to promote the tourism's market are varied and adapted according to the first three Ps that have already been explained, for example, the technological method by inputting the information of the

province in the website of Tourism Authority of Thailand (www.tourismthailand.org) or other websites that are related to the tourism.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The major key that brings most of the foreign tourists to Ayutthaya province is the prosperous history of the historical sites. The tourism industry of Ayutthaya province has been reputed among Thai people and foreign tourists since UNESCO declared historical Ayutthaya to be a World Heritage Site on December 13, 1991. To make Ayutthaya more reputable is not only the responsibility of the Ayutthaya government itself, but also every group of people who lives in Ayutthaya especially the local people who will be the most important group to impress foreign tourists.

Although the result of the findings of foreign tourists' satisfaction with Ayutthaya's historical places, facilities, and services showed that most tourists were satisfied with the overall physical environment, facilities and services, but some areas still need to be improved such as the crowds at some places. Therefore, improvement can create more positive satisfaction foreign tourists and make them have good impressions so they come back to Ayutthaya province in the future.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. The research should be deeper in the behavior and the satisfaction of the tourists toward the specific historical sites of Ayutthaya to use as a trend to improve the tourists' satisfaction. This will make them return to Ayutthaya again in the future and use word of mouth to promote Ayutthaya province to their families, friends, and acquaintances.

2. The research should be about the current impact that the tourism entrepreneurs and the community encounter. This will be the guideline for them to improve and develop the historical sites.

3. The research should be about the factors influencing the tourists' selection of travel agencies so as to improve the agency system.
4. The research should be about the line of thought in improving and developing travel agency marketing plans.
5. The research should be about the tendency of Thai tourism's market in the future.