

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Nowadays, tourism is very important for many countries around the world because it is the major income, and Thailand is no exception.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) was founded in 1960 (The name was Tourism Organization of Thailand (TOT) from 1960 to 1979). Since the establishment, the number of tourists has been increasing. The number of tourists decreased in some years only because of some unusual situations as follows:

Table 1. The Number of Foreign Tourists Visiting Thailand and Important Events

Year	Number of Tourists	Important events
1973	1037737	First time visitors reach 1 million
1976	1098442	First time visitors decrease in number
1981	2015615	First time visitors reach 2 million
1982	2218429	Income from tourism surpasses all other exports
1983	2191003	Worldwide recession, second time visitors decrease in number
1987	3482958	Visit Thailand Year, first time visitors reach 3 million
1988	4230737	First time visitors reach 4 million
1990	5298860	First time visitors reach 5 million
1991	5086899	Persian Gulf War, third time visitors decrease in number
1994	6166496	First time visitors reach 6 million

From the above table, in 1973, it was the first time that the number of foreign tourists visiting Thailand reached 1 million. Eight years later, in 1981, it was the first time that the number of foreign tourists visiting Thailand reached 2 million. The year 1987 was the “Visit Thailand Year” and it was the first time that more than 3 million foreign tourists came to Thailand. In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the number of foreign tourists visiting Thailand increased dramatically. It reached 4 million for the first time in 1988, only one year after reaching 3 million, and it reached 5 million for the first time in 1990, only two years after reaching 4 million.

Not only did the number of foreign tourists visiting Thailand increase, but the income of Thailand from these tourists also increased as follows:

Table 2. The Number of Foreign Tourists Visiting Thailand and Thailand's Revenue from these Tourists from 1997 to 2007

Year	Tourists (Million)	Change (%)	Revenue (Million baht)	Change (%)
1997	7.22	0.41	220,754	0.63
1998	7.76	7.53	242,177	9.7
1999	8.58	10.50	253,018	4.48
2000	9.51	10.82	285,272	12.75
2001	10.06	5.82	299,047	4.83
2002	10.80	7.33	323,484	8.17
2003	10.00	-7.36	309,269	-4.39
2004	11.65	16.46	384,360	24.28
2005	11.52	-1.51	367,380	-4.42
2006	13.82	20.01	482,319	31.29
2007	14.46	4.65	547,782	13.57

Tourism or foreign tourists are the cause of national income, investment, and economic growth (Kamolthip Yuennan, 2008). From the above table, the number of visitors who came to Thailand in 2007 (14.46 million people) was about twice as many as that in 1997 (7.22 million people). The income of tourism in 2007 was 547,782 million baht, while that in 1997 was only 220,754 million baht. It was an increase of 148.14%.

One of the reasons why millions of foreigners come to Thailand is that this country has many tourist attractions: seas, mountains, waterfalls, historical sites, and others.

A historical site which is Bangkok's most famous landmark is The Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. It is a place tourists must visit. Without visiting this place, the trip to Bangkok cannot be complete.

The Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha were built in 1782 when King Rama I founded Bangkok to be the capital of Thailand. King Rama I had only a few buildings constructed. However, many buildings and many priceless objects have been added after his death. Also, this is the place at which many

important events have occurred. For example, it is the place at which the coronation ceremonies of the kings of the Bangkok Era have taken place, it was the place at which King Rama V was born, and it was the place at which King Rama VIII passed away.

This place has many interesting stories to know and to remember. Nevertheless, Nidda Hongwiwat (นิดดา หงส์วิวัฒน์, 2547) stated that most visitors coming here cannot remember anything because they do not understand what they see. Understanding the story of the place can help people have a longer memory, and the one who can help people understand is a guide.

Wanna Wongwanich (วรรณาวงษ์วานิช, 2546) stated that a guide has four roles as follows:

1. Being a teacher: Like a teacher, the duty of a tour guide is explaining the story and answering the questions. Hence, a tour guide should be knowledgeable.

2. Being a psychologist: Knowledge alone is not enough. A tour guide should know what tourists want and respond to them in the right way.

3. Being an actor/singer: Sometimes, singing or acting can reduce the boredom, especially during a long journey.

4. Being an ambassador: A tour guide should explain the story of the country positively. However, it should not be exaggeration.

According to *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2006, p. 567), the meanings of “guide” are the following:

1. something that helps you form an opinion or make a decision about something else

2. a person whose job is showing a place or a particular route to visitors

3. a book which gives you the most important information about a particular subject

4. a guidebook

5. a person or thing that influences what you do or think

In *Macmillan English Dictionary* (2002, p. 634), the word “guide” is similarly defined as follows:

1. a book about a city, country, or area

2. something that helps you to make a judgment about something
3. a piece of equipment that helps you find the correct place or amount for something
4. someone whose job is to look after a group of people who are visiting a place and give them information about it
5. someone who helps you to decide what to do by giving you advice or by giving you a good example to follow
6. the Guides Association

From the above explanations, it can be concluded that a guide can be both a person and a resource material.

At the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, two kinds of tour guide are available as follows:

1. Human
2. Machine (Personal Audio guide: PAG)

The human guides are from many companies, whereas the Personal Audio Guides (PAG) at the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha are supplied by the Palace & Temple Company Limited, not the government.

The PAG is a portable machine guide. It is another choice for tourists who cannot or do not want to use the services of a human tour guide. The PAG booth is located near the ticket booth. The rental cost is 200 baht per 2 hours. Before a tour starts, the staff explain to the tourists how to use the machine, and give them a map of the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. The PAG is comfortable to carry and easy to use. Using the PAG has many benefits. For example, tourists can skip some parts to which they do not want to listen. Also, the tourists can take a break in the middle of the tour whenever they want. The contents explained by the PAG are as follows:

1. Introduction
2. The Hermit Doctor
3. Cloisters & Ramakien
4. Raised Level Structures and Subsidiary Buildings
5. Golden Chedis / Mythical Creatures
6. Phra Asada Maha Chedi, the "Eight Prangs"

7. Guardian Giants
8. Statue of Goddess Kun Iam
9. Hor Phra Khanthara Rat
10. Royal Chapel of the Emerald Buddha
11. Belfry
12. Salarai
13. Buildings behind the Royal Chapel of the Emerald Buddha
14. Barom Phiman Hall
15. Phra Maha Monthien Group
16. Chakri Maha Prasat Hall
17. Weapons Museum
18. Dusit Maha Prasat Hall
19. Rajakaranya Sapha Hall
20. Aphorn Phimok Prasat
21. Emerald Buddha Temple Museum

By the PAG, the above places are described in eight languages as follows:

1. English
2. French
3. German
4. Japanese
5. Chinese (Mandarin)
6. Russian
7. Spanish
8. Thai

As it is written above, a tour guide is important for tourism. This research is done to study the foreign tourists' satisfaction with the PAG at the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problems of this study are as follows:

Main problem:

What is the degree of foreign tourists' satisfaction with the PAG at the Grand Palace and the Temple of Emerald Buddha?

Sub-problems:

1. What part of the marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion) satisfies foreign tourists?
2. Are the foreign tourists satisfied with the staff of PAG?
3. What are the foreign tourists' suggestions?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

Main objective:

To study the foreign tourists' satisfaction with the PAG at the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha

Sub-objectives:

1. To find out what part of the marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion) satisfies the foreign tourists
2. To find out whether foreign tourists are satisfied with the staff (PAG)
3. To receive the foreign tourists' suggestions.

1.4 VARIABLES AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

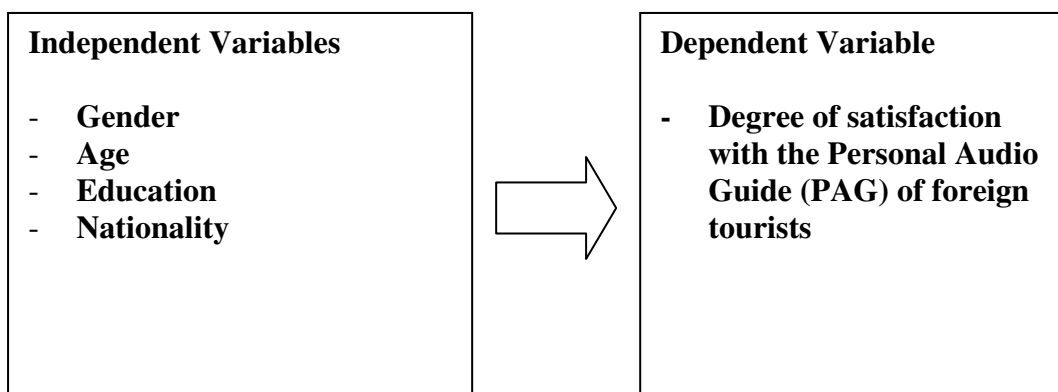
1.4.1 Variables

Independent variables:

The independent variables of this research are demographical characteristics of foreign tourists who visit the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha and use the PAG. They are gender, age, educational level, and nationality.

Dependent variables:

The dependent variable of this research is the degree of satisfaction of foreign tourists who visit the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha and use the PAG.



1.4.2 Definitions of Terms

Definitions of the terms mentioned in this study are the following:

Personal Audio Guide (PAG) – A small portable machine which gives information about the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha

Foreign Tourist – A person who is not Thai and comes to Thailand to travel, not to work

Satisfaction – The feeling of pleasure that a person gets when he or she achieves or obtains something which he or she wants.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focused on the degree of satisfaction of foreign tourists using the PAG at the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

The respondents were foreign tourists who visited the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. The instrument of this research was a self-administered questionnaire. Each of them was composed of both closed-ended and open-ended parts. The Likert 5-point scale was used to study foreign tourists' degree of satisfaction with the PAG at the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha; other questions were about their demographic information and suggestions.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study is as follows:

1. To improve the quality of the PAG at the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha
2. To be a guideline for other places which have the PAG.

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on the degree of satisfaction of foreign tourists with the PAG at the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. It is divided into five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction, which consists of background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, definitions of terms, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Review of related theories, research, studies, and literature

Chapter 3: Methods which are used to collect, interpret, and analyse the data

Chapter 4: Findings of the study

Chapter 5: Summary, discussions, conclusions and recommendations for further research.