

## ABSTRACT

RESEARCH PAPER : Attitude of Tour Guides Toward Ecotourism  
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The main purpose of the study was to find out the attitude of tour guides toward ecotourism, and the factors influencing their attitude. The background variables studied were sex, age and education and the variables concerning the experiences in ecotourism included work experience, training, ecotourism management and personal experience about ecotourism. The study also sought the tour guides' opinions about the government policy on ecotourism, including the problems and obstacles to ecotourism management.

The sample consisted of 123 tour guides working for tourist agents in Bangkok. They were asked to fill out a questionnaire. Percentage, mean and standard derivation were used to describe the data and t-test and F-test were employed to test the hypothesis.

**The findings were briefly reported as follows :**

1. The number of male tour guides in the study was equal to that of female tour guides. Their ages were 26-30. They had a Bachelor's degree and earned 5,001-10,000 baht per month.

2. Most tour guides' average work experience was 5.5 years. They had never attended any training course on ecotourism, but had personal experience in ecotourism 1-4 times during the past year.

3. They were found to have a positive attitude toward the government policy on ecotourism.

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4. Regarding the attitude of the tour guides toward ecotourism, it was found that they agreed to the idea of ecotourism at a high level. That is, they had a good attitude toward ecotourism when all the aspects were considered together and when each was considered separately. However, there were some points that tour guides still had a poor knowledge and understanding of, or still had not understood. They stated that providing facilities and convenience were the most important in ecotourism. Next, promotion of making souvenirs from plants, trees or marine animals, though helping to increase local people's income, has not given much importance by the tour guides. As for their behavior about ecotourism, the tour guides tended not to limit the number of ecotourists in each trip. In other words, limiting the number of their customers was the last thing they would do.

5. The only factor found to influence the tour guides' attitude toward ecotourism was their opinion about the government policy on ecotourism. On the contrary, sex, age, education and experience in ecotourism i.e., work experience, training, ecotourism management, and personal experience in ecotourism all were found to have no impact on their attitude toward ecotourism.

**The following recommendations were made.**

In the study, many problems and obstacles to ecotourism management were found. These problems concerned tourist attractions, government officers, tourists, tour guides, local people and other related agencies. Therefore, it was recommended that the government impose some measures, make plans and operations related to ecotourism. Especially, clear guidelines should be set in line with the established plan. Training on ecotourism should be held for all people and agencies concerned, public as well as private ones. All forms of public relations on ecotourism should be carried out. The government plans should be revised and developed for others to follow.