

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter is divided into 3 parts: 1) a summary of the study, 2) a summary of the findings, and 3) discussions and recommendations.

#### **5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

The tourism industry plays an important role in generating income for this country, especially international tourists. Knowing tourists' impressions with regard to visiting Thailand will help determine appropriate strategies or measurements to cope with the situation in the world tourist market. It can help all agencies concerned to have a clearer view of what areas that should be improved as well. The result of this study can be summarized as follows:

##### **5.1.1 Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this survey was to explore the impressions of foreign visitors. It aimed to find out the range of foreign tourists' impressions visiting Thailand **before** coming to Thailand, and **after** having experience in visiting Thailand. In addition, this study also wanted to identify the experiences they gain from visiting Thailand.

##### **5.1.2 Subjects, Materials, and Procedures**

This study aimed to seek the impressions of foreign tourists when visiting Thailand. The subjects were 100 foreign tourists. They were both male and female foreign tourists who traveled around the Bangkok area. A questionnaire which was used to evaluate the range of foreign tourists' impressions toward visiting Thailand consisted of 3 parts as follows: 1) Personal information 2) General impression of foreign tourists toward visiting Thailand 3) Problems and inconveniences encountered by foreigners. All data received from the study were analyzed by the SPSS program.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGSS**

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

### **5.2.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents**

More than half of the respondents were male. Most of the respondents were between the ages of 25 – 34 years old. As for the education background, most of the respondents had a degree higher than a Bachelor's degree. One-third of the respondents worked in private companies. The income that most of the sampling group received per year before tax was about 20,000 – 50,000 \$US. Moreover, more than three-quarters of the respondents had the purpose to come to Thailand for holiday. Most of them came to Thailand with friends. More than half of the respondents had visited Thailand more than once.

### **5.2.2 General Impression of the Respondents**

#### **5.2.2.1 Before Visiting Thailand**

“Public safety/political stability” and “Recreation and sport” least motivated the respondents. “Special event/festival” also left a lot to be desired. On the other hand, most of the motivation that the respondents had before visiting Thailand was for “Natural attractions”. Moreover, the respondents were also highly motivated to visit Thailand by “Thai culture/tradition”, “Archeological, historical, cultural sites” and “Thai cuisine”.

#### **5.2.2.2 During Visiting Thailand**

While “Natural attractions” motivated the respondents before visiting Thailand the most, “Thai culture/tradition” was the strongest impression of the respondents during their stay in Thailand. “Archeological, historical, cultural sites”, “Thai cuisine”, “Natural attractions” highly impressed the respondents as well. Most of the motivational factors scored at the very high level. These four aspects were the same top aspects to influence the respondents before visiting Thailand, but only differ in the order of the aspects in the top group.

### 5.2.2.3 Respondents Opinion toward Experiences of Thai Culture

For the respondents who had experience of Thai culture, “Friendliness of Thai people/Thai hospitality” was the most up to their expectation.

### 5.2.3 Problems and Inconveniences

According to the findings, problems and inconveniences that the majority of the respondents faced mostly were 1) Language 2) Transportation, and 3) Unreasonable prices.

In short, the findings can be concluded as follows:

- Based on the results from the study, most respondents were male. The overall education levels of the respondents were quite high. Most of the respondents came to Thailand with friends for holiday purposes.
- Before coming to Thailand, foreign tourists’ motivation to visit Thailand was firstly “Natural attractions”, followed by “Thai culture/tradition”, “Archeological, historical, cultural sites” and “Thai cuisine”.
- After experiencing Thailand, foreign tourists were mostly impressed firstly with “Thai culture/tradition”, followed by “Archeological, historical, cultural sites”, “Natural attractions” and “Thai cuisine” respectively.
- Foreign tourists who had opportunities to experience Thai culture agreed that “Friendliness of Thai people/Thai hospitality” was most up to their expectations.
- Comparing the feeling of foreign tourists visiting Thailand before and after experiencing Thailand, their feelings toward visiting Thailand were **better** and nearly all of them mentioned they would visit Thailand again.

## 5.3 DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.3.1 Discussions

The overall result of this study shows that foreign tourists have good impressions regarding visiting Thailand. However, there are also some points or aspects that need to be discussed further.

#### 5.3.1.1 Strengthen of Thailand Tourism

Thailand tourism has strong points in its famous character of Thai hospitality, diversity, rich Thai culture, and Thai food. The location of Thailand as a gateway to other countries in Southeast Asia region, which tend to be a significant factor in the future, also plays an important role in Thailand tourism. Moreover, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) also promotes Thailand tourism by emphasizing measures to emerge into the new target market, maintaining market share, and at the same time drawing repeat tourists to Thailand such as promoting “Seven Amazing Wonders” campaign. The findings of this study confirmed the strong points of Thailand tourism.

- **Demographic Information of the Respondents**

According to the findings, the majority of the respondents were male. As for the age of the respondents, most of their ages ranged between 25 – 34 years old. The other group was between 45 – 54 years old. Most of the respondents had a Bachelor’s degree or higher than Bachelor’s degree. Occupations of the respondents were mostly private company employee, followed by student. However, occupation of the respondents under “Other” category was also a very high number.

In the aspect of annual income before tax, the majority of the respondents had an income of 20,001 – 50,000 \$US. Most of the respondents come to Thailand with friends. Moreover, more than half of the respondents visited Thailand for the first time.

Based on the findings, it can be inferred that foreign tourists who come to Thailand were mostly well educated and had high income. This may suggest that

Thailand will gain high quality tourists who also tend to have more purchasing power for spending in Thailand.

- **General Impression of the Respondents**

The major aspects motivating the respondents before coming to Thailand were “Natural attractions”, “Thai culture/tradition”, “Archeological, historical, cultural sites” and “Thai cuisine”. These motivational aspects scored at a high level.

However, during their stay in Thailand, the respondents gained some experiences of Thailand. Asking respondents to rate their impressions on the same aspects during their stay showed the result that most of them were impressed by “Thai culture/tradition”.

The top four aspects that impressed the respondents before and after visiting Thailand were the same aspect. They were “Natural attractions”, “Thai culture/tradition”, “Archeological, historical, cultural sites” and “Thai cuisine”, but the ranking of the top four aspects was not in the same order. Whereas “Natural attractions” was the first ranking in Before Visiting Thailand topic, “Thai culture/tradition” came first ranking in During Visiting Thailand topic.

Moreover, when asking the respondents if their experiences in Thai culture met their expectations, “Friendliness of Thai people/Thai hospitality” was most up to the respondents’ expectation. The other experience up to expectation of the respondents was “Buddhist temple”. The score of these two aspects of Thai culture were also in very high level.

These findings suggest that the well known Thai hospitality or Friendliness of Thai people which is one of the segments under “**Seven Amazing Wonders**” banner was successfully demonstrated. The following group, “Buddhist temple”, which was also one of the segments of “Seven Amazing Wonders”, was apparent as well. Nearly all of the respondents had opportunities to experiences both “Friendliness of Thai people/Thai hospitality” and “Buddhist temple”.

- **The feeling toward Thailand, and Revisiting Thailand**

The feeling that the respondents had after experiencing Thailand is another interesting point to discuss. Based on the study, the findings show that the feeling of foreign tourists was mostly “**Better**” after they experienced visiting Thailand. Moreover, nearly all of the respondents implied that they would come back to visit Thailand again.

As the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) aims to launch many campaigns to promote visiting Thailand among foreigners, TAT has also set strategies such as maintaining its old targeted markets and emerging new markets. Maintaining its market share in its old targeted markets, TAT implements a **Revisiting Thailand** approach to keep its market and income.

So, the results found in this study which show nearly all the respondents stated intention to come back to Thailand again would also indicate the successful of those strategies.

In summary, the findings of this study are also in accord with the findings of other studies/researches, which were mentioned in chapter 2 of this study. The study which was conducted by Pailin Choenpetch (ไพลิน เชิญเพชร, 2548) also showed that Chinese tourists had positive or neutral opinions toward Thailand tourism. They liked to visit historical places.

Another thesis studied by Busaba Sutethorn (บุษบา สุธีธร, 2541) showed that natural resources were the biggest attraction to foreign tourists. Moreover, the study conducted by Araya Wannaprasirt (อารยา วรรณประเสริฐ, 2542) showed that the outstanding positive image of Thailand was the friendliness and kindness of Thai people.

### **5.3.1.2 Weakness of Thailand Tourism**

Based on the questionnaires, there were also some points or aspects that urgently need to be solved in Thailand tourism as follows:

- **Language**

The respondents claimed that many Thai people were not able to communicate in English. Even staff or people who were in the tourist industry were not capable of communicating with foreign tourists in English. According to the findings, one of the respondents claimed that the guide had poor command in English, and the information or explanation in English about temples or other places was not understandable.

This may be one of a few cases in the study, but it revealed that certified guides, especially international guides should have good command in English. Those certified guides will indirectly convey good message as well as information to foreign tourists. They will affect foreign tourist's **impressions** toward visiting Thailand.

Another point that needs to be discussed is signs to indicate direction or information for foreign tourists. Better signage would facilitate foreign tourist activity while traveling in Thailand. The government should also urge Thai people to study English language effectively or improve English ability. This would create a favorable atmosphere for the tourism business.

- **Transportation**

The result of the findings showed that foreign tourists complained about serious traffic congestion in Bangkok. The respondents suggested the government to expand the Sky Train and Subway Train system. Traffic congestion is one of the bad impressions and it costs a lot of time and money to everyone. This problem will keep the tourists away from visiting Thailand. Because of this problem, some of the foreign tourists expressed the opinion that they would not come back to Bangkok or Thailand.

Apart from the above mentioned points, another interesting point was about Tuk-tuk drivers and taxi drivers who charged very high fares. Also, metered-taxi drivers always refused to use or turn on the taxi-meter for the fare. On the other hand, the metered-taxi drivers prefer to propose foreign tourists a very high fare for their service. The researcher also experienced this problem while traveling with foreign tourists. Most Tuk-tuk drivers refuse to take passenger direct to their destination. Instead, the driver would persuade the passenger to go to their shops so that the

drivers could get their commission. Moreover, if passengers refuse to follow the drivers' request, the drivers would become rude or aggressive to the passenger. For taxi drivers, they always declined to put the taxi-meter on for fare charging. They tended to request the fare from foreign tourists by offering very high charge for their service. Some of foreign the tourists mentioned to the researcher that the behavior of drivers as mentioned was considered as a rip off by the tourists.

This problem is another bad impression of Thailand and also drives foreign tourists away from visiting Thailand again. The government and all agencies concerned should take serious actions to enforce rules or regulations to prevent Tuk-tuk or taxi drivers taking advantage of the passengers.

- **Unreasonable Prices**

This study shows that the vendors over charged the respondents. Even simple goods or service that commonly should not cost much, were often over charge as soon as it was ordered by foreigners. Foreign tourists felt that Thai people were cheating them.

This problem gives a bad impression to foreign tourists. It will flaw the reputation of "Friendliness of Thai people/Thai hospitality".

As well as the above mentioned problems, double standard price was another point that the respondents complained about. Many foreign tourists were confused with this system. They considered it as unfair. Being able to explain or give proper reason for this double standard price could mitigate foreign tourist's bad impression of this aspect of visiting Thailand.

### **5.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for further research.

5.3.2.1 The study showed that most of the foreign tourists come to Thailand for holiday purposes. Studying in depth about foreign tourists' activities during their stay in Thailand and the length of their stay will reveal trends in the favorite activities



among tourists. This will help government and all agencies concerned to give more support and promote tourism business in a more proper and effective way.

5.3.2.2 This survey on foreign tourists' impressions when visiting Thailand focuses on only foreign tourists who travelled around the Bangkok area. So the results would be more reliable and practical if the survey was done with foreign tourists outside Bangkok.

5.3.2.3 The researcher had limited time to collect data; therefore, the number of the sampling group was also limited in order to be on time. Other researchers who are interested in studying on this topic should increase the number of the sampling.