

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) discussions, (4) conclusions, and (5) recommendations for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

5.1.1 Objectives of the Study

The research aimed at studying awareness and satisfaction of TAT office directors towards communications of the Tourism Intelligence Unit and Crisis Management Center as well as the TAT office directors attitudes toward TAT Operation Center's overall performance.

5.1.2 Subjects, Materials, and Procedures

The population of the study was directors of TAT offices situated in Northern, Central, Northeastern, and Southern Thailand; ASEAN, South Asia, and South Pacific region; East Asia region; Europe, South Africa, and Middle East region; and the Americas region. The total number was 49 directors.

Composed of 30 items, the research instruments in the study were open and closed ended questionnaires composed of 30 items: demographic information of respondents, awareness of TAT Operation Center information through media, information receiver's satisfaction regarding TAT Operation Center's information distribution, information receiver's opinion about TAT Operation Center's information distribution, attitudes on process awareness of the TAT Operation Center, as well as comments on problems, obstacles, and suggestions regarding TAT Operation Center's information system.

The cross-sectional design was done to study awareness, satisfaction, problems, and comments about the TAT Operation Center.

Questionnaires were sent via e-mail address of domestic and oversea TAT offices and Tourism Coordination Centers from 17-28 February 2008.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 Most respondents (69.39%) were male, aged between 51-55 years old (59.18%), had a Master's Degree (71.43%), and were TAT domestic office directors (57.14%).

5.2.2 85.71% of domestic and oversea TAT office directors know that TAT has founded the TAT Operation Center to disseminate information during normal situations and crises.

5.2.3 Regarding overall satisfaction towards the TAT Operation Center's information dissemination on several aspects: reporting incident and loss, preliminary help for tourists, news presentation of mass media, evaluation of effects on tourism, suggestions on proceeding guidelines, and overall satisfaction, TAT office directors are neutrally satisfied (3.29).

5.2.4 TAT Operation Center information makes them have better understanding of the situation; TAT office directors are extremely satisfied (4.29). Channel of disseminating information of TAT Operation Center helps reduce documentary problems well; TAT office directors are satisfied (4.14). The amount of information the TAT Operation Center disseminates is quite appropriate; TAT office directors are satisfied (4).

5.2.5 Concerning TAT Operation Center information's reliability, TAT office directors are extremely satisfied (4.29). TAT Operation Center information is correct; TAT office directors are satisfied (4). TAT Operation Center disseminates information in a straight-forward manner; TAT office directors are satisfied (3.86).

5.3 DISCUSSION

This section concerns how the results of the study match the theories and earlier studies. Therefore, the discussion is as follows:

1.1 The feedback from webmail and intranet is quite good. They are appropriate channels to communicate because they are really easy to access. Both domestic and overseas TAT office directors have their own access, in other words, they can apply the same username and password to TAT electronic mail (Webmail system)

and intranet (work system within the organization). The information needed to adjust marketing strategies and maintain reputation of tourist attractions would be distributed through these kinds of channel right after TAT office directors of crisis areas had held teleconferences with working group of Tourism Intelligence Unit and Crisis Management Center or TAT Operation Center.

1.2 In terms of perception, TAT office directors get TAT information from webmail system (27.78%), intranet and TAT website (11.11%) while Apisit's (respondents towards the Public Health Ministry's crisis communication during SARS and Bird Flu) received Ministry of Public Health information from television (69%), newspapers (13.5%), and broadcasting radio (10%). (อภิสิทธิ์ฯ เหมาะสมสกุล, 2547). TAT office directors comfortably receive crisis information from webmail system (42.86%) intranet and TAT Operation Center (7.14%) while Apisit's respondents received the Ministry of Public Health information on SARS and Bird Flu epidemic from television (71%), newspapers (15%), and broadcasting radio (10%) (อภิสิทธิ์ฯ เหมาะสมสกุล, 2547). 85.71% of TAT office directors knew that the TAT Operation Center was established to distribute normal and crisis information while 44.75% of Apisit's were aware that the Ministry of Public Health had established a hot line and a website to provide information on SARS and Bird Flu epidemic (อภิสิทธิ์ฯ เหมาะสมสกุล, 2547). 85.71% of TAT office directors knew that the TAT Operation Center was established to report crisis progress while 42.50% of Apisit's were aware that the Ministry of Public Health founded a specific center in order to distribute information on SARS and Bird Flu epidemic (อภิสิทธิ์ฯ เหมาะสมสกุล, 2547).

2.1 In terms of satisfaction, when comparing agreement degree of the Public Health Ministry (อภิสิทธิ์ฯ เหมาะสมสกุล, 2547) to the TAT Operation Center concerning the accuracy of information, TAT office directors are more satisfied (4) than Apisit's (2.04) because the public sector and interested people can access and use tourism information from this center. All of the information is in depth in several

aspects: number of tourist arrivals, tourism situation, and tourists' behavior, etc. When comparing the agreement degree of the Public Health Ministry system (อภิสิทธิ์ เหมะสมสกุล, 2547) to the TAT Operation Center concerning the reduction of anxiety, TAT office directors were more satisfied (3.57) than Apisit's (2.7) because TAT has founded a Tourism Intelligence Unit and Crisis Management Center or TAT Operation Center to operate during Thai tourism festivals. This kind of center will be used as an operation room for TAT executives or a war room in order to proceed with plans to manage during both normal and crisis situations and to be able to adjust strategic plans to timely decrease possible effects. The TAT Operation Center can be linked with both domestic and international TAT offices to receive and send information on current situations, especially worse cases, by informing managing methods to decrease customers' anxiety and restore their confidence. Consequently, the TAT Operation Center information helps reduce the fears of tourists and entrepreneurs in the area.

2.2 Concerning demographic information of respondents, most TAT office directors (69.39%) were male, were aged between 51-55 years old (59.18%), had a Master's Degree (71.43%), were working at domestic offices (57.14%). Most of Apisit's (respondents towards Public Health Ministry's crisis communication during SARS and Bird Flu) (60%) were female, were aged between 25-30 years old (45.50%), had a Bachelor's Degree (68%), were working in private sectors (62%) (อภิสิทธิ์ เหมะสมสกุล, 2547). There are differences in details because Apisit's thesis was conducted to study people's opinions and awareness about the Public Health Ministry's crisis communication.

According to the Crisis Communication Model (Laws & Prideaux, 2005), developing a Crisis Management Team (CMT) in the Crisis Preparation Phase can be applied to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)'s Emergency Communication Center (ปารีชาติ บุญคล้าย, 2548), and Tourism Intelligence Unit and Crisis Management Center or TAT Operation Center, as well as Thai Airways International Public

Company Limited's Crisis Management Operation Center (CMOC) (ฉัตรสุดา วงศาอ้วน, 2548).

According to previous studies, the following organizations had proceeded on crisis communication management: the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) established an Emergency Communication Center after the tsunami disaster in Thailand on December 26, 2005 (ปาริชาติ บุญคล้าย, 2548). Moreover, TAT created campaigns called "Be My Guest" and "Traveling Thailand, you can go every month" (เที่ยวทั่วไทย ไปได้ทุกเดือน) after the terrorist attack in the United States of America on 11th September, 2001 (บุปผา ลาภะวัฒนพันธ์, 2546). The Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) has managed crisis communication during its crises: gulf war in 1990, political uprising in 1992, and stock manipulating case in 1992 (อุษณีย์ สมบูรณ์ทรัพย์, 2537). Thai Airways International Public Company Limited has founded a Crisis Management Operation Center (CMOC) to practice 4 Rs during the organization's crises (ฉัตรสุดา วงศาอ้วน, 2548).

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from the discussion above.

5.4.1 According to the results of the study, the TAT Operation Center should distribute information more regularly and update information all the time.

5.4.2 The TAT Operation Center should distribute information more effectively and the information should be more complete.

5.4.3 Anxiety of tourists and entrepreneurs in the area can be reduced because of information from the TAT Operation Center.

5.4.4 The TAT Operation Center serves information promptly and the information is beneficial for making decisions and adapting marketing strategy.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, these recommendations are made for future research:

5.5.1 During the study, there was the time limitation for the researcher to survey. It would be better for more accurate answers to make in depth interviews with related parties instead of a survey by questionnaires only.

5.5.2 A future study could also concentrate on how to improve services for greater satisfaction with the TAT Operation Center prototype website.

5.5.3 Further research could be conducted in 16 newly established TAT domestic offices situated in Mae Hong Son, Pae, Uthai Thani, Sukhothai, Suphanburi, Bangkok, Prachuap Khirikhan, Samut Songkram, Loei, Surin, Trang, Krabi, Chumporn, Songkhla, Narathiwat, and Surat Thani.