

STURCTURAL EQUATION MODEL OF CAUSAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE INTENTION TO RETURN OF TOURISTS IN THE NORTHEASTERN HISTORICAL PARKS IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research are to study the causal factors affect that the intention to return of tourists to visit the Northeastern historical parks in Thailand, and to investigate the types of Thai and foreign tourists affect the relationships between marketing mix and the intention to return to the Northeastern historical park in Thailand. The research found that marketing mix has affected the intention to return of tourists the Northeastern historical park in Thailand. And the variable intention to return of Thai tourists was directly influenced by the marketing mix with the magnitude of 1.00, which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level of significance. In contrast, the variable intention to return of foreign tourists was directly influenced by the marketing mix with the magnitude of 0.87, which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level of significance.

Also, the Northeastern historical parks or agencies should give priority to products that best preserve to be the most complete. Northeastern historical parks should be control over the price of the product and tourism services to meet the standards for Thai tourists. The Northeastern historical parks should advertise and public relations more effectively accessible to foreign tourists to create a tourism image for the country.

Keywords: 1) Marketing Mix 2) Intention to Return 3) Tourists 4) Northeastern Historical Parks

1. Introduction

Historical park are manmade attractions, but different from other man-made attractions, because has historical, cultural, and social value, as well as spiritual attachment for later generations. There are several historical parks in Thailand, that unique in architecture and art in each locality, which is a major attraction in tourism (Department of Tourism, 2014). To plan tourism and, to set a strategy for tourism to be standard must consider the tourism system, such as products and services, distribution communication this is a necessary marketing factor and a very important part of the process of managing tourism strategies (Chaimee, 2016). The tourism situation in Thailand has continued to grow in both number and revenue from tourism over the past five years. The number of tourists has increased steadily from 14.0 million people in 2009 to 24.8 million people in 2014. The highest number of tourists in 2013 is 26.5 million people and the seventh largest in the world (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2015).

The importance of tourists is very important because tourists have to pay a high cost to travel to buy happiness and fun each time (Pimonsompong, 2013). Northeast is the most populated region in Thailand. Therefore, it is an area with a lot of tourist attractions, especially culture, as well as an ancient civilized graveyard that has been recognized by historians and archaeologists both Thais and foreigners (Kheawrat, 2010).

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From these significant points, researchers are interested to study marketing mix factors that affect the intention to return of tourists. This is a guideline for the development of tourist sites in the northeastern historical park in Thailand that sustainable economic development for the tourism industry.

2. Research Objectives

1. To study the causal factors affect that the intention to return of tourists to visit the Northeastern historical parks in Thailand.

2. To investigate the types of Thai and foreign tourists affect that the relationship between marketing mix and the intention to return to the Northeastern historical parks in Thailand.

3. Literature Review

Marketing Mix is a marketing tool that can be controlled together with marketing planning to satisfy the target group (Kotler, 1997) include of four components: 1) product 2) price 3) place, and 4) promotion. Tsai (2010) and Jeremy (2006) argue that successful marketing strategies should be experienced in the following processes: (1) product strategy (2) price strategy (3) location strategy and access channel, and (4) promotion strategies. It is an important marketing tool that the organization should builds relationships with all parties involved (Durovich, 2001). Point out important to achieve good marketing performance for tourism development. Marketing mix is one of the main functions of the business. Every business unit tries to attract and retain consumers. This goal can be achieved by marketing is a process of studying consumers' needs for re-purchase to bring about business profits.

Intention to Return is behavior of tourists to return to tourism is a degree of deep commitment to attitudes (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). The behavior of intention to return has been widely used in predicting future actions. Vermeulen, et al. (2011) concluded that a basic understanding of intention is the possibility of more behavior by which an individual's participation in behavior or action there are opportunities again. In addition, Lehto, O'Leary, and Morrison (2004) indicate that tourists to return of tourism may have different expectations if they visit different destinations in their destinations or participate in different activities, such as travel services sales of helpful or a service where consumers can achieve their deep-rooted needs.

Marketing mix affects that Intention to Return this literature review explores the results of marketing mix variables that affect the intention to return to tourism of target group. Sodsai (2015) found that the marketing mix in terms of product and marketing promotion, affect that the intention to use the large water park in Thailand. Whereas, Natongkom (2018) found that the marketing mix in terms of product, price, personnel and physical is factors affecting the intention of using low cost airlines in Thailand. In addition, Wansok (2013) states that services marketing strategies the effect that the intention to return to spa business in Thailand.

The researchers have integrated conceptual framework in independent variables is marketing mix based on the concept (Kotler, 1997) dimensions of 4 aspects: 1) product 2) price 3) place, and 4) promotion. The dependent variables are: the intention on return to tourism is integrated in the concept of consists 4 aspects as: 1) the level of attachment in remembrance 2) the level of attachment in intention to return 3) the level of attachment in intention to return if additional costs are required, and 4) the level of attachment in the intention to come back again certainly (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001), as shown in Figure 1.

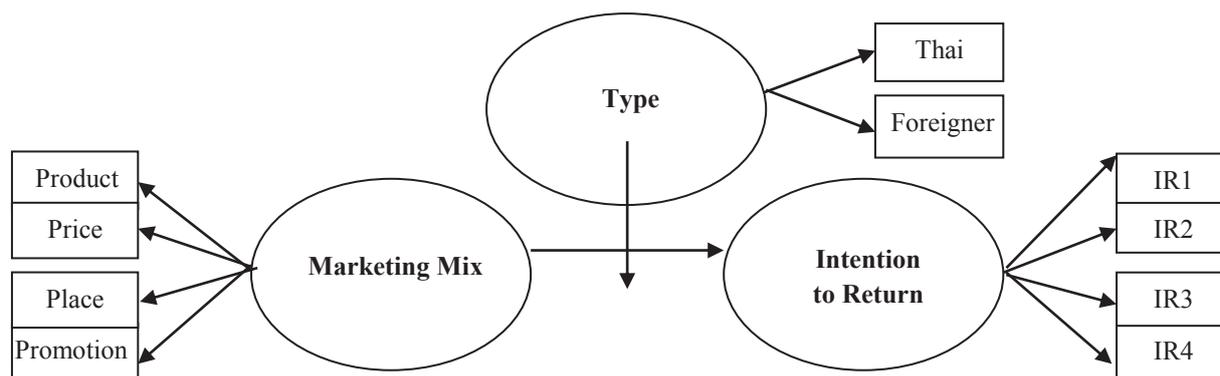


Figure 1: Model of Causal Relationships

Research hypothesis

H1: Causal factors have affected the intention to return of tourists in the Northeastern historical parks in Thailand.

H2: Thai and foreign tourist which are differentiated, have a different marketing mix to intention to return to the Northeastern historical parks in Thailand.

4. Research Methodology

Population and samples this research was population is Thai and foreign tourists who come to visit which are 1) Phimai historical park, NakhonRatchasima province, 2) Phanom Rung historical park, Buriram province, and 3) PhuPhra Bat historical park, UdonThani province. The sample size was 390 respondents, used the formulas in the calculations of Vanichbuncha (2002). The defect was not more than 5% with confidence of 95% . The sampling method is purposive sampling and quota sampling, 130 samples were collected per location.

The research instruments used in this research were questionnaire as a research tool, consisting of 4 parts as follows: Part 1) general information of tourists, the questionnaire consisted of 6 questionnaire items, including gender, age, marital status, education level, occupation, and average monthly income; Part 2) the opinions on marketing mix were as survey questionnaire (Rating Scale) covering 4 dimension; Part 3) the opinions on intention to return were as survey questionnaire (Rating Scale) covering 4 aspects; and Part 4) additional suggestions a questionnaire was used to provide feedback on how to improve tourism performance by using open-ended questionnaire. Parts 2) and 3) are measured using 5 levels of Likert Scale as of, 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Validity the researchers developed the questionnaire developed to present to the experts, and 5 experts to check the consistency between the questions and the objectives to measure. The results of the examination based on the analysis of all items, showed that the value was between 0.620 to 0.840 which passed the acceptable standard at more than 0.5 (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1997).

Reliability, the researcher used the technique to find the alpha coefficient (Coefficient Alpha Cronbach Method). The questionnaire was used for 30 questionnaires to examine and the results were found to be between 0.726 to 0.933. The reliability of the questionnaire was more than 0.7, Thus, the quality of the research tool was tested in terms of content validity, and reliability that can be trusted at a high level (Nunnally, 1978).

Data analysis, statistics used in data analysis include descriptive statistics the percentage, mean, standard deviation, and inferential statistics. The structural equation

models (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses for analyzing the causal path, and to investigate causal factors that have the affect that the intention to return tourists in the Northeastern historical parks in Thailand.

4. Results

Descriptive Statistics

General information of tourists, most of them are male (56.90%), age 20-30 years old (32.60%), marital status is single (60%), bachelor's degree (29.50%), work in company employ (27.90%), and average monthly income 10,000 - 15,000 Baht (27.20%). There are 240 Thai tourists (61.54%), and 150 foreign tourists (38.46%).

Market mix analysis results, the results showed that opinions on marketing mix the overall 4 dimension is high level were $\bar{X} = 3.93$ and, S.D. = 0.710. When considering each side, it was found that tourists have the most opinions on the product ($\bar{X} = 4.03$, S.D. = 0.726), was ranked first, the place ($\bar{X} = 3.99$, S.D. = 0.706), the promotion ($\bar{X} = 3.87$, S.D. = 0.714), and the price ($\bar{X} = 3.86$, S.D. = 0.697), respectively.

Intention to return analysis results the results showed that opinions on intention to return the overall 4 aspects is high level were $\bar{X} = 4.04$ and, S.D. = 0.845. When considering each side, it was found that tourists have the most opinions on the level of attachment in intention to return if additional costs are required ($\bar{X} = 4.06$, S.D. = 0.790) was ranked first, the level of attachment in remembrance ($\bar{X} = 4.04$, S.D. = 0.880), the level of attachment in the intention to come back again certainly ($\bar{X} = 4.02$, S.D. = 0.809), and the level of attachment in intention to return ($\bar{X} = 4.02$, S.D. = 0.811), respectively.

Inferential Statistics

The objective analysis was to examine the consistency of the model, the structural equation, the causal factors influencing intention to return of tourists the Northeastern historical park in Thailand. Relevant literature review indicated that the model was consistent with empirical data. Consideration based on the criteria of Hair et al. (2006); Diamantopoulos & Siguaw (2000), which used the criteria and results for the consistency index as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The newly developed model consistency index

Statistic	Criteria	Statistics in the Model
Chi-square	$p > 0.05$	30.41
GFI	> 0.90	0.98
CFI	> 0.90	1.00
NFI	> 0.90	0.99
IFI	> 0.90	1.00
RMSEA	< 0.05	0.045
SRMR	< 0.05	0.021

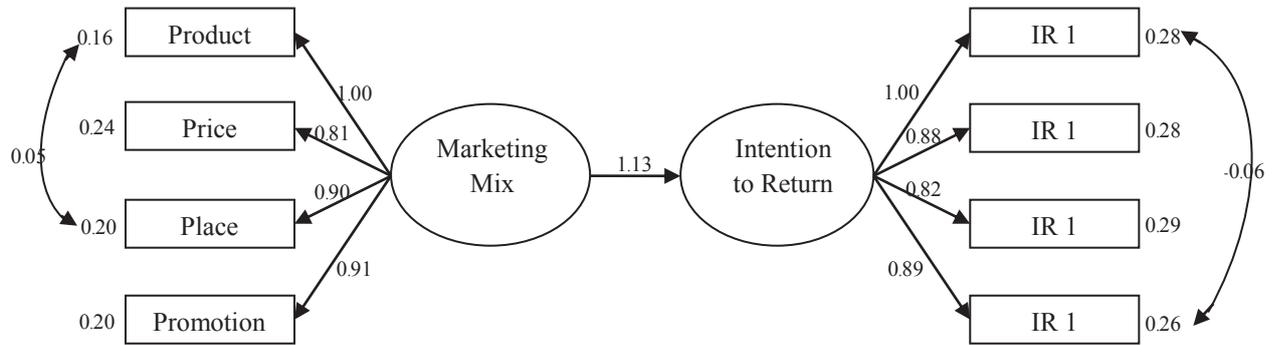
The objective analysis was to examine the consistency of the model, the structural equation, the causal factors influencing the intention to return of tourists the Northeastern historical park in Thailand by analyzing (Direct Effects: DE) as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the marketing mix model that affects the intention to return of tourists

Marketing Mix/Observed Variables	Factor loading	S.E.	t	R ²
Product	1.0			0.70
Price	0.81	0.05	15.40**	0.49
Place	0.90	0.04	20.76**	0.63
Promotion	0.91	0.05	17.96**	0.66

**p < 0.01

The relationship of causal factors have positive affected the intention to return of tourists was influenced by the marketing mix, This is based on the research hypotheses. The variables intention to return of tourists was directly influenced by the marketing mix with the magnitude of 1.13, which was statistically significant at 0.01. Marketing mix factors, the most influence on the intention to return of tourists is the product ($\beta= 1.0$), was ranked first, the promotion ($\beta= 0.91$), the place ($\beta= 0.90$), and the price ($\beta= 0.81$), respectively, as shown in Figure 2.



Chi-Square=30.41, df=17, p-value=0.02352, RMAEA=0.045

Figure 2: Model of causal structural equation (Full Model)

The second objective was to investigate the types of Thai and foreign tourists affect that the relationship between marketing mix and the intention to return to the Northeastern historical parks in Thailand. The variable intention to return of Thai tourists was directly influenced by the marketing mix with the magnitude of 1.00, which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level of significance. In contrast, the variable intention to return of foreign tourists was directly influenced by the marketing mix with the magnitude of 0.87, which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level of significance.

Considering the causal factors of the marketing mix variables of Thai tourists towards intention to return to the tourism found that the product ($\beta= 1.00$), the price ($\beta= 0.90$), the place ($\beta= 0.92$), and the promotion ($\beta= 0.84$). The causal factors of the marketing mix variables of foreign tourists towards intention to return to the tourism found that the product ($\beta= 1.0$), the price ($\beta= 0.66$), the place ($\beta= 0.88$), and the promotion ($\beta= 1.00$). In conclusion, Thai tourists are influenced by marketing mix in price and place, more than foreign tourists. In contrast, foreign tourists are influenced by marketing mix in promotion, more than Thai tourists.

6. Conclusions

Theoretical Implication

Marketing mix has affected the intention to return of tourists the Northeastern historical park in Thailand. This is consistent with the research results of Khan, et. at. (2016) found that marketing mix affects attitudes that cause behavior towards the intention to tourism of tourists in Taiwan. This is consistent with the research of Jaicheun (2016) found that Marketing mix affects the decision to re-use the services of a group of tourists who come to Boutique hotel in Tha Mai city Chantaburi province. The tourists will be back to the new service again if there is a chance. And also consistent with the research of Ruangkalapawongse and Ruangkalapawongse (2017) found that the development of marketing mix should focus on the factors of the product and the physical characteristics that affect the willingness to return to the Don Wai waterfront marketin NaknonPathom province of Thailand.

Managerial Implications

1) The marketing mix in terms of products is the most important factor intention to return of tourists. Also, Northeastern historical park or agencies should give priority to products that best preserve to be the most complete.

2) Thai tourists have more opinions on marketing mix in price and place more than foreign tourists. Northeastern historical park or agencies should be control over the price of the product. And tourism services to meet the standards for Thai tourists. They should promote Thai tourists to have more convenient access to tourist attractions.

3) Foreign tourists have more opinions on marketing mix in promotion more than Thai tourists. Northeastern historical park or agencies should Advertising and public relations be effectively accessible to foreign tourists to create a tourism image for the country.

Limitations and Future Research

This research is a collection of data at Northeastern historical park in Thailand, which consists of only three sites. Therefore, future research should increase the scope of the site to be a total all historical parks in Thailand the additional seven parks are: 1) Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya historical park, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, 2) Phranakhon Kiri historical park, Phetchaburi province, 3) Muang Sing historical park, Karnchanaburi province, 4) Kamphaeng Phet historical park, Khampangphet province, 5) Si Thep historical park, Phetchaboon province, 6) Sukhothai historical park, and 7) Si Satchanalai historical park, Sukhothai Province. To get better larger number of samples and to compare the results for better policy suggestions.

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