

[DOI: 10.20472/IAC.2016.023.041](https://doi.org/10.20472/IAC.2016.023.041)

**YOKSAMON JEAHENG**

Suratthani Rajabhat University, Thailand

**CHULEEWAN PRANEETHAM**

Suratthani Rajabhat University, Thailand

## **TOURISTS' NEEDS TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY MANAGEMENT OF HOTEL BUSINESS IN SURAT THANI PROVINCE**

### **Abstract:**

The purpose of this research was to explore tourist needs towards environmentally friendly management of hotel business in Surat Thani province, Thailand. The sample size was 384 tourists, who travelled to Muang district, Surat Thani province. A questionnaire was designed as a data collecting tool in order to collect information with accidental sampling. Statistical tools employed for data analysis were frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The results of the sampling's demographic data revealed that most respondents were female. Age's range was between 26-35 years old, and most had education at Bachelor level. The respondents' purpose of staying was for enjoyment and relaxation as the rest-seekers, duration of stay was 2-3 days and most of the respondents travelled for the first time. Moreover, they would be back to stay in the same hotel which costs about 500-1,000 Thai Baht.

The finding found that most of tourists choose to stay in hotels which concern about environmentally-friendly management with 68.5%. Tourists' needs towards environmentally-friendly management of hotel business focused on 4 different dimensions, namely management dimension, human resources management dimension, place and environmental management dimension, and communication and public relation dimension. The results found that a written-policy was the most importance of management dimension, knowledge of employees in responding guests' questions related to environmental saving was the most importance of human resources management dimension. For place and environmental management dimension, the natural design would be initiated as the decoration of hotels. For communication and public relation dimension, the tourists could receive some hotel's information via social network which was the most popular communication channel. However, hotel owners should improve their environmental quality.

### **Keywords:**

tourist, environmentally-friendly management, hotel business

**JEL Classification:** Q56

## **Introduction**

The tourism industry is a major industry in the world and it is important to the economic growth all the time (Nonthapot and Lean, 2015). Moreover, tourism is the main industry of many countries in the world that generates income and helps developing countries on both social and economical development. Thailand's tourism industry has been growing steadily. It is also a major industry in procuring foreign currency and always brings revenue to the country (Netsuwan, Suvannin, and Sriharun, 2012; Praneetham and Satjachaleaw, 2015). In particular, the increase in the number of tourists has continued to grow steadily (Khunon, 2015), because Thailand has the abundance of tourism resources in the whole country (Kuawiriyapan, et al., 2010). However, tourism is recognized as a resource-intensive industry (Lu and Nepal, 2009).

The tremendous growth of the tourism industry in Thailand has been resulting in the growth of the hotel industry as well. Hotel business is a major business in the travel industry that brings lots of revenue to the country. Over the years the hotel business has developed quickly, which could be confirmed by the increasing rate of business owners and business groups in venture capital from abroad. The increase of domestic tourists has resulted in an increase in the hotel business. The hotel business is one of the businesses that require the consumption of energy, natural resources and destruction of natural resources, as well as have impact on the environment in many ways (Namoltha, 2013). If the hotel business has increased and developed without well care and protection, especially the development regardless of the consequences to the environment, these could damage the image of the country and could affect the development of the hotel business in the future. Hence, the hotel business should be involved in environmental planning and protection.

Surat Thani province has an increasing rate of tourists and an increase in the hotel business growth. Therefore, the researchers are interested in exploring tourist needs towards environmentally friendly management of hotel business in Surat Thani province. The finding will be useful in planning of the environmentally friendly tourism development and encourage business accommodation in the province.

## **The Purpose of the Research**

The objective of this research was to explore tourist needs towards environmentally friendly management of hotel business in Surat Thani province, Thailand.

## **Methodology**

The primary data has been collected from 384 tourists, who travelled to Muang district, Surat Thani province. The close-ended questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was designed as a data collecting tool in order to collect information with accidental

sampling. Statistical tools employed for data analysis were percentage, mean, frequency and standard deviation.

## Results

The results of the sampling's demographic data revealed that most respondents were female. Most of age's range was between 26-35 years old, and most had education at Bachelor level as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| Characteristics         |           |         |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Sex                     | Frequency | Percent |
| Male                    | 313       | 34.10   |
| Female                  | 253       | 65.90   |
| Total                   | 384       | 100.0   |
| Age                     | Frequency | Percent |
| 16 – 25 Years old       | 77        | 20.10   |
| 26 – 35 Years old       | 157       | 40.90   |
| 36 – 45 Years old       | 84        | 21.90   |
| 46 – 55 Years old       | 66        | 17.20   |
| Education Level         | Frequency | Percent |
| High school level       | 20        | 7.30    |
| Vocational school level | 101       | 26.30   |
| Bachelor                | 196       | 51.00   |
| Higher than Bachelor    | 59        | 15.40   |
| Total                   | 384       | 100.0   |

The respondents' purpose of staying was for enjoyment and relaxation as the rest-seekers, duration of stay was 2-3 days and most of the respondents travelled for the first time. Moreover, they would be back to stay in the same hotel which costs about 500-1,000 Thai Baht as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Travel Behaviors (n = 384)

| Behaviors                       | Total     |         |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------|
|                                 | Frequency | Percent |
| 1. Traveling frequency          |           |         |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> time            | 127       | 33.10   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> time            | 90        | 23.40   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> time            | 110       | 26.60   |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> time            | 57        | 14.80   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> time & above    | -         | -       |
| 2. Duration of stay             |           |         |
| 1 day                           | 114       | 29.70   |
| 2 to 3 days                     | 185       | 48.20   |
| 4 to 5 days                     | 76        | 19.80   |
| More than 5 days                | 9         | 2.30    |
| 3. Main reason of visit         |           |         |
| To see relative & friends       | 21        | 5.30    |
| Business                        | 44        | 11.20   |
| Religious spots                 | 13        | 3.30    |
| Health and sports               | 11        | 2.80    |
| Welfare                         | 20        | 5.10    |
| Study visit                     | 42        | 10.70   |
| Cultural attraction             | 32        | 8.10    |
| Rest / transfer to other places | 68        | 17.30   |
| Enjoyment and relaxation        | 75        | 19.10   |
| Activities                      | 50        | 12.70   |
| Others                          | 17        | 4.30    |
| 4. Room rate per night          |           |         |
| Less than 500 Baht              | 31        | 8.10    |
| Between 500 – 1,000 Baht        | 241       | 62.80   |
| Between 1,001 – 1,500 Baht      | 75        | 19.50   |
| More than 1,500 Baht            | 37        | 9.60    |
| 5. Place to stay when revisit   |           |         |
| Stay in the same hotel          | 328       | 85.40   |
| Stay in other hotel             | 56        | 14.60   |

Table 3: Opinion on the tourist needs towards environmentally friendly management of hotel business in management dimension (n = 384)

| Topics   | $\bar{(x)}$ | SD   |
|--|-------------|------|
| Policies related to the environment.                                   | 4.01        | .358 |
| Written- environmental policy.   | 4.15        | .511 |
| Procurement of goods and services are environmentally friendly.        | 4.07        | .474 |
| Establishment of an organizational structure involves the environment. | 3.97        | .619 |
| Departments in hotel are responsible for the environment.              | 3.68        | .887 |
| Total  | 3.97        | .570 |

Table 3 shows that, overall, the tourists' opinion on the needs towards environmentally friendly management of hotel business in management dimension was at "good" level (Mean = 3.97). The finding indicated that the written - environmental policy was the most importance of management dimension.

Table 4: Opinion on the tourist needs towards environmentally friendly management of hotel business in human resources management dimension (n = 384)

| Topics  | $\bar{(x)}$ | SD   |
|---|-------------|------|
| The ability to communicate in English and foreign languages.                            | 4.21        | .435 |
| Skills and personality.   | 4.11        | .319 |
| The ability to provide information on the tour.   | 4.15        | .361 |
| Employees with knowledge related to environmental management.                           | 4.20        | .401 |
| Knowledge of employees in responding guests' questions related to environmental saving. | 4.25        | .435 |
| Total   | 4.18        | .390 |

Table 4 shows that, overall, the tourists' opinion on the needs towards environmentally friendly management of hotel business in human resources management dimension was at "good" level (Mean = 4.18). The finding indicated that knowledge of employees in responding guests' questions related to environmental saving was the most importance of human resources management dimension.

Table 5: Opinion on the tourist needs towards environmentally friendly management of hotel business in place and environmental management dimension (n = 384)

| Topics  | $\bar{x}$ | SD   |
|---|-----------|------|
| Having natural zone in hotel.                                 | 4.04      | .200 |
| Decoration of building with beautiful natural surroundings.   | 4.57      | .495 |
| Trees are grown as ornamental plants in beautiful condition.  | 4.31      | .464 |
| The design uses natural light to save energy.                 | 4.24      | .426 |
| Using of powerful and energy-efficient power supplies.        | 4.10      | .478 |
| Practice and cultivate employees to save electricity.         | 4.08      | .426 |
| Publicity campaign to guests regarding saving electricity.    | 4.02      | .424 |
| Use of water-saving fixtures or equipment.                    | 4.05      | .358 |
| Saving water management policy.                               | 4.06      | .330 |
| Practice and cultivate employees to reduce use of water.      | 4.05      | .266 |
| Proper sewage management before being released to the public. | 4.02      | .289 |
| Collecting garbage in the guests' rooms every day.            | 4.09      | .383 |
| Use of recycle product or environmentally friendly products.  | 4.04      | .200 |
| Total   | 4.11      | .355 |

Table 5 shows that, overall, the tourists' opinion on the needs towards environmentally friendly management of hotel business in place and environmental management dimension was at "good" level (Mean = 4.11). The finding indicated that for place and environmental management dimension, decoration of building with beautiful natural surroundings was at the highest level (Mean = 4.57).

Table 6: Opinion on the tourist needs towards environmentally friendly management of hotel business in communication and public relation dimension (n = 384)

| Topics                    | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Brochure                  | 52        | 12.80   |
| Magazines                 | 86        | 21.10   |
| Newspapers                | 36        | 8.80    |
| Television                | 106       | 26.00   |
| Social network / Internet | 113       | 27.80   |
| Other                     | 14        | 3.40    |

*Remark: the respondents can give more than one answer*

Table 6 shows that for the communication and public relation dimension, the tourists could receive some hotel's information via social network or internet which was the most popular communication channel.

## **Guidelines and recommendations in the service for hotels**

The respondents recommended hotels should provide or organize green activities or environmentally friendly campaign that visitors can participate in as part of the agreement of the service. Hotel staff should have good knowledge and awareness in environmental protection and they should be able to provide useful information to travelers or visitors. Moreover, the government should take the more seriously role to monitor and direct the hotel regarding the environmentally friendly management of hotel business, provide channels to promote environmentally friendly tourism management to the tourists and hotel guests. And giving awards to the hotel that organizes the green campaign with the guests to maintain the environment in order to exemplify and promote eco-friendly management.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

The findings revealed that most of respondents were female tourists between the ages of 26-35 years old, holding bachelor degree. The study found that the respondents came to Surat Thani province for relax. This is consistent with research of Praneetham and Jongwutiwes (2014) that the purposes of traveling for students was holidays and relax. Moreover, the finding from this study revealed that the duration of stay was 2-3 days and most of the respondents travelled for the first time, costs of stay per night at a hotel was about 500-1,000 Thai Baht, and they would be back to stay in the same hotel. Most of tourists received information via social network or network. This is consistent with research of Sanjaiya (2009) and Praneetham and Jongwutiwes (2014) that tourists received information from the internet.

The study revealed that, overall; tourists' opinion on the needs towards environmentally friendly management of hotel business in 4 dimensions was at "good" level. The finding found that the written - environmental policy was the most importance of management dimension. While, knowledge of employees in responding guests' questions related to environmental saving was at the highest level for human resources management dimension and decoration of building with beautiful natural surroundings was at the highest level for place and environmental management dimension. Namoltha (2013) pointed out that the Bangkok's tourists made decision to select the Eco Resort in Hua Hin by relized marketing factors are product factor, price factor, distribution factor, physical factor, promotion factor, process factor and people factor respectively and consider external factor are social factor, government policy factor and economy factor respectively. Netsuwan, Suvannin, and Sriharun, (2012) revealed that the service which had the highest effect to the decision making on choosing of type of tourism accommodation service in Phetchabun province.

The study guidelines and recommendations for environmentally friendly management of hotel business was that the government or related agencies should work together to determine the policies to stimulate knowledge and awareness of tourists,

entrepreneurs, hotels business and hotel staff regarding the environment and environmental conservation and protection in order to achieve the sustainable tourism.

## Acknowledgement

The authors would like to acknowledge financial support from Suratthani Rajabhat University. Any errors are the responsibility of the authors.

## References

- Khunon, S. (2015). The Different Impacts of Safety and Security Issues in Local and National Tourism Destinations on Tourists' Loyalty. In Proceedings of the *WHTER & ICES 2015 Conference on 'New Paradigm Era and Roles of Tourism'*. p. 29-34.
- Kuawiriyapan, S.; Kaewcha, A.; Kaewcha, K. and Prodprakon, D. (2010). Behaviors and Factors that Affect Thai Tourists Traveling to Historical Parks. *International Journal of Arts and Sciences*. 3 (13). p.95 – 105.
- Lu, J. and Nepal, S.K.(2009). Sustainable Tourism Research: an Analysis of Papers Published in the Journal of Sustainable Tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. 7(1). p. 5–16.
- Namoltha, N. (2013). *Factors Influence the Decision Making of Bangkok Tourists' s Selection the Eco resort in Hua Hin District Prachuab Kereghan Province*. Thesis in MBA (General Management). Graduate School, Stamford International University.
- Netsuwan, A.; Suvannin, W., and Sriharun, B. (2012). Factors Affecting the Choosing of Type of Tourism Accommodation Service in Petchabun Province. *Valaya Alongkorn Review*. 2(2). p. 63-71.
- Nonthapot, S. and Lean, H.H. (2015). International Tourism Market Analysis in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region: A Panel Data Approach. *Pertanika J. Soc. Sci. & Hum*. 23(4). p. 945 – 966.
- Praneetham, C. and Jongwutiwes, N. (2014). Factors Related to the Decision to Travel of Suratthani Rajabhat University Students. In Proceedings of the *Researches and Creative Solutions for Sustainable Local Development*. 20 – 21 November 2014. p. 396 – 408.
- Praneetham, C. and Satjachaleaw, N. (2015). Change of the Way of Life towards ASEAN Economic Community, A Case Study of Ban Klongro, Surat Thani Province, Thailand. *European Journal of Social Sciences*. 48 (3). p. 300 - 304.
- Sanjaiya, M. (2009). *Factors Influencing the Decision to Travel Overseas of Thai People*. Independent Study in Business Administration, Faculty of Business Administration, Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi.