MARKETING MIX FACTORS AFFECTING DECISION MAKING OF FOREIGN TOURISTS AUDIENCES WATCHING THAI BOXING AT LUMPINEE BOXING STADIUM

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Abstract - The purpose of this research was to 1) explore channels for getting information about Thai Boxing (Muay Thai) and reasons to making decision to watching a live match in Lumpinee Boxing Stadium of foreign tourists 2) examine for marketing mix of foreign tourists audiences watching a live match in Lumpinee Boxing Stadium. The data were collected from 400 tourists watching Muay Thai match at Lumpinee Boxing Stadium by accidental sampling method. The tool was questionnaire, The Statictics were Mean and S.D.
According to the results found that
1. The highest frequent used channels for getting information about Thai Boxing were from social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Whatsapp WeChat etc ($\bar{x}$ =3.72), followed by from Access websites ($\bar{x}$ =3.25). The lowest frequent used channels were found in radio channel ($\bar{x}$ =1.87).
2. For the marketing mix, most of foreign tourist audiences agreed that the most important factor was friendliness and hospitality of personnel ($\bar{X}$ = 3.80), followed by convenient ticket purchase ($\bar{X}$ = 3.78), attractive location ($\bar{X}$ = 3.72), and easy access to boxing stage ($\bar{X}$ = 3.71).

Keywords - Marketing Mix, Foreign Tourists , Thai Boxing Audience, Lumpinee Thai Boxing Stadium , Muay Thai audiences

I. INTRODUCTION

Thai boxing (Muay Thai) is a sport which helps develop society and culture. Trainee boxers and boxers are considered cultural ambassadors who maintain the national uniqueness. Thai boxing is also beneficial to health of people and society as it can be used as an entertaining activity[1].

Muay Thai is a martial arts and national sport of Thailand that has been familiar among Thai people for a very long time as a combat sport. It is local cultural wisdom of Thai people.Many parts of body are effectively used as weapon. It is also regarded as one of the world's ancient combat sports [2].
Muay Thai is used as a form of combat applying entire body as the weapon such as punch, elbow, knee, and foot to fight against an opponent without any use of object. [3] Therefore, Muay Thai is an empty hand fighting combining both science and art together. This kind of boxing is commonly acknowledged among people worldwide as well.

Most foreigners visiting Thailand and watching Muay Thai agree that this martial arts (battle sport) is the most wonderful fighting style in the world because it contains both science and art regarding Thai wisdom[4]. It can be said that Muay Thai is complete sport because entire parts of body like punch, elbow, arm, knee and foot are used to fight effectively.
Thai boxing is popular overseas as seen from some historical evidences in museums and certification of academic institutions. A large number of foreigners travel to Thailand to learn Thai boxing while some hire Thai trainers to teach them abroad which can bring high revenue to the country. The government has defined several policies to improve the country through creative economy such as health, food, tourism, as well as goods and services based on culture, wisdom, and modern technology. Famous sports of Thailand including Thai boxing and takraw have been utilized to determine tourism promotion policy as Ministry of Tourism and Sports suggests that the direction of tourism marketing of Tourism Authority of Thailand in 2014 focused on Thai boxing by cooperating with boxing camps in foreign markets [5].

The marketing for Thai boxing is considered a new issue. Thus, it is crucial to gather sufficient data, especially from foreign tourist audiences watching Thai boxing at a famous location "Lumpinee Boxing Stadium", to create a marketing plan applying marketing mix or 7Ps – product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence and presentation, and process.
This study examines channels of information receiving, reasons to watch Thai boxing of foreign tourist audiences, as well as marketing mix of foreign tourist audiences, Lumpinee Boxing Stadium, . The findings would be useful for the stadiums and Tourism Authority of Thailand to create the marketing plan of Thai boxing to attract more foreign tourist audiences and increase the revenue of the country[6].

II. OBJECTIVE

1. To investigate channels of information receiving, reasons to watch Thai boxing of foreign tourist audiences at Lumpinee Boxing Stadium.
2. To explore marketing mix of foreign tourist audiences watching Thai boxing and marketing mix of Lumpinee Boxing Stadium.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Scope of Research

Scope of population and sample

1. The population was foreign tourists who watched Thai boxing at Lumpinee Thai Boxing Stadium Boxing Ring in 2016. However, the exact number of population was unknown since there had never been an official data collection.
2. The samples consisted of 400 respondents obtained from using a formula for calculating sample size for an unknown population. The population proportion was .60 with a 95% confidence level and an error less than 5%. Then the sample size included 368 respondents. Nonetheless, the final sample size was increased to 400 respondents to avoid any loss and error using accidental sampling to collect data from foreign tourists who watched Thai boxing at Lumpinee Thai Boxing Stadium Boxing Ring during June-July 2016.

Scope of Content

1) Channels of information receiving and reasons to watch Thai boxing of foreign tourist audiences
2) Marketing mix or 7Ps including product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence and presentation, and process

Scope of Area

Lumpinee Thai Boxing Stadium Boxing Ring, Bangkok Thailand.

A. Research Design

This was a survey research which aimed to examine channels of information receiving, reasons to watch Thai boxing, and marketing mix of Lumpinee Boxing Stadium based on opinions of foreign tourist audiences.

B. Research Instrument

The research instrument in this study was questionnaire which consisted of two parts as follows:
Part 1: General information of foreign tourist audiences
Part 2: Attitude of foreign tourist audiences at Lumpinee Boxing Stadium towards three aspects – 1) channels of information receiving, 2) marketing mix of audience Thai Boxing

C. Development of Research Instrument

1. Theories and concepts related to Thai boxing and marketing mix were inspected.
2. The two parts of questionnaire were developed and proposed to three experts to evaluate validity using index of congruence (IOC). It was found that IOC of every item was higher than .50. Then reliability of questionnaire was assessed using Alpha's Pearson product moment correlation. The reliability coefficients were 0.80, 0.85, and 0.81, respectively.

D. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using software package and statistics including mean and standard deviation.

IV. RESULTS

A. Discussion

The results of analysis of channels of information receiving and reasons to watch Thai boxing of foreign tourist audiences at Lumpinee Boxing Stadium were presented below.

Channels of information receiving	$\bar{X}$	SD	Interpretation
Internet, website, webboard	3.53	1.18	High
Social media, Facebook, Instagram,	3.72	1.05	High
Pinterest, etc.	3.25	1.07	Moderate
Television	1.87	1.12	Low
Radio	1.96	1.09	Low
Newspaper	1.99	1.06	Low
Magazine	1.85	1.07	Low
Book	2.86	1.24	Moderate
Friend, relative or acquaintance	2.11	1.22	Low
Thai boxing exhibition	2.37	1.34	Low
Thai boxing competition	2.40	1.17	Low
Advertisement in tour program			
Total	**2.60**	**1.15**	**Moderate**

Table I. Channels of receiving information on Thai boxing

According to the survey of received the information on Thai boxing via social media, Facebook, Instagram etc at high level ($\bar{X}$ = 3.72, SD = 1.05); followed by the Internet, website, webboard at level ($\bar{X}$ = 3.53, SD = 1.18); television at moderate level ($\bar{X}$ = 3.25, SD = 1.07); and radio at low level ($\bar{X}$ = 1.87, SD = 1.12).

2. The results of analysis of marketing mix of foreign tourist audiences watching Thai boxing and marketing mix of Lumpinee Thai Boxing Stadium were demonstrated below.

	Marketing Mix	$\bar{X}$	SD	Interpretation
Product	-famous martial arts sport of Thailand	3.60	0.90	High
Price	-Suitable number of matches	3.66	0.88	High
	-Price of package	3.55	1.15	High
	-Payment system	3.53	0.92	High
Place	-Discount from ticket reservation	3.52	0.99	High
	-Easy access to boxing stage	3.71	0.97	High
	-Sufficient ticket selling points	3.57	0.88	High
Public Relations	-Ticket reservation via the Internet	3.52	1.12	High
	-Mobile advertisement such as car or bus	3.40	0.97	Moderate
People	Billboard	3.39	0.99	Moderate
	-Advertising brochure	3.41	0.98	Moderate
	-Quality service and punctuality	3.52	0.88	High
		3.60	1.02	High
Physical evidence	-English communication skills	3.80	0.95	High
		3.72	0.93	High
Process	-Friendliness and hospitality	3.55	0.95	High
		3.78	0.92	High
	-Attractive location for Thai boxing contest	3.63	0.90	High
	-Cleanliness of stage area			
	-Sufficient seats	3.57	0.93	High
	-Convenient ticket purchase of each program or package			
	-Flexibility or convenience of ticket checking system			
	Total	**3.63**	**0.97**	**High**

Table II Marketing mix of foreign tourist audiences watching Thai boxing at Lumpinee Boxing Stadium

According to the survey of marketing mix of foreign tourist audiences who watched Thai boxing at Lumpinee Boxing Stadium, the results showed that the most important factor was the friendliness and hospitality of personnel ($\bar{X}$ = 3.80, SD = 0.95); followed by the convenient ticket purchase of each program ($\bar{X}$ = 3.78, SD = 0.92); Attractive location for Thai Boxing contest ($\bar{X}$ = 3.72, SD = 0.93);the easy access to boxing stage at high level ($\bar{X}$ = 3.71, SD = 0.97); and advertising brochure at the lowest level ($\bar{X}$ = 3.41, SD = 0.98).

CONCLUSION

A. Channels of Receiving Information on Thai Boxing

The findings illustrated that the foreign tourist audiences who came to watch Thai boxing obtained the information via social media, Facebook, Line, Instagram, the Internet, website, and television. This was consistent with current situation that information technology has become more advanced. The information could be spread out quickly and globally, particularly via social media. It was concordant with a study of Suchat Itthiwannapong [7]. which found that Thai boxing camps had used multiple marketing communication strategies to attract foreigners; for instance, advertising brochure, support by foreign staffs, and coordinating with foreign boxing camps. In his paper, Kaew Samrit Boxing Camp and Por. Pramook Boxing Camp utilized less offline media because they had no advertisements on brochure and television while they advertised via online media example websites and contacted their customers via e-mails.

B. Marketing Mix

The opinions of foreign tourist audiences toward the marketing mix of Lumpinee Boxing Stadium demonstrated that the friendliness and hospitality of personnel were at the highest level.This was in accordance with Kesinee Pratummanee[8] study which found that the personnel were the most important marketing mix factor. As stated in her work, hospitality, good personality, and enthusiasm for providing service gained the highest mean. Likewise, Techita Chaiorn [9] pointed out that there were various marketing mix factors influencing use of service of Thai boxing camps which were personnel, promotion, and price. Hence, it could be concluded that friendly personnel, hospitality, good service, and English communication skills considerably affected the marketing mix of boxing stadiums. This was because the qualified personnel could help achieve service goal. Thus, it was necessary to support and promote the personnel or allow them to deal with problems and needs of this target group. Moreover, the physical evidence of stage area was essential to attract more foreign tourist audiences.

Most samples were European and Asian, respectively. Most of them were working people and male. Such data represented that, in spite of a recession, the number of foreign tourist audiences from these regions were higher than others. Therefore, both public and private sectors of Thailand responsible for determining tourism policy should offer high quality service for this group of tourists and attract more foreign tourists who were not seriously affected by global recession such as China, India, and ASEAN countries. Demand and supply side policies should be highly concordant with each other.

Modern media should be applied to reach more audience targets. Thai boxing should be promoted via public relations on the Internet, website, and social media because the communication methods in society had been changed. Thus, value chain of Thai boxing policy for tourism should be obviously implemented to provide channels to access the target customers, offer high quality service, and improve physical evidence to impress the audiences and increase repeat purchase

rate. According to an interview with the samples after watching Thai boxing, the results demonstrated that most of them would like to visit and watch the matches again. They loved Thai boxing because it was entertaining and exciting. They felt excited when the audiences in the stadiums cheered the boxers on the stage with the excitement. Also, they liked Thai culture when the boxers danced before starting the fight. They were excited when watching boxing skills of the boxers (use of fists, feet, knees, and elbows) and guessing who would win or lose. Thai boxing was then the very entertaining sport and should be widely promoted to let people recognize that it was really great and the audiences would be happy when watching it. Thai boxing was outstanding and different from other martial arts in various countries and it could be applied to improve boxing skills of other boxers.

SUGGESTIONS

A. Suggestion for implementing findings of research

1) Tourism Authority of Thailand should determine further policies based on the finding that most of foreign tourist audiences watching Thai boxing came from Europe. Thus, this group of audiences should be retained while finding new foreign markets.
2) Lumpinee Boxing Stadium should develop the marketing mix based on the opinions of foreign tourist audiences to meet their satisfaction.
3) The findings were beneficial to institutions offering Thai boxing and tourism courses.

B. Suggestion for further research

1) An in-depth comparative study should be conducted with other boxing stadiums outside Bangkok Metropolitan.
2) A qualitative study should be directly carried out with foreign tourists.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First I would like to thankful for Dr.Weera Weerasophon from Suan Sunandha Rajhabhat University aspiring guidance, invaluably constructive criticism and friendly advice during this dissertation work. The author sincerely grateful to them for sharing their truthful and illuminating views on a number of issues related to this dissertation.
The author express own warm thanks to Dr.Sriraphop Rattanasuban for their support and guidance.who provided insight and expertise that greatly assisted the research and last thank you Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University to support this research to be successful.

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