TOURISTS' BEHAVIOR OF SPA USE IN UDON THANI, THAILAND

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Abstract - The research "Tourists' Behavior of Spa Use in Udon Thani, Thailand" was a quantitative research and aims to study the travelers' behaviors of spa use in Udon Thani. The sample were 400 respondents, closed – end questionnaires as the tool and data analysis by using the descriptive statistics in percentage. This study revealed that the travelers who visit Udon Thani's town and use spa service there are 400 respondents, most of them were female age between 31 – 40 years old. Their education are at university level, own business or do commerce for living. Their income are average between 500 – 700 $ per month and residence in North-eastern Thailand. In the behavior of travelers' decision to use spas in Udon Thani mostly for stress therapy / wellness / health tourism. The respondents used spa at least 2 – 3 times a month, mostly use the service in weekends, spend time with the service within 1 hour, self-made decision to use the service, spend at least 30 $ at once and received the service's information from the internet medias.

Index Terms - Tourists, Behaviors, SPA, Udon Thani, Thailand

I. INTRODUCTION

From the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan of Thailand (2017 – 2021) "Thailand will receive revenues from tourism more than 100,000 trillion $ and be above the 30th of Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index : TTCI)

There are 10 strategies under the 12th plan; for North-eastern region is to develop the region to be free from poverty and improve cultural tourism, historic Khmer civilization, nature tourism and international sports.

Such as the promotion of cultural tourism especially Khong River basins and health & wellness in the upper north-eastern group of provinces; the promotion of pre-historic tourists attraction in Udon Thani, Khonkean, Kalasin by adding services integration in many ways to meet the target segments; the development of tourists attractions to meet the standards; promote the tourism activities for all year round travel and also develop tourism routes with networks to disperse tourists from major cities to other towns, communities and locals.

Thailand has many tourism resources such as ecotourism, health tourism, cultural tourism, agro tourism, religious tourism and many more. Altogether attract both domestic and international tourists to travel to the famous places in Thailand, to absorb the local ways of life, beautiful traditions and relaxation, release stress from work which increase national income from tourism.

Health or Wellness tourism is in the interest of world tourists; and Asia is one of the destination where tourists pay attention. Spas in Asia have received good reputation and good brand image because Asian spas have some potential to serve the nature related spas. Moreover, Asians are very warm heart, sincere and open-minded; also the lower investment cost in Asia so the Asian spas are able to serve more amenities.

Such as, fitness room, yoga class, Tai Chi, or even spa cuisine class to allow the tourists to learn and cook themselves at home. Asian spas are recognized as the prototype which other parts of the world try to copy. Thai spas are also received good reputation from the world and prototype to many other spas. Thai spas are unique in characteristic of holistic healing and they are the destination of tourists to use service when they are arriving Thailand.

Nowadays, Thai spa business has been supported by government and private agencies to push forward to be ready with quality to meet world class standard. (Thai Spa Association, 2014) Thai spas are unique and distinct service characteristics which giving the nation good reputation as many of Thai spas have received the world class awards and making the nation good image and also increasing revenue receipts from spa business in each year. (AEC Thai Spa, 2012)

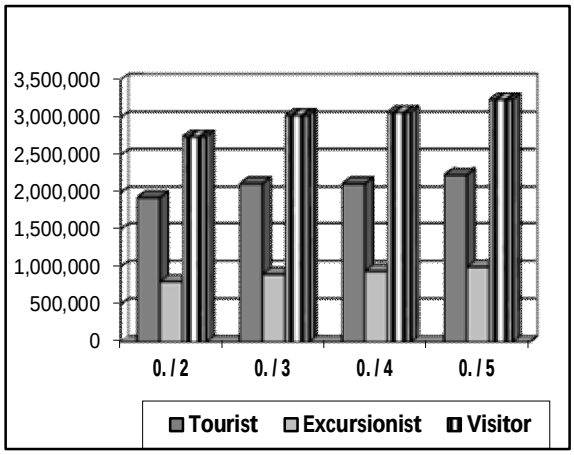
Thai spas markets seems to be a very high competitive market because there are many spa entrepreneurs increased in the market each year, neither Bangkok Metropolis and up-country. The president of Thai Spa Association has stated that "Thai spas and Thai massages (wellness spa, wellness massage and massage for beauty) are totally value at 1,000 million $ and they are dramatically increase from 2012 at 466 million $ to 533 million $ in the next year but above all; the beautician market in Thailand tend to grow up to 666 million $ in the year 2017.

Udon Thani is a big province in the upper north-eastern region of Thailand. It is a hub of Thai – Laos's culture and history. In Ban Dung district, the locals produce rock salt solidly. The area of rock salt producer are cover the area about 2,000 acres. Most of the producers sell rock salt to the middle man merchants. In the past, the price of rock salt is very

good but two years before the price of it has decrease from 15 – 16 $ per ton to 10 $ per ton so these making the rock salt producer require the Thai government for help freezing the price. So rock salt has to be processing to other products to add values such as spas material, other cosmetic products as Udon Thani help the local rock salt producers in Ban Dung district. (Pavinee Charoenying, 2016)

Wellness spa service is the art and science which Thais must aware to co-create the good image by promoting work skills, communication skills, caring, spa treatments and other services such as decoration, reputation, reliability, spa products and other components to run a spa business.

From domestic tourists statistics in Udon Thani, 2017 told that the tourists has increased 5.4 % from 2016 (2,240,644 domestic tourists)



From Fig 1, the chart of the tourists, excursionists and visitors statistics in Udon Thani tend to increase every year since 2014 which possible to unmeet the needs of tourists at full service because the tourists behavior changed easily with trends; if the destination understand tourists' behaviors the involved agencies will be able to manage the tourism resources to meet the needs of different types of tourists.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Consumer Behavior Analysis Theory

The consumer behavior analysis is the study to distinguish buying behavior of the services and products of the consumer or marketing factors that affect the buying decision. So, the marketer will use information collected from this tool to adjust the marketing management appropriately.

The consumer behavior analysis uses 6Ws 1H questions to find 7 essential answers of consumer behavior (7Os) [Kotler,]

1. Who is in the market? It aims to find the needed information such as occupants, demographic profile of consumers, psychologic geography or psycho-analysis and behavior analysis.

The involving marketing strategies are 4P's marketing mix such as product, price, place, promotion strategies and appropriate marketing communication which meet consumers satisfaction.

2. What does the customer buy? This question want to know what objects which customer buy; what does the consumer want from products; the qualification, attributes and distinction of the competitors.

This question involved with the product strategies such as new image of product; packaging, branding, service quality and new innovation. Augmented products, expected products or the potential of products to their competitors which include the disparity of products, services and physical environment.

3. Why does the customer buy? This question want to know the objectives from the customer to buy that product either the customer want it to fulfill physical wants or psychology wants which need to study the factors influence to buying behaviors included internal factor (psychology factors), social factor, cultural factor and individual factor.

The concern marketing strategies are product strategies, promotion strategies, marketing communication strategies such as staff up-selling, public relations, price strategies and distribution channel strategies.

4. Who participates in the buying? The answers wanted from this question are the organizations or people who have influenced to the buyers such as the influencer, role models, net-idols which using the publicized, advertising and promotion strategies based on the influencer to buyers.

5. When does the customer buy? This question want to know the occasions when consumer buy products, it may be specific period of the year, seasonal, or special days.

The marketing strategies use for answer this question are the promotional strategies and IMC strategies.

6. Where does the customer buy? This question wants to know what outlets the customer bought the products or will buy the products e.g. department store, grocery and shops.

The involving marketing strategies are distribution channel strategies like how to bring products to reach the target without middleman.

7. How does the customer buy? This question want the answer about the decision process of buying the products e.g. problem recognition, finding information, choices evaluation, decision and feelings after buying products.

The marketing involved with this question are

promotion strategies and IMC strategies, advertisement promotion, staff selling, publicize, direct marketing will support the objectives of buying.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was objected to study the behavior of tourists to use spa service in Udon Thani, Thailand. This research utilized the quantitative research method with the statistics of unknown numbers of tourists who visit to Udon Thani, Thailand and spent time with spa service during January – May 2018. So that this research distributed 400 questionnaires followed Cochran's 1977 sample size formula. The questionnaires comprised of 3 parts: 1) the demographic of the respondents, 2) the behaviors of tourists to use spa services in Udon Thani, Thailand. These data were analyzed to find the behaviors of tourists to use spa services based on descriptive statistic with percentage to describe, and 3) recommendation from the respondents.

IV. RESULTS

A. Demographic of Respondents

Most of the respondents were female (77%), aged between 31 - 40 years old (40%), college & university education level (52%), own business or do commerce (20%), monthly income is average at 501 - 666 $ (35%) and reside in North-eastern region respectively.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Sex	Amount	Percentage
Male	92	23
Female	308	77
Total	**400**	**100**

Age	Amount	Percentage
Below 20 years	20	5
21 – 30 years	96	24
31 – 40 years	160	40
41 – 50 years	44	11
51 – 60 years	48	12
Above 61 years	32	8
Total	**400**	**100**

Education Level	Amount	Percentage
Below college	72	18
College & University	208	52
Higher university	120	30
Total	**400**	**100**

Monthly income	Amount	Percentage
Below 333 $	20	5
334 – 500 $	80	20
501 – 666 $	140	35
667 – 833 $	40	10
834 – 1,000 $	68	17
1,001 $	52	13
Total	**400**	**100**

Occupation	Amount	Percentage
Students	60	15
Agriculture	20	5
Own business / Commerce	80	20
Employee	64	16
Civil servants	72	18
State enterprise agents	56	14
Others	48	12
Total	**400**	**100**

Residence	Amount	Percentage
Bangkok Metropolis	56	14
Central region	36	9
Northern region	44	11
Southern region	24	6
Eastern region	28	7
western region	12	3
North-eastern region	200	50
Total	**400**	**100**

B. The tourists' behavior of spa use in UdonThani, Thailand

This section represents the percentage of the tourists' behavior towards spa use in Udon Thani, Thailand.

Table 2: the purpose of spa use

Purpose of spa use	Amount	Percentage
Relaxation / stress relieve	76	19
Healing / wellness treatment	160	40
Skin therapy / beauty therapy	112	28
New experience	44	11
Others	8	2
Total	**400**	**100**

These data showed that the respondents used spa for healing / wellness treatment at most (40%), for skin and beauty therapy (28%) and for relaxation (19%).

Table 3: the frequency of spa use

Frequency of spa use	Amount	Percentage
First time	56	14
2 – 3 times	152	38
4 – 5 times	108	27
More than 5 times	84	21
Total	**400**	**100**

These data showed that most of the respondents spent 2 – 3 times during their visits in Udon Thani (38%) and 21% of the respondents used spa services more than 5 times.

Table 3: the period of spa use

Period of spa use	Amount	Percentage
Weekdays	112	28
Weekends	160	40
Holidays	96	24
Vacations	28	7
Others	4	1
Total	**400**	**100**

These data showed that most of the respondents used the spa services during weekends (40%) while 24% of them used spa during holidays and 28% used the spa service during weekdays.

Table 4: the person involved with decision to use spa

Person involved with decision to use spa	Amount	Percentage
Self	168	42
Family	76	19
Friends / Colleagues	100	25
Relatives	32	8
Others	24	6
Total	**400**	**100**

These data showed that the respondents were self-made decision to use proper spa service (42%). While friends and colleagues have influenced to the respondents about 25% and family involved with the decision at 19%.

Table 5: the expense use in each spa usage

Expense in each spa usage ($)	Amount	Percentage
Below 33 $	200	50
34 – 50 $	28	7
51 – 66 $	64	16
67 – 83 $	48	12
84 – 100 $	36	9
Above 100	24	6
Total	**400**	**100**

*** Currency was adapted from Thai baht (฿)**

These data showed that the respondents spent below 33$ for spa expense (50%) and the highest spending for spa usage was only 6% (around 100$ and over)

Table 6: the spa service usage

Spa service usage	Amount	Percentage
Foot massage	196	49
Body massage	40	10
Beauty massage	24	6
Aroma therapy massage	132	33
Others	8	2
Total	**400**	**100**

These data showed that most of the respondents with 49% of them used "Foot massage", while "Aroma therapy massage" was with 33% of the respondents.

Table 7: how the respondents collect information

Information Collective	Amount	Percentage
Radio	12	3
Television	28	7
Publication	96	24
Relatives / Friends	72	18
Travel Agencies	4	1
Internet	188	47
Others	0	0
Total	**400**	**100**

These table drew out how the respondents received and collected the spa, spa service, spa product and spa shop from the internet at most (47%), via publication at 24% and word-of-mouth from friends and relatives at 18%.

Table 8: what the spa type the respondents used

Spa Type	Amount	Percentage
Club Spa	**12**	**3**
Destination Spa	**20**	**5**
Medical Spa	**4**	**1**
Hotel & Resort Spa	**100**	**25**
Day Spa	**256**	**64**
Home Spa	**8**	**2**
Others	**0**	**0**
Total	**400**	**100**

The respondents selected the spa in the day spa at most (64%), use hotels & resorts spas at 25%, with destination spa at 5%, home spa at 2%, club spa at 3% and do it at home at 2%.

CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to study the tourists' behavior to use spa in Udon Thani, Thailand.

It was used Kotler (1996) to be the theory setting to find the answer about the tourists' behaviors in spa use and will discussed that the tourists who visit the spas in Udon Thani have had the pre-purchased process to find the support information in order to decide to use a spa service as well as the spa entrepreneur also find what the customer's want in order to develop the service to meet the customer's satisfaction.

1. The target consumers (who) means the 400 tourists who used spa in Udon Thani, Thailand were 77% females (308 persons) which consistent to Sitthichai Thammasaneh (2011)[..] has studied the spa

management in Chonburi province and Wannida Chua-in et al., (2013) studied the behaviors of Thai and international tourists who use the spa service in Hua-Hin, Thailand. These revealed that females are more likely to use spa more than males it may because of females are tend to care their appearance, internal and health, which spa can treat body and mind with aroma therapy to relieve stress and health rejuvenation.

The respondents are aged between 31 – 40 years old (160 persons) about 40%, they are assumed at young adult and middle-aged, with Ericson's theory; this group is the adults who have started working and can get stressed easy so they tend to use spa to relieve stress especially people who have high education and high position whom they use brains and concentrate with work. This group has enough income to use the spa service. The 52% of the respondents were graduated from the university (208 persons), some of them are own business or do the commerce (20%), their incomes are around 501 – 666 $ and 50% of them reside in North-eastern region of Thailand.

2. The service of spa (what); in this research found out that most of the objectives of spa using for health & wellness tourism which also consistent to the study of Sitthichai Thammasaneh (2011) because the work led the stress so people want to get relax at spa at least 2 – 3 times a month, most of them spent time during weekends according to Sunisa Pensub et al. (2012) had studied the satisfaction of Thai tourists about the health tourism: a case study of Raksawarin Hotsprings in Ranong province, they spent time at the spa at least 1 hour with self-made decision. Orathai Jantaro et al. (2012) also studied the tourists' behaviors who have used spa in Surat Thani province that the tourists spent money at the spa about 33 $ at once and most likely to use the foot massage service which inconsistent with the study of Sippasinee Baray (2012) who had studied the marketing factors affecting the Thai spa use from Chinese tourists that they like the body massage with aroma therapy more than other services, the beauty treatments, foot massage, yoga, meditation, spa cuisine and detox were the following.

3. Where: the tourists use Day Spa and Hotel & Resort Spa because they are convenient to travel and also reliable from the tourists' perception process; it may be from the reputation or word-of-mouth which received the spa services information from the internet or other media. According to Chuchai Smithigrai (2010), stated that the perception is the process that an individual able to choose, organize and translate into some meanings and consistency so the consumers choose the spa that fit their wants and needs. Sippasinee Baray (2012) and Suteeraporn Untimanont (2010) stated that the consumers satisfy with the inner city location which easy to travel to use the service.

4. When: the tourists use the service during weekends and spend at least 1 hour. According to Sunisa Pensub (2013), the tourists satisfied with the 1 hour service.

5. Why: the tourists use spa service because of the work stress and want to relax in a short period of time. Agreeably with Sippasinee Baray (2014) noted that the Chinese tourists had psychology factors from the stress then they were using spa service.

6. Whom: the tourists use spa service with self-made decision consistency with Sigmand Freud's theory about 'ego' which confident with self.

7. How: the tourists use the social networking service and telephone communication to reserve the service which agreeable with the study of Sippasinee Baray (2014) that the Chinese tourists were likely to reserve the services via phone communication more than walk-ins, they were unlikely to use the travel agency to reserve their spa services. According to Kritika Kongsompong (2010) stated that if the entrepreneurs can manage their business to meet the needs of customers as much as they can, they can compete in the market and be the leader because they will deliver efficient service to the customers.

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