



Tourism demand in Nakhon Pathom for the development of revisit tourism destinations in Nakhon Pathom and the connected areas

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were to: 1) study tourism demand of tourists in Nakhon Pathom Province; 2) study revisit demand in tourist attractions and 3) find out tourism the patterns for the development of revisit tourism destinations in Nakhon Pathom Province and its connected areas. It was a quantitative study of behavior and demand of tourists. The data then were analyzed by percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Regarding the result, it is found that: 1) the samples are more of female gender and are single of age between 35 – 44. They live in Bangkok. They are government employees with monthly income of 5,001 – 10,000 baht. Moreover, most tourists travel in the country approximately 5 times a year and often travel during the school-off. They traveled to Nakhon Pathom for the second or third time to pay respect to the Buddha images and they decided to travel based on opinions from their friends and their relatives. In addition, regarding the expectation of tourist attractions, they focused on the convenience of travel. They organized the trip by themselves, travelled by private car, and bought food souvenir. Furthermore, demand for revisit tourism in Nakhon Pathom has been rising due to tourism factors, tourists' opinions, and tourism demand in the province. The average expenditure is 2,001 – 3,000 baht. It is also found that tourism demand was at a very high level. Considering the various aspects, it is found that tourists had the highest demand in service quality, tourism activities, and restaurants and bars. Moreover, from the tourists' opinions, it is found that the most suitable tourism pattern for Nakhon Pathom was leisure tourism, followed by agro-tourism, and spiritual tourism. Most tourists traveled for spiritual purposes, e.g., to make merit, learn about the history, and learn about the local way of life. Finally, the research found 3 patterns for revisit tourism, including 1) leisure tourism in local community, 2) agro-tourism, and 3) spiritual tourism. The finding leads to the creation of tourism activities, for example, those concerning spiritual tourism, which can properly respond to tourists' demand in Nakhon Pathom Province.

Keywords: Tourism demand, tourist behavior and revisit tourism.

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1. Introduction

At present, tourism is relatively one of the major economic factors of many countries, especially Thailand. According to the United World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), it is estimated that, by 2020, the number of the international tourist will have grown to 1,600 million, with more than the cumulative amount of 100 trillion baht spent worldwide [1]. In Thailand, it is found that tourism contributes one third to the national income, amounting to more than 100 billion baht each year. Since 1982, tourism has been playing the major role in Thai economy. In 2015, for example, tourism earned the country as much as 3.54 trillion baht [2]. The importance of tourism seems to grow more and more eminent, considering that new various

purposes of traveling have emerged, for instance, traveling to learn more about the local; and many tourism attractions positively responded to them. The reason why Thailand is one of the most visited countries finds the answer in its tourism resources, which can be developed into many patterns of tourism, for example, nature tourism, historical tourism, and cultural tourism. In addition, it is undeniably known that Thai people are friendly and tourist-welcoming, and their exotic way of life can greatly interest international tourists. The idea of Thai uniqueness was also promoted by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, running the campaign "Discover Thainess" [1]. A tourism strategy was devised accordingly, focusing on three objectives: 1) to create tourism management sustainability, 2) to add more value to the place of tourism, and 3) to raise awareness of the community identity and encourage local people's participation [3].

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Thereby, tourism management needs to take the three objectives into account, creating a co-learning space between the locals and the visitors, promoting sustainability, and developing a way to increase the tourism value, regarding economic, social, cultural, and ecological aspects. This will help create sustainable Thai-unique resources of tourism. However, a number of tourist attractions are facing problems at present, e.g., the lack of proper preservation and maintenance of tourism resources, the management with no regard to sustainability, as well as the external factors, for example, gloomy economic prospect, turbulent political climate, and natural disasters. All of these impose negative effects upon the country's tourism. It is agreed, then, that to put emphasis solely on the financial benefit of tourism can be detrimental to the community and any related agencies [4]. Thereby, many authorities and agencies decided to develop the mutual learning of the locals and the visitors and a way to increase the value of each tourist attraction, regarding economic, social, cultural, and ecological aspects, in order to advance towards sustainable tourism and promote repeat visitation.

Nakhon Pathom Province is notable for its natural, historical, and cultural tourism resources, from which many places of tourism and tourism activities emerged [5]. In 2015, the number of Thai tourists visiting the province was 3,011,331, generating the income per visitor as 3,837.42 baht. In 2016, the number was 3,564,887 and 4,804.55 baht, respectively [4]. Despite the income, the province suffered from the negative effects of tourism, for instance, the decadence of tourism resources, the raise of the living cost, the change in the local way of life, all of which are especially due to the lack of understanding and communication between the locals and the visitors. The National Tourism Development Plan 2012-2016 holds a study in tourism trend and situation which focuses on common tourism problems and resource sustainability. Five key points are emphasized: the development of infrastructure and facilities, the development and preservation of a tourist attraction, the development of tourism-supporting products and services, the development of the visitor's trust and confidence, and the collaboration between the government agencies, the private agencies, and the local authorities in tourism management. This aims to improve the standard of tourism, encourage repeat visitation, as well as establish the tourism routes, one of which connects Kanchanaburi Province of Thailand, and Myanmar, while the other route connects several adjacent central provinces such as Nakhon Pathom, Ratchaburi, Samut Songkram, and Kanchanaburi, with the help of the construction of a new motor way. These routes are bound to be affected by tourism. In order to respond to the change in the purpose of traveling, a study becomes necessary. It will help to analyze tourism-related factors, such as demand and supply, to help

develop the travel destinations in Nakhon Pathom and the nearby provinces into a place of repeat visitation. Tourism management will be improved, which helps to cater to each group of visitor's needs. The study findings will seek to boost cooperation between the locals and the visitors, add new values to tourism, simultaneously develop and preserve the place of tourism, and create the open space for the visitors and the locals to learn from each other, all of which will mutually result in sustainable tourism in the end.

2. Research Objectives

2.1 To study tourism demand of tourists in Nakhon Pathom.

2.2 To study revisit demand in tourist attractions in Nakhon Pathom.

2.3 To determine the tourism patterns for the development of revisit tourism destinations in Nakhon Pathom and the connected areas.

3. Literature Review

3.1 *The idea of tourism demand*

"Tourism demand" as the need of tourists in using services and purchasing products in tourist attractions [6]. The demand varies in degree depending on the season of the year, length of the stay, economic climate, personal experience, current trend, and modes of transportation available. Furthermore, it divided tourism demand into three groups [7], i.e., 1) actual demand: tourists who wish and can actually visit the place of tourism and have high payability; 2) potential demand: tourists who wish to visit the place of tourism but lack money, time, or viable transportation. This group can turn into Actual Demand with the aid of marketing promotions and the improved availability of transportation facilities; 3) deferred demand: people who are not yet interested in traveling due to the lack of information and other support factors (money, time, traveling management). It added that tourism demand is related to the willingness of a person of sufficient purchasing power to travel to another place, buy goods, and use traveling-related services. Thereby, the rise and fall in the quantities of the product and the tourism-related services will reflect the rise and fall in tourism demand [8]. To summarize, tourism demand refers to the degree of a person's willingness to purchase products and use tourism-related services, and that person must hold sufficient purchasing power and wish to buy products and use tourism-related services. The factors which make tourism demand vary include: 1) push factors: technological advancement, income, lifestyle, well-being, occupation, increase in leisure, transportation development, communication, and information exchange; and 2) pull factors: readiness of tourism supply, tourism resources, service charges, rules and regulations, safety, and the media.

3.2 Tourists' behavior and motivation

Tourists' motivation will help to create more effective tourism and revisit tourism plans. A study on motivation then becomes necessary for a study on satisfaction, decision, and marketing [9]. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to explain the travel motivation of humans as follows: 1) physical needs, 2) safety needs, 3) social needs, 4) esteem needs, and 5) self-actualization needs [10]. Apart from that, a study by Wansamon Jantadit [11] talked about the factors which affect tourists' behavior and motivation. The author categorized the factors into two groups, that is, 1) internal factors: health, income, attitude, and experience, and 2) external factors: political situation, economic climate, as well as obtained information [10]. The information sources could be divided onto three groups as follows: 1) personal sources; 2) commercial sources, including advertisement, exhibition, and a salesperson; and 3) public sources, including travel articles and tourist attraction reviews.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Population: 3,564,887 Thai tourists.

4.2 Sample groups: 400 Thai tourists visiting Nakhon Pathom, selected by accidental sampling.

4.3 Research instruments: a questionnaire addressing tourism demand in Nakhon Pathom to help with the development of revisit tourism destinations in Nakhon Pathom and the connected areas.

4.5 Content analysis following the objectives of this research.

5. Results

5.1 Tourism demand: general information, travel behaviors, and demand of tourists

Regarding the sample groups, it is found that 62.50% of them are female, 62.50% of them are single, 27% of them are 35 – 44 years old, 37.50% of them live in Bangkok, 41% of them work for government agencies, 19.50% of them earn 5,001 – 10,000 baht per month, 51.25% of them travel within Thailand fewer than five times a year, 46.75% of them travel during summer vacation when schools are close, 50.75% of them came to visit Nakhon Pathom for the second or third time, 51.75% of them visited Nakhon Pathom for religious purposes, 21.75% of them chose Nakhon Pathom as their destination based on the information received from their relatives; as for tourists' expectations in Nakhon Pathom, 26% of them focused on tourist attractions, 22.50%, restaurants and bars, and 19% a place to stay; as for what motivated tourists to visit the province, 24.75% of them said it was about transportation convenience, 23%, financial convenience, and 22.50%, the locals' hospitality; 38.50% of them organized the trip themselves, 87.50% of them used private car to travel, 55.50% of those who stayed

overnight chose to stay at a hotel or a resort, 75.50% of them contacted the resort and arranged the reservation themselves, and 37.25% of the sample groups chose to buy food and beverage as souvenir.

5.2 Revisit demand of tourists

Regarding the sample groups, it is found that 77.25% of them chose not to revisit Nakhon Pathom. Still, 50% of them rated their trip very satisfactory. 27.25% of them spent 2,001 – 3,000 baht on average, and 25% of them spent 1,001 – 2,000 baht on average. The overall tourism demand of tourists is considered high. It is also found that tourists focused on service quality the most ($\bar{X} = 4.18$), followed by tourism activities ($\bar{X} = 4.14$) and food quality ($\bar{X} = 4.05$). Regarding service quality, it is found that tourists focus on service provider's attendance the most ($\bar{X} = 4.32$), followed by the adequacy of tourism staff ($\bar{X} = 4.27$) and staff's hospitality ($\bar{X} = 4.19$). Regarding tourism activities, it is found that tourists focused on activity duration and participation convenience the most ($\bar{X} = 4.22$), followed by the interestingness of the activity ($\bar{X} = 4.19$) and the allowance of visitor participation ($\bar{X} = 4.14$). Regarding restaurants and bars, it is found that tourists focus on the adequacy of restaurants and bars the most ($\bar{X} = 4.28$), followed by the suitable price of food and beverage ($\bar{X} = 4.19$) and the service ($\bar{X} = 4.16$). Regarding the tourists' opinion on the travel pattern most suitable for Nakhon Pathom, it is found that 22.50% of them thought that leisure travel was the most suitable one, followed by agro-tourism, 20%, and spiritual tourism, 15%. Regarding the choice of a place to stay, 40% of the sample groups chose the place that was near a tourist attraction, 20.75% chose the place by reputation, and 13.50%, by price. Regarding the modes of traveling, 84.75% used a private car, 5.25% used local transportation service providers such as two-rowed buses and auto rickshaws, and 1.25% use public transportation or a bus. Regarding the activity during the travel, 55.75% went to visit religious sites to pray and make merit, 22% visit historical sites to learn more about the province's history, and 9.25% sought to learn about the local way of life. The most used facility and service was phone/internet, 61%, followed by public toilets, 20.75%, and a guide, 8.50%.

5.3 Travel pattern for the development of revisit tourism destinations in Nakhon Pathom and the connected areas

Three patterns are determined, that is, 1) leisure tourism in a local community, 2) agro-tourism, and 3) spiritual tourism, all of which were adapted and provided with tourism activities as follows:

5.3.1 Leisure tourism in a local community: Khlong Mahasawat and Khlong Lat Eetan Communities

There are nine activities:

- 1) Visit Miss Usa's lotus farm, where tourists can row a boat in a pool of lotus and gather them at will.
- 2) Visit a fruit orchard with the owner guiding and informing tourists of interesting information.
- 3) Learn how to plant orchids.
- 4) Learn how to make lotion, soap, and noodle sauce from baby jackfruits.
- 5) See the demonstration of traditional rice cracker making; tourists visiting Khlong Mahasawat Community will be given an opportunity to make the snack.
- 6) Ride a railcar viewing the local way of life; the locals along the railway are mostly farmers who plant riceberry, tend a fruit orchard, and grow rice.
- 7) Visit the renowned pomelo grove of Nakhon Chai Si District. The most grown pomelo varieties are khaow nampueng, khaow tongdee, and khaow pen. The grove was built in 1981.
- 8) Learn about the organic way to grow food.
- 9) Buy a low-price souvenir such as lime and pomelo.

5.3.2 *Agro-tourism: Bang Lane District*

There are four activities:

- 1) Enjoy the fresh morning air at Red Lotus Floating Market. Row boat and a rower service are available.
- 2) View a variety of food and beverage nearby. Tourists are highly recommended to taste the savory lotus petal wraps at RED LOTUS Caf?.
- 3) Learn about the preservation method of more than 1,200 Thai herbs, including the rare species such as *Wrightia sirikitiae* and *Bauhinia sirindhorniae*.
- 4) Take a tour to study the work of Lam Bua Agriculture Group. This provides tourists with an opportunity to visit their farms and fields as well as to learn practical techniques in growing plants.

5.3.3 *Spiritual tourism: Nakhon Pathom City*

There are five activities:

- 1) Visit the Phra Pathom Chedi Temple and pray to Phra Ruang Rojanarit, the tutelary holy being of the province, and Phra Phuttha Narachet, the sacred buddha image widely revered.
- 2) Pay respect to Phra Rahoo at the Sisa Thong Temple.
- 3) Visit the Bang Phra Temple, known for yantra tattooing.
- 4) Visit the Raikhing Temple to worship Luang Phor Wat Raikhing, the buddha image respected by the locals. One of the tourist attractions of this temple is the merit making method by feeding carps with milk.
- 5) Pay respect to the large walking buddha image which is held the most exquisite in Phutthamonthon District.

That there are 3 patterns and 18 activities meet needs of tourists who will revisit in Nakhon Pathom province.

6. Conclusion

From the study of tourism demand of tourists in Nakhon Pathom Province, it is found that the sample groups are mostly female, single, and 35-44 years old. They live in Bangkok and work as government employees, earning 5,001 – 10,000 baht a month. Most of the tourists travel in Thailand fewer than 5 times a year and like to travel during summer vacation when schools are close. Many visited Nakhon Pathom for the second or third time with religious purposes. They decided to come to the province based on the information received by their friends or their relatives. They focused on the tourist attraction the most. What motivated them to visit Nakhon Pathom was the convenience in traveling. They organized the trip themselves and traveled by cars. The most popular souvenir was food and beverage. Regarding demand on repeat visitation, opinions on tourism in Nakhon Pathom, and general tourism demand, it is found that many people rated their trip very satisfactory. The money spent on average is 2,001 – 3,000 baht per person. Also, there were tourism demand in many aspects. Tourists focused on the quality of tourism-related services the most, followed by tourism activities and restaurants and bars. Apart from that, tourists believed the most suitable pattern for travel in Nakhon Pathom was leisure tourism, followed by agro-tourism and spiritual tourism. Most of the tourists chose to stay overnight in the province, choosing the place by their location and tourist attractions nearby. The most popular activity was to visit a temple and make merit, followed by to learn about local history and to learn about the local way of life.

Furthermore, three suitable tourism patterns are determined: 1) leisure tourism in a community, 2) agro-tourism, and 3) spiritual tourism. The research team attempted to encourage repeat visitation in Nakhon Pathom by devising tourism activities in many places. This can help to distribute tourists to the connected areas. Also, it is found that tourists were more interested in activities concerning faith and spirituality.

7. Discussion

Overall, Thai tourists travel to Nakhon Pathom for leisure purposes. More and more people are finding desired information by themselves and have expectations for tourist attractions in the province. One of the factors which help them to choose this as their destination is the affordable price of traveling. Popular souvenir includes food and beverage. However, most tourists choose not to come back in the year after. The reason seems to be that, although most tourists visit many places of attractions in the province, they do not have many activities to do. It is essential, then, to add new values to a tourist attraction and develop a variety of activity to help with this problem. The institute for

small and medium enterprise development [12] suggested the same thing: in this era where people compete with creativity and idea, value creation is the core strategy to promote competitiveness in tourism industry. In addition, value creation differs from value added: it places importance on the consumer, raising the value of a product or service with creative force drawn from arts and culture, local wisdom, natural resources, innovation, and technology, which help people to recognize a product or service. Integrating local uniqueness into a product or service will prevent them from being easily imitated. The process to imbue a product or service with creative uniqueness is also in accordance with the creative development of tourism, which supports the variety of tourism activities and boosting the tourists' motivation for travel. The value addition to tourist attractions and the betterment in tourists' satisfaction can increase the rate of repeat visitation. Terdchai Choibamroong [13] mentioned that the value of tourism resources refers to the application of those resources goal to respond to human's demand. He divided the value into four categories: 1) local wisdom value, 2) historical value, 3) social and economic value, and 4) educational value. The same idea was expressed by Thanathon Thongkhom [14], in his study on the importance of the resources value to help with proper response to tourists' need, saying cultural value raised means financial value raised as well. It will help contribute to personal recognition, that is, the sense of connection between tourists and their place of tourism. They will not only enjoy each trip but can even find their second home in a certain place, which encourages repeat visitation.

Thai and foreign tourists find satisfaction in different places. Thai tourists focus on service quality, tourism activities, and restaurants and bars, while foreign tourists focus on the place of tourism, the place to stay, and tour package offered. The difference in external factors causes the different in the two groups' expectations. Wansamon Jantadit [11] said that the factors which affect tourists' behavior and travel motivation include 1) health: this factor directly supports the travel; for example, people like in the sample groups travel to Nakhom Pathom in order to seek relaxation; 2) income: it is another major factor which dictates the tourism pattern of each tourist and is used to roughly determine their payability [10] 3) tourists' attitude and personal predilection: tourists' emphasis on the factors which decide their place of destination naturally varies and alters from time to time, depending on their age, experience, and circumstance; and 4) experience: this factor can change a tourist's attitude, knowledge, and perception.

Regarding revisit tourism demand in Nakhon Pathom, it is found that tourists believed that the most suitable pattern of tourism for the province was leisure tourism. The popular activity of repeat visitation of Thai tourist was to visit the temple and make merit,

while that of foreign tourists was to visit a tourist attraction. Thereby, the variety of activity, the allowance of tourist participation, and the impression of local identity can encourage repeat tourism. Phuriwat De-taom [15] proposed a creative tourism development plan. The practical guideline is as follows: 1) find an identity and try to understand the value of a culture; 2) develop uniqueness; 3) analyze the marketing demand in depth; 4) add value to the tourism product; and 5) adapt and change the marketing plan when necessary. When applied, this guideline can highlight the concealed characteristics and uniqueness of tourism resources, which can be utilized in the creation of a variety of tourism activity as well as promote repeat tourism.

8. Suggestion

8.1 A further study on the promotion of special interest tourism activities in Nakhom Pathom should be conducted.

8.2 A further study on the community's potential and capability in supporting tourists should be conducted.

8.3 A further study to form the value-adding guideline for minor places of tourism in Nakhon Pathom should be conducted.

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