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1st International MICE Conference and Forum Conference Proceedings

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The logo for the 1st International MICE Conference and Forum. It features the text "1st INTERNATIONAL" at the top. Below it, the word "MICE" is written in large, colorful letters: "M" is orange, "I" is green, "C" is purple, and "E" is red. Each letter has its corresponding activity written vertically inside it: "Meeting" for M, "Incentive" for I, "Convention" for C, and "Exhibition" for E. Below "MICE" is the text "CONFERENCE AND FORUM". The entire logo is set against a background of a network diagram with nodes and lines, and a large orange geometric pattern on the left side of the page.

1st INTERNATIONAL MICE CONFERENCE AND FORUM

About Us

The 1st international MICE Forum & Conference will be held in Bangkok, Thailand from August 29 to 30, 2018. The conference will be hosted jointly by the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), University of North Texas (UNT) and MICE Academic Cluster as a strategic partner.

Objective

The main objective of the 1st international MICE Conference & Forum is to provide a platform for researchers, academicians, practitioners, as well as industrial professionals from all over the world to actively exchange, share, and challenge new ideas, applied experiences, state-of-the-art research, and case studies on MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions/Events) and/or related MICE and Events industry.

The conference invites conceptual and empirical research papers, and case studies on MICE related topics. Papers and presentations are expected to address both (but not limited in) the theoretical, methodological, and practical aspects of MICE.

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Table of Contents

	Page
A comparative case study on sustainable meetings; Gothenburg, Sweden – Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand Achiraya Promlung and Assist. Prof. Dr. Donruetai Kovathanakul	8
A Review of Religious Attributes for Halal MICE Tourism Business in Thailand Suwaluck Uansa-ard and Wisuwat Wannamakok	16
A Study of Guidelines for MICE Academic Cluster in Thailand Jantajit Thanasiri and Assist. Prof. Lt. Dr. Kaedsiri Jaroenwisan	31
Active learning activities for the MICE Introduction Course Ilada Sarttatat	42
An Investigation of Destination Images towards the MICE Industry in Thailand Jiraporn Ampornpan	49
Application for rental-space reservations to enhance service efficiency In Convention and Exhibition Center Chonkarn Chomthong and Assist. Prof. Dr. Donruetai Kovathanakul	60
Beyond the MICE Cluster: Crowdsourcing Platform for Hong Kong, the Innovation to Promoting MICE Buyer Market Experiences Assist. Prof. Dr. Donruetai Kovathanakul	70
Consumer Behavior on Ko Yo Fabric buying Nichapat Boonyarat and Nurahayati Manu	82
Employee's Job Satisfaction Motivators in Destination Management Company (DMC) in MICE industry Parinya Nakpathom, Santidhorn Pooripakdee and Assist. Prof. Lt. Dr. Kaedsiri Jaroenwisan	93
Factors influencing foreign customers on selecting Hotel for MICE in Bangkok Chatchai Sirivaneepagorn	100
Future Trend of Exhibition: ICC Hai Yai Teerawut Petkeaw, Phavinee Sukharach, Rawipas Purawattanakun and Supawee Maskeereewong	111
Key Success Factors of MICE Electronic Request for Proposal (eRFP): A Case Study of Bangkok Hotels Assist. Prof. Dr. Kom Campiranon and Dr. Sarawut Ramjan	115

Table of Contents

	Page
Sustainable MICE City Prototype Development, Chiang Rai Province Anavin Suwanna and Assist. Prof. Dr. Donruetai Kovathanakul	126
Sustainable Development for Greening Practices of MICE Industry: A Case Study of Sampran Riverside, Nakorn Prathom Province Maneerat Sukkasem and Assist. Prof. Lt. Dr. Kaedsiri Jaroenwisani	137
The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) in decision making for MICE Destination Nootchanate Kansamut and Assist. Prof. Lt. Dr. Kaedsiri Jaroenwisani	155
The Readiness of Seminar Rooms in the Hotels to Support Songkhla MICE City Yurawat Sasanon, Karuntee Kansuk, Chatchon Kasorn, Natcha Ratikonkun, and Natsuda Rittichot	172
The Efficiency of Language Communication for MICE Industry Adithep Kampangseree, Alexander Gerrard Hoare and Gina Margaret Summers	179
The Rise of Artificial Intelligence and the Fall of Employment in the Event Industry Chootham Tangjaitrong, Krittika Kunupakan and Rujipas Boonsamrej	187
The Provision of Islamic hospitality service through the lens of Muslim and Buddhist employees in the MICE industry in Southern Thailand Songsin Teerakunpisut	199
Tourist Loyalty to a local Event: A Case Study of Chiang Mai Yi Peng Festival Yu Tan and Dr. Pairach Piboonrungraj	205
Posters	
Attendees Satisfaction: Evidence from Coach the Coaches Program for MICE Industry Jensamut Khunsamut, Bodin Kransanairaviwong and Panat Janpaipruk	228
Crisis Management in Exhibition Industry: A Case Study in HaiYai Pornpimon Mitkasame, Matzee Marnya, Wilasinee Janchuay and Sirikarn Dangchoung	229
Developing Future MICE Destinations Eakarin Vanitcharoen	230

Table of Contents

	Page
Economic Impact of Thailand's MICE Industry Takerngsak Chaiyakarn	231
Guideline for Attraction on "Tourism for all concept" Evaluation, Routes of Word Tourism Day 2016: Khon Kaen Province. Wannida Sarirat, Kanittha Charoenwiphat, Nisarath Chatbubpha and Assist. Prof. Donruetai Kovathanakul	232
Sustainable MICE Khewika Sukiam and Suttima Jungsakun	233
The Beginning to Green MICE Khewika Sukiam and Varissara Sam-ang	234
The Development of Gastronomy Education Program to Prepare for Professional Chef Students in MICE Industry of Thailand Sarayuth Chaileuangleu and Assist. Prof. Dr. Preeda Chaiya	235
The Exploration of Information Resources in MICE and Event Career Opportunity Kanin Buakhwan, Thanaporn Rittirat, Sirirat Wutthisakdanon	236
The Future Meeting Thailand's 8 World Class Venue Thitiporn Pitipoompong, Patompop On-oun, Rujiranet Jongjit and Itthichai Petchjuminan	237
The Hospitality Crisis Management Practice in Five-Star Hotel Venues: A SWOT Analysis Assist. Prof. Dr. Preeda Chaiya, Teerapon Thuaenphae and Suvitcha Sritan	238
The Impact of Destination Image: Songkhla Old Town Benjaporn Saengum, Thatawan Sitapiya, Pissinee Jianbut, Panisara Pholfakfang and Sarah Anukunsat	239
The Study of MICE Customer's need for Hotel catering in Bangkok Assist. Prof. Lt. Dr. Kaedsiri Jaroenwisan, Thitirat Chobnitat, Ornphisa Prempreee, Paynuka Kwanyuen and Pichamol Jantang	240
Understanding the Needs of The Business Travelers: A Case Study in Phuket Adisit Binlaeman, Pudcharaporn Sonarod and Kanjana Saranoppakun	241



Table of Contents

	Page
An Economic Impact Assessment of a Flagship Festival in Thailand: A Case of Chiang Mai Flower Festival 2018 Pimpika Chawalit, Dr. Pairach Piboonrungrroj	242
Scale Development for Halal Meeting Service Readiness Hanteenee Charong, Dr. Pairach Piboonrungrroj	243
Estimating the Economic Impact of MICE Business, Using Input-Output Model Chanamart Intapan, Pimpika Chawalit and Dr. Pairach Piboonrungrroj	244
The Analysis of Guidelines for The Standard Preparation of The Meeting Rooms in Thailand Natthanitcha Singbura-Udom, Nug-rob Rawangkarn, Sinthawa Khamdit, Somboon Cheng, and Narongrit Neelayothin	245

A comparative case study on sustainable meetings; Gothenburg, Sweden – Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand

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Abstract

The MICE industry has an important industry to stimulate the economy of the country by generate incomes and create prosperity for the benefit of all sectors of society. The activities around meetings and other organization bring people together and offer communities an opportunity to celebrate and showcase their traditions, culture and way of life. As the major stakeholders in such activities realize the significant economic benefits of holding meetings, governments and operators are making significant capital investment in developing the necessary facilities and infrastructure to accommodate this sector of the MICE industry. While a lot of activities has a number of positive economic impacts, such as job creation and increased revenue there are also potential negative consequences. This paper need to incorporate sustainability into meeting businesses according to practical tips, and tools from Gothenburg sustainable meetings for the purpose of identifying objectives that can be used and lead for sustainable meeting. The purpose of this study based on 1) To study the context of sustainable meetings in Nakhon Ratchasima compare to Gothenburg 2) To analyze the assessment according to practical tips, and tools from Gothenburg sustainable meetings to guide Nakhon Ratchasima in order to raise the standard as sustainable meetings destination in Thailand.

Keywords: Sustainable, Meetings, Comparative, Environment, Destination, Guideline

Introduction

In 2017, the number of MICE travelers were increasing from 2016 28,854,061 to 35,326,508 domestic Meeting business travelers with the total average growth rate for all sectors from 2016 was 22.40% (Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, 2017) with the increasing growth it is shown that the industry is expanding in a positive direction in terms of economy but in the other hand the number of travelers has increased, which has given consequences for both direct and indirect of the negative environment. A direct consequence is something that immediately impacts the meetings' environment, where an indirect consequence is something that does not cause immediate damage to the meetings' environment, but rather impacts the environment negatively later (Goldblatt, 2012). There are many ways in which meetings contributes to pollution of the environment such as waste, air, water and noise which causes the greenhouse effect, gas emissions and climate change. This study examines the sustainable meeting of two cities, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand and Gothenburg, Sweden, using Gothenburg as a guide to inspire and make Nakhon Ratchasima a city in Thailand with a leading destination for sustainable meetings.

Gothenburg is a world leading destination for sustainable meetings and events. The city is a living example of sustainable urban development and is one of the world leading cities in sustainable construction, waste management and re-usable energy, and at the cutting edge of environmental certification of hotels and events. Meeting-related areas are well established in Gothenburg which contributes to reduce carbon emissions: attending a conference by eco-friendly venue services covering smart production, efficient energy consumption and technologies, recycling, waste management and sustainable event management. Transportations, all journeys have low-emission vehicles, and encourages eco-driving, run on renewable energy, walking or biking, hotel rooms in the city that are environmentally certified. These are all reasons of Gothenburg taking the title of the most sustainable city in the world.

Nakhon Ratchasima, generally known as "Korat", is the country's largest province by area, with a population of about 2.7 million who produce about 250 billion baht in GDP, the highest in Isan (Janssen, 2016). Furthermore, if Nakhon Ratchasima Geo Park is being approved by UNESCO regarding the roadmap in 2020, the city will be named as an UNESCO Triple Crowns number fourth in the world followed by Italy, South Korea and China. The city will become a more attractive place to visit, work in and invest in. Nowadays, the level of competition and choice of products is growing rapidly in the meetings' industry, therefore the city must take the approach of considering every aspect of recruiting meeting to the city as a highly potential destination to intend, adapt and implement the city's sustainability.

The aim of this paper is to study the context of sustainable meetings in Nakhon Ratchasima compare to Gothenburg and analyze the assessment according to practical tips and tools from Gothenburg sustainable meetings to guide Nakhon Ratchasima in order to raise the standard as sustainable meetings destination in Thailand.

Literature Review

The article study literature review of sustainable meetings, standards and comparing them with Gothenburg implement for the long-term sustainable development of the destination.

MICE Industry

MICE (Meetings, Incentive Travels, Conventions, and Exhibitions). It is one of the fastest growing industries in Thailand, which contributes enormous revenues to Thailand. The components of the MICE industry can be explained as follows:

Meetings refers to a gathering of 10 or more participants for minimum of four hours (Events Industry Council, 2018) in one place to motivate participants, conduct business, share ideas and learn (Convention Industry Council, 2012).

Incentive includes leisure trips emphasizing pleasure and excitement and may appear to have little or no connection to business. However, when offered to employees, they become incentive travel. Often associated with hard work, business objectives and corporate effectiveness, employees on incentive travel do not need to pay as the company will do so on their behalf.

Conventions is frequently employed interchangeably with other terms such as ‘conference’ or ‘congress’. Different interpretations given to these three terms have blurred their definitions. In addition, while ‘conference’ may be a preferred term in a certain region, other regions may prefer to use ‘convention’ or ‘congress.’ In the US, the word ‘congress’ is not used for general corporate meetings as it refers to the American parliamentary meeting, while in other regions, congress means a big meeting.

Exhibitions can generally be portrayed as “presentations of products and services to an invited audience with the object of inducing a sale or informing the visitors”. (Exhibitions Liaison Council, 1995). Exhibitions are an effective marketing tool for many firms as they offer three-dimensional product advertising in that goods can be seen, touched and assessed. Participating in exhibitions can boost sales and allow exhibitors to present products or services directly to the public who may be both consumers and business owners within the same industry.

Sustainable Meetings

The growing popularity of travelers to attend meetings are recognized as making a significant contribution to MICE industry and in particular to host destinations. In many cases meetings extend the length of stay by visitors to a destination. The meetings attended by visitors also encourage a positive impact through cultural exchange and the building of friendships and business contacts (McCabe, 2000). However, many risks are associated with meetings and this may result in negative economic, environmental social and cultural impacts (Dwyer et al., 2000; McCann and Thompson, 1992; Tyrrell and Johnston, 2001). Meetings tend to have both direct and indirect influences on the environment. A direct influence is something that immediately impacts the event environment, where an indirect influence is something that does not cause immediate

damage to the meetings environment, but rather influences the environment negatively later (Goldblatt, 2012). Meetings will often exploit the environment through the misuse of resources, such as energy and waste, which in many cases leads to a delineation of a destination's image. For example, a 5-day conference with 8,500 attendees can produce 24 tons of waste and consume 88,461 kWh of electricity; they can use 210,800 plastic plates, 297,500 paper napkins, 255,000 plastic cups and 306,000 water bottles (Gračan et al, 2010). Due to the large amounts of products consumed during meetings, it makes one of the largest sector contributors to the waste stream within the hospitality industry. Therefore, sustainable meetings have to adopting business strategies and activities that meet the needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders today while protecting, sustaining, and enhancing the human and natural resources intended as practices aimed at minimizing the detrimental impact on the environment in terms of both resource depletion and pollution" (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 1994, Tzschentke, Kirk, & Lynch, 2008). Thus, sustainable meetings lead to the management of resources including travel and transport, purchasing and waste, food and beverage, water, energy, accommodation, hosts, and contribute to the local community to meet the preserving natural resource.

Gothenburg Convention Bureau

By 2021 Gothenburg will be a destination that sets an international example by constantly challenging every aspect of sustainability. Göteborg & Co works closely with their partners to move sustainability efforts further. Producing events in-house gives them the opportunity to use events as platforms for innovation and testing of sustainable activities and processes. All company-controlled events hold a third-party certification. Meetings operators and rights holders are challenged and encouraged to develop their sustainability performance further when planning an event in Gothenburg. Gothenburg Convention Bureau offers advice on sustainability issues for meeting planners that can encourage Nakhon Ratchasima to certify the meeting and recommend Thailand environmental base environmental diploma. There are some tips and tool on how to reach sustainability goals.

The Methodology

The methodology revised and review sustainable meeting following the Gothenburg convention bureau criteria as a guideline to support sustainability initiatives structure, engage all sponsors, partners, suppliers and contractors and involve their sustainability initiatives in the delivery and operation of the meetings and develop initiate collaborations that can contribute the effectiveness and benefit the potential of the meetings develop in Nakhon Ratchasima. Content analysis were conducted to collect materials for this study, including literature reviews, books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to a particular issue. The information included adopted performance, activities and achieved progress and was categorized in order to identify sustainable meetings comparison.

Results

The result of this study to identify a clearly understanding, assessment and compares of sustainable meeting, social and environmental sustainability commitment and performance of Gothenburg, Sweden to adopting for Nakhon Ratchasima and encourage stakeholders who relate with sustainable meetings such as government, entrepreneur, meeting travelers with particular importance of creating the new development for Nakhon Ratchasima as a result for meetings sustainability by stand up presentation with the best practices as following:

Travel and transport: Nakhon Ratchasima should encourage local people use public transportation to the destination if possible and encourage participants to do the same, walking and biking and encourage participants to offset meeting's greenhouse emissions by their travel.

Purchasing and waste: Nakhon Ratchasima should encourage the stakeholders to have purchases plan based on minimizing – reuse – recycle and have a plan for leftover material that easy to sort waste. Local products should meet eco and ethical labelling standards. Local suppliers and focus on experiences as giveaways.

Food and beverage: Nakhon Ratchasima should serve vegetarian options, locally produced and seasonal products which are ecologically and ethically labelled. serve bottled water in glasses or their own bottle, communicate and information the participants about serving and where the food and drink comes from, allergies and ingredients simplify food choices for many people.

Accommodation: Nakhon Ratchasima should encourage hotels and accommodations in term of eco or green label standards.

Hosts: Nakhon Ratchasima should hire local hosts, ensure that hosts have good working conditions and are insured, be sure to have a wide diversity among hosts.

Communication and marketing: Nakhon Ratchasima should inform participants about sustainability ambitions and sustainable actions, priorities digital communication and marketing, involve and challenge participants to contribute to a sustainable meeting.

Accessible to as many people as possible: Nakhon Ratchasima should have meeting plans based on accessibility criteria regarding transport, facility, food and beverages, accommodation, communication, etc. Accessibility entails making it possible for people who have difficulty hearing, difficulty seeing, difficulty moving, intolerance toward certain substances, difficulty interpreting, processing and conveying information to participate at meetings.

Contribute to the local community: Nakhon Ratchasima should encourage participants to get involved in collections for local community or environmental organizations, share important knowledge and do outreach activities with local organizations and ask the meeting facility to donate surplus food and materials.



Discussion

Sustainable meetings are no longer just a trend, instead they are transforming into standard within the industry which is why it being so imperative for meetings to be properly educated about what sustainability means. This paper outlines some of the practices that meetings should implement at both the micro and macro level. Implementation of these practices will help to increase from the bottom line as seen with Nakhon Ratchasima, sustainable meetings practices can have a significant effect on the revenue of a venue, not just in savings but in business generated as well. Nowadays, planners and companies are becoming more interested in sustainable practices, due to the fact that meetings are often such a huge producer of waste. Therefore, the planners and companies becoming more invested in the environment and concerned about reducing waste to avoid the risk that can be losing their business. Based off the above literature, it is clear that a plan for meetings are needed that can set them up with the proper steps necessary to reduce their carbon footprint and improve business. This paper not only guide for the city, but to influence what the MICE city in Thailand will demand from their host cities and to present the learning objectives that were identified, as a result of this process in the future which shows the power of their transformation.

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A Review of Religious Attributes for Halal MICE Tourism Business in Thailand.

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Abstract

Thailand has a potential natural resources and excellent business facilities. With the help of Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, Thailand is being promoted as a hub for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Events (MICE) in an Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN). This study focuses on the review of Religious Attributes for Halal MICE Tourism Business in Thailand. Thailand is one of the supply centers for certified Halal products in Thailand. This study suggests that both government and private sectors involved Halal tourism business should work together to enhance the effectiveness of Halal MICE and standardize the religious-based facilities for Muslim visitors from all over the world. Besides, the findings also emphasize the determination to set administrative standard for a sustainable Halal MICE tourism business according to the literature review and found that religious attributes and MICE Tourism for Muslim participants can be categorized into 6 topics which are Hotels meeting the religious needs of patrons, Places of worship, Availability of Halal food, Banning of alcohol consumption and gambling, Sexual permissiveness, and dress code. This research could be a good implication for MICE tourism businesses in Thailand and also provide practical policy implications for boosting Halal MICE tourism worldwide.

Keyword: Halal Tourism, MICE Tourism, Halal MICE, Religious Attributes, Thailand, Review

Introduction

According to Ministry of Tourism and Sports, the Muslim population in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is about 240 million, which is a huge and growing market for tourism, especially from Indonesia and Malaysia which are home to the majority of Muslims in the region. Beyond the region, In Thailand context, Thailand has six-million-strong Muslim population with the fast growing range of Muslim-friendly products and services which are playing an important role in enlarge number of tourists and visitors from all around the world. As of the April,

2017 flight schedule, Thailand had more than 730 weekly flights from cities in 17 Muslim-majority countries. It is a big number that much more than any other countries in Asia. In this sense, it also gives visa-free and/or visa-on-arrival facilities to citizens of 12 Muslim-majority countries. Consequently, visitors from the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are the top average daily spenders, according to 2015 statistics published by the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

Halal tourism becomes a popular term in Thailand; this market remarkably grows in Southeast Asia and Europe. In this sense, it creates a massive amount of spending worldwide especially, Thailand. With a large number of Muslim tourists in Thailand, the Thai Halal tourism industry maintains its focus to provide more facilities for Muslim travelers. This way, according to Tourism Authority of Thailand, figures will reflect the growth of the niche industry. Thus, to serving tourists well, the service industry players are keen to accommodate tourists so that their needs are met with regards to dining, prayer time and activities. Therefore, tourism and religion can also impact on tourist behavior. For instance, religion influences the choice of destination, tourist product preferences, and the offering of religion related opportunities and facilities to tourists. Similar to other tourism subgroups, religious tourism is seen more in the context of the current competitive environment, in which the tourism and hospitality industries are constantly searching for new customer segments. In this context, the tourism industry often inhibits a competitive relationship, where tourists feel they have no other alternative than to compromise on their spiritual beliefs in favor of a tourist experience. Instead, tourism and religion should pursue a complementary if not co-habitual relationship. For this purpose, accommodating the religious needs of any faith and further studies addressing these needs, are required. However, there are some limitations in both government and private sectors in operating Halal MICE tourism business. For instance, Al Meroz hotel in Bangkok offers religious services and guidance to Muslims. Also, the accommodations of the hotel have been especially built to ensure the comfort and well-being of the Muslim guests. In the field of medical tourism, lots of hospitals in Bangkok are setting up facilities for Muslim patients such as Bumrungrad International Hospital, Bangkok Hospital, and etc. Overall, Thailand looks all set for developing Halal tourism in line with the government's plans which created revenue for the country dramatically. In addition, according to Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2017, Thailand was ranked 2nd in Muslim-friendly destination in the Non-OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation). This was in accordance with the forecast by Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) in 2015 stating that Thailand has the potential to become the Halal tourism hub in the Asia-Pacific region compare to Singapore.

The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Events (MICE) tourism business is growing rapidly in Thailand. International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) stated in the international meetings in 2013 and ranked Thailand 29th globally in terms of the number of international meetings held, and 7th in Asia Pacific. Bangkok was ranked 20th among cities

worldwide and 4th in Asia Pacific, follow Singapore, Seoul and Beijing. (Thailand Conference and Exhibition Bureau-TCEB, 2015). The total number of visitors to Thailand has grown rapidly over the past 20 years from around eight million arrivals in 1998 to an estimated over 35 million in 2017. For 2018, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) forecasts revenue of 3.1 trillion baht (US\$ 9.1 billion) in tourism revenue. Moreover, Thailand's cities, beaches, and hospitality industry have received numerous awards in recent years. Featuring many popular tourist and MICE destinations, including Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Pattaya, Phuket, and Khon Kaen, Thailand receives praise from both media and MICE organizations for its outstanding service and infrastructure. Thailand receives more than 25 awards for international travel destination ("Destination Awards"), including Number 1 rankings for weddings, spas, food, families, international conventions, golfing, exhibition and conventions bureau, and both all-around best city (Bangkok) and country. Moreover, Thailand also receives awards for serving business travelers ("Business Venues Awards") which include Number 1 rankings for travel agencies, business hotels, and meetings and convention hotels (Pattaya's PEACH)(Thailand Convention and exhibition Bureau, 2017).

As such, with all above availabilities, religious attributes for Halal MICE Tourism Business in Thailand should be studied intensively in order to examine what if Thailand is really ready to welcome Muslim visitors, especially Muslim businesses and organizations to hold meetings, conferences and events and improve the Muslim tourism standard. However, the objective of this review is appropriate religious attributes for strengthening Halal MICE tourism business of Thailand and provide implication on the awareness of religious practice that complies to the halal regulations. In this sense, this paper is trying to provide an in depth look at religious attributes for Halal MICE tourism that published in the literature in order to identifying the possible practices and gaps that require for further research.

Research Methodology

Among the hundreds of articles published in the MICE Halal tourism area each year. The major challenge in the compilation of the articles analyzed was to identify those publications that referred to the implications for Thailand's MICE tourism. The papers often use more specific words such as Islam, Halal, food, drink, exhibition, and meeting which make a common search more difficult. Thus, just a keyword search was not sufficient for data collection for this research. A detailed and manual analysis was necessary. The protocol used to define the sample is described as follows;

1. Only studies reporting about MICE, Religion (e.g. Islam), and tourism were included.
2. Only papers from indexed journals and peer reviews from Science Direct website were evaluated. Thus, academic publications such as theses, dissertations, and chapters of books were all excluded.

3. Only papers written in English and with keywords in English.

The first search returned hundreds of articles, most research outside of the MICE tourism and Halal practices area are excluded . Only the first 5 pages with 25 works per page were considered. This step required reading the abstracts carefully and, often, it was also necessary to consult the full text of the article. Therefore, 40 papers were considered good fits for the next step. Next, defined the period spanning the publications: from 1980 to2016. This timeline was organized into five to avoid the bias of possible results of the searches. And then received 30 papers. It can be shown in the figure1 below.

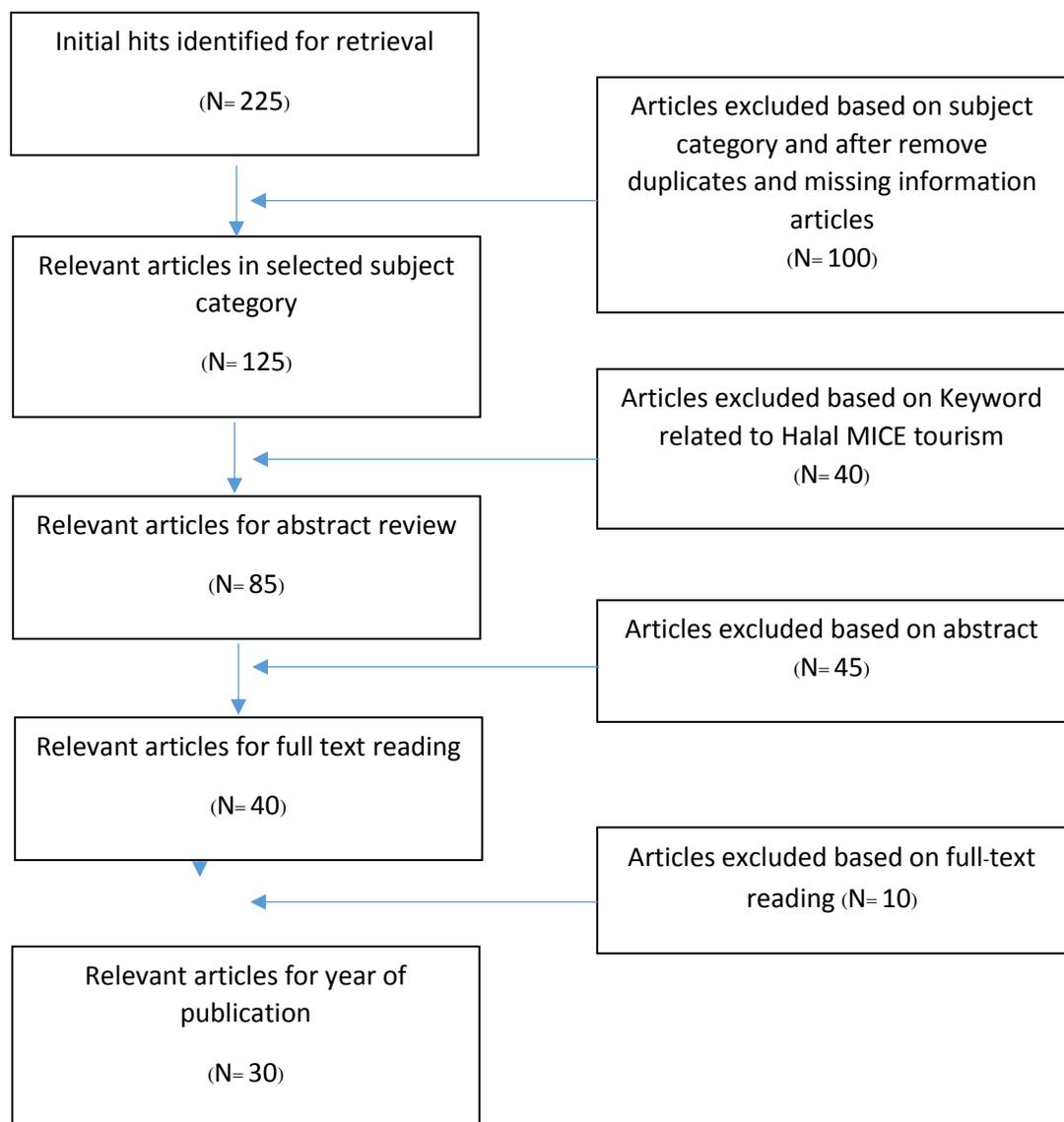


Figure1. Flow diagram of literature review processes

Literature overview

Halal Tourism

Observers of the academic tourism research literature will have noticed a growing interest in the outbound and intra-regional tourism movements in the Islamic world. Indeed in the last five years in particular there have been an increasing number of published academic materials on this phenomenon, including books edited by Scott and Jafari (2010), and El-Gohary and Eid (2014), while collections of conference papers and individual journal papers on the subject have become more common. Halal is an action or object permissible under Islamic law. It is not just forbidding pork or alcoholic drinks. According to respected Islamic scholar, Sheikh Yussuf al-Qaradawi, defines Halal as “That which is permitted, with respect to which no restriction exists, and doing of which the law-giver, Allah, is allowed” (Al-Qaradawi, 2013). The academic interest is paralleled by interest in the commercial world, and indeed does little more than reflect the reality of that world as indicated below by reference to the marketing campaigns of individual countries. Such is the interest, there have now been a number of trade markets, shows and summits that provide access to the burgeoning number of products that are coming onto the market. There are many studies focused on Halal tourism. Batrawy (2015) provides examples of a rental company in Orlando, Florida, that provides ‘halal vacation homes’ complete with curtained pools, rooms with prayer mats and copies of the Koran. It is also noted in the same article that tourists from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman will spend US\$64 billion on travel in 2015 – a figure expected to reach US\$210 billion in 2030 (Batrawy, 2015). Siti Anis Laderlah (2011) studied on Islamic Tourism in Malaysia and found that Islamic tourism is flexible, reasonable, simple, and balanced. Accordingly, there is no specific purpose of travelling. Islam also persuades Muslims to travel to see the creations and the power of Allah. In Islam, travelling balances marriage life. This supports the studies of Nursanty (2013) and Henderson (2010) which reveal that Islamic tourism is the way marketing is used to create travel programs and activities that meet the basic needs of Muslim visitors. Moreover, Bin Ab Taliband Abu Baker (2014) studied on Halal Logistics in Malaysia using SWOT Analysis and focused in the strength or weaknesses, and its external opportunities or threats (SWOT) in the Halal logistics environment. They depended in this study on the interviews with middle- and top-level managers with reputable knowledge, expertise and experience in the Logistics and halal industry. SWOT analyses done as follows: strength (strong government support), weakness (inconsistent halal definition), opportunity (Muslims population growth) and threat (no uniformity on halal standards). Finally, Ranea Qaddahat, Farouk Attaalla, and Mostafa Mahmoud Hussein (2016) studied the Halal Tourism by evaluating opportunities and

challenges in the Middle East "Jordan and Egypt" which recommend the ideas to establish and apply the principles and practices of Halal Tourism in the tourism industry by preparing a pilot project and an action plan for the airlines, travel agencies and hotels establishments in how to apply the principles and standards of Halal Tourism. Establishment of a unit specializing in the rehabilitation of tourism enterprises and the granting of certificates to the best properties in the application of Halal Tourism. Holding sessions and training courses about the concept of Halal Tourism and how to apply the standards and principles associated with it. As such, in Thailand view, Oraphan Chan-in et al, (2013) mentioned that Halal tourism potentials on the Andaman shore in Thailand can also assist tourists from OIC. It identified that the models to administrate and manage Halal tourism for tourists from OIC combined with the understanding of tourist guide in Islamic principles. The services are based on the basic needs of Muslims, no non-Muslim activities, Muslim-friendly accommodations, toilets, Halal-certified restaurants, proper logistics, and praying places. This is related to the influence of religion on tourist movements is an undeniable fact that today Islam alone embraces over billion people across the world as the framework that shapes the behavior of one fifth of the world's total population. Religious tourism, in Islam, Halal tourism can effectively contribute to destination competitiveness. The Thai hotel industry with one of the most resilient forms of hospitality industry has immense potential to the halal tourism. In order to find research-based solutions and strategies for halal tourism development in Thailand, this study selected six hotels with potentials to develop halal tourism and services in Bangkok, as the most visited destinations for the Middle-East and other Muslim markets in Thailand and found that halal standard will be advantage for business (Shirzad, 2014).

Consistent with the above availabilities, Thailand is ready to be progressed to Halal industry hub which increases job opportunities, revenue, and provincial and national economy. The Halal industry helps develop and standardize halal products to compete with the world Halal markets. This will help Thai businesses working on Halal principles and their contribution to the competitiveness in this new niche market in Thailand and ASEAN region. Thus, the raise of question on how to be ready for Halal tourism is presented and the term of Religious Attributes is considerably investigated. This should be further studied.

MICE Tourism

Thailand's meeting and convention industry has developed dramatically over the last decade. Interest in the industry has grown, and competition has intensified in the marketplace due to the significant contributions to the local and national economies. Yet, there is a paucity of research exploring Thailand's meeting and convention industry. The early development of the meeting and convention industry in Thailand has not been well documented. It was not until 1977 that the International Convention Division of the Tourism Authority of Thailand was established. This could be regarded as the starting point for recognizing the importance of international conventions in

Thailand (Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, 2003). In the first years following the founding of the International Convention Division, most meetings and conventions were held in city hotels. By 1984, the Tourism Authority of Thailand established the Thailand Incentive and Convention Association (TICA) with the purpose of closely coordinating between government and private sectors to effectively develop and promote the MICE industry. In the beginning, TICA's members included hotels, destination management companies, tour operators, convention/ exhibition organizations, contractors, convention centers, advertising agencies, and other tourism suppliers. Later, the Bangkok Convention Center of the Sofitel Central Plaza Hotel (currently Sofitel Centara Grand Bangkok) was built. This venue was recognized as the first international standard convention hall in Thailand (Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, 2003). By 1991, Thailand's first national and world-class convention center, the "Queen Sirikit National Convention Center" (QSNCC), was opened to serve the industry's growing needs and to host major international events. Since the opening of the QSNCC, the Thai government has played an active role in supporting the MICE industry and has aimed to promote Thailand as one of the leading convention destinations in the Asia-Pacific region. In recognition of the importance and contribution of the MICE industry to the national economy and the increasingly competitive global market, the Thai government established the TCEB in 2002 as the key government agency responsible for the nation's MICE industry. The establishment of the TCEB represents a long-term commitment by the Thai government and private sector to promote and develop the country's MICE industry. The TCEB plays an important role as a coordination and facilitation center for Thai business operators by offering an integrated one-stop service and supporting businesses involved in MICE in Thailand. The overall impact of the convention business is expected to be much larger than the spending associated with attending a convention (Braun & Rungeling, 1992; Kim, Chon, & Chung, 2003). The amount of convention related spending initiates a broad set of economic interactions that produce additional spending in other sectors of a region's economy (Braun & Rungeling, 1992). Thus, the economic impact of meetings and conventions can be doubled or tripled due to the extensive indirect impact on the host's economies (Lee & Back, 2005a), and meetings and conventions can also provide a year-round demand, especially during the off or shoulder seasons (Abbey & Link, 1994 cited in Oppermann, 1998). In addition to the economic contributions, intangible benefits generated from the meeting and convention industry cannot be ignored. These may include associated social and cultural benefits to the host destinations, the exchange of ideas, the cultivation of business contacts, the provision of forums for continuing education and training, and the facilitation of technology transfers (Dwyer & Forsyth, 1997). With significant contributions to the national economy, as well as the hospitality and tourism industry, it is worth examining associated barriers that might affect the success of Thailand's meeting and convention industry (Aswin & Kim, 2009).

Religious Attributes and MICE Tourism for Muslim participants

Thailand's meeting and convention industry has developed dramatically over the last decade. Interest in the industry has grown, and competition has intensified in the marketplace due to the significant contributions to the local and national economies. As mentioned before, there is a paucity of research exploring Thailand's meeting and convention industry. The early development of the meeting and convention industry in Thailand has not been well documented. This could be regarded as the starting point for recognizing the importance of international conventions in Thailand (Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, 2003). Since Religion such as Muslim is playing a significant role on Thailand's tourism nowadays. As such, Religion attributions should be intensively studied. There is a saying that religion is a large influence on many people's behavior as customers (Essoo and Dibb, 2004). In the context of tourism, religion may influence the choice of destination and tourists' product preferences (Weidenfeld and Ron, 2008). According to Poria et al. (2003), the effects of religious belief on behavior come from two main sources. The first is the explicit and clear guidelines on acceptable and unacceptable behavior or practices. Examples consist of the religious rules prohibiting Muslims from consuming pork, or Hindus from consuming beef. The second means by which behavior is influenced is the fact that religion shapes the culture, attitudes and values of society. This is supported by Grigg (1995) whose research provides evidence on the influence of religion and religiosity on dietary habits. Further support is found in Essoo and Dibb (2004), who demonstrated the influence of religion on consumer behavior by identifying the differences in consumer spending between Muslims and Hindus. Although the relationship between tourism and religion has been addressed in the literature on tourism, there remains a shortage of theoretical publications in the area of tourism in the context of Islam. Religion and religiosity are acknowledged factors influencing behavior according to various social settings. In spite of this widely acknowledged fact, research that explores relationships between religion, behavior and tourist destination choice remains highly limited (Din, 1989; Rinschede, 1992; Fleischer, 2000; Howe, 2001; Poria et al., 2003; Weidenfeld, 2006; Weidenfeld and Ron, 2008). Din (1989) argues that social scientists have tended to overlook the importance of religion in tourism studies. Its importance is emphasized by Weidenfeld and Ron (2008) who underline the general importance of the relationship between tourism and religion. For this reason, Heo et al. (2004) recommend more related studies that identify and discuss special tourist requirements and preferences. Although neglecting to mention religion specifically, Meng et al. (2008) conclude that tourists are more likely to choose destinations believed to best satisfy tourist 'push' needs and preferred destination attributes. Thus, when it comes to the relationship between tourism and religion, particularly Islam, the lack of literature is more obvious, especially regarding Islamic religious attributes and their impact on tourist needs in general and Muslim tourists in particular. Very few studies available typically focus on the needs of Muslim pilgrims' (Shafi et al., 2008) rather than the needs of tourists. However, Weidenfeld and Ron (2008) forecast increased number of religiously minded tourists who join dynamic multi-purpose packages especially from developing

countries many of which are Muslim countries. As such, Religious Attributes should be studied in order to meet the Muslim's standard. This paper has been reviewed many studies on this topic as followings and can be categorized into 6 main topics:

Hotels meeting the religious needs of patrons. Additional religious services and provisions in hotels may result in attracting new markets and improved hotel rates (Weidenfeld, 2006). A study in Israel conducted by Mansfeld et al. (2000) recommended placing 'Makkah stickers' or 'Qibla stickers' (stickers with ornamented arrows pointing towards the city of Makkah in Saudi Arabia for prayer directions) as well as placing a copy of the Quran in every room occupied by Muslim visitors. Din (1989) found that hotels in Kuantan, Malaysia, catered to Muslim needs in the hospitality industry by requiring first-class hotels to provide prayer rooms fully equipped with prayer mats, the Quran, Suruh Yasin and Tasbih, plus Qibla stickers. Weidenfeld (2006) presented a number of suggestions to improve the religion-friendliness of hotels. The suggestions begin by simply providing a bible in hotel rooms along with providing information on religious activities and institutions. This keeps religiously minded tourists in direct contact with scripture and informed of available services. Workers create a religious atmosphere in the hotel (Mansfeld et al., 2000; Weidenfeld, 2006; Timothy & Iverson, 2006). The hotel may choose to organize its own religious activities. It should provide a place of worship within the hotel itself in order to help providing a religious environment.

Places of worship. The five daily prayers are of great importance to practicing Muslims. Therefore, the mosque (a Muslim house of worship) or prayer room is considered to be one of the most crucial facilities for Muslims (Syed, 2001; Al-Hamarneh and Steiner, 2004; Timothy&Iverson, 2006; Woodward, 2004). In addition, Weidenfeld (2006) suggests that proximity to a mosque may influence Muslim tourist preferences when making hotel reservations. Mohsin (2005) conducted a study to assess Peninsular Malaysians attitude towards choosing the Northern Territory of Australia for a holiday as a tourism destination and found that Muslim respondents were concerned about the availability of mosques.

Availability of Halal food. Researchers examined characteristics of demand and supply of halal food for Muslims, or the availability of alcohol for non-Muslims on destination choice. They also presented findings on food service requirements by Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians. (Dugan, 1994; Cohen, 1979; Panosso Netto & Gaeta, 2011; Sharpley&Stone, 2011; Uriely, 2005). Evidence from Brown's (1996) ethnographic study shows the influence of religious prohibitions on determining their expectations regarding services provided by a hotel such as appropriate ingredient choice and preparation. Halal food and a Muslim-friendly experience stood as the top unique Muslim tourist market needs (The World Halal Travel Summit, 2015; Ozdemir & Met, 2012). For Muslims, the issue is centered on the concept of Halalness. Halal food refers to food that can be lawfully consumed when conditions for Islamic food preparation are met. Researchers examined characteristics of demand and supply of halal food for Muslims, or the

availability of alcohol for non-Muslims on destination choice (Dugan, 1994; Cohen, 1979; Panosso Netto & Gaeta, 2011; Sharpley&Stone, 2011; Uriely, 2005). Moreover, evidence from Brown's (1996) ethnographic study shows the influence of religious prohibitions on determining their expectations regarding services provided by a hotel such as appropriate ingredient choice and preparation. Halal food and a Muslim-friendly experience stood as the top unique Muslim tourist market needs (The World Halal Travel Summit, 2015; Ozdemir & Met, 2012). Food that is unlawful to Muslims includes pork, pork-derived foods including lard and bacon and meat and other products from carnivorous animals or those that feed on carrion. Consumption of any food or drinks with alcoholic content is also prohibited (Dugan, 1994). One important distinguishing feature of the Halal label is that animals must be slaughtered in a specific way and with the person carrying out the slaughter reciting the name of Allah which is God.

Banning of alcohol consumption and gambling. According to Islamic Shariah, it is completely forbidden for Muslims to drink or sell alcohol. Muslims are also prohibited from gambling and being involved in the gambling industry. It is stated in Holy Qur'an: 'O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination, - of Satan's handwork: eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper' (Holy Qur'an, 5: 90). Moreover, the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: 'Alcohol is the mother of all evils and it is the most shameful of evils' (Ibn Majah, 2004). Muslim countries such as Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Pakistan implement policies on public consumption of alcohol and gambling strictly. However, in some other Muslim countries, such as Egypt and Turkey, the situations are not so restrictive. For example, in most states in Malaysia, alcohol is freely available although Muslims can be punished for drinking in public (Aljazeera, 2009). This is supported by the findings of The World Halal Travel Summit (2015). According to them, basic needs (such as Halal food, absence of alcohol, prayer spaces and Ramadan accommodation) are a must for Muslim majority countries. Moreover, in a global survey jointly conducted by Dinar Standard and Crescent Rating in 2011, Halal food and a Muslim-friendly experience stood as the top unique Muslim tourist market needs (The World Halal Travel Summit, 2015).

Sexual permissiveness. The Shariah expressly forbids Muslims from engaging in fornication or adultery. Activities deemed conducive to sexual permissiveness are not allowed to take place in public. This is based on many verses in The Holy Quran including like: 'Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils)' (Holy Qur'an, 17: 32). Most Muslim countries including Malaysia prohibit adultery. The Malaysian licensing policy prohibits prostitution and behaviors such as public or indecent displays of affection (Din, 1989; Henderson, 2003, 2008a; Zamani Farahani and Henderson, 2010). Moreover, in some Malaysian towns, municipal enactments for lodging establishments explicitly forbid unmarried couples from being in close proximity (Din, 1989). Many Muslim authorities frown on tourism in general due to the

perception that tourism is associated with sexual permissiveness (Din, 1989). Therefore, some Muslim scholars prohibit sex tourism as practiced by some Arab Muslims from the Middle East in travelling to Europe or Bangkok (Din, 1989).

Dress code. According to Shariah, Muslim women must not expose their hair and body. The Holy Quran states: ‘O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters and the believing women to draw their outer garments around them (when they go out or are among men). That is better in order that they may be known (to be Muslims) and not annoyed...’ (Holy Qur’an, 33:59). According to Muslims, typically, observe a dress code and avoid free mixing, some hotels in Turkey offer separate swimming pool and recreational facilities (Ozdemir & Met, 2012). Apart from discussion of hotel requirements (Ibrahim, 1982), there are few studies of Muslim leisure activities while travelling. Martin and Mason (2004) provide a general examination of leisure in an Islamic context. Moreover, Shariah, Muslim women must not expose their hair and body. Men are supposed to cover their thighs (Timothy and Iverson, 2006). In deciding tour destinations, Muslims look at the local dress codes in that particular region of the world being considered. Such considerations are to gauge the level of conformity to Islamic dress norms in order to determine if they will or will not be comfortable visiting that particular destination. This is particularly so for Arab tourists who have to observe strict dress codes in their native countries and prefer not to expose themselves and families to environments that may threaten their sense of proper dressing.

Findings

According to the context of Halal tourism in Thailand, this study reveals that there are availabilities of tourism infrastructures. Moreover, how to apply the principles and standards of Halal Tourism is a questionable. It is related to the influence of religion on tourist movements is an undeniable fact that today Islam alone embraces over billion people across the world. Religious tourism, in Islam, Halal tourism can effectively contribute to destination competitiveness. The Thai MICE industry has immense potential to the halal tourism. Finding the research-based solutions and practices for halal tourism development in Thailand is needed. Halal practice is linked with the MICE tourism. Since, Thailand's meeting and convention industry has developed dramatically over the last decade. Interest in the industry has grown, and competition has intensified in the marketplace due to the significant contributions to the local and national economies). With significant contributions to the national economy, as well as the hospitality and tourism industry, it is worth examining associated regional attributes for Muslim participants that can enhance the competitiveness and success of Thailand's meeting and convention industry. So, this is the contribution of this paper that trying to review the proper practices on Halal and MICE tourism. Therefore, according to the literature review, shown in figure1, religious attributes and MICE tourism for Muslim participants can be categorized into 6 topics which are Hotels meeting the religious needs of patrons, Places of worship, Availability of Halal food, Banning of alcohol consumption and gambling, Sexual permissiveness, and Dress code. As such, these findings can be

a good implication for MICE tourism businesses in Thailand and also provide practical policy implications for boosting Halal MICE tourism worldwide.

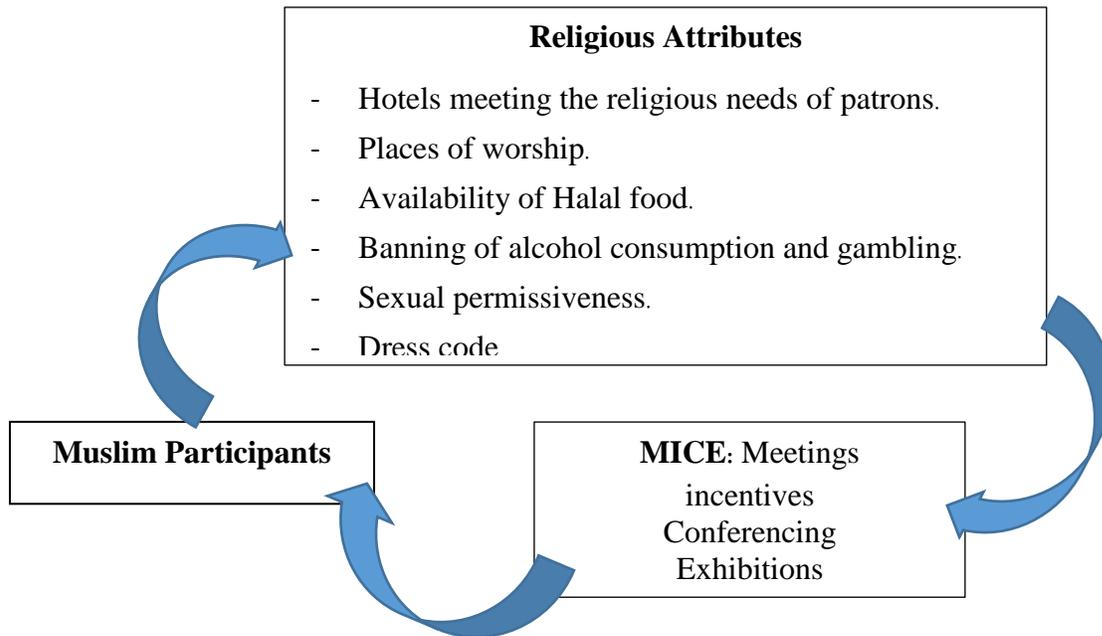


Figure 2. Religious attributes and MICE activities.

The study provides some beneficial information; however, the authors acknowledge some limitations. The people that are qualified to work in Halal tourism business are quite limited in numbers. For example, hotel staff, restaurant servers, tourist guides, Halal food, and chefs in name a few. Government and private sectors have agreed to support Halal MICE in Thailand Islamic Committees, Travel Agencies, Thailand Tourism Authorities, etc. This indicates the great opportunity for promoting Halal MICE in Thailand.

Suggestion

The suggestions to both those who make the policies and those in the private sectors. For the policy level, there are many government sections which can help empowering the Halal MICE industry in Thailand. Thailand Skills Development Center should be in charge of training those who are interested in working in Halal MICE business like hotel and restaurant service staff. Tourism Authority of Thailand should provide workshop about Halal tourism which broadens people understanding about working with Muslim travelers. Thai Chamber of Commerce can help promote the availability of facilities for Halal MICE business and support the supplier of Halal products. Importantly, education institutes should develop a course in 'Muslim tourists' behavior' geared around tourism industry or related major. Private sectors like MICE organizers, travel agencies, tourist attractions, business accommodations, and catering businesses should



understand the basic needs and restrictions of Muslim travelers to provide better service in order to achieve better satisfaction. In addition, establishment of a unit specializing in the rehabilitation of tourism enterprises and the granting of certificates to the best properties in the application of Halal Tourism. Holding sessions and training courses about the concept of Halal Tourism and how to apply the standards and principles associated with it Muslim-friendly accommodations, toilets, Halal-certified restaurants, proper logistics, and praying places.

Conclusion

According to the findings and input from this study, it can be concluded that all sections working in Halal MICE business should understand the nature, basic needs, limitations, and restrictions of their Muslim clients in order to facilitate them properly. This may lead to the customer's satisfaction and repeat business. Thailand can be one of the best or better destinations where Muslim visitors can enjoy their holidays together as a family or solo while maintaining their religious practice. This should be the number one goal to attract repeat customers so that Halal MICE business in Thailand is able to reach its potentials with the collaboration of all stakeholders who understand the framework and integrate into action or include in the national development policy.

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A Study of Guidelines for MICE Academic Cluster in Thailand

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Abstract

The purpose of this research A Study of Guidelines for MICE Academic Cluster in Thailand to study the MICE Academic Cluster and develop the MICE Cluster Model in the academic sector, including the success indicators to determine the MICE Academic Cluster. The research method used in this study was qualitative method for obtaining complete data. Using document research, structured In-depth interviews, and focus group was completed by 15 representatives of 8 MICE industry experts and 7 academics. Descriptive qualitative was used to analyze data. Results of Guidelines for MICE Academic Cluster in Thailand that is a strong relationship between the cluster and the center (Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau: TCEB), as well as with stakeholders in each region. Thus illustrating the potential and capabilities of group are 1) Networking 2) Connectivity 3) Connection 4) Linkage 5) Collaborative activities to the educational institutions, government and private sectors related to the MICE industry in each cluster located in each region effectively. Continuing to be able to respond to changes in external factors and to be competitive with others. In the academic framework, the Business Cluster Model is used as a framework for the dissemination of knowledge, activity, training and improving performance of employees in the MICE industry. Including the distribution of opportunities and budget. Cluster development will be aligned with regional zoning into four areas to align the strategies of each region. It is a cluster unit that supports the mission of Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau. Support Operations Policy-based activities go hand-in-hand with relevant sectors in the area. The cooperation with the educational institutes is well-prepared and there are activities for the continuous development of employees in each region. They were: 1) Northern Region is Chiang Mai University 2) Northeastern Region is Khon Kaen University 3) Southern Region is Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai 4) Central is Silpakorn University and Dusit Thani College. However, the structure of the center for each cluster can be determined. The role and responsibilities of the cluster include: 1) the center of knowledge and develop MICE industry with Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau 2) support and drive Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau's policy towards implementing clusters and practices 3) promote and disseminate

information, activities, knowledge and progress 4) coordinated with the government and private sectors 5) evaluate the results of the policy evaluation according to the mission as well as provide, advice and guidance for improvement and optimize MICE employees in Thailand 6) report on performance every 6 months that the indicators of success in collaborative distribution are: 1) Database and information systems Development 2) define activities to promote and enhance knowledge in terms of academic services, research and information base in the framework of a five-year long-term plan to guide the development and establishment of the MICE Academic Cluster which the indicators are set out in two aspects: 1) Increased number of Certified to upgrade the personnel of the country 2) the establishment of a test center for professional MICE in the future, which is to develop

the structure, increase the number of personnel and to expand the target for future sustainability of MICE industry.

Keywords: Academic, Cluster Model, MICE Industry

Introduction

Currently, MICE industry is focused on personnel and network development to transfer knowledge for future generations. Enhance the potential by developing knowledge, sharing information and expanding support base to both domestic and international trade partners. As well as improving the quality of operations and services to international standards. Supporting the growth of the MICE industry in Thailand, the needs of operators in each area to flexible and understand the correct content in the MICE industry to respond for sustainable development. Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), a governmental organization established to promote and develop business events in Thailand. TCEB is dedicated to promoting Thailand as a hub for events and supporting a streamlined and focused service for travelers and participants who attend Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions from around the world that MICE Capabilities Development Department is a key player in driving mission under the corporate development strategy. The main mission is to enhance the potential of the Thai MICE industry to be internationally competitive, strengthen the MICE industry by developing knowledge management, networking and marketing strategy with the goal of producing professional personnel. Also promote students who are new generations to follow a valuable career in the rapidly growing MICE industry in Thailand. As well as enhancing the ability to manage professional MICE industry operators. Presently, MICE Capabilities Development Department has implemented six strategies related to the development of the MICE industry, comprising Strategy 1: MICE Standards aim to make Thailand a MICE hub in Asia with international standards. Strategy 2: The development of the MICE industry is aimed at Thailand as a major destination for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions sustainability. Strategy 3: Development of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by promoting the knowledge of the Thai MICE industry to the ASEAN Economic Community. Strategy 4: Capability Plus is aimed at the main goal of developing MICE industry executives. Strategy 5: Trade Education is aimed as the host and center of MICE learning

for Southeast Asia. Strategy 6: MICE Academy is aimed at Thailand as the center of MICE education in Southeast Asia. All six strategies focus on the development of the MICE industry through 3 target groups are: 1) Multipliers PCOs/ PEOs, 2) New Entrants/ MICE Cities, and 3) GenY/ Students. Therefore, the purpose of this research to study the MICE Academic Cluster and develop the MICE Cluster Model in the academic sector, including the success indicators to determine the MICE Academic Cluster.

Literature Review

Guidelines for MICE Academic Cluster in Thailand studied of the MICE Cluster Model in academic sector that develops through business models from various industries to be analyzed and applied to the MICE cluster model. Cluster development in the industry is globally recognized as it strengthens clustered networks (Elisa & Carlo, 2011) and strengthens the MICE Value Chain of the future MICE industry in Thailand. Guidelines for MICE Academic Cluster in Thailand reviewed following related documents are

1) Cluster Concept; A cluster is a geographical proximate group of interconnected companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and externalities (Michael E. Porter, 1990). Moreover Cluster helps in developing economies, where market failures and institutional weaknesses may be particularly severe, firms may find interorganizational networks can be used as safety nets against uncertainty and unfavorable business climates. They use networks to access resources, reduce information asymmetries, enable higher bargaining power versus other market counterparts, strengthen their lobby power towards governments, and enable firms to upgrade their capabilities (Guillen, 2000; Khanna and Rivkin, 2001; Mesquita and Lazzarini, 2008; McDermott, Corredoira, and Kruse, 2009). The Measurement of networks and key concepts for Cluster (See Figure 1) is “networking,” “connectivity,” “connections,” and “linkages” are often measured through indicators e. g. , joint production, joint sales, joint research and development. (Huggins, 2001; Ketels et al., 2006).

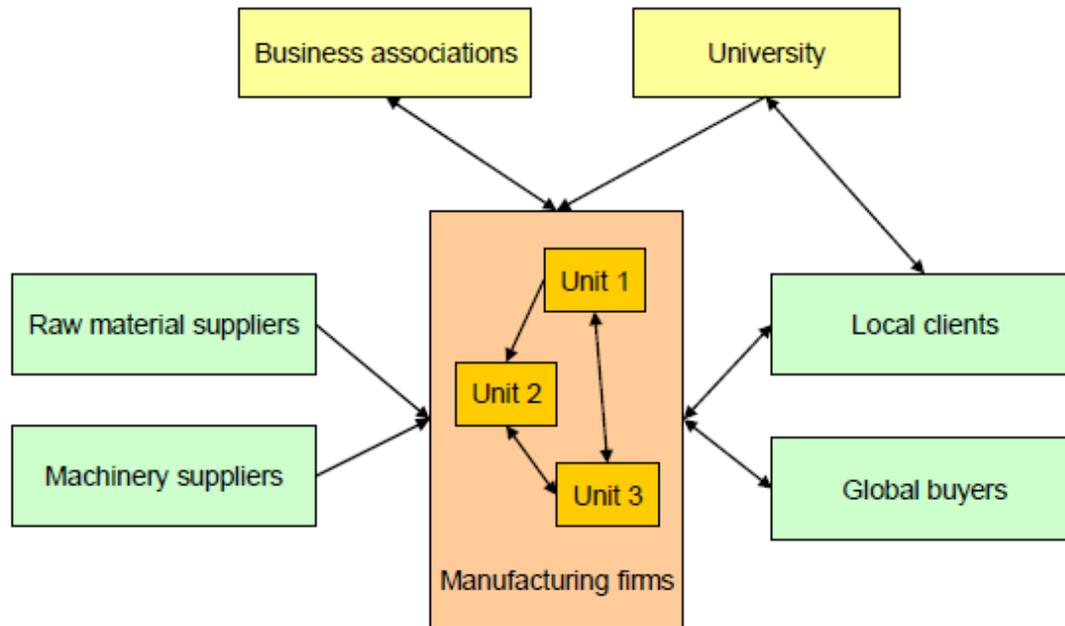


Figure 1 Example of Conventional Mapping of Networks in Clusters

(Giuliani E. & Pietrobelli C., 2011)

2) Diamond System Model Concept; the theory is based on the system of determinants, called by Michael E. Porter (1990) “diamond”, which consists of: 1) the factorial determinants - the endowment of a country with factors; 2) the determinants of the demand - the features of the internal market; 3) up and downstream industries; 4) the strategy and structure of the companies and the rivalry among them - the domestic competition; These four determinants are considerably influenced by others two factors: the chance and the governmental policy. All these determinants are conditioned one to another. According to Porter, the countries have success “where the national diamond is the most favorable”. The more complex and dynamic the economic environment of the country is, the more like is some companies to fail if they cannot capitalize in an adequate way the requests of this environment.

1) The factorial determinants represent the starting point necessary to enter in competition. The classical economic theory identifies the labor, land and capital as the factors of the production. The theory of Porter demonstrates that, even the endowment with factors is obviously important, the critical element for a country to be competitive is to create new factors and to improve the existing ones. The competitive advantage should be created, it is not inherited (Negrițoiu Mișu, 1997). Porter divides the production factors into the following categories: 1.1) human resources - quantity, the level of instruction, the costs with the labor, the time of working, the attitude to working; 1.2) natural resources - abundance, quality, accessibility, the costs with land, water, mineral resources, forest; 1.3) knowledge resources - the supply of the scientific,

technical and marketing knowledge used for creating and distributing goods and services. These knowledge are located in universities, research institutes, informational system, data banks, commercial associations, and so on; 1.4) capital resources - the level and the cost of the capital available for financing the industry, determined by the saving rate of the economy and the structure of the financial national market, which is different from a country to another, although we attend the globalizations of the capital markets; 1.5) infrastructure - includes not only the transport systems, post, communications, payment systems and the systems used to transfer money, but also different infrastructure elements that determine the attractiveness of a country regarding the quality of life and work conditions (culture, health). Considering the present conditions, when the mobility of the production factors is permanently increasing, it is less important the direct access to them, but especially the economic and financial efficacy in their allocation and use. Porter sees two categories of production factors: a) primary factors (include natural resources, climate, geographical position, qualified or not qualified labor) that can be met in all countries, but with different proportions. b) advanced factors (modern informatics infrastructure, high-skilled labor, competitive research institutes). The most of these factors are created in time with important investments. In present, these factors are also the most important for obtaining the competitive advantage. But Porter draws the attention that often the advanced factors are built on the primary factors. Another classification of the production factors divides the factors by their specificity into: -generalized factors (the transport and communications system, banking system, educated and motivated labor) that can be used in many industries, being available in many countries; -specialized

factors (high skilled labor, special infrastructure) located into a limited number of economic sectors. Their creation supposes bigger investments with a bigger level of risk, starting from the existence of the generalized factors. They are rare but critical for creating and maintaining different forms of competitive advantages.

2) The determinants of the demand have an important role for creating competitive advantages. They influence the acquirement of the competitive advantage by the mix of the domestic demand. The nations win the competitive advantage if the domestic demand is so strong that forces the companies to innovate more rapidly than the foreign competitors in order to stay on the market. Porter identifies three features of the domestic demand which influence the acquirement of the competitive advantage: - the structure of the domestic market which determines the quality level of the goods; - severe domestic buyers with sophisticated needs; - anticipatory needs of the domestic buyers. In the case of a big country with big domestic market the development is stimulated and investments for large-scaled production of the goods can be made, while in the case of a small country with reduced domestic market, the only chance to reach a scale economy is to become international. The domestic market can develop the competitive advantages by internationalizing the domestic demand and the distribution of the national products abroad. When among the buyers are foreigners, no matter if occasional buyers (tourists

or businessmen) or permanent buyers (the subsidiaries of the foreign trans-national companies) and their needs are severe, this fact determines the national companies to improve their goods. The conclusion is that the domestic market, by its features can determine the acquirement of the competitive advantage. But its influence depends on the other determinants of the “diamond”.

3) Up and downstream industries are another determinant in obtaining the competitive advantage, if they have a strong position on the international market. A country can become more competitive, if it has a more concentrated and specialized horizontal and vertical industry, that can bring a plus of information, of innovation, but the same as in the case of the determinants of the demand, the influence of the links among the industry branches on the growth of the international productivity and consequently on obtaining the competitive advantage depends on the other determinants of the “diamond”.

4) The strategy and structure of the company and the rivalry among them is the fourth determinant of the diamond that influence the international competitiveness of a country by the way which the companies are organized and managed in, by the proposed objectives and the applied strategies. Of course, there are differences among the countries regarding the instruction level, the objectives, the working style and the managers' approaches. The goals and strategies depend on the form of ownership, the motivation of the owners and on the stimulation of the managers. Essential for the competitive advantage is the coordination of the company goals with those of the owners, shareholders, managers. The individual motivation of people working in a company is important for improving the professional training for acquiring and maintaining the competitive advantages. The acquirement and maintain of the competitive advantages are closely linked to the existence of a real and strong

competition on the domestic market, which motivates the companies to promote new products on the market and to discover new markets in order to stimulate the growth. The domestic competition has, at least, the same importance as the international competition, the existence of many competing companies being favorable as the national companies become as strong as their foreign competitors. The adoption by the government of certain regulations that encourage the establishment of new companies determines the growth of the competition and thus contributes to maintaining the competitive advantage. As we showed earlier, these four determinants of the “diamond” evolve closely with other two factors: the chance and the policy of the government. The chance: Porter noticed that during the evolution of the most industries which got the competitive advantage, a major role had the chance, identified by wars, major changes on the international financial market, changes into the costs of the production factors (the oil shocks), political decisions of the foreign governments, pure inventions. The governmental policy can influence the acquirement of the competitive advantage being considered as the most important determinant. This is related to the fact that a government can influence the local market by subventions, investments in education, regulating the domestic market, creating a competitive infrastructure for reducing the accessing costs of the factors. The state is also an important buyer for certain industries, such as defense industry, aeronautics, and telecommunications. Important

is to approach the system of the competitiveness conditions with a coherent governmental action in order to create or improve the national competitive advantages.

Methodology

The research method used in this study was qualitative method for obtaining complete data. Using document research, structured In-depth interviews, and focus group was completed by 15 representatives of 8 MICE industry experts and 7 academics. Descriptive qualitative was used to analyze data. There are 4 steps in research of Guidelines for MICE Academic Cluster in Thailand process: Step 1: Document research, study the establishment of a regional MICE academic cluster. The researcher collected knowledge from the study of books, information on the Internet, and research in both domestic and international, related to cluster theory concepts in various industries. Step 2: Extract data to define the draft and evaluation form to structured In-depth interviews from 8 MICE industry experts. Step 3: Confirmed the result and summarize group discussions (Focus Group). The group discussion was conducted by 15 representatives from the population, from the two groups, the first group, the academic group, and the second group is the experts related to the MICE industry. Step 4: Confirm the research results. The researcher proposed MICE Academic Cluster to the TCEB Policy Advisory Meeting to confirm the MICE Academic Cluster model based on the components and attributes as well as the indicators of success in the initial stage.

Results

Results of Guidelines for MICE Academic Cluster in Thailand that is a strong relationship between the cluster and the center (Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau: TCEB), as well as with stakeholders in each region. Thus illustrating the potential and capabilities of group are 1) Networking 2) Connectivity 3) Connection 4) Linkage 5) Collaborative activities to the educational institutions, government and private sectors related to the MICE industry in each cluster located in each region effectively. Continuing to be able to respond to changes in external factors and to be competitive with others. In the academic framework, the Business Cluster Model is used as a framework for the dissemination of knowledge, activity, training and improving performance of employees in the MICE industry. Including the distribution of opportunities and budget. Cluster development will be aligned with regional zoning into four areas to align the strategies of each region. It is a cluster unit that supports the mission of Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau. Support Operations Policy-based activities go hand-in-hand with relevant sectors in the area. The cooperation with the educational institutes is well-prepared and there are activities for the continuous development of employees in each region. They were: 1) Northern Region is Chiang Mai University 2) Northeastern Region is Khon Kaen University 3) Southern Region is Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai 4) Central is Silpakorn University and Dusit Thani College. However, the structure of the center for each cluster can be determined. The role and responsibilities of the

cluster include: 1) the center of knowledge and develop MICE industry with Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau 2) support and drive Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau's policy towards implementing clusters and practices 3) promote and disseminate information, activities, knowledge and progress 4) coordinated with the government and private sectors 5) evaluate the results of the policy evaluation according to the mission as well as provide, advice and guidance for improvement and optimize MICE employees in Thailand 6) report on performance every 6 months that the indicators of success in collaborative distribution are: 1) Database and information systems Development 2) define activities to promote and enhance knowledge in terms of academic services, research and information base in the framework of a five-year long-term plan to guide the development and establishment of the MICE Academic Cluster which the indicators are set out in two aspects: 1) Increased number of Certified to upgrade the personnel of the country 2) the establishment of a test center for professional MICE in the future, which is to develop the structure, increase the number of personnel and to expand the target for future sustainability of MICE industry.

Discussion

This research is used as a guideline for creating a culture of innovation in the organization, leading to new models of excellence, new forms of management and good organizational performance. The results are theoretical contributions to the application of the knowledge to industries or others with similar operating

environments. Including benefits in the public and private sector involved in the implementation of this information into the framework of the policy, predefined plans of business organizations to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in the competition to success and sustainability in the business level. However, the results from this study reflect the success factors of the MICE Academic Cluster in Thailand, including the above mentioned factors. Therefore, management a few years of operation after, a comparative study should be conducted as to whether these success factors influence the effectiveness of setting up the MICE Academic Cluster in Thailand.

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Active learning activities for the Mice Introduction Course

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Abstract

The traditional lecture method focuses on the role of the lecturer more than that of the learners, meaning students acquire knowledge passively. Up to now, Thepsatri Rajabhat University has used a traditional lecture method for the MICE Introduction course, which is designed as the only elective course concerning MICE industry knowledge in the Hotel and Tourism curriculum. However, past results have shown that learners could not definitively explain the MICE industry. Further, they were not interested in working in MICE for their future careers. Thus, the primary aim of this study was to conduct a MICE Introduction course for learners by using active learning methods for one semester (15 weeks). This research used MIX methods: qualitative and quantitative method such as group discussion, a workshop, and a field trip. The tools for data analysis included participatory observation, content analysis, and a questionnaire survey. The results found that active learning methods through various activities such as online media, group discussion, a work shop, and a field trip could better promote learners' interest as well as understanding of content.

Keywords: Active learning, MICE Introduction course, Online media, Group discussion,
Workshop, Field trip

Introduction

At Thepsatri Rajabhat University, a Mice Introduction course was designed for sophomores majoring in the Department of Tourism and Hotel. This course is the only elective course that learners have to pass in order to gain approval for the Tourist Guide license according to the tourist guide curriculum of the Department of Tourism of Thailand. From past results that emphasised the traditional lecture method, it was shown that learners who studied for only one semester could not perceive or express the meaning of MICE. Thus, they would not be interested in a professional experience course in MICE or apply for MICE positions in the future. Therefore, the question arises as to how learners can be drawn to the MICE Introduction course and how they can more effectively learn about the MICE business. Therefore, the aim of this study is to present the MICE

Introduction course through active learning activities in order to activate the learners' interest in MICE and encourage them to apply for employment opportunities in the MICE industry.

Literature Review

Active learning activities is alternative instruction approach which emphasizes on the role of students's learning process to do things and develop their thinking skills. Based on previous study, active learning activities in the classroom are popular, including class discussions, small group discussions, short written exercises, think-pair-share, ungraded writing exercise, and class polling, visual-based instruction, problem-solving model, case study method, debate, cooperative learning drama, role playing and simulation, and peer teaching (Bonwell & Eison, 1991 cited in Charles & James,1991).Those approaches focus on motivate students toward further learning, to allow students to apply information in new settings, or to develop students' thinking skills influence influence favorably students' attitudes and achievement (Charles & James,1991).To promote active learning is necessary to design the course for short duration, structured and planned, focused on subject matter

Methodology

This research used MIX methods, comprising qualitative and quantitative methods through active learning activities such as group discussion, a workshop, and a field trip. A questionnaire survey was also conducted to gauge satisfaction. The tools for analysis included participatory observation and content analysis. The statistics used for the questionnaire survey included percentage and average x. This research was conducted among learners, comprising 31 sophomores at Thepsatri Rajabhat University majoring in Tourism and Hotel Management. The research period lasted one semester, specifically 15 weeks of the first semester of 2017 (from August to November 2017). Additional details are provided below:

Table 1: Mice introduction course syllabus

Weeks	Content	Instructional Method	Activities	Tools
1-4	Introduction to MICE	Lecture	-Individual research through online methods -Group discussion in class	-PowerPoint -Text -Online media

				“TCEB’s MICE Understanding”
5	Test			
6-9	Meaning of MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention, Events)	Lecture and group discussion	-Design for domestic convention programme -Present and discuss in class	-PowerPoint -Text, worksheet
10	Midterm exam			
11-15	Practical experience	Lecture, Workshop and field trip	-Work shop on the topic “Designing place and arranging IKEBANA(Japanese flower arrangement) for meeting rooms” -Field trip to a hotel for experience and discussion with an entrepreneur	-Workshop on the venue of MICE -Field trip
16	Final exam			

Results

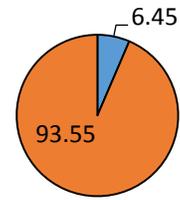
The results of participatory observation in class by using online media as individual homework showed that students could better explain about the definition of MICE after choosing to learn one of “TCEB’s MICE Understanding” chapter through online media as individual homework and discussing their understanding about the MICE industry in class. Further, the presentation concerning the designing convention programme could encourage the learners’ creative ideas and inspired them to discuss topics with other groups.



Figure 1: Various examples of active learning in the MICE Introduction course

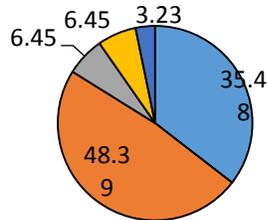
The results of the workshop on the topic “Designing place and arranging IKEBANA for meeting rooms” at the Professional Experience Centre of the university fostered practical knowledge about the arrangement of meeting rooms in various shapes and designs, which could be applied to other related classrooms and courses.

The results of the half-day field trip to the Greenery Hotel in Khaoyai, Nakorn Ratchasima Province were positive. The hotel has a policy for encouraging learners to have a good chance to exchange experience and information directly with the entrepreneurs, such as a conference with the Food & Beverage Division. This field trip allowed learners to gain better understanding of MICE and the venues of MICE. The questionnaire survey was conducted after the field trip among 31 respondents divided in two groups based on sex and age to explain the learners’ general information. The results were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale to gauge their satisfaction



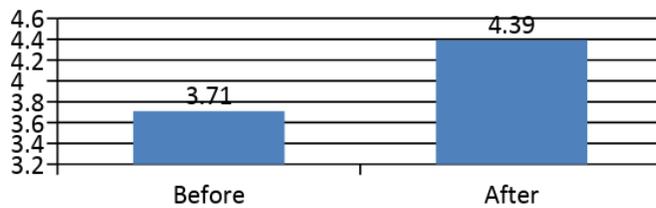
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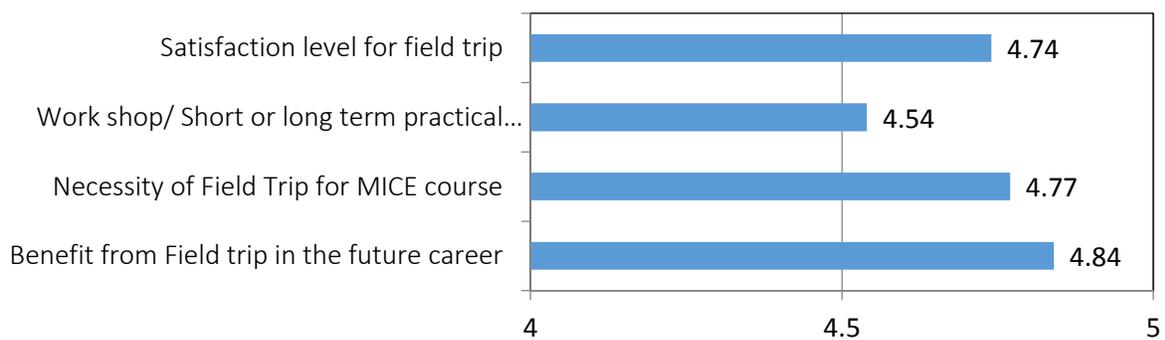


19 20 21 22 24

Knowledge and understanding level about MICE from the field trip



Field trip

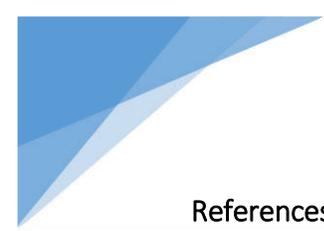




Discussion

The results of using various active learning activities in the classroom for the MICE Introduction course can be discussed in detail as follows. Using online media for the MICE chapter as self-directed learning could activate the learners to be more interested in their surrounding information and environment. Furthermore, the group activity for designing the conference programme encouraged them to create ideas and realise their role as well as learn to accept different points of view. They could also build teamwork with mutual understanding among peers (Charnprasert,2014). Moreover, the group activity could create better relationships. Teamwork is very important for achieving their goals and overall success (Keewchaon & Chuntuk, 2017). For the arrangement of the workshop in MICE practical experience, the learners' study process through action learning enhanced their learning behaviour by linking their existing knowledge with new knowledge and experience, teamwork building, and enthusiasm (Yokin, 2015). For the field trip and direct exchange, learners were more active in their direct experience with the entrepreneur and understood more about MICE. The field trip also affected the learners by increasing learner achievement in their learning process, which could benefit other learning processes in related subjects. Field trips in the future should focus on improving communication, which encourages creative learning and innovation, which are necessary for individual learning processes.

In conclusion, the results and related study showed that various learning activities designed through active learning can benefit learner knowledge and increase understanding. This study was limited to showing only the various kinds of active learning for learners. As such, this study was not focused on learner achievement through standard test assessment.



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An Investigation of Destination Images towards the MICE Industry in Thailand

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Keywords: Conferences, Conventions, Destination Image, Meetings, Place Image, Thailand

Abstract

This study investigates the destination image of Thailand as a Meeting, Incentive, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) destination, particularly, Bangkok. In terms of MICE customers, the research is interested in current customers of the MICE industry in Thailand who are host organizers. Additionally, they have experienced arranging Meetings/Conferences in Thailand. The experience, attitude and views of current host organizers have value for MICE practitioners in order to attract and retain host organizers as MICE customers. In terms of data collection, a qualitative method approach has been adopted. The findings of the study show the positive views and experience of current host organizers towards the Meetings/ Conferences industry in Thailand. These are based on hospitality, security, facilities for meetings/conferences and a good value of money. In order to establish Thailand as Asia's business events hub, the results of this study are adapted to the needs of MICE practitioners in terms of policy making, marketing and the funding of product and facilities development in Thailand.

Keywords: Conferences, Conventions, Destination Image, Meetings, Place Image, Thailand

Introduction

In recent years, the increasing revenue from the Meeting, Incentive, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) industry has had a significant role for helping to boost the Thai economy. Statistics compiled by the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) (2018) show that, from 2013 to 2017, the revenue from the MICE industry had increased gradually and peaked at 86,188 million baht (approximately 2,588 million USD) in 2017. Because of the size of income generated, Thailand strives to promote the MICE sector in order to increase revenues and establish Thailand as Asia's business events hub. To achieve these goals, Thailand should be able to attract and retain both of its current and potential MICE customers. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate destination images of Thailand for meetings/ conferences purposes. In terms of MICE customers, the research is concerned with current customers who are host organizers and chose Thailand for organizing meetings/ conferences. They are in both domestic and international organizations whose offices are located in Bangkok, Thailand. In addition, they have already arranged meetings/ conferences in Thailand and they explained about their relevant experiences in relation to for example, reasons of selecting Thailand for meetings/ conferences, attitude and views after organizing meetings/ conferences in Thailand. To be precise, the research question is to explore how current host organizers understand images of the MICE industry in Thailand. This study started with a brief literature review of the previous studies on destination images, the

methodology applied in this study, and then followed by the results of the interviews and discussions of the findings (see Figure 1).

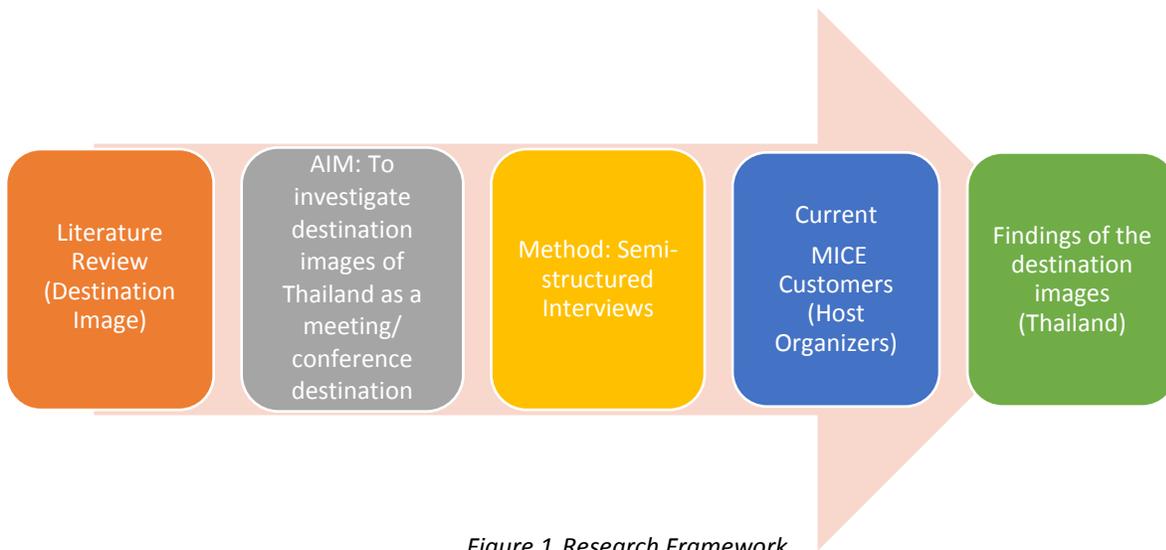


Figure 1. Research Framework

Literature Review

Destination Image

According to Selby (2004), destination images are important and influence an individual's decision-making processes when they are searching for and evaluating a destination. In addition, Cooper (2008) stated that destination image in combination with motivation and behavior provides is a pull factor which influences demand. A number of authors (McCartney, Bulter and Bennett, 2009; Ingram and Grieve, 2013) pointed out the significance of product and destination images. Moreover, Kozak, Andreu, Gnoth, Lebe, and Fyall (2013) argued that an important element of destination image is to implement a brand strategy through differentiation, which is an important key to gaining success. For judging the success of tourism destination, 'The 10 As' are adopted as a useful set of attributes namely, awareness, attractiveness, availability, access, appearance, activities, assurance, appreciation, action, accountability (Morrison, 2013). In relation to the conference and meeting industry specifically Krungman and Wright (2007, p.39) created the question as a checklist of the destination assessment. For example, 'Is there broad appeal to the attendees?', 'Are there any significant safety and security concerns?', 'Does the city or region have a good range of conference hotels and facilities?', etc. Additionally, the work by Henaïen and Sinha (2014) indicated the top memorable variables of the conference destination from the organizers, delegates and suppliers perspectives focusing on the city of Stockholm, Sweden. It can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Top Memorable Variables of the Conference Destination

<p>Organizers Perspectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Event costs (catering, printing, hotels, etc.) ➤ Ease of dealing with suppliers (English language standard, ease of communication, payment terms) ➤ Convention and Visitor Bureau (CVB) help (site visits, identifying venues, funding applications) ➤ City's interest level in the conference (support through sponsorship, promotion, speakers, etc.) ➤ No. of local delegates attracted to the conference & the percentage of local vs. international delegates ➤ Safety and security ➤ Accessibility and transportation ➤ City's cleanliness
<p>Delegates Perspectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ International networking opportunities at the conference ➤ Standard of venue and hotel interior ➤ Availability of ample restrooms at the venues ➤ Wi-Fi and technology availability ➤ Food choice, restaurant and bars ➤ Social activities ➤ Safety and security ➤ Accessibility and transportation ➤ Service quality ➤ Public transportation ➤ City's cleanliness ➤ Credit card payment facilities ➤ Cell phone coverage
<p>Suppliers Perspectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Venue standard ➤ Service quality ➤ Delegate turnout ➤ Food and catering ➤ Accessibility and transportation ➤ Safety and security ➤ Costs/ prices ➤ Weather ➤ Accommodation ➤ Internal meeting logistics

Source: Adapted from Henaïen and Sinha, 2014

Henaïen and Sinha (2014) also showed the significance of the destination image in the site selection process as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Importance of City Image

Organizers Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Advantageous to hold international conferences in attractive cities as it results in increased number of attendees ➤ Cities known to be insecure or too expensive get reduced number of attendees ➤ Hosting conferences in lesser-known cities however is also interesting, as people are curious and like to experience new cities too
Delegates Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Variety of activities for the attendees is important ➤ Local cuisine ➤ Unique factors at the destination, conference venues, and hotels ➤ A positive city image results in future leisure trips ➤ Expensive, insecure or unclean reputation results in low delegate turnout
Suppliers Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Of high importance as it attracts many delegates (however, being too attractive can lead to delegates engaging in leisure activities, instead of focusing on the conference) ➤ Bad weather has resulted in buyers turning down destinations

Source: Adapted from Henaïen and Sinha, 2014

Differently, this study concentrates upon host organizers' perspectives only in order to reveal destination images of Thailand for meetings/ conferences purposes.

The MICE industry

In terms of the MICE industry, the Commission of the European Communities (CEC) and the International Association of Professional Congress Organizers (IAPCO) (1992) defines "MICE" in the following way "M = Meeting", "I = Incentive", "C = Convention or Conference", and "E = Exhibition". This study focuses on the meetings (M) and conferences (C) industry especially Thailand. Additionally, MICE customers in the study mean that host organizers who decided to arrange meetings/ conferences in Thailand.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative research method, aiming to explore the destination images of Thailand for meetings/ conferences purposes. Semi-structured interviews were employed in order to seek in-depth insights from individuals who are host organizers and decided to arrange meetings/ conferences. Noor (2008) explains that semi-structured interviews should be employed more than structured interviews because they allow sufficient flexibility whilst maintaining some structure which enables the interviewer to keep control of the conversation. At the same time the informant can give rich, detailed answers in their own language. Participants were recruited for the semi-structured interviews by using a purposive sampling technique.

Purposive sampling was used because informants were selected based on their having experienced Thailand as a meeting/ conference destination. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), purposive sampling enables researchers to use their judgement to select cases that will allow them to answer the research questions and achieve the research objective. The sample subjects must be company managers or representatives who arranged meetings/ conferences in Thailand in order to examine the image of the industry in Thailand from the depth of their experiences. To achieve accurate sampling, the companies and organizations that have already been host organizers as MICE customers were recorded in both of the Annual Report 2013 of Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB, 2013) and the Annual Report 2014 of TCEB (TCEB, 2014). The researcher therefore utilized the updated reports that were as the inclusion criteria of this study. The companies or organizations that have already arranged meetings/ conferences in Thailand, but were not recorded in both of the Annual Report 2013 of TCEB (TCEB, 2013) and the Annual Report 2014 of TCEB (TCEB, 2014), were excluded from the interviews. Although there is much debate (e.g. Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 1998; and Morse, 1994 for example) about what constitutes a suitable sample size in qualitative research, Bertaux (1981) attests that the smallest acceptable size is 15 informants. Hence, the number of participants need in this study was between 15-20 company managers or representatives. All interviews were audio-recorded. On average, each interview lasted 30 minutes.

The interview data were analyzed by the use of thematic analysis which is the most common form of analysis in qualitative research (Guest, 2012) and emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns (or "themes") within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Before analyzing the data, the recorded interviews were transcribed and also were translated from Thai to English. Subsequently, these documents were coded in order to find out themes. Coding is the "process of simplifying and making sense out of the complex data" (Patton, 2002, p.463). All the themes and participants statements presented in this study were translated into English and checked by a proofreader. In terms of reliability and validity, the researcher utilizes the data source triangulation and theory triangulation for examining evidence from different types of data sources and using more than one theoretical approach to interpret and support data.

Results

As stated earlier, the number of participants need was between 15-20 company managers or representatives. This is based on Bertaux's (1981) assertion that the smallest acceptable size is 15 informants. In fact, it was possible to exceed the minimum requirement and interview 38 current host organizers. This is because opportunities arose as a result of the recommendations of interviewees which enabled snowball sampling through which other respondents were contracted. In addition, 38 interviewees are representatives of both domestic and international organizations/companies whose office are situated in Bangkok, Thailand.

The findings emerged from the interview data as shown in Table 3 and are able to answer the research question. It is to explore how current MICE customers understand the images of Thailand for meetings/ conferences purposes.

Table 3. The theme and sub-themes from the semi-structured interviews

Theme	Sub-themes
Positive Experiences of Current MICE Customers	Hospitality
	Security
	Facilities for meetings/ Conferences
	A good value of money

Source: Author

Based on Table 3, the results discovered the main theme and sub-themes. The next paragraph is going to discuss each sub-themes.

Hospitality

Thai hospitality is mentioned as the good reputation of Thailand. This is accepted by interviewee No.1 stated that *"Thai hospitality is excellent, because staff are service-minded and good in spirits."* Additionally, interviewee No.17 said that: *"In my point of view, Thai hospitality is better than other countries and Thai staff are willing to serve. It makes attendees feel happy and satisfied."* This supports that current MICE customers think positively about Thailand regarding Thai hospitality. Consequently, it is a reason why they repeat choosing Thailand as a meeting/ conference destination. For instance, interviewee No.28 noticed that: *"Whatever makes delegates feel very glad, we will provide it again in the next meetings/ conferences such as hospitality, Thai food, venues, etc."* Therefore, Thai hospitality can link with one of the 10 A's attributes that is *"Appreciation"* (Morrison, 2013). This attribute concentrates upon tourists' feelings in relation to the levels of welcome and hospitality. It also relates to one of checklists about the destination assessment (Krungman & Wright, 2007). This sub-theme is able to appeal to the host organizers, attendees and guest speakers.

Security

According to Krungman and Wright (2007), one of destination selection criteria is safety and security concerns. As interviewee No.22 said: *“The organization feels satisfied arranging international conferences in Thailand. We are confident of security in Thailand and we are proud of submitting a bid to host.”* From the attitude, it is clear that host organizer selected Thailand as a meeting/conference destination because of security. The sub-theme is one of top memorable variables of the conference destination from the organizers, delegates and suppliers perspectives (Henaien & Sinha, 2014). It is also relevant to one of the 10 A's attributes (Morrison, 2013) are adopted as a useful set of attributes for judging the success of tourism that is “assurance”. To apply the finding with the theory, Thailand has a good image for current MICE customers that make actual consumers satisfied with the destinations and influence the decision-making behavior of potential customers (Selby, 2004; McCartney et al., 2009; Kozak et al., 2013).

Facilities for meetings/conferences

In the context of facilities for meeting and conference purposes, there is a range of audio-visual aids that can be used either alone or in combination, for example, basic visual aids (flip chart and whiteboard), overhead transparencies, slides (photographs, text or diagrammatic), video, film, business television, computer data and graphics projection, screens, projectors, microphones, amplifiers, loudspeakers, etc. (Seekings & Farrer, 1999). The representative of an international organization (interviewee No.1) mentioned that *“The organization selected five-star hotels in Thailand. In my view, their facilities for meetings and conferences are fully prepared. When compared with other countries in the Southeast Asia, the facilities of five-star hotels in Thailand are better than them.”* Similarly, the administration manager of an international organization (interviewee No.5) said that *“From the evaluation forms after organizing international meetings and/or conferences in Thailand, delegates gave ‘very good’ level about both hotels and facilities for meeting and/or conference purposes. Based on my experiences of arranging international meetings and conferences, some countries in Southeast Asia are not complete.”* In addition, this is accepted by the technical manager of a company (interviewee No.32) explained that *“Most participants feel impressed on meeting rooms of the hotels and facilities for meeting purposes such as over-head projectors, sound system, screens, Wi-Fi access, etc.”* According to the above discussion, the sub-theme is able to reply a question ‘Does the city or region have a good range of conference hotels and facilities?’ of destination assessments (Krungman & Wright, 2007).

A Good Value of Money

Money is one of the deciding factors when it comes to choose a meeting or conference venue. The costs for organizing meetings and/or conferences consist of fixed costs and variable costs. According to Seekings and Farrer (1999), fixed costs are paid for no matter how many delegates attend the event, for instance, charges for the hire of venue facilities, administrative costs, conference organizers' fees and expenses and contingencies. The authors also explained the costs that vary depended upon the number of participants attending called variable costs (Seekings & Farrer, 1999). Thus, the company or organization has to manage and control the expenditures of the event carefully.

In order to confirm that the budget is an essential element for meetings and conferences arrangements. The representative of an international organization (interviewee No.3) stated that *“The budget is the most significant factor which we take into consideration when making a choice about a meeting and/or conference destination. Because it is as a determinant relevant to other costs such as venue, speakers' fees (including their travel and accommodation expenses), marketing costs, meals, refreshments, accommodation, conference kit, document costs, etc.”*

Interviewee (No.3) also expressed that *“From my experience, it is worth the money to arrange international conferences in Thailand compared with other countries that the organization had to pay the same amount of budget. I think that Thailand can afford supporting things for delegates such as goods for shopping, food, Thai massage and spa.”* Similarly, the director and general manager of the company (interviewee No.20) remarked that *“Indeed, our company selected Thailand for international meetings purposes because firstly, the access from abroad to Thailand is easy and the domestic travels are convenient as well. Next, it is really good value for money (eg. accommodation, food, shopping merchandises and transportation). I think that these are not expensive, reasonable price and diverse. Lastly, Thai hospitality including mentality and serviced mind are excellent.”* From these comments that are echoed by the interviewees' views it is clear that Thailand is worth the money for meetings/ conferences purposes. According to Krungman and Wright (2007), a question about destination selection criteria is that *‘Will attendees be attracted by the destination's assets?’* Apparently, this sub-theme is able to attracted delegates based on the previous experience from the current host organizers.

Discussion

This study examined destination images of Thailand for meetings/ conferences purposes, particularly Bangkok. Therefore, current host organizers as MICE customers are the key persons to reveal images of the MICE industry in Thailand because they have experienced arranging meetings/ conferences in Thailand. The experience, attitude and views of host organizers have value for MICE practitioners in terms of marketing, policy making and the funding of products and facilities development in Thailand. As mentioned in the literature review part, the results of this research concur with destination selection criteria by Krungman and Wright (2007) such as facilities for conferences, a destination's assets and security concerns. Additionally, previous studies (Weber & Chon, 2002; Henaien & Sinha, 2014) has clearly identified destination images to be one of the most significant criteria in site selection, as it directly corresponds to the number of delegates. The findings also confirm the importance of destination images about hospitality, security, facilities for meetings/ conferences and a good value of money. These are positive images of Thailand for meetings/ conferences purposes from host organizers' perspectives. Consequently, this study makes both a theoretical and practical contribution to knowledge. In terms of theoretical contribution, it offers a better understanding of knowledge, and it will add a variety of literature streams to the study of the MICE industry. In practical terms, the concept of destination image is seen as a crucial element for gaining the success (Kozak et al., 2013). Thus, it is suggested that destination marketers consider the implications of these positive images of the MICE industry in Thailand because they could be fundamental factors in increasing customers' satisfaction and attracting both potential and repeat customers.

In summary, Thailand has hardly caught researchers' much attention in examining its destination images for meetings/ conferences purposes before. This study acted as an initial effort in analyzing them from the perspective of current host organizers. It is hope that the findings of this study would help the MICE marketers better understand the features of Thailand's destination images and thus make more effective marketing strategies in promoting Thailand's MICE industry to the international markets. For limitation of this study, it has only studied the experience, attitude and views of current MICE customers after arranging meetings/ conferences in Thailand. Hence, further research is recommended to focus on the relationship between destination images and customer satisfaction on revisit.

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Application for rental-space reservations to enhance service efficiency In Convention and Exhibition Center

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Abstract

In digital economy, there has been consistent technology development for usable applications. This is an opportunity for MICE industry to develop applications for rental-space to enhance service efficiency of the owner of convention and exhibition centers to meet the international standards. The study has objectives as follow: 1) to study and analyze the application for rental-space reservations to enhance service efficiency and 2) to propose guidelines for applying and adapting rental-space applications for Convention and Exhibition Center to enhance service potential in the future. The result of this study shows that the rental-space functions on an application are suitable for enhance to service efficiency in Convention and Exhibition Center, including 6 functions as follow: 1) Reservation and rental-space system 2) Financial transaction 3) Important data protection system 4) Checking status rental-space system 5) Speedy data processing and 6) Statistical report and monthly summary system.

Keywords: Application, Rental-space, Service potential, Convention and Exhibition Center

Introduction

The social and economic aspects of digital technology are rapidly evolving. There is an Internet-based communications network that links electronic tools together as a tool for facilitating access to information, quick communications and activities. At present, 95% of the world population uses digital technology. The remaining 5% have not had a chance. Almost half of the world's population has access to the Internet and the use of digital technology. It is likely to continue to grow (Ulrich Zachau, 2016; ETDA, 2014; Sombat Gusumawalee, 2016) and one of the popular digital technologies used to facilitate the application of technology is application. The system can help facilitate activities such as services, entertainment payments and functions. On the App Annie survey (2017), it analyzed the usage of applications of users around the world in 2017, there had been more than 175 billion times of downloads and is likely to increase in the future around 95% indicating that using application has become part of the way of life (Nuttawut Pongsiri, 2017; Fayosy, 2018), and provides an opportunity for the service industry. This shows a opportunity to use digital technology in the application to develop and maximize service potential (ETDA, 2014; Public Debt Management Office, 2017)

Thailand has adapted and realized the importance of digital technology. The application is a tool for working, communicating, developing new products and services. In relevant services industries (ETDA, 2017; Public Debt Management Office, 2017), especially in the MICE industry,

digital technology related to the application system has been developed. It is deployed within the convention center and exhibitions to increase the potential of services such as MICE tourist applications, application for planning events, and applications for hosting, etc. The users can also check and add events to the car lenders and have them notified for the interested events as well as receiving new information, updates and any changes directly to the cell phones. There is a new application for space rental suitable for department stores, convention halls and trade shows which is space rental application. This application has been developed to be applicable to devices convenient to carry in the present and can function in many ways such as controlling the rental space, transactions, managements, and managing contracts. This application can solve problems of duplicated bookings (Kasscom, 2012).

Therefore, the learner recognizes the importance of using the application for space rental and to help develop service potential for space rental including the follow: 1) Space Management application that helps organizations manage their rental space including rental contracts, issuance of contract documents, and financial transactions 2) FM systems is a system that can help you manage your reservations quickly and real-time. The tenant's data collection system is safe. 3) Happy Desk is an application for organizing meeting space, control system of the conference room, rental period control and can design electronic contract documents. With the three examples above, researchers analyze the functions of the application to provide an appropriate application solution to increase the potential for space lease of Khon Kaen International Convention and Exhibition Center in the future.

Objectives of the study

- 1) To study and analyze applications for space rental and enhance the service efficiency of Convention and Exhibition Center.
- 2) To provide guidelines for deploying space rental applications implemented for service enhancement at Convention and Exhibition Center.

Methodology

In this study, the researcher uses secondary data compiling from researching information from documents and publications both domestic and international focusing on applications, in particular application development for services. I also analyzed the results by analytical description based on the three case studies for rental application as follow:

- 1) SPACE- Management 2) FM systems and 3) Happy desk to enhance future service.

Results and Discussions

Results of literature reviews related to application

An application is a program or software that allows us to perform certain tasks according to our needs. The user must have a user interface called "User Interface" or "UI" to be the middleware to use the various aspects of the application. Apps with the user (Vangie Beal, 2015; Christine Curley, 2015; Basic Computer, 2013; Apasak Anand, 2016). The application of the

application is designed depending on the purpose of the user. Nowadays, there are three main types (Sasiporn, 2014; Mobile Application, 2015):

- 1) Desktop Applications is an application for using on Desktop computer which is the operating system software section. The system controls the operation of the device and supports the use of the application or programs on the computer.
- 2) Web Application is an application that displays web pages. Applications must be connected to the Internet at all times and may not be able to use some of the system resources. However, it can develop program quickly (Tech Terms, 2014; Margaret Rouse, 2016; Daniel Nations, 2018).
- 3) Mobile Applications are applications that run on handheld devices, such as mobile phones, tablets, and so on. The operating system is IOS, Android, and Windows Phone, etc. By using the application within the organization, the popular applications are in the form of desktop applications and mobile applications. They are easy to use. Fast estimation and can be used without any Internet (Mobile Application, 2015).

The procedures to develop or design applications include 6 main steps which are as follow (Geeta Tyagi, 2015; Technotechindia, 2017; Joshua green, 2017): 1) Planning Purpose of use and plans for development. What is the purpose of the application? 2) Analyze the weaknesses that need to be developed in the workplace of an organization, or is the application that needs to be added to solve the problem in the implementation of services and analyze the essential which should be developed and used affectively to maximize performance. 3) Design is the design of the application program that has characteristics. The design should be easy to comprehend, not complicated and also clearly proportional. 4) Development and Implementation: This is the development of the system and to record the various steps following up the operation closely before testing. In this section, IT Technicians or the software development company is responsible. 5) Testing, this step is to bring the almost complete application to get tested in the sample user group to find the error in the work and to improve leading to the effective use. Testing ensures the system is stable and 6) Maintains continuous monitoring and quality control to further develop the application program format in the future.

In the MICE industry, there has been a consistent development of applications to enhance the service for exhibitions & service centers' open space rental service, for exhibitions and meeting room. The application is gaining popularity, because the application can facilitate the operation of the service to the tenant and the owner of the space as following topics:

Application for rental space reservation

Renting space means having any space that the owner of the area or place open for activities by an outsider or a tenant to sign a rental contract as part of the lease agreement (Dictionary of the Royal Thai Academy, 2011), but in the MICE industry, reservation of space rental service includes venue, meeting room, seminar room which by the owner of space is the convention and exhibition center. There will be contact between the tenant and the owner of the area to sign contracts and arrangements for the event. When it comes to developing applications,

which is an application for rent space reservation, they are designed to facilitate the speedy booking service. The system can display details of the status of the area at that time or real time showing details about the cost of renting space, and the facilities in the area. It also reduces the time to contact about the documents and financial transactions, etc., resulting in convenient and fast service. Rental applications are becoming increasingly popular, as are convention centers and convention centers. This application can benefit the owner of the space who can check the status of the area. This can prevent overlapping reservations, reduce the cost of paper resources, communicant. (Assetwork, 2017, Qube, 2017), promote the image of service capabilities of the convention center and showcase products to a modern look. There are three case study examples for renting the space.

1) SPACE Management

- Appearance: this app is made for the purpose to assist in the management suitable for rental areas like shopping center, office building, industrial estates, condominiums, convention centers, and exhibitions. The application is easy to operate on web applications, desktop applications, and mobile applications. It supports the work that needs to be practical on the real space. It can be accessed via a mobile device both IOS and Android; as well as internet both connected and not connected ways. (G-able, 2018).

- Functionality: The system has functions that cover the layout of the area, reservation, lease agreement utility, fee payment system, receipt, contracts, and documents in electronic form can evaluate the area for renovation and cost estimation. It can also record statistics of management system results and monthly rental sales number. The system will help control the space to avoid overlapping contracts. (G-able, 2018)

2) FM systems (space management)

- App nature: the application was developed with a purpose that is to manage the space for shopping center, office buildings, condominiums, convention centers and trade fairs which are available in the web application system and desktop applications. The system will facilitate management control and lease agreements, configuration for the reservation system overlap. It can also be used to design space between operators and organizations (FM systems, MCPS).

- Functionality: the system has the main functions: the reservation system and lease; lease information between landlords and tenants that comes with exceptional security system protecting data. Rapid payment system, receipt, contract document in electronic form, tenant records system and membership system are included.

3) Happy desk

- App nature: it is a software application developed by WUN Yardi- Company aimed to help rental management and management of convention and exhibition centers, as well as office buildings that offer conference room rental. The application is available on web-application and desktop applications. It can be accessed via wireless internet or offline. The application is easy to use and gives fast results; also there is enough space for data storage. (The receptionist, 2017)

- **Functionality:** The system has a number of key functions, including a comprehensive system of reservation or lease agreements, electronic cash transfer system, space rental control system, electronic receipt, and electronic documents as soon as there are payments from tenants. The system includes a report format for the rental, rental space, real time status, an automated response system for tenants, a 24-hour service area, and a tenant notification system; in the event of an automatic lease agreement (The receptionist, 2017)

Based on the case study of three sample application areas, the sample application focused on the same target group: among landlords. The system design can facilitate the process of renting. I can analyze the best features of an application for a rental reservation. The basic functions are as follows: 1) The system can be used in various operating systems such as web application, desktop application and mobile application. 2) The system covers contract processing such as contracts, rental lease and also invoices. 3) There is an important data protection system. 4) There is an electronic payment system. 5) The rental status can be checked. 6) The rental rate calculation and 7) The speedy billing system. These features can be used to enhance the service potential of the landlord. The application for space leasing can maximize service potential which is discussed in the next section.

Space rental application to maximize service performance

In operation, service is a technique to improve performance of the work to meet the needs of consumers and keep them happy, comfortable or satisfied with the results. If there is a good service potential, it can result in the advancement of work within the organization. (Mostafa Rahmana et al., 2016; Wann YihWu et al., 2018). The better quality the work, the more potential it grows at work. The results of the good work bring satisfaction and the process of working at a cost-effective time. By reducing the lost time, there is a reduction of the loss of resources in the organization; resulting in good work and following the correct process steps. Needless to say, there will be an increase in the capacity of the service to achieve the goals of the organization (John D. Millet, 1954; Certo, 2000; Altaf Hussain et al., 2013; Sirivadee Choocherd, 2013). Potential services have five main components (John D. Millet, 1954; Peterson and Plowman 1989; Certo, 2000).

1. Reliability is the creation of a service that will provide the service with accuracy, such as an example of an FM System application that provides an important data protection system for lease agreements. It ensures the users or the example of Space Management with the use of document authentication system to enhance credibility.
2. Ability to respond (responsiveness) is a fast service. The three applications are similar, focusing on performance, speed and to facilitate financial transactions and documents in online format; as well as the ease to collect data as shown in use of FM System in 2017 by Steven Baumgardner who compared how much faster it is to gain information compared to the past and they have a strategy plan to improve the time even more to get everything done with 50% less time (FM System, 2018).
3. Assurance is the ability to deliver trust and confidence. For example, SPACE Management has a rental report system and the monthly rental space to keep track of the management results that

the organization can bring to the development of other potential. In 2017, FM System application user named Heather Wiseman said that the system helped her save time to track and account by a large scale and it gives more room for more business traffic which allows them to focus only on expanding the business (FM System, 2018). Gary Glawe also mentioned how 360 Facility does not make any mistake and does the job (FM System, 2018).

4. Empathy is to take care of the tenants of the area thoroughly. The FM System has functions for storing old tenant groups to keep a record or to a membership to add extra services, or to provide detailed explanation and special promotions. The system can focus on creating a feeling of being special for the service.

5. Tangibility means the physical appearance of facilities, personal equipment, and communications equipment such as the Happy Desk. There is an optional 24-hour auto responder function, and there is a system to issue receipts as soon as payment from the tenant, then send it to an email or text message, or send to the accounting department to reduce the duplication of documents. In 2017, an anonymous user said how much he appreciated the large coverage or functions Happy Desk offers such as transactions and reservations which proves capability of the app's features. He also likes the support team and changes can be done smoothly and the software has everything he needs.

From the above, the study concluded that application for space rental can enhance the service. The functional design of the service is met by the tenants. The system design facilitates ease of work. The service process is a rapid response system, and can solve problems. A good application can perform the service which enables the owner of the space to enhance the service capabilities of the organization. This is a guideline for introducing applications for hosting and applies for service enhancement at Convention and Exhibition Center.

Conclusion

The study found that Convention and Exhibition Center struggled with communication problems within the organization causing overlapping bookings and inefficient space management, as well as document processing that had many mistakes. The issue ruins the image of Convention and Exhibition Center in their service. They also lack the use of technology for services such as application. Therefore, the purposes of this study are to 1) study and analyze the rental space to enhance the services of Convention and Exhibition Center and 2) propose implementation of application suitable for renting spaces of Convention and Exhibition Center. From studying and analyzing applications for rental space, there are 3 case study examples: 1) SPACE Management 2) FM systems and 3) Happy desk. There are six functions that are suitable and appropriate for convention and exhibition centers which are as follow:

1) A system that covers the lease of a space, such as a lease contract or a space reservation. Contract renewal document, you can specify the contract date, start date, terms and conditions. It is possible to assign one contractor to several contracts. Each contract can specify unlimited booths, including whether to give out invoices together or separately. In the system, it can be contacted by electronic documents and can reduce redundant documents.



2) Comprehensive financial transaction system, including the ability to assign code and tenant information: complete set of debt and collection. The system can make a change requesting to adjust the exact amount of revenue and to check the accuracy before post invoice.

3) The system is designed to provide a full range of rental services. It can determine how much space (width x length) in each zone if it can accommodate the size of the event. The system can calculate the total area by square meter or number of booths to find out the amount of space in each zone. It includes date and time, alert system for overlapping reservations, and real-time data retrieval.

4) Fast and efficient processing; especially in the processing related to the lease agreement, it displays area status, and calculates the short-term, long-term rental rates accurately and quickly to reduce errors in rental calculations. It can show the details of the projects to the personnel thoroughly.

5) Statistical system to summarize the results of the lease and the use of customer space. It can be summarized in both daily, weekly and monthly formats, as well as memorizing customers who come to use the service to view the details of the most frequent groups in order to offer promotions and discounts. This tactic impresses customers. They can also report the suitability of those who use the rental service within the convention center, in order to bring defects in various points to develop the service system, develop the application system and to increase the potential of service in the future.

6) Important information protection system has designed codes to create the privacy of access to the information of the users who are using the service and information within the organization.

From the above mentioned text of the 6 functions of system development. Therefore, the development of digital technology on application can be useful and important to apply to work in various areas of the rental service of convention centers and trade fairs. The system can help solve problems in the document, figure out duplicated rentals and save on the cost of materials related to the document. The system can report data faster which is effective and maximize performance on the service creating a good image of the service to meet international standards.

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Beyond the MICE Cluster: Crowdsourcing Platform for Hong Kong, the Innovation to Promoting MICE Buyer Market Experiences

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Abstract

In 2017 City rankings report by International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), Hong Kong, jumped from 19th to 13th, as total number of meetings is 119 conferences. That is why the author mentioned “Beyond the MICE Cluster: Crowdsourcing Platform for Hong Kong, the Innovation to Promoting MICE Buyer Market Experiences”. The literature reviewed MICE cluster, crowdsourcing platform, innovation, MICE buyer, and buyer experiences. The methodology is based on a case study of Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC). The item checklist gives authors a framework for condensing the systematic review. The specification focuses on the core organizers: professional conference organizer, professional exhibition organizer, destination management company, event management company, and venue owner. The findings are crowdsourcing platform, the platform of HKTDC unlock the boundary of MICE buyers and sellers, they can link up each other. This consists of the factors for Hong Kong MICE City are discussed to derive implications for innovate to promoting MICE buyer market experience. The online marketplaces connect service providers and product suppliers. The functions are products/services highlights, company name, research, blog and forum, events, news for buyer and seller, and multimedia. Sourcing of quality products in small quantities with secure payment, buyer loyalty rewards, mobile application, and social media are added on. The social media is transforming the way we think of crowdsourcing and will continue to do so as the benefits of using to crowdsource become more well-known. This is becoming an essential component as it allows MICE sellers to reach a wider buyer faster, cheaper and more efficiently than ever before.



Keywords:

MICE Cluster, Crowdsourcing Platform, Innovation, MICE Buyer Market Experiences

Introduction

In 2017 City rankings report by International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), Hong Kong, jumped from 19th to 13th, as total number of meetings is 119 conferences. ICCA statistics only include meetings organized by associations, as included in the ICCA Association Database, which live up to three strict criteria. They must: 1) be attended by at least 50 participants, 2) be organized on a regular basis (one-time events are not included) and 3) move between at least 3 different countries. (ICCA, 2017)

Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC, 2018) communicate that Hong Kong is the world's 7th largest trading economy, Hong Kong has developed into a premier convention and exhibition center in the region. As a free port with superb air connectivity at the heart of Asia, exhibitors and visitors can come to Hong Kong conveniently, making the city a preferred location in staging international conventions and exhibitions. The city's main MICE venues include the HKCEC in the main business district, the AsiaWorld-Expo (AWE) near the airport and the Hong Kong International Trade and Exhibition Centre in Kowloon Bay. In 2016, Hong Kong was crowned as “Asia's Leading Meetings & Conference Destination” in the World Travel Awards and “Best Business City in Asia” in the Smart Travel Asia Award. The Mainland and Hong Kong governments signed the Agreement on Trade in Services in December 2015 in respect of applying liberalization measures for Hong Kong service suppliers and professionals on the mainland from June 2016.

The Objectives

The objectives of this paper, Beyond the MICE Cluster: Crowdsourcing Platform for Hong Kong, the Innovation to Promoting MICE Buyer Market Experiences, is to discuss how to innovate the meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions (MICE) Cluster and their crowdsourcing business platform. As this is the innovation tool to promote MICE buyer market experiences.

Literature Review

The literature reviewed MICE cluster, crowdsourcing platform, innovation, MICE buyer, and buyer experiences.

MICE Cluster

Clustering is the phenomenon whereby firms from the same industry gather together in close proximity. It is particularly evident in industries like banking. The Economists (2009) explain clustering as a means for small companies to enjoy some of the economies of scale usually reserved for large ones. An isolated greenfield site in a depressed region where government grants are plentiful may bring a young company immediate benefit. But in the longer term the young company may be better off squeezing itself onto an expensive piece of urban real estate in close proximity to a significant number of its competitors.

The Core business of MICE is organizer, professional conference organizer (PCO), professional exhibition organizer (PEO), event management company (EMC), and destination management company (DMC), and venue owners.

For the suppliers, seventeen businesses related MICE industry, composed of 1. Organizers 2. Venue Owner 3. Accommodation 4. Restaurant Caterer 5. Souvenir Suppliers 6. Tour Business 7. Freight Forwarder 8. Transportation Business Owner 9. Interpreters 10. Service Contractors 11. Monetary Agency 12. IT Company 13. Graphic and Printing House 14. Advertising & PR 15. Map Producer 16. Florist 17. Photo and Video Producer, and others.

Crowdsourcing Platform

Crowdsourcing platform is;

1. The practice of turning to a body of people to obtain needed knowledge, goods or services. (TechTarget, 2017)
2. Crowdsourcing involves obtaining work, information or opinions from a large group of people into the collective intelligence who submit their data via the Internet, social media and smartphone apps. To solicit feedback from an active and passionate community of customers can reduce the amount of time spent collecting data through formal focus groups or trend research. (Moneywatch, 2007; Investopedia, 2018)
3. People involved in crowdsourcing sometimes work as paid freelancers, outsource to a third-party provider. while others perform small tasks on a voluntary basis. (Investopedia, 2018)

4. Crowdsourcing, public at large to complete business-related tasks that a company would normally either perform itself. (Moneywatch, 2007) Open innovation websites allow people from all cultural, economic and educational backgrounds to collaborate on ground-breaking technology. (Ferrari and Fidanboyu, 2013)
5. This enables managers to expand the size of their talent pool while also gaining deeper insight into what customers really want. (Moneywatch, 2007)

Innovation

The business innovation need a roadmap for the journey to creating value, and a strategy that lays out where and how innovation is going to help your organization get to where it needs to be. Businesses then need to create an atmosphere where creativity is welcomed, by making people feel like they can deliver an idea, and that it's safe to share their own and link up with others. It's also crucial to collaborate. The need to build links has always been there, but today it's called "open innovation" – which means networking with people inside and outside of the organization. (Hajra Rahim, 2017; Satell, 2017) categorized 4 types of innovation, breakthrough innovation, sustaining innovation, basic research, and disruptive innovation.

MICE Buyer and Buyer Experiences

In Asia and the Pacific, one of the fastest developing regions in the world, MICE industry development can be a key driver of economic growth, regional cooperation and intellectual development. This publication brings together the theoretical background of MICE tourism as well as best practice examples from around the Asia Pacific Region. Together these show how MICE tourism can bring benefits beyond profits and short-term jobs to include adding competitive advantage to destinations, diversifying source markets and engaging both hosts and guests in global, regional and local issues. (UNWTO, 2012)

BusinessDictionary (2018) defines buyer as 1. Party which acquires, or agrees to acquire, ownership (in case of goods), or benefit or usage (in case of services), in exchange for money or other consideration under a contract of sale. Also called purchaser. See also customer.; 2. Professional purchaser specializing in a specific group of materials, goods, or services, and experienced in market analysis, purchase negotiations, bulk buying, and delivery coordination.

In depth, Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (2016), research that MICE buyers want unique experiences that give them good value for money. Good quality, capacity, flexibility and professionalism are important.



Figure 1 Asian Business Travellers at a Glance 1 (Singapore Tourism Board, 2015)

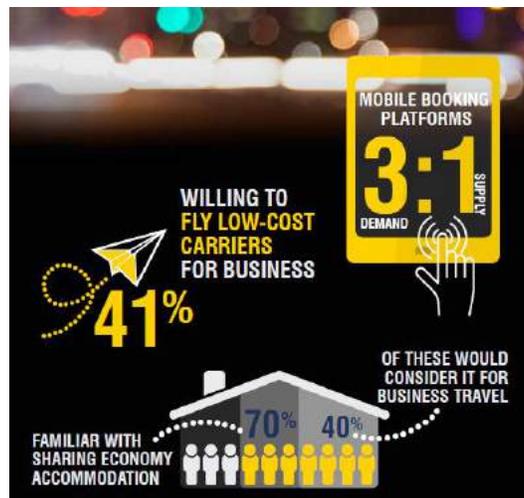


Figure 2 Asian Business Travelers at a Glance 2 (Singapore Tourism Board, 2015)

MICE buyers, five key markets were study by Singapore Tourism Board (2015): China, India, Indonesia, Japan, and Singapore. These countries together represent 68 percent of Asia's population and more than 78 percent of the region's expenditures for business travel. Their choices are being shaped by their own leisure travel experiences, as well as evolving digital

platforms, proximity to work and features that provide convenience and efficiency, such as high-speed Wi-Fi, are top priorities. And services, more flexible travel policies, and shifting consumer preferences. And the trend is likely to continue as more Millennials, those born between 1981 and 1995, join the market.

The prior experiences to create packages tailored to their preferences, seek convenience and crave travel experiences. MICE buyers seek for distinctive travel experiences and are willing to pay more personally for additional services, whether to facilitate work such as in-flight Wi-Fi to appeal to their desire for distinctive experiences. These are all about experience.

Methodology

The methodology is based on a case study of Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC). The item checklist gives authors a framework for condensing the systematic review as below table.

The specification focuses on the core organizers: professional conference organizer, professional exhibition organizer, destination management company, event management company, and venue owner.

No.	Crowdsourcing Platform Components of MICE Destination
1	Website Type
2	Companies, Company Name - Success Stories, Our stories
3	All Products Categories, Products/Services, Wholesale Products, ePay Products - Trade Recommendation - Weekly Deals, Deals and Promotions
4	For Buyer - Find Product Suppliers - Find Service Providers
5	For Seller - Look for Quality Buyers at Trade Fairs - Advertise Your Goods and Services
6	Post a Buying Leads, Post Buying Request, Buying Requests list, Trading Post (Post your buying/selling offers.) - Request for Quotation Make a request to receive quotations from the suppliers.

No.	Crowdsourcing Platform Components of MICE Destination
7	Matching Status, Benefit Offers, Business Matching, Global Business Matching Service (GBMS)
8	MICE Venues - Online Exhibition, Events & Fair, Events, Exhibitions & Conferences, Trade Events
9	Mobile Application
10	SME Support - SME Startup (SME Startup Programme) - Business Advisory Service - Seminars & Workshops - Register in Databank - Business Databases - Meeting Suppliers Online - Customized Sourcing Service
11	- Keyword Trends - Most view countries
12	- Publication, Knowledge - News & Notices, Newsletters - Product Magazines - Multimedia, Design Gallery, Media Resource - Market/Industry Reports & Analysis - Blog Articles, Forum Entries, Research
13	Support, Service, FAQ, Live Support, Call Center, Help, Contact us - Global Partners, Global Partnerships - Related Links - Recommended Sites - How to Use, Site Map, Web Directory

Figure 3 Item Checklist for Crowdsourcing Platform Components of MICE Destination

Source : HKTDC, 2018

Results

The findings are crowdsourcing platform, the platform of HKTDC unlock the boundary of MICE buyers and sellers, they can link up each other. This consists of the factors for Hong Kong MICE City are discussed to derive implications for innovate to promoting MICE buyer market experience. The online marketplaces connect service providers and product suppliers. The functions are products/services highlights, company name, research, blog and forum, events, news for buyer and seller, and multimedia. Sourcing of quality products in small quantities with secure payment, buyer loyalty rewards, mobile application, and social media are added on. The social media is transforming the way we think of crowdsourcing and will continue to do so as the benefits of using to crowdsource become more well-known. This is becoming an essential component as it allows MICE sellers to reach a wider buyer faster, cheaper and more efficiently than ever before.

Additionally, Hong Kong MICE buyers, the unique experience, good value for money, good quality, capacity, flexibility and professionalism, proximity to work and features that provide convenience and efficiency, seek convenience in evolving digital platforms, such as high-speed Wi-Fi. MICE buyers seek for distinctive crave travel experiences. They are willing to pay more personally for additional services, whether to facilitate work.

No.	MICE Crowdsourcing Platform Components of Hong Kong	Innovation	Crowdsourcing Platform	Organizers, Venue Owners, Suppliers
1	Website Type Trusted e-Sourcing Platform, Online Marketplace	Sustaining Innovation		Convention Bureau
2	Companies, Company Name - Success Stories, Our stories			
3	All Products Categories, Products/Services, Wholesale Products, ePay Products - Trade Recommendation - Weekly Deals, Deals and Promotions		/	HKTDC PCO, PEO, DMC, EMC, suppliers
4	For Buyer - Find Product Suppliers - Find Service Providers		/	PCO, PEO, DMC, EMC, suppliers
5	For Seller		/	PCO, PEO, DMC, EMC, suppliers

No.	MICE Crowdsourcing Platform Components of Hong Kong	Innovation	Crowdsourcing Platform	Organizers, Venue Owners, Suppliers
	- Look for Quality Buyers at Trade Fairs - Advertise Your Goods and Services			
6	Post a Buying Leads, Post Buying Request, Buying Requests list, Trading Post (Post your buying/selling offers.) - Request for Quotation Make a request to receive quotations from the suppliers.		/	PCO, PEO, DMC, EMC, suppliers
7	Matching Status, Benefit Offers, Business Matching, Global Business Matching Service (GBMS)	breakthrough innovation	/	PCO, PEO, DMC, EMC, suppliers
8	MICE Venues - Online Exhibition, Events & Fair, Events, Exhibitions & Conferences, Trade Events	Sustaining Innovation		Venue Owners
9	Mobile Application HKTDC Marketplace APP, e-Badge, HKTDC Mobile APP	breakthrough innovation	/	HKTDC
10	SME Support - SME Startup (SME Startup Programme) - Business Advisory Service - Seminars & Workshops - Register in Databank - Business Databases - Meeting Suppliers Online - Customized Sourcing Service	breakthrough innovation		HKTDC, suppliers
11	- Keyword Trends - Most view countries	Sustaining Innovation	/	Convention Bureau Research University
12	- Publication, Knowledge - News & Notices, Newsletters - Product Magazines - Multimedia, Design Gallery, Media Resource - Market/Industry Reports & Analysis	- breakthrough innovation - basic research	/	

No.	MICE Crowdsourcing Platform Components of Hong Kong	Innovation	Crowdsourcing Platform	Organizers, Venue Owners, Suppliers
	- Blog Articles, Forum Entries, Research			
13	Support, Service, FAQ, Live Support, Call Center, Help, Contact us - Global Partners, Global Partnerships - Related Links - Recommended Sites - How to Use, Site Map, Web Directory	Sustaining Innovation	/	

Figure 4 MICE Innovation Crowdsourcing Platform Components of Hong Kong Stakeholders

Discussion

The innovation was driven the breakthrough platform to sustain (ICCA, 2017; Satell, 2017) the scheme of organizers, suppliers, and attendees, answering all demand. This start up stage collected data by basic research for database, to tech disruption. (Hajra Rahim, 2017)

Hong Kong crowdsourcing platform obtain MICE products (TechTarget, 2017). This involves buyers and sellers' data via the internet, social media and smartphone applications. The stage can reduce the amount of time spent collecting enormous researches, as pool of knowledge. (Moneywatch, 2007; Investopedia, 2018) The facebook involve in crowdsourcing sometimes work as third-party provider. (Investopedia, 2018) And Public at large to complete MICE tasks. (Moneywatch, 2007) The websites allow meetings stakeholders to participate that. (Ferrari and Fidanboylu, 2013)

The tailor-made packages create the unique experiences, pay more personally for technology facility. (Singapore Tourism Board, 2015)

The implications are integrator platform build, other crowdsourcing platform types should be studied to enrich the findings. The value, this article primarily addresses the question of how MICE buyer market can take the experience of crowdsourcing. The original contribution of this is a set of strategies to crowdsourcing platform by taking a platform's entire MICE business model into account.

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Consumer Behavior on Ko Yo Fabric buying

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Abstract

Fabric of Ko (island) Yo, or Ko Yo textile is the local fabric produced by Ko Yo people. Ko Yo is a Sub-district of Mueang District in Songkhla Province. It is a native product that has a famous of Songkhla Province since past to present. It has been neat and colorful, which lift weaved to be artistic patterns, solidly and smoothly. That is a regional handicraft motif of Southern Thailand. Moreover, it is the supreme of One Tambon (Sub-district) One Product (OTOP). Objectives of this research were to evaluate the general conditions and problem of Ko Yo fabric production, and to study the network development in commercial producing the Ko Yo textile by determining the level of satisfaction on production, and buyers' satisfaction. This research used both qualitative and quantitative research technics. Data collection was done by the research instruments in interviewing, observation, and surveying from 14 entrepreneurs and 20 buyers. Research results were found that buyers were satisfied in overviews on the design pattern at the rather high level, products at the medium level, price at the medium level, the distribution channel at the rather low level, and promotion at the medium level.

Keywords: Cost, Production, Woven, Textile, Fabric, Ko Yo

Introduction

Ko yo fabric or woven is a local textile fabric of Ko (an island in Thai) Yo (a kind of tree) Sub-district at Mueang District in Songkhla Province, a famous native product of Songkhla from past until now. It is neat and colorful. The raised flower weaving with pattern on the fabric was delicate. It is a symbol of Southern folk weaving handicraft and is the culmination of the One Tambon (Thai Sub-district) One Product [OTOP] in year 2006 (Suthas Na Ayuthaya, 2017).

Textile industry in household would be interesting because it is important for developing the economic and social of Songkhla Province, helping the local people get jobs to generate income, reducing the unemployment in the community for well-being (Charernsuk, 2014).

Originally, Ko Yo Sub-district had many community enterprise groups of producing Ko Yo fabric. Some groups did not succeed. The nonsuccess groups can be operating to date are groups of 1st Rajawat Sangsong-la, Ko Yo fabric agriculturist housewife, bullet wood flower, banyan shade fabric, and Pa Lim Ko Yo fabric (Chudhavipata, 2012).

Purposes of this research were (1) to study the operation on process of production the Ko Yo fabric and (2) to set the form of recording the cost of Ko Yo fabric production. This occupation rose from local wisdom. It should be supported to invulnerable lived long.

In addition, it will help promote the travel in community. Especially, it can attract both Thai and foreign travelers, and the business investors come into local for purchasing textiles. Moreover, local revenue income will be increased to develop country.

This research is expected be benefit to (1) members of 1st Rajawat Sangsong-la group and nearby villagers have developed an operating process on production of woven Ko Yo, and (2) members in the group of 1st Rajawat Sangsong-la will know the production cost of the Ko Yo fabric, and able to apply the knowledge for decreasing the cost of production.

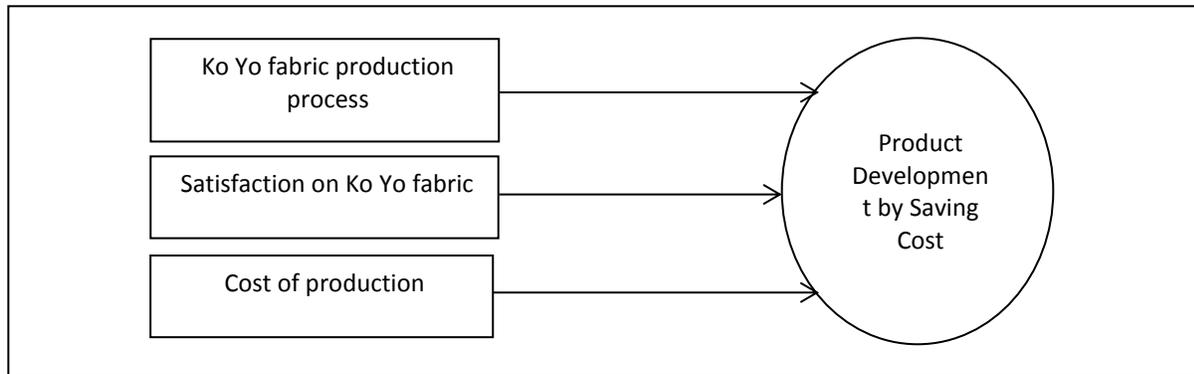


Figure 1
Research Framework

Literature Review

Ko Yo is a small island in Songkhla Lake. It covers an area of 9,275 rai¹, far from Songkhla downtown about 6 kilometers, consists of 9 villages. Ko Yo people have been known to weave for over hundred years, since the arrival of settlers on the island, also continuous teaching in the household. Ko Yo weaving in the early stages, using "loom" as 'hand' and tool that Southern people called it that "Tron" instead of the shuttle. Additionally, they used cotton which grown and dyed themselves (Songkhla Inland Fisheries Research and Development Center, 2016).



¹ Rai is Thai scale using in measuring area, equally as 400 square-Wa or 1,600 metre².

Figure 2
Shuttle using in present

Using the natural colors by style of folk, most of colors are from tree, bark, essence, root, and fruit, such as: the red color from the Yo root, the light green color from Ma-phood fruit, the yellow color from the old turmeric, the orange (bright red) color from brick, the light purple color from the Wa, the greencolor from Samor shell, Hoo Gwang (deer ear) from leaf, the blue color from indigo, etc. In the first period, a woven was a lonely color and the various flower pattern of fabrics. Design of Rajawat cloth was a beautiful design which derived this name from the king (Saprun, 2010).



Figure 2
Aquarium for showing the Rajawat design congratulate fabric

Designs of Ko Yo fabric is old patterns. No one wove them in present. Patterns that appear and popular today are: Rajawat design, Rosukon flower pattern, Phayom flower pattern, five one design, the figure of deva or clasping hand or worship design, Thai chilli design, Looggaw design, Bu-nga flower pattern, Loog-wai design, chess pattern, Scot pattern, Phagagrong flower pattern, cross design, Kodgrich decorative pattern, Koe Thium design, square pattern, chain or interlock design, and diamond-shape quadrangle pattern.

In ancient times, Ko Yo villagers have weaved fabric without the pattern names. They called fabric design easily and remembered the weaving methods by following their ancestors. Sometimes, they have adapted the weaving for a strange pattern. If it accidentally were beautiful, then it will be weaved appreciated by villagers and set its name following a villager who created that pattern, such as the Ko Thium design. Sometimes, it might be called following in character that similar with

florae, such as Kee Gai (chicken shit) flower, etc. Goddess, sometimes referred to by the characteristics similar to the plant species such as flowers, chicken.

Two types of the Ko Yo fabric patterns can be classified as.

1. Traditional Ko Yo fabric patterns, such as Garuda pattern, in front of the lady pattern, Peony pattern, Garuda encircle pattern, Rak (love) flower pattern, Kem Thong (golden needle) pattern, and Thep Phanom (the figure of deva) pattern, which are the ancient patterns that weaved by style of twelve heddles. In the present time, it has no weavers who can weave by style of twelve heddles (http://taxclinic.mof.go.th/pdf/DF17626E_64A6_BCD3_6086_A4D3D1A3381F.pdf).
2. Ko Yo fabric pattern at present, are as chain pattern, square pattern, Mook flower pattern, Chan flower pattern, rattan pattern, Bu-nga flower pattern, Kome flower pattern, Son fruit pattern, bullet wood pattern, Satang pattern, Chuan Chom flower pattern. Additionally, some patterns of Ko Yo fabric are invented are Krueawal flower pattern and Tha-le Thip pattern, which are created in special occasion of Songkhla Province has held the Light, Color, and Voice festival at Tha-le Thip celebration which used The Institute for Southern Thai Studies, Thaksin University to be the place for holding the festivity. Some sheets and patterns of These Ko Yo fabric design are kept in The Institute for Southern Thai Studies, Thaksin University (<file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Chapter%202.pdf>).



Buyers were selecting the Ko Yo fabric products
1st Rajawat Sang Song-la group



Tissue boxes were produced from Ko Yo of
textile fabric.

Figure 4

In Shop for distribution the product of Ko Yo fabric textiles

Special nature of Ko Yo fabric

It is cotton cloth mixed with synthetic fibers or cotton only that color does not fall in washing. It is high durability due to the fabric that used in daily life. Its design is detailed and beautifully. Ko Yo fabric has become more popular. This Yo island cloth is adapted into more modern tools and clothes which are new strange products and have been more popular with users of working age because it is popular in the elderly at past
(http://taxclinic.mof.go.th/pdf/DF17626E_64A6_BCD3_6086_A4D3D1A3381F.pdf).

Methodology

Population and Sample

Population of this research was a president of group, and members of 1st Rajawat Sangsong-la group, who producers, total as 14 persons. Sample size was set from both of the specific or purposive and the accidental random sampling methods. The purposive sampling was used with a president and 13 members of group.

The Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size, by 0.05 tolerances, equally as 20 buyers which choosing the sample by the accidental random sampling method. The shop of 1st Rajawat Sang Song-la group has buyers come to buy their product in approximately 21 persons per day.

Research Instrument

1. Interview form

This research used a semi-structured interview form which was not strictly in setting the questions. The producers have been asked by not arrange the questions. Natures of questions were open-ended for asking the group president by 7 items, and asking the producers by 10 items.

2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire is an instrument that made for measuring the opinions or true which were not known the facts at past, present, and the expectation on events at future. Most of questionnaires would be in form of the question set to indicate things that wanted to evaluate. Questions will encourage and push for person answering the outcomes. It popularly used be an instrument for measurement on the consumer behavior by close-ended questions. This research used both questionnaires for entrepreneurs and buyers.

The 1st questionnaire used with entrepreneurs, which was divided into 3 parts: Part I asked for general characteristics as 7 items, Part II asked for level of satisfaction on cost of Ko Yo fabric production as 20 items, and Part III asked for their suggestions.

The 2nd questionnaire used with buyers, which was divided into 3 parts: Part I asked for general characteristics as 6 items, Part II asked for level of satisfaction to Ko Yo fabric as 21 items, and Part III asked for their suggestions.

Data Collection

This research defined the procedure and how to collect data by following these steps:

1. The study collected the secondary data from documents, that related to Ko Yo fabric, such as local magazines, official letters, organisation brochures, community PR booklets, provincial history book, textbooks, and researches
2. Field study was used to collect data by both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The research is based on the field data collection process. It focused on oral history from memories and records of the respondent representatives. It has the stages of the data collection data stages as followed.
 - 1) The interviewing was interrogation for qualitative data by using the semi-structure interview form. Researchers used this way for collection the data from stakeholders in real area, with the president of 1st Rajawat Sang Song-la group. Sample was the respondents in research field, answer information related history and background of weaving the Ko Yo fabric by the group of 1st Rajawat Sang Song-la. In addition, cost of the Ko Yo fabric production including processing in weaving since past until now were collected data by interviewing method with the present of 1st Rajawat Sang Song-la group, which the president of group answered to give information.
 - 2) Observation: In this research, the researcher has defined two types of observations.
 - 2.1) Non-Participatory Observation, the researcher went to the community in the research field to observe the general condition of content in 1st Rajawat Sang Song-la group.
 - 2.2) Participatory Observation, the researchers were involved in weaving, preparation of threads for weaving, and helped to sell the Ko Yo fabric, while we have asked and recorded data that wanted more details.
- 3) Asked the 14 Ko Yo textile manufacturers and the 20 buyers by using questionnaire.

Analytical Statistics

Analysis of data in this research was operated by following steps.

1. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources, which related to this research, brought to set the question items for using in interviewing on issues that wanted to study.
2. Bring the data were received from interviewing with sample, to check the integrity of the data.

Presentation of data that were received from the research field by interviewing, observing, and using the questionnaire methods, then brought data to analyze and discuss the results by capturing the main points of the topic and identify the main events by separating them into issues, following the purposes of this research. Afterthat, it will be presented the reports of the quantitative actual data.

Interpretation

Data were gathered by the interview form and questionnaire, analyzed by defining the criteria for interpretation of mean value based on the following criterions: 0.00 was not satisfied, 0.01 - 1.99

means less satisfaction, 2.00 - 2.99 means less satisfaction, 3.00 - 3.99 means medium satisfaction, 4.00 - 4.99 means more satisfaction, and 5.00 means very satisfied.

Results

Results of Analysis on Producers' General Characteristics

The study on cost of Ko Yo fabric textile production in Songkhla, was found that most of producers were female, 11 were 79% and 3 were male. Majority of respondents were 41-50 years old were accounted by 4 people or 29%, and 29% of the age group between 51-60 years old. Most of producers have the weaving be the supplement occupation as 11 people or 79%, the main occupation been accounted 3 for 21%.

Most of members in group of the 1st Rajawat Sang Song-la finished study from the secondary school level as 6 people or 43%, followed by the primary school level as 5 people or 36%. Status of members in group of the 1st Rajawat Sang Song-la, majority of them were married as 9 people or 65%, followed by 3 divorced people or 21%.

Five of them have weaved for 5-7 years as 5 people or 36%, followed by 4-person weaving for 8 years and over, or 29%. Incomes of members in the 1st Rajawat Sang Song-la group, most of them are 10,000 - 19,999 Baht as 9 persons or 64%. Secondly, the monthly income is less than 10,000 Baht, representing for 36%.

Fabric Producers' Satisfaction

Satisfaction on cost of production was found at a medium level (\bar{x} = 3.27), when considering in each item found that ready on production power was medium at 3.89, followed by pre-production planning at 3.64.

Satisfaction on the marketing promotion was overall at a medium level (\bar{x} = 3.04), when considering in each item found that product was identified by medium 3.86, followed by improvement of the product quality to meet the needs of customers with an average of 3.64.

Satisfaction on knowledge of the manufacturers was found that overall at a medium level (\bar{x} = 3.03), when considering in each item found that knowledge on the fabric production was 4.07 mean at rather high level, followed by knowledge on the raw materials and production equipment was 4.00 mean.

Satisfaction on the responding showed that overview was in rather high level (\bar{x} = 4.02), when considering in each item found that it has the old customers returned to buy products regularly and always was in rather high level (4.21 mean). Secondly, the products was standard as customer acceptant, and customers satisfy with the quality of products was at medium as 4.00 mean.

General Characteristic of Buyers

Study on cost of Ko Yo fabric production in Songkhla Province showed that majority of the customers were females (16 persons), 80% and 4 males (20%). 41 years and over were 11 people

or 55%, followed by 31-40 year olds were 7 persons or 35%. Most of customers were finished at the under-graduate level or completed the Diploma, 7 persons or 35%. Secondly, they finished in the level of bachelor as 6 persons or 30%. Most of customers' status was married as 15 persons or 75%, followed by single as 3 persons or 15%. Majority of customers were Buddhist as 15 people or 75%. Secondly, they respect Islam as 5 people or 25%. Most customers were from central Thailand as 8 people or 80%, followed by Northern as 6 people or 30%.

Satisfaction on the pattern design was found that overview at rather high level ($\bar{x} = 4.01$), when considering in each item found that pattern was various colorful with a mean of 4.50, followed by pattern is unique to itself, with a mean of 4.35.

Result of satisfaction on products was showed that overview mean at a medium level ($\bar{x} = 3.54$), when considering in each item found that resolution of weaving as 4.15 mean in a rather high level, inferior to the durability of fabric with a mean of 4.00.

Satisfaction on the distribution channel was found at a rather low level ($\bar{x} = 2.67$), when considering in each item found that it has the price tag of each goods clearly as 3.45 mean, followed by it can be purchased easily and convenience as 2.30 mean.

Satisfaction on the sale promotion was found in the medium level ($\bar{x} = 3.17$), when considering in each item found that sellers' politeness and friendly with a mean of 4.40, followed by sellers' services and advice, with a medium of 3.90.

Discussion

Research results of studying on cost of Ko Yo textile production were from analyzing data on satisfaction of Ko Yo fabric production cost. There are issues that can be discussed as followed.

- (1) Research result found that most of manufacturers are female (79%), because females tend to prefer the weaving rather than males. Also, the majority of customers are female (80%), as females prefer the woven fabrics rather than males, in accordance with Pongwiritthon (2017) studied on the purchasing behavior of woven cotton products in Mueang, Chiangmai Province in a case of implication for marketing mixes based on buyer needs, found that most buyers were female (75.50%).
- (2) Considering each aspect of producers, most of them have satisfaction in medium level in every aspect which can be described as followed.

Cost of Production: Manufacturers were ready on production and planning in production as well. However, cost of purchasing the raw materials was quite high and there is a shortage of funds, in contradict with Sirikutjatuporn and Lapthanes (2010) studied on the increasing of the production power capability by effective planning in a case of sewing the car accessory, found that the planning subdivision in the production sector of AAA company has no program and ways of effective planning. No detail in process planning and not clear on the production framework when should be started and finished.

Marketing Promotion: Because of members of the 1st Rajawat Sang Song-la group lacks of knowledge on the marketing and use of new technologies for promotion the market, therefore

the Ko Yo woven fabric was not very well known. However, quality and uniqueness of fabrics meet the customers' needs as well. In contradict with the research result of Kongraksavech (2015) studied on business plan for healthy oldies food the business feasibility project on healthy elderly food, "oldies food" in Bangkok, found that trend on competitiveness of the food industry has intensifies and highly competitive, but trend of health care and the increase of elderly people is growing as well. Risk factors arise from internal and external environments including the production cost and competition. Advantage of competitors was high quality of raw material, while disadvantage of competition was high fund of investment. The important strategy in business was the differential production and responding the needs of special groups.

Knowledge and Manufacturers' Abilities: Most of the group members have knowledge and experience in weaving as well. However, knowledge of management on performances and profitability were very low, conformed to the research results of Lekglang (2014) studied on guidelines for the development of cotton weaving and cloth making group in Ban Khoksung village, Chiang Yuen Sub-district, Chiang Yuen District, Maha Sarakham Province, found that group had good management system, especially in defining the roles and responsibilities of members. Their members had the ability to produce a quality product resulted in a 4-star national OTOP award. Right now, the group emphasized on cloth making rather than cotton weaving, thus only few members had specialized in sewing. The systematic planning, implementation and management in the groups were effective and appropriated for sharing responsibilities in various fields. Members were skilled and specialized in the operations, therefore, the products had good quality and high standard. Additionally, the group has diversified distribution channels and product promotion campaign loading to profit from operations every year, as well as gaining support for the various government agencies involved.

Feedback: The overview was rather high level. Old customers returned to buy products regularly. Also, there are always new customers. Probably, because of the Ko Yo fabric was a quality textile and beautiful patterns. Considering in Each Aspects, on Buyers: Most of them were satisfied with all aspects in medium levels. These can be discussed as followed. Design Patterns, the colors and patterns of the woven fabrics were beautiful as well as very unique in rather high level, consists with the research results of Chandhasa, Rungwannasak, and Pattanapanitipong (2010) studied on the unique identity of Ban-Chiang pattern to apply with Batik painted textile and develop into the handicraft souvenir of the province of Udon Thani, found that pattern which best reflects the unique identify of Ban-Chiang is 'lai kod gon hoi'.

Product: Most of customers were satisfactory in the resolution and durability of the woven fabrics. Modernization and diversity were at a medium level, in accordance with the research results of Kringern, Suwannarat, and Narkwiboonwong (2018) studied on factors affect consumers' purchasing the community product in a kind of wearing cloth, found that majority were female, marital status, aged between 41-50 years, education level bachelor degree, career of government official, income 20,001 Bath per month or more, causes to buy community products in three orders are as follow: Thai woven conservation, supports OTOP products and as a gift on various occasions. The amount of purchase was 1,000-3,000 Baht. The relationship between personal

factors and buying behavior towards community product was gender factor not related to buying behavior but personal factors of status, age education level, career and income per month related to buying behavior were significant at 0.05 level. The factors predicting relationship between bought and purchase factors were distribution factor, package factor and quality factor at high level ($r=0.767$) and describe variability of bought 58.90 percentage.

Price: Customer satisfaction on price was a medium level. In terms of bargaining, customers were low satisfied, in conformed to Sakulrattanasak and Vivatvikai (2011) studied on satisfaction of buyers in Rama V fresh market in Nonthaburi Province, found that most respondents were female, which were between 41-50 years old. Average income was more than 20,001 Baht. With overall, the level of satisfaction of buyer to the Rama V fresh market was at medium level. Moreover, respondents were satisfied in three factors at high level: services of environment, services, and service product respectively. The rest of them were satisfied at medium level, service promotion, service place, service price, and service process respectively.

Distribution Channels: As a whole was at a low level. Because of it was hard to be found for buying in contradict of Thipjumong (2014) studied the marketing development of the cloth woven products in Krasaesin, Songkhla Province. The findings revealed that there are two dominant sales: firstly, the producers sold their own products by themselves in their community and malls. Secondly, they would weave their products by customers' orders. Government officers and non-government officers in local were normally customers.

Marketing Promotion: Most customers were satisfied with friendly in service, and advice from sellers. However, training provides the knowledge of weaving, and the visiting education were still low, nearly with the research results of Bailee (2017) studied on problems and needs of textiles product in Loei Province. The findings revealed that 5 problems of textile products were shown: distribution, supply materials, competitiveness with larger industry, investment fund and lacking of academic knowledge. In addition, the textile industry of Loei province required government supports in marketing and distribution, investment fund, academic knowledge and other supports. Also, the suggestions of Wantrong and tukpimai (2017) studied on network development in resource learning center of hand-woven fabric of Surin Province, Udonthani Province and Champasak Subdistrict, found that sample have satisfaction with operation of learning source of hand-woven fabric at the overall was in high level, therefore, the development of learning network of hand-woven fabric in Surin province, Udonthani province and Champasak subdistrict should be the knowledge transference in process of hand-woven fabric. There should be a training in hand-woven fabric design, silk preparation, and weaving techniques. There should be a curriculum for teaching in the universities. There should be a hand-woven fabric exhibition. There should be a public relation about hand-woven to boost up learning of the people in the community, students, and teenagers. There should be an activity for promoting the hand-woven fabric in order to conserve and preserve the fabric. There should be a continuation of project and this can turn to be the AEC network

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Employee's Job Satisfaction Motivators in Destination Management Company (DMC) in MICE industry

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Abstract

This research aims to study the motivators affecting the employee's job satisfaction of destination management company (DMC) in MICE industry. This research applies qualitative method focusing on depth-interview with 18 key informants who are representatives of public and private organizations, educational institutions. They are general manager, MICE department manager and human resource manager who are related to destination Management Company (DMC) in 5 MICE cities in Thailand: Bangkok, Chiangmai, Khonkean, Phuket and Pattaya. The key informants mention that there are 12 motivators affect their employee's satisfaction and have been classified into 4 categories; 1) compensation consists of 5 components - commission, bonus, health insurance, wage and gratuity; 2) management system consists of 2 components - modern facilities, and promotion; 3) motivation consists of 3 components - incentive tourism, meeting and sharing experience, and seminar and field trip; and 4) working atmosphere consists of 2 components - family working style and freedom and flexible.

Key Words: Destination Management Company (DMC), Employee's Job Satisfaction Motivators, MICE industry

Introduction

Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (2014) presents incentive tourism as one of main industry in MICE industry. Incentive tourism is the tourism as being as the prize or award to motivate employee's achievement of a particular organization, in other words, it is the tourism as being as a part of activity pre/post meeting, exhibition, and convention. The business company that supports incentive tourism is called Destination Management Company (DMC); the main duty is arranging travelling program based on customer's need (Mongkolwanich & Chattiwong, 2017). In the fast pace of globalization, most of DMC organizational structure is changed to be Online Travel Agency instead of being as Travel Agency (TA) because of the change in tourists' behavior. However, the key success of DMC, for being survived, is employee. Employee of DMC must work under

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pressure with high potential, abilities and competencies to deliver the services and to satisfy the customers in order to earn more profit as incentive tourism providers of MICE industry.

As a consequence, DMCs have to prepare and support their employees to work for and also to satisfy on their job. If the employee satisfies on his/her work, he/she also would like to deliver the full service to satisfy customers; employees' job satisfaction significantly affects customers' satisfaction (Nazeer et al., 2014). The satisfaction of employees is referred to the perception of environmental psychology with physical characteristics and environment situation. If DMCs support employees to satisfy their working; the employees will work efficiently and effectively for organization (Tsai & Wu, 2010). In addition, DMCs should motivate and encourage employees to have empathy, responsiveness, respect, teamwork, and internal service quality (Ariani, 2015). From this reason, researcher is interested to explore the factors that can motivate employee's job satisfaction which DMCs should be suggested to motivate their employees.

Literature Review

Employee's job satisfaction is important for organization because each employee has different characteristics. The organization must understand employee to foster and support them for the increment of job satisfaction level (Nazeer et al., 2014). Moreover, employee's job satisfaction is an equipment to deliver the efficiency of employee to produce the quality of job and provide the best service to customers (Ariani, 2015). Hoppock (1935) informed that the satisfaction of employee can be generated because of tangible facilities such as tools, facilities, wage, and intangible facilities such as environment, organizational support and progressive. In addition, satisfaction affects the being of happiness in duties and carriers (Huak, Pivi & Hassan, 2015; Ariani, 2015). Lotunani et al. (2014) refers to Spector (1997) who informs the characteristics of job satisfaction as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Characteristics of job satisfaction

Job satisfaction characteristics	Description
Wage	The satisfaction of salary and salary increasing
Promotion	The satisfaction of getting a promotion
Supervision	The satisfaction of controlling form supervisors
Compensation	The satisfaction of commission, bonus, health insurance, wage and gratuity
Reward	The satisfaction of special gift or other extra
Working condition	The satisfaction of policy and procedures in workplace
Working partner	The satisfaction of coworkers
Working atmosphere	The satisfaction of workplace environment
Communication	The satisfaction of communication in organization

Moreover, Tsai & Wu (2010) studies the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction and turnover intention. The result shows that the factors of job satisfaction consist of compensation, characteristics of job, self-satisfaction, and mentoring system

and working partner. In addition, Chen (2012) studies integrated service quality model in quality improvement: an empirical study of employee's satisfaction for hot spring industry. The result shows 5 factors of employee's job satisfaction; working atmosphere, compensation, management system, motivation and organization's vision.

The reflection in job satisfaction affects efficiency and effectiveness of employees in organization. The results do not show only the effect of employee satisfaction towards customer service development and the customer satisfaction but also create the employee commitment and employee loyalty (Tsai & Wu, 2010). However, many researchers study the employee's Job satisfaction motivators in different organization. The result presents the perception and evaluation of employee in job satisfaction as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Summary of literature review toward employee's job satisfaction motivators

Authors	Title	Employee's Job Satisfaction Motivators								
		Working atmosphere	compensation	Management System	Motivation	Organization Vision	Characteristic of Work	Progressive	Supervisor and co -	Self-Satisfaction
Tsai & Wu (2010)	The Relationships between organizational Citizenship behavior, Job satisfaction and Turnover intention		✓				✓		✓	✓
Pantouvakis (2011)	Internal Service Quality and Job Satisfaction Synergies for Performance Improvement: Some Evidence from a B2B Environment	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Chen (2012)	Integrating Service Quality Model in Quality Improvement: An Empirical Study of Employees Satisfaction for Hot Spring Industry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Venema (2013)	Learning Orientation and the Service-profit Chain: Exploring the Link between learning Orientation,		✓				✓	✓	✓	

Authors	Title	Employee's Job Satisfaction Motivators								
		Working atmosphere	compensation	Management System	Motivation	Organization Vision	Characteristic of Work	Progressive	Supervisor and co -	Self-Satisfaction
	Internal Service Quality and Employee Satisfaction in the Service Sector									
Viswanathan and Chopra (2015)	Study on Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction, Loyalty, and Commitment Among Managerial Staff with Reference to e-Publishing Organization in ITES/ BMP Industry			✓		✓		✓	✓	
Rajput, Singhal & Tiwari (2016)	Job satisfaction and Employee Loyalty: A Study of Academicians	✓			✓			✓		✓

Source: Synthesized by researcher

Methodology

This qualitative research uses the semi-structure interview questions to conduct in-depth interview with 18 key informants from 5 MICE cities; Bangkok, Chiangmai, Khonkean, Phuket and Pattaya. The 18 key informants are selected by purposive sampling which comprise of 2 representative from Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), 1 representative from Association of Thai Travel Agent (ATTA), 1 representative from educational institution, 7 representatives as the position of general manager in DMCs, 4 representatives as the position of MICE department manager and 3 representatives as the position of human resource manager of DMCs. The investigation of creditability in qualitative data followed by the concept of Noppakesorn et al. (2008) uses data triangulation method which uses different sources of information in order to increase the validity of a study. The investigation by using data triangulation method has three involvements: time, space, and person. The use of different time is in-depth interview 18 key informants who work in various duties in DMC during December 2017 - February 2018. Moreover, the use of space concerns different 5 cities of MICE to collect the data. However, the different key informants influence the variety of information in the study.

Results

From in-depth interview of 18 key informants, the result shows the motivators' information to support the employee's job satisfaction which consist of 12 factors as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Motivators' information towards employee's job satisfaction

Motivators	Key informants																		total	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		
Meeting and sharing experience	✓									✓			✓					✓		4
Incentive trip	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	11
Seminar and field trip	✓	✓				✓		✓				✓						✓	✓	7
Wage	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓				✓		✓			✓		8
Commission	✓				✓				✓		✓				✓			✓		6
Bonus	✓								✓	✓	✓				✓			✓		6
Health insurance	✓								✓	✓	✓				✓			✓	✓	7
Family working style		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	11
Freedom and flexibility		✓					✓											✓		3
Promotion		✓				✓	✓													3
Gratuity					✓															1
Modern facilities							✓			✓										2

Source: Synthesize by researcher

According to table 2, the result shows there are 11 counts as the highest frequency counted from key informants who answer the motivation factors of employee's job satisfaction which are incentive trip and family working style. For the second rank, wage is the second highest number which is 8 counts. Seminar and field trip is the same as health insurance which have 7 counts. Commission has 6 counts which equals to bonus to motivate employee's job satisfaction. However, there are 5 factors to motivate employee's job satisfaction which consist of meeting and sharing experience, freedom and flexible, promotion, modern facilities and gratuity with 4, 3, 3, 2, and 1 count, respectively.

Moreover, 12 answers are classified into 4 categories: 1) Compensation has 5 components - commission, bonus, health insurance, wage and gratuity, 2) Management system has 2 components - modern facilities, and promotion, 3) Motivation has 3 components - incentive tourism, meeting and sharing experience, and seminar and field trip, and 4) Working atmosphere has 2 components - family working style and freedom and flexible.

Discussion

The employee's job satisfaction motivators in DMC consist of compensation, management system, motivation, and working atmosphere. Firstly, compensation is the most important as being as employee's job satisfaction motivators because employee always works hard for completing duties' responsibility. The compensation mentioned by Tsai & Wu (2010), Pantouvakis (2011), Chen (2012) and Venema (2013) includes commission, bonus, health insurance, wage and gratuity. Secondly, management in organization should support and facilitate the employees to work comfortably and quickly. In addition, employees should receive the promotion suitably based on their potential, competency and responsibilities. From this reason is supported by Chen (2012) and Viswanathan & Chopra (2015) who mentioned that organization must provide the convenience to support all employees during their working in organization. Moreover, getting promotion is another management system that organization should concern to motivate employees. Thirdly, motivation is another factor to enhance the employee's job satisfaction level, as studied by Pantouvakis (2011), Chen (2012) and Rajput, Singhal and Tiwari (2016). The important of motivation is to foster employee for learning, gaining new experience and sharing the idea with supervisor, co-worker and partner. The motivation factor includes incentive trip, meeting and sharing experience, and seminar and field trip. Finally, working atmosphere, as mentioned by Pantouvakis (2011), Chen (2012) and Rajput, Singhal & Tiwari (2016), shows the trend of new evolution organization which develops employee's job satisfaction by integrating family working style, teamwork activities, and freedom and flexibility.

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Factors influencing foreign customers on selecting Hotel for MICE in Bangkok

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Introduction

The income from the Tourism Industry is the one of the major factors that contribute to the GDP of 12 trillion Thai Baht range from 9% in the year 2013 to 17.7% (2.53 trillion Thai Baht) in 2016 (The Tourism Authority of Thailand) Lots of new hotels opened in many areas in Bangkok, most of hotel revenue came from hotel rooms but they also gained more revenue from companies or government offices (Thai and international) for meeting rooms and events. In 2017 Thailand hosted “World Travel and Tourism Council 2017” and other International Conferences effecting to foreign and Thai customers' demand for hotels in Bangkok.

According to supporting overall for Thai economy on annual government statement of expenditure in 2016, expecting that MICE will be the one of the parts of increased business and economic growth rate and aboard confidence in very short future, also it is expected that MICE customers will grow by 5% to around 1,060,000 people for MICE travelers generating 92,000 Million Thai Baht income (Thaihotelbusiness.com)

MICE: Meeting, Incentive, Conferences, Exhibitions, is one of the types of tourisms that has been pushed forward by the Royal Thai Government and they have established the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) which is in present in 5 designated major cities; Bangkok, Phuket, Khonkaen, Pattaya, Chiangmai.

Hotels are the base element for tourists. Business travelers that attend MICE spend more than leisure tourists and spending by business travelers has increased at a faster rate than those of tourism as a whole (Glyn and Terry, 1995). The researcher aims to show the main factors influencing foreign customers when selecting hotels for MICE in Bangkok as one of 5 major cities previously mentioned.

Literature

Demography: analyze or explain the structure of people in many areas relating to social, cultural and economic traits such as sex, age, education, marital status, occupation and income (Kotler, 2003, pp.264-266)

Marketing Mix relates to a controllable variable or marketing tool that companies use to determine customer needs and satisfying the said needs as a company target group, normally Marketing Mix has only 4 variables (4Ps) as Product, Price, Place, Promotion but they added 3 more variables, namely People, Physical Evidence and Process, updating to be in line with the new modern marketing theory, especially adapted for the Hospitality Business so they called "7Ps" (Kotler, 1997, p.92)

Decision making means processing or selecting or deciding to do something by choice, so consumers select one of them under their needs by 5 steps of decision making; problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternative, purchase decision, post purchase behavior (Siriwan Sirirat and group, 1998, p.145)

Prameth Unnaprani (2016), carried out a study on service behavior and customer satisfaction of the population, the users of 5-stars hotel, Centara Grand Bangkok Convention Center Central World, the findings have shown a moderate level for 7"Ps", choosing Executive Suites at 5,001-8,000Baht/ night and also cleanliness and decor are the most important factors of making decision.

Methodology

This research entitled "Factors influencing foreign customers on selecting Hotel for MICE in Bangkok" was a survey of 500 people by way of questionnaire that focused on a customer base of Business customers on Sukhumvit, Bangkok Hotel area and had the following objectives 1)To study personal factors relating to

decision making on selection of hotels for MICE in Bangkok. 2)To study the marketing mix relation to decision making on selection of hotels for MICE in Bangkok. 3)To study factors influences affecting the selection of hotels for MICE in Bangkok.

Quantitative research method was applied for this study by using a questionnaire survey comprised of two parts, designed to gather information relating to business customers for collecting the data from foreign customer and tourists who stayed overnight in Bangkok during November 2017 till April 2018 and used the 5 Likert scale, ranging from 1-5 and various statistics to analyze the data consisting of percentage, mean, standard deviation (S.D.), t-test, multiple regression, one-way ANOVA and these were chosen based on purpose sampling on convention

hotels on simply random sampling, Hence, the number of respondents who completed the questionnaires was under the targeted sample indicated by Yamane sampling formula for 30 travelers who stayed in a Bangkok MICE hotel. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to test the stability of variables retained in each factor, and only those variables having coefficients greater than or equal to 0.50 were considered acceptable and a good indication of construct reliability (Nunnally,1967) Based on Yamane developed formula, using 95 percent confidence level with sampling 5 percent, the target sample size should be 400 people

Results

The finding of this study revealed that the majority of those surveyed had the following demographics: female (68.8%), aged between 21-30 years old. (64.8%), single (70.8%), Bachelor's degree (81.2%), public employee (59.2%), income per month between 2,001-3,000 USD (48.0%)

Variable		Average	SD	Result	p
Sex	Male	4.129	0.527	F = 1.259	0.263
	Female	4.214	0.568	Levene's test = 0.298 df1 = 1 df2 = 248	0.586

*p < 0.05

From the table, it shows that the variations in demographics of foreign customers has very little significance on their decision making and selection of Hotels for MICE in Bangkok and an insignificant difference between male and female participants. (Levene's test = 0.298, p = 0.586) Females selection of hotel for MICE was slightly higher than their male counterparts (female customers 4.214 and Male customer at 4.129)

Variable		Average	SD	Result	p
Age	Less than or equal 20 Years	3.942	0.493	F = 1.188	0.307
	21 - 30 years	4.208	0.561	Levene's test = 0.365 df1 = 2 df2 = 247	0.694
	More than 31 years	4.180	0.553		

*p < 0.05

From the table, the results show that the variations of foreign customer decision making on selecting Hotel for MICE in Bangkok between groups of ages are not different and

insignificant (Levene's test = 0.365, $p = 0.694$) ($F = 1.188$, $p = 0.307$) the results showed that most of foreign customers aged 21 – 30 years choosing hotel for MICE at 4.208, and the foreign customers more than 31 years old choosing hotel for MICE at 4.180 and the foreign customers less than or equal to 20 years old choosing Hotel for MICE at 3.942

Variable	Average	SD	Result	p	
Marital Status	Single	4.146	0.574	F = 1.799	0.168
	Married	4.291	0.501	Levene's test = 0.28a df1 = 1 df2 = 247	0.867
	Widowed	4.000	.		
	Divorced	-	-		
	Separated	-	.		

* $p < 0.05$

From the table, revealed that vary of foreign customer decision making on selecting Hotel for MICE in Bangkok between group of marital status are not different and insignificant (Levene's test = 1.28a, $p = 0.867$) the result that most of foreign customers who are married choosing hotel for MICE at 4.291 then are the foreign customer who single choosing Hotel for MICE at 4.146 and the foreign customer who widow choosing Hotel for MICE at 4.000

Viarable	Average	SD	Result	p	
Educational	Less than Bachelor's degree	3.947	0.633	F = 1.741	0.178
	Bachelor's Degree	4.215	0.546	Levene's test = 0.789 df1 = 2 df2 = 247	0.455
	Master's degree	4.109	0.576		
	Higher than Master's degree	-	-		

* $p < 0.05$

From the table, the results show that the variations of foreign customer decision making on selecting hotel for MICE in Bangkok between groups of different Educational status are not different and are insignificant (Levene's test = 0.789, $p = 0.455$) the results showed that most of foreign customers holding a Bachelor's degree at 4.215, and the foreign customers holding a Master's degree at 4.109 and the foreign customers with educational qualifications of less than Bachelor's degree at 3.947

Variable		Average	SD	Result	p
Occupation	Student	3.978	0.638	F = 1.122 Levene's test = 0.940 df1 = 5 df2 = 244	0.455 0.349
	Government Officer	4.295	0.581		
	Private company employee	4.172	0.546		
	Business owner	4.260	0.518		
	Housewife	4.371	0.595		
	Unemployed person	-	-		
	Others	4.155	0.669		

*p < 0.05

From the table, the results show the variations of international customers decision making on selecting hotel for MICE in Bangkok between groups of occupations are not different and are insignificant (Levene's test = 0.940, p = 0.455) (F = 1.122, p = 0.349) the results showed that most of the foreign customers who are a housewife at 4.371, the foreign customers who are government customers at 4.295 then are the international customers who are business owner at 4.260 then are the international customers who are private company employees at 4.172, the international customers in other occupations at 4.155 and the international customers that are students at 3.978

Variable		Average	SD	Result	p
Monthly income	Less than or equal 1,000 USD	4.136	0.513	F = 0.316 Levene's test = 0.725 df1 = 2 df2 = 247	0.729 0.485
	2,001 – 3,000 USD	4.206	0.511		
	3,001 USD or above	4.196	0.654		

*p < 0.05

From the table, the results show the variations of foreign customers' decision making on selecting hotel for MICE in Bangkok between levels of monthly incomes are not different and are insignificant (Levene's test = 0.278a, $p = 0.892$) ($F = 0.316$, $p = 0.729$) the results showed that most of the foreign customers who had a monthly income of 2,001 – 3,000 at 4.206, the foreign customers who had a monthly income 3,001 USD or above at 4.196 and the foreign customer who had a monthly income less than or equal 1,000 USD at 4.136

The Marketing mix influences that are taken into consideration when selecting a hotel for MICE in Bangkok revealed that the following: People (Mean = 4.46), followed by promotion (Mean = 4.41), Price (Mean = 4.33), Place (Mean = 4.33), Product (Mean = 4.24), Process (Mean 4.18), and Physical evidence (Mean = 3.84)

Marketing Mix	Result	
	X	SD
Product		
1. Hotel Brand or name influences the decision making	4.29	0.613
2. Decision making is based on hotel products, such as Restaurant, Bar, Spa etc.	4.18	0.699
3. Decision making is based on hotel room amenities, such as Coffee maker, work station, internet etc.	4.30	0.649
4. Decision making is based on hotel facilities, such as swimming pool, gym, meeting room etc.	4.29	0.658
5. The availability of a variety of room types to choose from	4.12	0.684
Price		
1. Price is the most important factor.	4.48	0.596
2. The quality standard of the Ibis hotel is worth the value for money.	4.46	0.621
3. There are hotel price lists for customers to choose from.	4.35	0.642
4. Focus is on the budget (Cheapest price)	4.04	0.803
Place		
1. Hotel Accessibility is important, such as easy to find, close to the sky train etc.	4.42	0.569
1. Hotel Accessibility is important, such as easy to find, close to the sky train etc.	4.42	0.569
2. Hotel location is important, convenient to attractions etc.	4.47	0.575
3. A reservation service is a factor that makes you choose the hotel.	4.30	0.634

4. Online reservation is important.	4.42	0.604
5. Ease in making a reservation and the process is not complicated.	4.26	0.588
6. The hotel website is easy to find and recognized.	4.28	0.567
7. The reservation can be made via Travel Agency, Tour Operator and Agoda.	4.15	0.639
Promotion		
1. Hotel promotions can attract you in making a decision easier.	4.42	0.569
2. Decision can be influenced by promotions such as gift voucher, games or hotel activities.	4.43	0.605
3. There are various media recognitions such as Television, Magazine, Online Social Media.	4.47	0.628
4. Redeem points for hotel privilege such as free room Upgrade etc.	4.36	0.636
5. Decision making made by special price such as discount 40-50%, Stay 2 nights get free 1 night, or special prices with bank credit cards promotion etc.	4.38	0.569
Process		
1. Decision making is based on service process such as hotel payment system etc.	4.18	0.556
2. Fast check in and check out process are important.	4.15	0.572
3. Speed of service is important.	4.22	0.536
4. Special service is important, such as carrying the baggage, in room service, shuttle service etc.	4.19	0.546
5. Decision making is based on classifying the customer such as VIP guest check in counter or Tour Group counter.	4,15	0.551
People		
1. Decision making is based on hotel staff.	4.34	0.603
2. Grooming of staff is important.	4.39	0.613
3. Cheerful staff and readiness to give service to the customers.	4.48	0.609
4. Knowledge and skills of staff such as giving correct answer or solving the problems for the customers are important.	4.53	0.553
5. Staff should give the correct information to the customers.	4.50	0.583

6. Staff are caring and can provide good service.	4.50	0.589
Physical Evidence		
1. Decision making is based on hotel environment.	4.07	0.548
2. Luxury decoration could influence your decision.	3.86	0.663
3. Proper lobby and service availability is important.	3.80	0.707
4. Decision making is based on the luxury corridor.	3.62	0.889
5. Adequate parking is important.	3.76	0.811
6. Decision making is based on the hotel building appearance.	3.91	0.634

The factors influencing the selection of hotels for MICE in Bangkok revealed that the most important factor in the marketing mix was the Product at 0.261 (+0.176 People +0.156 Promotion + 0.103 Physical Evidence + 0.030 Process + -0.007 Place + -0.173 Price) as detailed in the table below by significance. ($r = 0.145$ $F = 7.179$ $p = 0.000$) less than 0.05

Marketing Mix	b	S.E.	Beta	t	p	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	1.866	0.400		4.662	0.000		
Product	0.261	0.089	0.240	2.937	0.004	0.512	1.954
Price	-0.173	0.079	-0.169	-2.184	0.030	0.571	1.751
Place	-0.007	0.102	-0.006	-0.072	0.943	0.536	1.865
Promotion	0.156	0.092	0.131	1.689	0.092	0.569	1.756
Process	0.030	0.110	0.023	0.272	0.786	0.494	2.024
People	0.176	0.094	0.152	1.881	0.061	0.526	1.902
Physical Evidence	0.103	0.072	0.105	1.436	0.152	0.639	1.564

$r = 0.415$, $adj. r^2 = 0.148$ $F = 7.179$ $p = 0.000$ Durbin Watson = 1.724

Variable	Hotel for MICE		Result	p
	\bar{X}	SD		
Product	4.24	0.512	t = -7.416 Levene's test = 29.552	0.000**
Price	4.33	0.544	t = -6.387 Levene's test = 27.605	0.000**
Place	4.33	0.434	t = -6.651 Levene's test = 30.436	0.000**
Promotion	4.41	0.467	t = -5.514 Levene's test = 48.825	0.000**

Process	4.18	0.421	t = -1.470 Levene's test = 52.714	0.000**
People	4.46	0.479	t = -6.362 Levene's test = 27.572	0.000**
Physical Evidence	3.84	0.565	t = 1.084 Levene's test = 18.725	0.000**
Total	4.25	0.360	t = -5.770 Levene's test = 50.064	0.000**

**p < 0.01

Discussion

The objectives of this research was to: 1)To study personal factors relating to decision making on selection of hotels for MICE in Bangkok. 2)To study the marketing mix relation to decision making on selection of hotels for MICE in Bangkok. 3)To study factors influences affecting the selection of hotels for MICE in Bangkok.

The findings of this study revealed that the majority of this survey fell into the following demographics: female (68.8%), aged between 21-30 years old. (64.8%), single (70.8%), Bachelor's degree (81.2%), public employee (59.2%), income per month between 2,001-3,000 USD (48.0%).

“Factors influencing foreign customers on selecting Hotel for MICE in Bangkok” had results that show how variations in demographics relate to decision making of consumers as follows:

The hypothesis 1; the personal factors of foreign customers by sex, age, marital status, educational, occupation, monthly salary differences relate to decision making on Hotel for MICE in Bangkok are not significant and reject the hypothesis by the result (One-Way ANOVA) of significance *p > 0.05

The hypothesis 2 ; the marketing mix factor of foreign customers that consists of Product, price, place, promotion, process,

people and physical evidence differences relate to decision making on selection of hotels for MICE in Bangkok are different and accept the hypothesis by the result (Multiple Regression) of significance 0.000 less than 0.005 (r = 0.415 F = 7.179 p = 0.000)



The hypothesis 3 ; the factors of foreign customers that consist of Product, price, place, promotion, process, people and physical evidence shows the result of significance 0.000 less than 0.01

The Marketing Mix factor from this study revealed that the significance is 0.000 which is less than 0.005 and agree with hypothesis related to decision making of consumers with differences: marketing mix that consumers want is Product (Decision making is based on hotel room amenities, such as Coffee maker, work station, internet etc.) Mean = 4.30

For recommendations and further study, 1) the researcher carried out the survey in the Bangkok area, and to gather more data the researcher could carry out the survey in different areas. 2) It would be beneficial to conduct research by way of a survey or by focus group interviews. With this method, the researcher may select a group of individuals to discuss and comment on important factors influencing the selection of hotels/resorts from their personal experiences and perspectives. 3) The limitations of this research were those of language, with the questionnaire only being provided in English language. The survey could be wider and more comprehensive if there were other languages such as Chinese and Japanese.



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FUTURE TREND OF EXHIBITION: ICC HATYAI

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Abstract

This study focused on the trend of exhibition in Thailand, particularly the exhibition at The 60th Anniversary of His Majesty the King's Accession to the Throne International Convention Center (ICC Hatyai). In order to organized a successful exhibition, we need to achieve the certain number of attendees therefore the future demand trend is essential for ICC Hatyai and exhibition industry to choose and organize the exhibition according to the demand. The sampling method used in this study is the convenient sampling method. The sample size of 322 attendees at ICC HatYai was determined by Krejcie and Morgan's sample size. We then used frequencies, percentage, and mean to analyze the data collected by using SPSS program. The results showed the demand trend of the exhibition at The 60th Anniversary of His Majesty the King's Accession to the Throne International Convention Center (ICC Hatyai). This study found out that the 322 population interested in visiting exhibition is made up of different ages, genders, and professions. Food Fair accounted for 76.6% of future demand trend, travel accounted for 54.7% and Book fair accounted for 49.5%. This corresponds to the Maslow (1970)'s theory of the need that, physiological needs are the most important basic needs in life, such as food, water, clothing, sleep and exercise.

Introduction

Since 2014, Thailand has steadily widened its exhibition portfolio over the years, as an exhibitions industry platform for the ASEAN Economic Community. Thailand have staging more than 88 leading international trade fairs annually and Thailand have 13 exhibitions which are The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI) approved events. During the year 2015, Thailand welcomed more than 157,996 International visitors who attended trade exhibitions (Supawan, 2014). In addition, according to UFI Thailand was Number 1in ASEAN, and No.8 in Asia, with a total of 550,000 net square meters sold. And the average size per fair in Thailand was 6,250 square meters (Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, 2014).

Exhibition in Thailand today brings a variety of technologies into the works to attract the attendees and promote the work that excites those who have seen them. Interactive Exhibition style attracts people who come to the event to participate in the activity itself. In the past nine years, ICC Hatyai has seen over 1.8 million visitors attending the International Convention Center, spending about 2,500 baht per person. The most successful and most attended event is OTOP, Motor Show, Hat Yai, HomePro and Decorative Materials, HomePro Fair, Coffee Tea & Bakery Fair, Summer Bitter Sweet and Songkhla Travel Fair. (Gimyong news, 2017). The future demand



trend is however uncertain. The aim of this research is therefore to identify the future trend of demand for exhibition in ICC Hatyai.

Literature Review

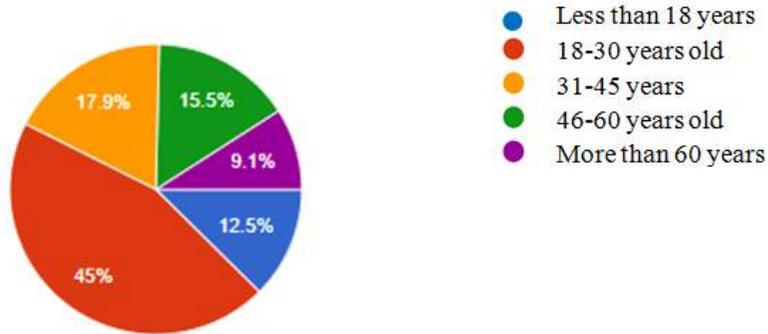
An exhibition, in the most general sense, is an organized presentation and display of a selection of items. In practice, exhibitions usually occur within museums, galleries and exhibition halls, and World's fairs. Exhibitions can include many things such as art in both major museums and smaller galleries, interpretive exhibitions, natural history museums and history museums, and also varieties such as more commercially focused exhibitions and trade fairs. (Frank Bartsch, 2013). The trend in Asia and Thailand is likely to be higher. This may be due to the terrorist situation in Europe, which has led to alienation in the region. The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) is an important factor contributing to the growth of Thai trade fairs and the growth of trade and investment in ASEAN. However, this exhibition will have to develop and enhance the service in various areas, such as facilitating travel central and local cooperation global public relations in various forms. And better infrastructure to support the expansion of this business in the future. Also, government stimulus will stimulate business growth. (Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, 2014)

Murray's Theory of Psychogenic Needs (Murray, 1938) states that demand is what an individual has created. This demand sometimes arises because of the internal impulse of the person. And sometimes it can be due to social conditions or extrinsic motives, or it can be said that the demand is due to physical condition and mental condition.

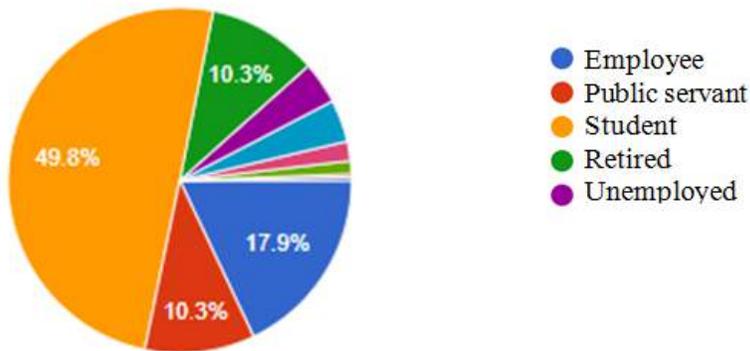
Methodology

This research used quantitative research method. Questionnaires were administered to 322 attendees of ICC Hatyai to determine their preference of exhibition in the future. The data was analyzed using the IBM SPSS software.

Results Age



Occupation



Trends	Gender		Age (18-30 years old)	Occupation (Student)	Area of residen (Hatyai)	Salary (less than 20,000 baht)
	Male	Female				
1. Consumer Products	13.1%	33.7%	45%	16.7%	27.1%	26.1%
2. Furniture and Home Decoration	11.9%	14%	7.6%	5.8%	13.7%	13.7%
3. Accessories, Clothes and Jewelry	4.9%	36.5%	20.1%	19.8%	24%	21.9%
4. Car, Motorcycle and Car Accessories	14%	4.6%	9.1%	8.2%	12.2%	11.2%
5. Wedding	0.9%	3.3%	2.7%	2.1%	2.1%	1.8%
6. Travel	20.7%	32.5%	28%	25.5%	31.6%	31%

7. Book Fair	17.6%	28.3%	23.7%	26.4%	29.8%	28.9%
8. Mother& Baby Products	0.3%	2.7%	1.8%	0.3%	2.1%	1.2%
9. Food Fair	23.4%	50.2%	36.5%	39.2%	45.6%	45.9%
10. Real Estate	10.9%	6.7%	6.4%	2.4%	10.3%	6.1%
11. IT & Mobile	19.1%	21.3%	25.5%	30.1%	30.4%	28.3%

Conclusion

In conclusion the top three trend of future demand for exhibitions are; Food Fair which accounted for 76.6% of future demand trend, travel accounted for 54.7% and Book fair accounted for 49.5%. This corresponds to the Maslow (1970)'s theory of the need that, physiological needs are the most important basic needs in life, such as food, water, clothing, sleep and exercise. This therefore suggests to the exhibition industry and the ICC the type of exhibition that their customers want.

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Key Success Factors of MICE Electronic Request for Proposal (eRFP): A Case Study of Bangkok Hotels

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Abstract

A MICE booking process requires customers to submit an electronic request-for-proposal (eRFP) in order to negotiate with the suppliers, particularly hotels, in regard to price, the availability of the hotel venue, and other requirements, which can be inefficient and lead to dissatisfaction for both customers and hoteliers. Therefore, this paper aims to examine the hotels' perception towards eRFP in order to identify the key success factors of MICE eRFP, using Bangkok hotels as a case study. The results provide a rich understanding of the success factors regarded by hoteliers as important in the utilization of eRFP. It is envisaged that this paper would have both theoretical and practical implications for the MICE sector in Thailand.

Keywords: MICE, eRFP, technology, hotel, Bangkok

Introduction

Thailand has been rated as the most preferred MICE destination that the survey participants would like to revisit for future business or MICE trips (TCEB, 2018c). Clearly, the MICE sector, or meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions, is crucial to Thailand's tourism industry and the Thai economy (Buathong & Lai, 2017). By the end of the 2018 fiscal year, it is expected that Thailand will welcome 1.3 million business travelers with 124 billion baht in revenue to the country (TCEB, 2018b).

As one of the key suppliers of MICE venues (Campiranon & Arcodia, 2008), hotels generally utilize electronic request for proposal, or eRFP, for their MICE bookings. According to the Global Business Travel Association and Council (2015), eRFP is an online platform which allows MICE customers to request for proposal through online channels.

Unlike online hotel room bookings, MICE eRFP requires hotel staff to review and respond to each customer (Global Business Travel Association & Council, 2015). Moreover, customers can gain more bargaining power as they can compare prices and services from their suppliers at no cost (Almunawar, Anshari, & Susanto, 2013). Therefore, high volume distribution of eRFP has resulted

in dissatisfaction for both customers and hoteliers due to the difficulties hotels have in responding to eRFP in a timely manner (Global Business Travel Association & Council, 2015).

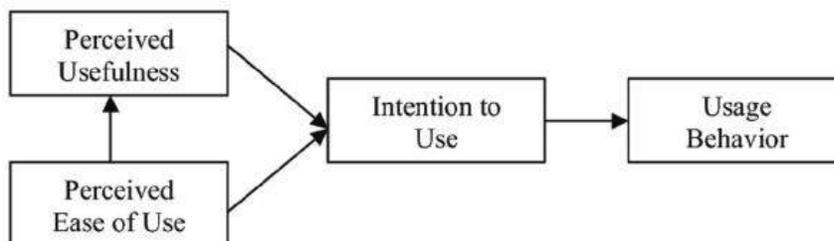
Whilst a number of studies have examined hotel online booking (e.g. Andrés-Martínez, Mondéjar-Jiménez, Gómez-Borja, & Alfaro-Navarro, 2014; Inversini & Masiero, 2014), it should be pointed out, however, that there has been no comprehensive research on the use of MICE eRFP (Seaton, 2017), particularly in a Thai context. Therefore, this paper aims to examine hotel perceptions of eRFP to identify the key success factors of MICE eRFP, using Bangkok hotels as a case study. It is envisaged that this paper will contribute to the growing body of MICE research, with potential implications for hotels that provide MICE services.

Literature Review

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Several technology acceptance models were developed in order to understand the user perceptions that impact the intention to use technology (Khan & Woosely, 2011). One of the most cited models is the Technology Acceptance Model, or TAM, which utilizes perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as the two major variables (Holden & Karsh, 2010).

Figure 1: Technology Acceptance Model



Source: Holden and Karsh (2010)

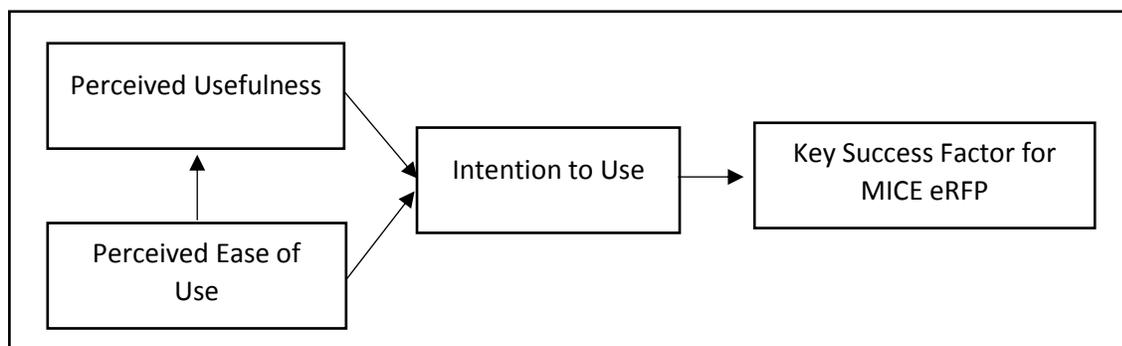
According to Davis (1989), Perceived Usefulness can be defined as “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance.” On the other hand, Perceived Ease of Use refers to “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular

system would be free of effort.” Kucukusta, Law, Besbes, and Legoh  rel (2015) added that technology acceptance or use is determined by behavioral intention. Both dimensions, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, jointly influence the attitude toward intended action

Methodology

This paper is motivated by the lack of relevant research and literature specifically concerning this research topic. In turn, this paper has adopted a qualitative research method. By adapting the TAM model, this paper has developed a conceptual framework to analyze the key success factors of MICE eREP for Bangkok hotels:

Figure 2: Technology Acceptance Model



Source: Adapted from Holden and Karsh (2010)

Hotels in Bangkok that are members of the TCEB (2018a) were chosen as the target population. Hotels in the directory were then selected using a purposive sampling method. An e-mail was sent to the general managers of 20 hotels asking for cooperation with the in-depth interviews. In return, the researchers received a total of 9 responses out of 20 (a 45% response rate) from hotels willing to participate in an interview. Each hotel manager was asked to nominate one high-level executive (e.g., a director or general manager), who was considered as most able to provide insightful information in regard to the research topic. The hotel profiles are presented below:

Table 1: Respondent profiles

Hotel	Star	Type	No. of Respondent	Respondent Profiles
A	4	Non-chain hotel	3	General Manager, Director of Sales, Sales Manager
B	5	Thai-chain hotel	1	Director of Sales & Marketing
C	5	International-chain hotel	1	Associate Director of Sales – MICE
D	5	Thai-chain hotel	1	Director of Sales
E	5	International-chain hotel	1	Director of Sales & Marketing
F	4	International-chain hotel	1	General Manager
G	5	International-chain hotel	1	Director Of Sales & Marketing
H	4	Non-chain hotel	1	General Manager
I	5	International-chain hotel	2	General Manager

6 hotels considered their hotel to be at the 5-star level, with 3 hotels considered as 4-star hotels. There were 5 international-chain hotels, 2 Thai-chain hotels, and 2 non-chain hotels. Out of 9 responses, there were a total of 13 respondents. During May and June 2018, data were collected through a semi-structured in-depth interview with senior executives who supervise the hotels' MICE eRFP. Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes.

By adapting Davis (1989)'s construct of Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use, Interview questions first asked the respondents about the hotel's MICE eRFP. Next, the researchers collected the respondents' opinions regarding the usefulness and ease of use of the MICE eRFP, which lead to the respondents' intention to use MICE eRFP. Then, success factors when utilizing eRFP were examined.

To analyze the qualitative data, content analysis was employed to contextualize the connections between the categories and themes. Tables were constructed to identify the themes of the critical success factors. According to Buathong and Lai (2017), content analysis is considered an appropriate research technique for making valid inferences from texts in the context of their use.

Results

Using a content analysis approach, similar opinions are grouped together into collective sets of variables, as shown below. It should be noted, however, that the frequency below is based on the number of interviewees who discussed such variables as opposed to the number of times that particular word was mentioned.

Perceived Usefulness

Overall, there are 3 major types of MICE eRFP currently utilized by Bangkok hotels, which are the hotel's own eRFP such as the MICE booking page on the hotel's website, CVENT, and the hotel chain's eRFP. Nonetheless, the majority of respondents stated that MICE eRFP is not perceived as useful. The details are discussed below.

Table 2: Perceived usefulness

Perceived usefulness	Frequency	Percentage
MICE eRFP is not useful	8	62
MICE eRFP is useful	5	38
Total	13	100

N = 13

Most respondents agreed that MICE eRFP is not very useful for 4 and 5 star hotels, as customers expect 4 and 5 star hotel to provide a personalized service by hotel staff. Moreover, MICE's requirements are more complex than hotel rooms' requirements. In some cases, customers did not provide a clear eRFP. One of the respondents stated that:

eRFP is not very useful. When customers enquire via eRFP, information can be quite vague and incomplete. For example, some customers ask for rates for a booking in the 3rd quarter of the year, with no specific dates. This is because customers are always rushed. Moreover, we need to block a certain number of guest rooms for MICE booking which could have been used for hotel room revenue.

MICE eRFP also has a low conversion rate of 10-15%, whilst catering and weddings have conversion rates of 30% and 50%, respectively. Whilst one respondent pointed that eRFP is not very useful as customers need to inspect the property before submitting an eRFP anyway, another respondent argued that some customers booked via CVENT and never visit the hotel, and rely only on the hotel's website.

38% of respondents pointed out that eRFP plays an important role in hotel revenue from overseas. For example, customers in the USA can book a MICE event in Thailand even though it is night time here. In addition, eRFP also saves time for hotels to understand the customer's requirements.

Nonetheless, a number of respondents agreed that the hotel should not invest in too many eRFPs, due to additional commissions and fees which need to be paid to each eRFP provider.

Perceived Ease of Use

In terms of the perceived ease of use, 54% of respondents pointed out that eRFP is not easy to use. The details are shown below.

Table 3: Perceived Ease of Use

Perceived Ease of Use	Frequency	Percentage
MICE eRFP is not easy to use	7	54
MICE eRFP is easy to use	6	46
Total	13	100

N = 13

The majority of respondents indicated that eRFP is not easy to use as MICE requirements are complicated and it puts pressure on the customers to fill in all details online. Furthermore, eRFP is difficult as each event is unique, and each MICE segment (e.g. conventions) has different requirements. Unlike meetings, for example, large conventions require many parallel sessions. In addition, MICE involves both room division (hotel room) and other divisions (catering, sales, event, etc). In turn, it may be difficult for hotels to integrate eRFP with the hotel's systems such as POS (Point of Sales). Therefore, it is too complicated to have one eRFP template for all events, as one respondent added that:

eRFP may work well for hotels that mainly focus on guest room revenue, and focus less on MICE revenue. Moreover, eRFP will only provide hotels with basic information such as dates, time, and other basic requirements. There is still a need for a sales person to follow up.

Although eRFP, particularly CVENT, is easy to use for event planners, they can ask for quotations from 10 hotels at the same time. From the hotel's perspective, however, this has created a flood of eRFPs which have low conversion rates. In turn, hotels would like to suggest that only 5 hotels should be allowed to be selected by customers as 10 is too many.

Intention to Use

Whilst not many respondents perceived eRFP as useful and easy to use, the majority of respondents intend to use eRFP for a variety of reasons as discussed below.

Table 4: Intention to Use

Intention to Use	Frequency	Percentage
Intend to use MICE eRFP	8	62
Do not intend to use MICE eRFP	5	38
Total	13	100

N = 13

Most respondents agreed that eRFP is becoming popular among hotels as it provides a revenue stream to the hotel. One respondent pointed out that CVENT provides 20% of the hotel's MICE business, but CVENT's revenue is 60% of the hotel's MICE revenue due to large events.

It should be pointed out that none of the respondents currently utilize Expedia's MICE booking technology, which can instantly provide approximate rates to the customers on the hotel's website. However, respondents had mixed responses when asked whether they planned to use Expedia technology, as stated by one respondent:

While we are willing to explore Expedia MICE technology, providing instant MICE rates on the website may not be a good idea as MICE's rate calculation is complicated and there are usually discounts for repeat customers, which can't be revealed online. Also, Expedia is a company that largely focused on hotel rooms, rather than MICE. Therefore, MICE may not be Expedia's expertise.

Another respondent noted that:

We will continue to use CVENT for sure. For Expedia MICE technology, it sounds like a good idea but we need to explore it further as we don't want to pay commissions to too many companies.

Hotels that do not plan to use eRFP generally use email communication with customers, instead of eRFP. They strongly believe that they can provide a personal service that is individualized for each MICE event. Moreover, not every hotel needs to use eRFP as hotels, in view of their potential capacity for MICE, need to decide whether eRFP is necessary or not. New hotels, and hotels with bad locations would certainly need eRFP to enhance their visibility. For renowned hotels, however, eRFP may not be a high priority.

Key Success Factor for MICE eRFP

Based on the interviews with respondents, the key success factors of MICE eRFP are categorized into the following factors: speed of business (46%), size of business (31%), and personal touch (23%).

Table 5: Key Success Factor for MICE eRFP

Key Success Factor for MICE eRFP	Frequency	Percentage
Speed of business	6	46
Size of business	4	31
Personal touch	3	23
Total	13	100

N = 13

Firstly, nearly half of respondents agreed that the critical success factor of eRFP is the speed of business as service is unarguably perishable. Simply put, a hotel's life span is not 20-30 years, but only 24 hours. This means hotels cannot sell yesterday's unsold rooms. In the hotel business, therefore, it is crucial to provide speedy services to MICE customers. More importantly, hotels need to respond to eRFP speedily. One respondent stated that his/her hotel used to have a 48 hours policy to respond to customers, and it was reduced to 24 hours and, more recently, 3 hours. It should also be pointed out that hotels need to provide customized responses with a 'wow' factor to each MICE customer.

Secondly, hotels need to consider the potential size of the MICE business before deciding to use eRFP. As discussed earlier in this paper, eRFP could work well for small and medium-sized MICE events. For larger events, such as conventions, requirements become very complicated and become a challenge for the customers to fill in details on eRFP. Some respondents believe that it is easier to create RFP manually, e.g. Microsoft Word, instead of using eRFP. Moreover, hotels also need to determine the conversion rate of eRFP. In short, eRFP is important for the hotels' presence in the market; however, not all hotels will benefit from eRFP.

Thirdly, hotels need to integrate both technology and the personal touch. Technology is unavoidable, and the use of hospitality technology, such as eRFP, has grown rapidly worldwide. Whether hotels are using eRFP or not, it is crucial for hotels to train their staff to maximize the use of technology whilst still providing personalized services in order to increase the conversion rate of MICE businesses.

Discussion

This paper has achieved its aim by examining the key success factors of MICE eRFP, using a case study of Bangkok hotels. By adopting Holden and Karsh (2010)'s Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as a framework for analysis, findings have provided meaningful insights towards how hoteliers perceive usefulness, ease of use, and intention to use eRFP. Moreover, this paper supports the findings of a number of authors (e.g. Global Business Travel Association & Council, 2015; Hussain, Rahman, & Hassan, 2012) who pointed out that technology can help hotels to reduce cost and increase operational excellence.

Having said that, the findings also support other studies which identified the disadvantages of eRFP such as the great influx of eRFP (Seaton, 2017) and the low conversion rate (Global Business Travel Association & Council, 2015). Although a number of respondents did not perceive eRFP as useful and did not find it easy to use, most respondents intend to use eRFP in order to stay competitive and to acquire additional revenue streams, particularly from overseas customers. Such a challenge is supported by Smagina (2017) who argued that the explosive growth of MICE products has led to increased challenges for Asian hotels to ensure that they attract adequate levels of future MICE business to remain competitive.

Most importantly, respondents emphasized the following success factors when utilizing eRFP: speed of business, size of business, and personal touch. Firstly, using technology to enhance the speed of service is vital, as supported by a number of authors (e.g. Den Hertog, Wietze, & De Jong, 2010; Hsieh, Hung-Chang, Chih-Ping, HsiuJu, & Yu-Chun, 2013). Secondly, hotels need to determine the potential for MICE business before investing in eRFP. Such an issue endorses Ostrom et al. (2010) who recommended that companies examine their own business model for growth and expansion based on their own services and products. Thirdly, it is crucial to balance technology and the personal touch as technology should be utilized to enhance and customize service processes (Hsieh et al., 2013), which is crucial as services largely focus on personalized experiences (Tripathi, 2017).

Although this paper has implications for hoteliers, its limitation is that the data were only collected from hotels in Bangkok. Therefore, it would be beneficial if comparative studies were conducted in the hotel sector in different parts of the country. For example, this could be a comparative study of technology acceptance towards eRFP by hotels in other high potential MICE cities in Thailand. According to TCEB (2018d), up to 45% of MICE events in Thailand between January and June 2018 were held in Bangkok, while the remaining 55 per cent were held in other MICE Cities including Chiang Mai, Pattaya, Phuket, and Khon Kaen. The findings of such research could provide important insights into the similarities and differences of eRFP strategies in different high potential MICE cities.

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Sustainable MICE City Prototype Development, Chiang Rai Province

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Abstract

All MICE events by nature are highly resource-intensive and can have negative environmental consequences for the host city. This conceptual article aims to study and analyze sustainable MICE city development criteria and to present a sustainable MICE city prototype for development of Chiang Rai. It reveals tenth criteria, for development of a sustainable MICE city prototype, as follows: having low carbon transport to city and venues; venue and facility services meet standards; utilization of sustainable accommodations and catering services; activities and events are based on cultural identity of the city; businesses are encouraged to show social and environmental responsibility; an excellent experience is delivered to organizers and participants; city disaster management plan and safety protocol are in place; the quality of life and well-being of the local people are supported; building of sustainable MICE heritage and pride for the next generation; and sustainable MICE organizing in all sectors is encouraged. The results of this study can contribute to proposing action policies that push the driving of sustainable MICE city development at national and international levels.

Keywords: MICE city prototype, MICE city, sustainable MICE city

Introduction

The MICE industry has been growing steadily and rapidly as an industry vital to the economy. The MICE industry's importance to the economy lies in its effectiveness as a driving mechanism for all major industries (TCEB, 2016). The MICE industry is one of Thailand's top-growing industries, while also contributing significantly to its tourism sector. Thailand's MICE industry has been growing steadily since 2010 (TCEB, 2015) with generated revenue for the year 2016 estimated at THB 81 billion. Thailand's MICE events are forecast to increase revenues to THB 153 billion by 2021 and to THB 246 billion and THB 557,000 billion in 2026 and 2036, respectively (TCEB, 2017). Currently, there are 5 MICE cities in Thailand, including Bangkok, Pattaya, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Khon Kaen (TCEB, 2016). Secondary MICE cities have also developed, such as Chiang Rai, Udon Thani, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Songkla. In an initial assessment of the city's potential to be a MICE city in the future, Chiang Rai city was found to have high potential for organizing MICE events, and the

Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) is determined that the city become a center for meetings and exhibitions in the northern region of Thailand (TCEB, 2016). Thus, the city's popularity for meetings has continued to grow.

Chiang Rai is located in the northern part of Thailand and lies upon the divergent boundary of 3 countries, including Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar. Chiang Rai remains second in Thailand's northern region, followed by Chiang Mai, for organizing international MICE events, with 66 international meeting and 5,715 participants in 2016. It is a city with abundant historical records, as it was the capital city of the Lanna Kingdom in ancient times. It is a city remarkable for its unique language, arts, customs, and cultures, as well as its variety of natural and historical attractions, including up to 121 destinations. Mae Fah Luang International Airport offers both domestic and international routes with over 8,000 flights per year and an ultimate capacity for more than 3 million passengers per year (Airports of Thailand PLC., 2017). In addition, Chiang Rai has 492 hotels and resorts with 14,663 available rooms. Its comprehensive and diverse accommodations make this destination perfectly suitable for private conferences and outdoor meetings surrounded by nature (TCEB, 2016). Thus, Chiang Rai is fast becoming a MICE destination which has promoted tourism and new destinations, including a number of new non-stop flights on both domestic and international routes (Office of Comptroller General's Department, 2017).

In 2017, Chiang Rai hosted the ASEAN- China- UNDP symposium on financing sustainable development in the region. Prior to the symposium, participants interacted with local communities in the Doi Tung Development Project, which is located in Chiang Rai. The ASEAN Secretariat has become a recognized model for sustainable development, and Chiang Rai city hosted the 8th East Asia summit high-level seminar on sustainable cities (Department of Environment Quality Promotion, 2017). As a result, the Chiang Rai municipality was chosen as the National Earth Hour Capital of Thailand under the Earth Hour City Challenge project, which aims to drive and support cities in facing climate and global ecosystem changes. In this regard, Chiang Rai Municipality promises 15% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 (WWF, 2016). Moreover, Chiang Rai municipality received “The World Smart Cities Award” for creative projects and innovative ideas promoting sustainable urban development from the organizing committee of Smart City Expo World Congress 2017 (SCEWC) (Chiang Rai Municipality, 2017). Meanwhile, the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) is contributing to the strategic development planning of Chiang Rai as a MICE City (Chiang Rai Public Relations Office, 2017) and Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA) is introducing a promotional prototype on sustainable tourism using Chiang Rai city. For these reasons, Chiang Rai shows potential and readiness to be supported and developed as a sustainable MICE city prototype, which can ultimately contribute to achieving policy and practical recommendations for driving sustainable MICE cities at national and international levels.

Objectives

1. To study and analyze sustainable MICE city development criteria.
2. To present a sustainable MICE city prototype development of Chiang Rai.

Literature Review

Situation of the MICE Industry

According to International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) statistics, ICCA captured a record number of 12,558 international association meetings were held in 2017, up from 12,212 meetings in 2016, a 3.85 percent increase, reflecting a slower rate of growth compared to the previous year (ICCA, 2018). Europe maintained its lead in terms of number of international association meetings organized, with 6,731 meetings or 53.60 percent. However, U.S.A. remains in the number one position with 941 meetings and 424,010 participants. Among Asia Pacific countries in 2013, those with the highest number of international meetings according to ICCA statistics were 1) Japan-414 meetings, 2) China-376 meetings, 3) Republic Korea-279 meetings, 4) Australia-258 meetings, 5) India-175 meetings, 6) Thailand-163 meetings, 7) Singapore-160 meetings, 8) Chinese Taipei-141 meetings, 9) Hong Kong-119 meetings and 10) Malaysia-112 meetings (ICCA, 2018). An examination of the ASEAN countries found steady growth in the overall market and Thailand maintained its lead in terms of number of international association meetings organized, with 163 meetings and 65,711 participants and ranked 25th globally in 2017. According to ICCA Statistics Report Country & City Rankings reported the most popularly cities for MICE destinations in Asia in were Singapore, Soule, Hong Kong and Bangkok, respectively. While Chiang Mai remains 27th, Phuket remains 71th and Pattaya remains 83th (ICCA, 2018). Furthermore, the TCEB annual report of year 2016 statistics indicate a drop in MICE arrivals and industry revenue from 2016 levels, with 1,273,465 international MICE travellers and revenue of THB 102 billion. The business categories bringing in the largest of revenue were: meeting revenue of THB 23.445 billion (258,483 travellers); international exhibitions earning THB 21.799 billion (272,382 travellers); conventions earning THB 15.686 billion (180,480 travellers) and incentive travel earning of THB 16.217 billion (263,556 travellers) (TCEB, 2017)

Sustainable MICE City Development Policies

Thailand's strategy for sustainable MICE city development involves creating a competitive advantage through developing production and service sectors based on diversity, quality, and Thai identities. Which promote Thailand as a world tourism destination focused on quality of tourism and earning a high income for the country. However, the emphasis for long-term sustainable tourism development should be placed on conservation of both natural resources and the environment while protecting community identities and ways of life (National Strategy Committee, 2017). Thailand's agenda has focused on strengthening industrial and agricultural sectors and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through meetings, trade fairs, and exhibitions. Meanwhile, revenue generation from spending by MICE travellers who attend MICE events in Thailand (TCEB, 2016) has contributed to sustaining Thailand's economic and competitive strength. The key targets have been the hospitality industry and MICE sector development by strengthening industry, matching businesses, and trading technologies. In the meantime, the MICE industry can help develop and improve related industries (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017). Development in the quality of tourist attractions and tourism products and services

results from unique and international standards based on balance and sustainability. However, environmentally friendly development of tourism must balance area, time, and clusters for distribution of income and tourism among all regions of Thailand (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2017). Similarly, Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau announced a strategy highlighting the importance of creating regional competitive advantages for distributing income from MICE events and increasing entrepreneurs included in developing MICE events from regional to international levels (TCEB, 2017). Moreover, the city policy aims to develop MICE tourism models and activities, including adequate facilities to support MICE travellers in Chiang Rai (Tourism Council of Chiang Rai, 2016). Therefore, local government organizations will be responsible for the proposed policy and implementing it in practical ways with relevant sectors. The policy contributes to delegating decision-making authority related to allocation of funds toward developing Chiang Rai as a future sustainable MICE city of Thailand.

Developing a Sustainable MICE City Criteria

The Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) has developed evaluation criteria for venues in different countries for use as criteria when developing prototypes and to identify the potential for cities to become MICE cities of the future. MICE city development criteria can be divided into 8 components, as follows: convenient access to the city and venues; support of host city in organizing MICE events; opportunities for additional activities beyond set meetings; available accommodations and facilities; available venues and facilities; good image and reputation of the city; good physical environment of the city; and low risk of cancellation, along with high security (TCEB, 2013). Development of a sustainable MICE city prototype should consider the organization of sustainable events, and an event checklist should address the following seven criteria: venue, accommodations, catering, communication and materials, local transport, exhibition, and stakeholder engagement and communication (UNDP, 2012; TCEB, 2015). Finally, to simplify the development of sustainability strategy, basic and advanced level guidelines have been created for seven MICE industry categories, as follows: audio-visual industries; event and activity organizer industries; exhibition, conference, and convention organizer industries; food and beverage industries; hotel industries; transport industries; and venue industries (Singapore Tourism Board, 2013).

Methodology

This conceptual article revises and illustrates MICE city development criteria (TCEB, 2013), the sustainable events criteria (UNDP, 2012), and sustainability guidelines for MICE industry categories (Singapore Tourism Board, 2013). Content analysis was selected as the research method (Xin et al., 2013). A literature review was conducted, and data was organized in groups and then displayed for interpretation and to ensure the data and results were accurate (Pothisita, 2016). For the qualitative part of the study, an in-depth analysis of related articles led to the development of a typology of popular themes presented in sustainable MICE city prototype development of Chiang Rai.

Results

MICE industry development in Thailand has focused on sustainability, which has been based on creating prosperity for the benefit of all sectors of the target city. This study demonstrates tenth components of developing a sustainable MICE city prototype, as follows: having low carbon transport to city and venues; venue and facility services meet standards; utilization of sustainable accommodations and catering services; activities and events are based on cultural identity of the city; businesses are encouraged to show social and environmental responsibility; an excellent experience is delivered to organizers and participants; city disaster management plan and safety protocol are in place; the quality of life and well-being of the local people are supported; building of sustainable MICE heritage and pride for the next generation; and sustainable MICE organizing in all sectors is encouraged. Prototyping sustainable MICE city of tenth criteria are illustrated in Figure 1.

Sustainable MICE city prototype of Chiang Rai	
1) having low carbon transport to city and venues	6) an excellent experience is delivered to organizers and participants
2) venue and facility services meet standards	7) city disaster management plan and safety protocol are in place
3) utilization of sustainable accommodations and catering services	8) the quality of life and well-being of the local people are supported
4) activities and events are based on cultural identity of the city	9) building of sustainable MICE heritage and pride for the next generation
5) businesses are encouraged to show social and environmental responsibility	10) sustainable MICE organizing in all sectors is encouraged

Figure 1 Prototyping sustainable MICE city of tenth criteria

Consistent with these criteria, a sustainable MICE city prototype for Chiang Rai should include the following items in detail:

1. Having low carbon transport to city and venues. The government of Chiang Rai should support MICE travelers and event organizers to increasingly choose to utilize low carbon transport: (a) Air transport using Mae Fah Luang International Airport, which is certified at level 2 in the Airport Carbon Accreditation program, a project that supports airports in implementing measures for carbon emission and energy management that aim to reduce carbon emissions. The airport can prepare to become certified at level 3 (Optimization) by increasing its scope for carbon footprint management, including carbon emissions reporting in activities beyond the airport's control. The airport is promoting and creating mechanisms for stakeholder participation in reporting on carbon emissions and activities in which they are involved which may be sources of carbon emissions (Ministry of Transport, 2015). In 2017, Mae Fah Luang International Airport reported having an average of 36 flights per day (Chiang Rai Provincial Office, 2017), with both domestic and international flights amounting to over 8,000 flights and 2,385,224 passengers (Airport of Thailand PLC., 2018), including direct flights from Bangkok, Phuket, and Hat Yai, as well as China and Hong Kong. Flying nonstop can reduce carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases normally caused by flight operation and in-flight services on each flight. For each flight, each passenger carries a carbon footprint of 285 grams per kilometer (European Environment Agency, 2013); (b) Ships, boats, and other types of water transportation along the Mekong river using 2 ports; Chiang Sean and Chiang Khong, Organizers and visitors or participants can travel and transport equipment and goods for events from Laos PDR, Myanmar, and China, with lower carbon emissions relative to aviation; (c) Land transport using National Highway 118, which links Chiang Mai Province, a major tourism destination and MICE city of Thailand, about 180 kilometers away: Transport by van and bus reduces carbon emissions by an estimated 55 and 68 grams Co₂ per kilometer, respectively (European Environment Agency, 2013). Public transport should facilitate getting to various venues, including from the center of the city to the convention center and hotel and resort venues where events are likely to be hosted. Shuttle buses should be provided to take guests from the airport to their hotel. Furthermore, public transport should be installed to service both city areas and outer areas, linking them to the airport, convention and exhibition center, tourist attractions, and city landmarks.

2. Venue and facility services meet standards. Chiang Rai has 9 convention centers (TCEB, 2016), with over 20 hotels and resorts that offer meeting rooms. Examples of convention centers include Utopia Ballroom of Le Meridien Chiang Rai Resort (1,230 sq.m.), Doi Tung Hall (700 sq.m.), Chiang Roong Ballroom (550 sq.m.), Champalao Room (500 sq.m.), and Hiran Nakorn at Rimkok (350 sq.m.). Examples of hotels and resorts with meeting venues include A-Star Phulare Valley, Anantara Golden Triangle, Elephant Camp & Resort, Chiang Rai Grand Room Hotel, Four Seasons Tented Camp Golden Triangle, Imperial Golden Triangle Resort, Phowadol Resort and Spa, Phu Chaisai Resort & Spa, Suanthip Vana Resort, Wiang Indra Riverside Resort, and Wangcome Hotel Golden Pine Resort & Spa Chiang Rai. Subsequently, the Chiang Rai government organization will continue to lead in the development of meeting rooms in convention & exhibition centers, including aiding hotel and resort entrepreneurs in meeting the Thailand MICE Venue Standard (TMVS) and ASEAN

MICE Venue Standard (AMVS), as well as international standards, such as the ISO 50001 Energy Management System (TCEB, 2016) and ISO 20121 Event Sustainability Management System (TCEB, 2016; Singapore Tourism Board, 2013), which define sustainable management systems for events that can lead to environmental certification (Boggia et. al, 2018), and APEX-ASTM Environmental Sustainability Standards for Events (Singapore Tourism Board, 2013; Carole et al., 2013).

3. Utilization of sustainable accommodations and catering services. Chiang Rai has 492 hotels and 14,663 rooms (TCEB, 2016). The local government can initiate projects to provide knowledge and understanding about local entrepreneurs through workshops and seminars on sustainable events that promote the potential for and awareness of sustainable MICE impacts. The government can also collect data and create a network of hotels and resorts that lead to certification toward standards or following of practices that meet sustainability principles. Currently, Chiang Rai has Thailand MICE Venue Standard (TMVS) certified hotel; Le Meridien Chiang Rai Resort and Wiang Inn Hotel (TCEB, 2017). The government can also convince event organizers or exhibitors to choose eco-friendly hotels for organization of MICE events, such as the Imperial Golden Triangle Resort, the Legend Chiang Rai Boutique River Resort & Spa, and the Mantrini Chiang Rai (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2018). In addition, catering companies should be chosen for MICE events according to their demonstration of responsibility for social and environmental issues. For example, the organizing event, we can use local ingredients instead of importing raw ones from overseas or outer sources. Moreover, the event's catering company should make an effort to reduce waste from food production and calculate food intake to match the total number of participants in order to reduce consumption and resources used.

4. Activities and events are based on cultural identity of the city. Chiang Rai has 121 tourist attractions, including 58 natural attractions, 46 historical attractions, and 17 art and culture attractions, which showcase a diverse civilization of 30 ethnic groups and feature more than 100 artists (Chiang Rai Provincial Office, 2017). The cultural identity and diversity of the city is applied toward organizing MICE events. For example, the host of the 8th East Asia Summit High-Level Seminar on Sustainable Cities designed and decorated the stage using northern style paper lanterns and the Lanna Flag, provided local food, and led a field study in the cultural learning center (Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, 2017). Additionally, MICE travellers were able to join activities outside of the conference, as well as attending a health and spa, participating in way of life experiences, arts and culture activities, and eco-tourism events. These activities also linked tourism activities among countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS).

5. Businesses are encouraged to show social and environmental responsibility. The city should focus on promoting and supporting organizers who use the convention and exhibition centers and standard hotels and resorts. The local government should promote the integration of local industrial clusters characterized by local arts and crafts products. Meanwhile, local people must develop the quality and standardization of OTOP products (Chiang Rai Provincial Office, 2017), as well as lend support to the networking of organic farmers in order to push Chiang Rai to lead as a prototype city for food safety (Thai Health Promotion Foundation, 2016), where local people desire to transition to organic farming using bio-fertilizers (Chiang Rai Provincial Office, 2017).

Increasingly, value-added local products and agricultural products are used in organizing sustainable MICE events. However, an increase in the knowledge of the benefits for both meeting planners and meeting/event attendees is needed to encourage the use of local foods or local products (Lee & Slocum, 2015)

6. An excellent experience is delivered to organizers and participants. Attendees can sense the hospitality, kindness, and friendliness of local people in Chiang Rai. As a result, both Thai and foreign participants are impressed and hope to revisit the MICE events. Moreover, MICE event organizers have delivered excellent experiences to organizers and participants, including: hotels and resorts continually promote sustainable practices; there is a diversity of local food with ensured safety of raw materials; Lanna culture, arts, and traditions are integrated into events; community and health tourism activities are offered; the value of money is reasonable and the local people are friendly; and becoming convenient transport and public services are available.

7. City disaster management plan and safety protocol are in place. Chiang Rai's local government has three disaster prevention projects under their natural resources and environment protection strategy (Chiang Rai Municipality, 2017) which prepare all sectors to take part in an integrated plan for disaster prevention and mitigation. For instance, the government of Chiang Rai and Thai Navy SEALs as well as experts from many countries around the world involved in rescuing of the 12 boys and their coach from Thum Luang cave in Mae Sai district, Chiang Rai. Moreover, Thai government and private sectors, local communities as well as more than 50 organizations collaborated to help the mission success. From this instance, the event organizers and MICE travellers could feel more secured for the city disaster management in Chiang Rai.

8. The quality of life and well-being of the local people are supported. Organized MICE events must be based on the following principles: promoting community participation and creating unity among local people in order to present a good image of Chiang Rai city; creating job opportunities for local people and increasing employment in the host city, with events generating high revenue from expenses paid by participants, organizers, and supporting sectors (eg. marketing, labor, transport); supplying local goods and services, including local agricultural products and value-added local products; and developing facilities and investing in infrastructure (e.g., airports, electric trains, and city buses) that both support sustainable MICE events and also benefit local communities and the economy of the host city.

9. Building of sustainable MICE heritage and pride for the next generation. Sustainable MICE event organizing promotes the host city's good reputation and supports it as a tourist destination. Chiang Rai's local people enjoy organizing festivals and traditional Lanna events, and the younger generation is able to take pride in their history and culture (Chiang Rai Provincial Office, 2017). MICE events encourage the participation of youth in events that present Lanna culture and history, which helps promote a learning process and a larger impact from sustainable MICE organizing. Moreover, organizers require local youth to take part in events at both national and international levels (e.g., as coordinators, receptionists, tour guides, folk artists). Youth's participation and their learning process through taking part in event practices ensure collateral creation for Chiang Rai as a host city for sustainable MICE destinations.

10. Sustainable MICE organizing in all sectors is encouraged. Recently, different sectors in Chiang Rai have become more active as drivers of the city's MICE industry, including: local government agencies, such as Chiang Rai Provincial Office, Chiang Rai Municipality, Chiang Rai Provincial of Tourism-Sports, Tourism Authority of Thailand-Chiang Rai office, and all local organizations, etc.; private entrepreneurs, such as convention and exhibition centers, hotel and resort businesses, transport businesses, event businesses, and other related businesses; educational institutions, including eight vocational colleges and four universities (Chiang Rai Provincial Office, 2017); and local people who aim to have festivals and traditional events held by government organizations. In addition, external support agencies such as the TCEB is pushing a strategic plan Chiang Rai as a MICE city and the DASTA is promoting a sustainable tourism for Chiang Rai city. Both are potential units of expertise in informing the development of Chiang Rai as a sustainable MICE City, making such development a concrete possibility.

Discussion

Developers of a sustainable MICE city prototype must consider sustainable MICE city criteria based on balancing social, economic, environmental sustainability (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2017), while giving priority to those most involved in the city. This article emphasized the participation of all sectors of sustainable MICE event organization, including policy makers, host communities, MICE entrepreneurs, educational institutions, and external support agencies. The integration of all sectors that contribute to a sustainable MICE city prototype. It's increasing MICE events at the regional to international levels (TCEB, 2017), and promoting MICE destinations (ICCA, 2017). Guidelines for sustainable event organization and operation have recently been developed by the UNDP (2012), which published a sustainability guide for all events in MICE industry. The Singapore Tourism Board (2013) also prepared and published a sustainability guidebook for Singapore's MICE Industry. In Thailand, the TCEB (2015) has prepared sustainable events guidelines for the MICE industry. The guidelines produced by the above agencies have focused on sustainability in the organizational process as practiced by venues, event organizers, and involving business sustainability guidelines are disclosed to key stakeholders in MICE cities. Nevertheless, the key factors for sustainable MICE events organization require facilitating multi-stakeholder collaboration in the host city. Consequently, sustainable MICE city criteria are crucial for these cities' sustainable development, and policy makers can adopt these criteria for developing Chiang Rai as a leading sustainable MICE city prototype.

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Sustainable Development for Greening Practices of MICE Industry: A Case Study of Sampran Riverside, Nakorn Pathom Province

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Topic Category (refer to the topic stated in call for paper): MICE & Events Management

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Greening Practices, Sampran Model, MICE Industry, Sampran Riverside, Nakhon Pathom

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the model of sustainable development for greening practices of MICE Industry: a case study of Sampran Riverside, Nakorn Pathom Province. The literature review of related concepts and theories are provided. The qualitative research methodology was applied to this case study which was conducted with 15 key informants by using a field survey. These key informants were the representatives of the top management and the managers who usually decided to become greening MICE operators and implemented in the environmental policy of Sampran Riverside and potential stakeholders of Sampran Business Model. The research instruments were in-depth interview using semi-structured format, structured observation survey, content analysis and document analysis techniques. All data from the interview session were recorded, verbatim transcribed and coded according to the aspects analyzed from the literature and field research data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Moreover, the triangulation method was applied to synthesize the information and check data validity and accuracy.

Findings showed that the sustainable development for greening practices of MICE Industry: a case study of Sampran Riverside, Nakorn Pathom Province were classified into 5 aspects; 1) Sampran Riverside context 2) corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy 3) sustainable development of Sampran business model 4) green practices and activities and 5) network and partnership. Moreover, it provides the opportunities for the development of sustainability management and recommendations for the future research theoretically developments are presented in detail and practical implications are indicated.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Greening Practices, Sampran Model, MICE Industry, Sampran Riverside, Nakorn Pathom

Introduction

MICE industry is growing sharply over the past decades in terms of diversity, size, number and popularity. It is not only the positive contribution to the national economic growth but also the negative impact on the natural environment and society (UNWTO, 2012). In recent years, the awareness of the sustainable development and green practices concepts have been increasingly realized. People become more aware of their carbon footprint, global climate change, energy crisis, waste management crisis, changes in customer needs and expectations, difficult competition among competitors and environmental sustainability criteria (Ridhima et al, 2018). Also global public awareness of the negative impact that corporations, individuals and MICE industry can have on the natural environment that has grown enormously (Kristen et al, 2015). MICE industry needs to be environmentally sustainable; this not only benefits the natural environment but also reduces the overall cost for the long run business. Furthermore, the MICE operators are required to set up a sustainable scenario and green practices for its growth and future development. Consequently, it is becoming a necessity to enhance competitiveness in the MICE market and provide an environmentally friendly product and services for their customers, also preserve the natural environment for the next generation.

Furthermore, the MICE industry plays a vital role in Thailand's tourism sector. Thailand has been developing itself into an increasingly famous location to hold international events, both product marketing and corporate seminars. According to the Thailand Conventions and Exhibition Bureau (Public Organization) or TCEB identified that Thailand was the first country in Asia to advocate the greening of MICE industry as a positive marketing tool and to help protect and minimize its negative impact on the environment. Thailand MICE industry's widespread acceptance of TCEB's green guidelines has led to more business coming to Thailand as organizers to indicate their preference for holding business events in a green destination (TCEB, 2017). Nowadays, the MICE planners or organizers have started to include green requirements for their events as the Request for Proposal (RFP) which provided to the venue. Meanwhile, MICE venues need to adapt their business green practices to meet the expectations of MICE planners. Moreover, TCEB (2017) stated that 68% of meeting planners report that CSR will be a focus for their organizations, 42% they are fully committed to CSR, 90 % of meeting businesses are engaged in CSR activity and 40% of them have a formal CSR policy, and 93% CEOs say sustainability is critical to their success. Sustainability is more than just turning the lights off; it is about a balanced approach to economic activity, environmental responsibility and social progress. Together, these three determinants form the core of a sustainable approach to business; often referred to as "the triple bottom line".

Sampran Riverside was selected as a focus of this case study since Sampran Riverside is an eco-cultural hotel which is located 30 kilometers west of Bangkok within a 70-acre riverside property. It has over 50 years of experience in organizing theme parties for corporate events and incentives. Moreover, it is one of the entrepreneurship which has initiated in the environmental management and designed the Sampran Business Model as a basis for driving force in sustainability MICE destination. Sampran Riverside is the first hotel to be certified and successfully complied with the PLEDGE in the food waste prevention standard that provided by TCEB, also, it is certified in the MICE Standard of ISO 20121 for event sustainability management systems which based on social, economic and environmental considerations. Furthermore, the lack of an academic research focused on the green MICE or events which was determined with increasing dramatically by the organizers of MICE events in formulating their green credentials that is more awareness about sustainable development, green practices than ever before. Consequently, the objectives of this study are to investigate the model of sustainable development for greening practices of MICE Industry: a case study of Sampran Riverside, Nakorn Pathom Province.

Literature Review

Environmental sensitivity is one of the main expectations of customers. To increase the awareness of customers causes companies to become more sensitive (Nuray et al, 2016). As the competition in the MICE industry increases on a global scale. It is imperative for hotels to sustain themselves by attracting market forces and includes pro-green practices. Moreover, nowadays, guests favor eco-friendly hotels since this affords them an opportunity to feel they are making a meaningful contribution to save the earth. MICE industry is required to set up a sustainable scenario for its growth and future development (Ridhima et al, 2018). Therefore, increasing concerns over climate and environmental change, the global economic and financial crisis and impacts on host community, delegates, participants, and destinations have reinforced the need for more sustainable approaches to MICE events.

Furthermore, sustainability now features as a part of the bid process for many mega-events such as; Olympic Games as well as significant regional and local events, where the event organizers are required by funding bodies and government to generate broader outcomes for the locality. Sustainable development has gained global recognition as a vital issue associated with the continued survival of human society. There are pragmatic and altruistic motivations for the sustainable development of MICE events. However, MICE events also need support from community, government, media and adhering to the sustainable development agenda is an effective way of gathering that support. Hence, developing sustainable development in greening MICE events is a way of approaching event management from a more holistic perspective that can

benefit event key stakeholders as well as communities affected by the event (Kristen Holmes et al, 2015)

Sustainable development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and the institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations. (WCED, 1987)). Also, Pearce et al (1990) noted strategy that manages all assets, natural resources, and human resources, as well as financial and physical assets, for increasing long-term wealth and wellbeing. Moreover, Berke and Conroy (2000) stated that a dynamic process in which communities anticipate and accommodate the needs of the current and future generation's ways that reproduce and balance local social, economic and ecological system, and link local actions to global concerns.

According to the United Nations (2017), created the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a new universal set of goals, targets, and indicators that UN member states will be expected to use to frame their agendas and political policies over the next 15 years. The SDGs cover social and economic development issues including 17 points of global agenda; poverty, hunger, health, education, climate change, gender, equality, water, sanitation, energy, urbanization, environment and social justice. Moreover, the Royal Thai Government is also promoting stronger linkages between its two bedrock economic pillars, agriculture and tourism as part of its national development strategy known as "Thailand 4.0". Also, TCEB (2017) stated that the Sustainable MICE is a marketing tool which was supported by TCEB for MICE entrepreneurs to organize the sustainable MICE events. TCEB's efforts to achieve sustainability began with its "Green Meetings Project" in 2018 and are continuing with the "Farm to Functions" in 2016. Moreover, TCEB was collaborated with Sampran Riverside and MICE business alliances to encourage MICE entrepreneurs to support organic agricultural products produced by local communities in order to create a sense of responsibility towards the environment and the society to respond to global trends. The collaboration was the essential purpose to enhance "Thailand as the world's leading MICE Sustainable Destination" under the 5-year MICE Sustainability Thailand Master Plan (2015-2019). Also, Mr. Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya, TCEB President pointed that "today, sustainable development has become the principle that global communities pay high attention particularly, the environment and the local participation have turned to play a vital role in influencing the decision making of foreign MICE travelers when it comes to organizing business events in Thailand. Therefore, TCEB realized the importance of connecting MICE entrepreneurs with local communities in order to implement the Sustainable MICE model development in a materialistic way and as such MICE businesses can eventually return profits and benefits to communities and the society (TCEB, 2017).

Methodology

This research was based on qualitative research methodology. Several research techniques were applied for the research. The research instruments were in-depth interview using semi-structured format, structured observation survey, content analysis and document analysis techniques. Data collection method was conducted in two steps. In the first step, a case study of Sampran Riverside through literature review. In the second step, official letter for conducting an interview and an on-site survey was sent to the Managing Director of Sampran Riverside. It has conducted 15 key informants with the representative's top management and managers who usually decided to become greening MICE operators and implemented in the environmental policy of Sampran Riverside and potential stakeholders of Sampran Business Model. The semi-structured interview questions were asked into 5 aspects; 1) Sampran Riverside context, 2) CSR strategy, 3) sustainable development of Sampran Business Model, 4) green practices and activities, and 5) network and partnership. After the interview session, observation of the sustainable development for greening practices approaches was carried out by using the checklist, photographs and video recording taken for the documentation. All data from the interview session were recorded, transcribed verbatim and coded according to 6 aspects analyzed from the literature and field research data. (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Moreover, the triangulation method was applied to synthesize the information and check data validity and accuracy.

Findings and discussions

The finding of this research identified the sustainable development for greening practices of MICE Industry: a case study of Sampran Riverside, Nakorn Pathom Province was classified into 5 aspects and the summary of findings can be referred from Figure 1, Table 1 and Table 2.

1) Sampran Riverside Context

1.1 Background of Sampran Riverside

Sampran Riverside is located 30 kilometers west of Bangkok, Nakorn Pathom Province. It was known until recently as Rose Garden Riverside and changed its name on the 50th anniversary to reflect the desire of the current managers, who were third generation family management, brothers Arrut, and Anak Navaraj to modernize the establishment. Moreover, it is the family run property since 1962 and the business started as a supplier of roses to the Bangkok flower markets. Since then, it has grown gradually to 70-acre riverside property. It an eco-cultural destination where tourists can experience the authentic Thai way of life and learn about local wisdom. For decades it has been considered as one of the Bangkok's favorite attractions because of the obvious dedication to preserve Thailand's natural and cultural heritage by engaging with the local

community. The facilities in the property included a 4 star riverside hotel with 160 rooms, 6 antique Thai houses around a serene lake, Patom Organic Spa, 4 restaurants, meetings rooms, a 10 acre of Sookjai organic farm, a weekend farmer's market, and the unique Thai village cultural center which will also be enjoying traditional arts and crafts such as; bamboo dancing, Thai martial arts, Thai boxing, garland making and fruit and vegetable carving. Sampran Riverside was started 50 years ago with the goal of preserving a century-old bullet wood or Pikul tree. (Sampran Riverside, 2018)

1.2 Sustainability MICE Venue

Sampran Riverside provided an excellent venue for local and international MICE for all sizes. It offered wide and varied choices of indoor and outdoor locations for organizers to provide a creative, unique edge and sustainability to their events in Thailand. There is no other place in Nakorn Pathom or around Bangkok that can offer MICE events with stunning location and a lush landscape by a river view together with exceptional service. It has over 40 years of experience in organizing theme parties for MICE events such as, "Loy Krathong Festival, Songkran Festival, and Temple Fair. According to Chorthip Kanoeythong (2018), stated that "In the past, we received tour groups of 90-100 people, mainly from Europe. But now, the tour groups are smaller, also the competition is fierce while the natural environment has dramatically changed along with tourists behaviors". Moreover, Arrut Navaraj, the Managing Director of Sampran Riverside, promised to preserve the natural environment and Thai cultural theme of his property and also keep its charm and enhance new attractions and activities of an organic farming tour and traditional agriculture while attracting MICE and health conscious tourists (Chorthip Kanoeythong, 2018). Furthermore, Sampran Riverside has interested a way to generate more revenue, therefore it has focused on MICE business from both Thailand and regional markets such as China, India, Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia. (Chanin Chuaypradit, 2018). Also, Arrut Navaraj stated that "Bangkok is chosen for many big MICE events each year, so we've approached organizers about using our property for leisure activities such as; team building, company outing, and CSR activities". Moreover, the company's previous revenue was 70% group tours and 30% MICE, but now it's sharply increased for 40% group tours and 60% MICE business. (Arrut Navaraj, 2017).

2) Corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy

Sampran Riverside provided off-site venue inspections, team building, CSR activity as well as the experience in Thai cultural and natural environment. These tailored programs and activities also incorporate eco-friendly and sustainability practices into it. According to Sookjai Organic Farm Project, it was managed by local villagers and Sampran Riverside. The organic farm has included 15 acres which is located across the Tha Chin River. It is certified organic to IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) EU and COR (Canada Organic Regime) standards.

The fruits vegetables, herbs, and lotuses are planted with fertilizers derived from organic waste. The organic products are used in their restaurants and MICE events with the concept “From Barn to Banquet, From Farm to Function”. The farm tours are operated every weekend and take 2 hours. It can be considered as additional activities to help MICE travelers to better understand the organic agriculture farming through displays of natural fertilizers composts and insect repellents, experience the livelihood of Thai farmers and sustainable food systems. Moreover, there are various activities for MICE travelers such as; to collect vegetables, herbs, fruits, and eggs for a cooking class or a farm lunch, to try sample homemade organic herbal teas, to plant the rice in the traditional way and harvest if it happens to be the season, and to bring back freshly herbs, organic ingredients and fruits for soothing spa treatment to Patom Spa. (Charin Chuaypradit, 2018).

Another project is Farm to Functions that is the first project in the World in integrating 3 sectors; government sector, private sector and MICE operators to support the economy of local communities, which is supported to promote Thailand as MICE Sustainable Destination. It has collaborated with MICE alliance; the Amnatcharoen Satjatham Rice Community Enterprise Network and 8 MICE venues, including *IMPACT Arena*, *IMPACT Exhibition and Convention Center*, *Queen Sirikit National Convention Center Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Centre* and *the Plaza Athénée Bangkok Hotel* and *a Royal Meridien*, *the Sukosol Bangkok Hotel*, *the Twin Lotus Hotel*, *the Dusit Thani Bangkok Hotel* and *Rama Gardens Bangkok Hotel*. Also, it aimed to order a minimum of 600 tons of organic rice per year for 19 hotels partners. It has collaborated with the Sustainable Agricultural Development Project with TCEB, TICA, and THA. This project is a new value chain of organic produce between farmers and 9 MICE entrepreneurs together to support local economy at the community level by making purchases of organic produce directly from farmers. It has contributed to the sustainable development of MICE business, the society and communities from the upstream to downstream. According to Arrut Navaraj (2017), stated that Farm to Function Project provided benefits in three key areas; 1) driving the economy- MICE operators will be supported to increase their competitiveness, reduce the cost of administration and farmers and communities gain a regular stream of income, 2) driving the community responsibility- the private sector is engaged in social responsibility helping MICE travelers to have healthy food with quality and the environment is less affected with farmers adopting more organic methods, and 3) driving the community engagement- the income distribution is started from the MICE business to communities, the farmers are given an opportunity to learn about business practice, and the communities step up their role in driving the economy of the country, resulting in the sustainability from upstream to downstream. Moreover, recently project is Farm to Firm that is set for connecting organic farmers to office workers with various partners which comprised Siam Commercial Bank, Siam Cement Group, Central World, Krungthai Bank and Bank of Thailand.

3) Sustainable development of Sampran Business Model

The findings of sustainable development of Sampran Model was initiative created by Arrut Navaraj, Managing Director, he aimed to serve organic vegetables, fruits and rice to hotel guests. The project has been purchasing organic produce from local farmers for many years before it received financial support from the government and other organization (TCEB, 2017). For the last 6 years, Sampran Riverside has been engaging with local farmers of Nakorn Pathom province for promoting organic agriculture through the Sampran Model. According to Figure 1 showed that the Sampran Model: sustainable business model based community partnership and sufficiency economy philosophy. The project operated under Bliss Foundation with funding from Thai Health Promotion Foundation and The Thailand Research Fund. Their Joint resolution is to understand and deeply access into organic agriculture and Sampran is a pillar to educate and intellect leads to well-being and happiness. Network partnership comprised; 12 groups of 177 organic farmers, The Thailand Research Fund (TRF) and Co-operative Academic Institute, Kasetsart University. Conventional farmers mostly depend on middlemen who dictated price and specifications for their produces.

Table 1: Sampran Model Impacts

Sampran Model Impacts	
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sookjai Market : 30 million baht/year - Sookjai Market Roadshow : 2 million baht/year - Sampran Riverside : 10 million baht/year - Farm to Functions Organic Rice Project: 14 million baht/year - Farm to Firm Project - Future markets: modern trades, restaurants and export - Reduction in cost of production without agrochemicals 50% - 70%
Environment	- Continuous improvement in soil and water qualities due to absence of agrochemicals
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous improvement in health for both producers and consumers. - Below average chemical resides in blood samples.
Social	- New communities established amongst organic farmers and consumers through Sookjai Market, Sookjai Roadshow, Bliss Festival and the Sampran Model Network.

Source: Chorthip Kanoeythong (2018)

Currently, Sampran Riverside worked with 12 groups of farmers in Nakorn Pathom and nearby provinces by mentoring, coaching, farm auditing and certifications under IFOAM accreditation. Moreover, Sampran Riverside bought around 530,000 baht per month of organic produces directly from groups of farmers. Farmers, therefore, could never name their price, yet at the same time, could never control their costs for rising price of agrochemicals. Moreover, farmer's debt problems worsen whilst their health and environment deteriorate with prolonged use of agrochemicals. This vicious cycle is apparent to most farmers who contribute to approximately 35% of Thailand's populations. Hence, most of our country's socio-economic problems could be resolved by addressing this unbalanced food supply chain problems. Furthermore, Sampran Model's vision is to restore the balance of local food system by finding new market channels, bulk and retail, for farmers who convert from conventional to organic agriculture. It aimed to link farmer directly to consumers via organic value chain based on fair trade. At present, market channels comprised Sampran Riverside, Sookjai Weekend Farmer's Market, Sookjai Market Road Show and the Sookjai Organic Website. Sookjai Market as a tool for driving force to Sampran Model. Charin Chauypradit (2018) stated that there are 69 retail operators, average earning of 39,000 baht per vendor (8 days opening on weekend), 2,000,000 baht monthly budget circulating, the statistics visitors traveled to Sookjai Market is average nearly 1,100 person per day, and 30,000,000 baht yearly revenue, in particularly the total sales July, 2017 earned 142 million baht.

Figure 1: Sampran Model based community partnership and Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of the late King Bhumibhol

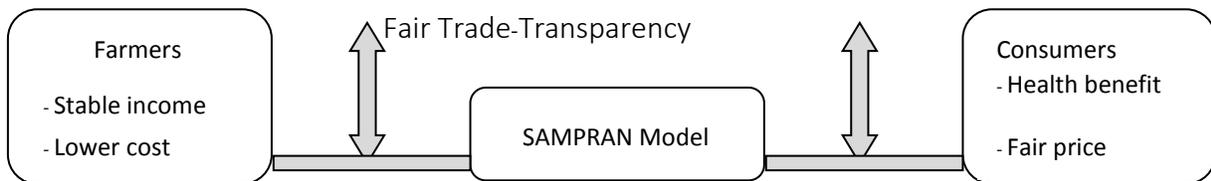
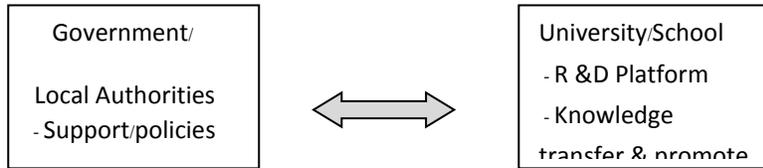
①	②	③	④
Self-sufficiency - change agent	Collaboration - collective leadership for change	Coordination - Sampran Model	Sustainable Development
Sufficiency Economy - basic	Sufficiency Economy - advance		

Outcome

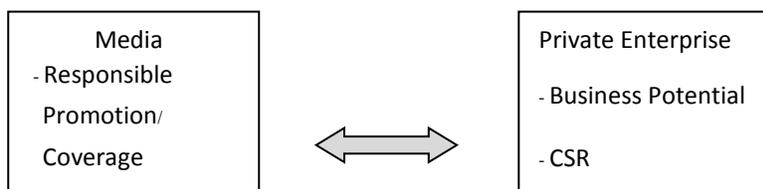
Balance/able to cope with uncertainly

Output

Economy/society environment/culture



Sustainable Tourism



Source: Adapted from Sampran Riverside (2018)

4) *Green Practices and Activities*

The findings showed that Sampran Riverside supported and adopted the environmental management policy, green practices policy and sustainable planning and development for their business, such as energy management, water management, 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), waste management and green products and material. Interestingly, the company considered in accessing the Participatory guarantee system (PGS) and organic certification standards which is certified organic to IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) EU, COR (Canada Organic Regime) and ACT (Organic Agriculture Certification Thailand). At present, there are divided into 12 groups of farmers with their group PGS and over 150 families of organic farmers gained the IFOAM certified organic in 2017 (Arrut Navaraj, 2017). Also, it established the Sookjai Foundation that it has collaborated with universities, government agencies and private sector to drive organic agriculture in Nakorn Pathom and neighboring provinces under the Sampran Model. 3% of sales are donated to Sookjai Foundation which supported the development of organic value chain in Nakorn Pathom and neighboring provinces (Arrut Navaraj, 2017). Moreover, there are various green practices and activities as follows:

- Event Production
 - recycled paper, biodegradable chemicals for cleaning products and eco-friendly or eco-labeling produced materials
- Energy Management
 - renewable energy solar panel, air-conditioning set to 25 degree Celsius, sub-metering, and energy saving equipment (LED lighting, auto sensor controlled lighting), turn off equipment when not in use and audit all power consumption to identify high users.
- Green Products and Materials
 - local products from community, products from green vendors and biodegradable products.
- Waste Management
 - composting food and waste from garden, refilling soap dispenser in the guestroom, recycle cooking oil, biodegradable plastic bag, paperless technology, and wasting separation program 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) e.g. To recycle approximately 500 liters of cooking oil into biodiesel every month.
- Water Management
 - low flow toilet and showerheads, grey water for irrigation, regularly check and

repair leaks, and encouraging guests to re-use towels or bed sheets.

- Sustainable Planning and Management
 - organic farm, herb garden, organic fertilizer, green transportation strategies,

consideration of natural surroundings in the design e.g. 70 acre property of Sampran Riverside is certified organic according to IFOAM, EU and Canada standards. Hence, there is no agrochemical on their grounds.

- Catering
 - local products to reduce food miles, supply refillable water cups or bottles, and

use compostable containers for food.

- ISO 20121 Standard for Event Sustainability Management
 - Sampran Riverside is certified and labeled in ISO 20121 standard for Event Sustainability Management System which **has been created for the MICE industry**. It provided the framework for identifying the potentially negative social, economic and environmental impacts of events by removing or reducing them, and capitalizing on more positive impacts through improved planning, processes and traceability (TCEB, 2017). The ISO 20121 standard was contributed to their reputation and recognize from the guests, MICE travelers, suppliers, partners and other stakeholders who carry similar ideology.

- Marketing and Merchandising
 - fair trade materials where possible, recycled paper, merchandise made from

sustainable material and avoiding wrapping programs or merchandise individually in plastic bag.

- Food Waste Management

The findings of food waste management of Sampran Riverside revealed that it is the first entrepreneurship in Thailand to comply with the food waste prevention standard under the program “the Pledge on Food Waste” in 2016 which is aligned on United Nations’ Food Loss and Waste Draft Standard. It is endorsed by TCEB which desire to create new sustainability standard and practices for MICE business. The Pledge is a third party verified food waste prevention standard articulated around 9 keys guidelines and 85 criteria to cut food waste and save on food costs. There are various sections were investigated in the Cut on Food Waste Policy; Main Kitchen, Rim Nam Kitchen and Restaurant, Inn-Chan Kitchen & Restaurant, Vanda Restaurant and Khao Gaeng Restaurant. After one year of cooperation with the Lightblue Consulting, it was able to cut food cost percentage by 3.04 points on average and food waste by 6,405 kilograms, reduce 12.5% in food cost per cover, offset 19,215 kilograms in carbon emissions within 10 months and saved up to 2 million baht a year (Benjamin Lephilibert, 2017).



According to Arrut Navaraj (2017), noted that the most difficult part for controlling food waste is the educational aspect. “We had to explain to all the staff the benefits of such a program and how it does translate in the hotel daily management; and we also have to implement educational work with guests. In both cases, the “losing face factor” must be taken into consideration to have sensitive approach (Arrut Navaraj, 2017).

Moreover, the hotel further implemented recycling programs in all fields of the food chain which are cold storage, fresh-cut fruit and vegetable, guest dishes, and on the buffet line. The majority of food waste came from guest dishes, representing as much as 60%, followed by buffet line 30%, and fruit and vegetables storages with 10% respectively. Recycling food waste has translated into turning fruits and vegetable into fertilizer, biodiesel, and vegetable oil. For the leftover food in good condition is also given to people in-need. According to Benjamin Lephilibert (2017), stated that the Sampran Riverside hotel's Food Efficiency Indicator (FEI), it calculated with the ratio of total food waste to total purchased and it reached 90.7% during the first year of the program implementation (Walit Sitthiphan, 2018)

5) Network and partnership

The findings of networks and partnership was concluded on Table 2 the Sampran Riverside Collaborations with – Public Private Partnership (PPP) as following;

Table 2: Sampran Riverside Collaborations – Public Private Partnership (PPP)

Upstream / Producer \longleftrightarrow Midstream / Processing \longleftrightarrow Downstream / Consumer		
Funding from Thailand Research Fund and Thai Health Promotion Foundation		
<u>Kasetsart University (Bangkok)</u> - Faculty of Economics : researches - Faculty of Agriculture: organic agriculture knowledge <u>Kasetsart University (Nakon Pathom)</u> - Faculty of Engineering: farmer's group development, eco plant pot production and organic agriculture in schools	<u>Kasetsart University (Nakorn Pathom)</u> - Faculty of Engineering: farm to firm project and logistics, post- harvest knowledge and website <u>Kasetsart University (Bangkok)</u> - Faculty of Agriculture: food processing using organic raw material	<u>Chulalongkorn University (SASIN)</u> - sustainable consumption and consumer's analysis <u>Mahidol University</u> - consumer well-being <u>Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB)/Thailand Incentive and Convention Association (TICA)/Thai Hotels Association (THA)</u>
Upstream / Producer \longleftrightarrow Midstream / Processing \longleftrightarrow Downstream / Consumer		
Funding from Thailand Research Fund and Thai Health Promotion Foundation		
<u>Mahidol University</u> - knowledge management <u>Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives</u> - Land Development Department: PGS pilot project with TOAF and ADB <u>Ministry of Commerce</u> - Department of Internal Trade: organic village project		- farm to functions project where hotels and convention centers buy organic rice directly from local farmers <u>Tourism Authority of Thailand</u> - promotion of organic agro-tourism and sustainable tourism - Annual Bliss Festival sponsorship <u>Ministry of Commerce</u> - Department of Internal Trade: organic farm outlet project - Annual Bliss Festival sponsorship
Lessons learnt analysis by Kasetsart University (Bangkok)		

Source: Sampran Riverside (2018)

Conclusion

The MICE operators and stakeholders are required to set a business model that must be in line with the vision and goal of sustainable development, sustainable planning, green practices policy and environmental management policy. It can sustain them in the long run. They should be required to invest in greening MICE practices which are ecologically tasks; Event production, energy management, green products and materials, waste management, water management, sustainable planning and management, catering, ISO 20121 Standard for Event Sustainability Management, marketing and merchandising and food waste management. Moreover, it should take a holistic approach drawing on the multidisciplinary theory it offers insight into the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts and how to adapt and mitigate the negative impacts underpinning three bottom lines. Also, the event organizers can positively contribute in the short term and long term by developing towards the sustainability of MICE events. Furthermore, the government should be motivated and offered an incentive and benefits for MICE hotels such as; tax reductions, and so on. It will contribute competitive advantages and enhance public image of MICE entrepreneurs and Thailand as a whole.

Furthermore, the main benefits of sustainable development in greening MICE industry comprised 3 aspects; 1) economic benefits; resource and financial savings, develop opportunities for revenue and funding, enhance branding, marketing and communications 2) social benefits; job creation, improve quality of life for local, support well-being of local residents from allocation of resources and 3) environment; preserve ecological integrity of destinations, emphasizes value and conservation of natural and cultural resources. The results of this research summarized in Figure 1, Table 1-3 lead to conclusions. Sampran Riverside is the best practice for greening MICE industry. Because of the new generation entrepreneur is initiative, creative and innovative ideas. Collaboration and lobbying can increase the feasibility of sustainable development in greening MICE project. However, the current situation for sustainable development in greening MICE industry is lack of initiative, investment, lack of knowledge and understanding, lack of financial support and lack of collaboration that would support the sustainable development of greening MICE business. The perception of greening MICE among stakeholder is characterized by a lack of knowledge and understanding of environmentally friendly and socially responsible business. Consequently, the green practices of MICE business were presented in the MICE industry. The sustainable business model was identified in an entrepreneur's passions for the environment and healthy lifestyle. Increasingly, the inspiration behind the starting up of the sustainable



development in greening MICE was not supported by the initiative and environmentally responsible desirable, but also by the need to create new revenue opportunities and competitive advantages. Each MICE operators can be implemented and fulfill the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental without obtaining any support from the government agencies. The importance of the main point for the success of greening MICE that it needs to keep a good relationship and strengthen collaboration with local communities, local government, and partnership. MICE operator's establishments must show concern for green practices and label themselves as green MICE so as to attract potential.

Implications of the study

This study may have important implications for MICE operators, MICE planners or organizers and MICE stakeholders who are interested in greening. Moreover, it may consider a best practice of Sampran Riverside for their efforts in improving and development green MICE can inspire and attract to them which enhancing the reputation and good image as a competitive advantage for their MICE businesses.

Recommendations for the future study

Firstly, the limitation of only one case study cannot be generalized. Therefore, the future research designed for several case studies where hold similar values to compare the model of sustainable development for greening practices of MICE Industry.

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The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) in decision making for MICE Destination

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Abstarct

This conceptual paper presents three-level evaluation structure is constructed. The highest level of the hierarchy is the overall goal evaluation structure is constructed for MICE Destination selection the second level represents the criteria (i.e., factors) affecting MICE Destination selection, including Infrastructure and Accommodation, site environment, Cost and Extra conference Opportunities. Various sets of subcriteria (i.e., attributes) associated with each factor in the second level are linked to the third level. The findings indicate that the AHP approach is a useful tool to help support a decision in MICE Destination selection. As a result, the findings will be of value to destinations that seek to compete for a share of the market. Specifically, the research sheds light on how destinations can increase their competitiveness, and where resources and efforts ought to be focused to improve a destination's attractiveness in this industry. A further potential application of the empirical results reported in this study would be the development of a numerical decision-support model that could be used to perform 'what-if' assessments and sensitivity analyses that would directly estimate the change in the probability of site selection as destination attributes are varied.

Keywords: analytical hierarchy process (AHP); decision making; destination; MICE

Introduction

The MICE industry has emerged as one of the largest and fastest growing sector. The growth of the industry can be attributed to various factors including the globalization, growth of business and technological advancements , drivers of tourism destination development as well as an essential generator of employment, income and foreign investment. During the last ten years, a major development has taken place in this industry. Many new destinations realized the economic benefit of this industry and have invested heavily to improve their cities to meet the meeting industry's needs. (SCHÜTTER,2010) The importance of hosting a meeting and convention to a city has emerged as a crucial strategic decision for stakeholders of a destination since the numbers of meetings, attendees, and spending create a positive economical multiplier impact to a destination. The meeting planners play an important role in determining the site selection and their decisions are very critical to the cities hosting the meetings and conventions (HUO,2014). The attractiveness of convention tourism has spurred destinations to proactively pursue the meetings and conventions market. Conventions may be hosted almost anywhere in the world, resulting in

keen competition among potential host destination sites (Crouch and Louviere 2004). Because of the growing intensity of competition, it is of great importance to those competing for business to understand the crucial factors affecting the convention site selection process (CHEN,2006).

Countries and destinations are vying with each other to promote themselves as a popular MICE destination, but the distributional potential of the MICE sector is highly dependent on the activities of professional conference organisers, event planners and their willingness to discover and market new destinations. One of the most important decisions that event planners have to make is selecting an appropriate site for an event (Vogt et al., 1994). The decision they make influences the number of attendees and determines how successful the outcome of the meeting will be (Lee & Back, 2005). The analytical hierarchy process (AHP), a prevalent MCDM method, could facilitate understanding the decision-making process and thus assist decision makers in allocating limited resources to strategic investment such as marketing, positioning, and so on. Satty's (1980) AHP is a pairwise comparison procedure designed to capture relative judgments in a manner that ensures consistency. This article presents a decision-making model based on AHP for MICE Destination Selection

Destination Image

Ryan (1991, 1997) identified a destination as an 'experience supplier' that binds together different products and services. Destinations can be divided into leisure and business travel destinations. In the leisure travel context, destination attractiveness is measured as the potential to generate a wonderful experience and provide an optimum sense of well-being during a holiday trip. The success of tourist destinations depends on the attractiveness of characteristics that make up the tourist strengths of a certain area (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009).

The concept of a destination is widely utilized in the context of convention trips, with a number of authors having discussed convention destinations, examining convention destination image, choice and selection (e.g., Chacko & Fenich, 2000; Crouch & Louviere, 2004; Oppermann, 1996). These studies have identified convention site (destination) selection variables and their relative importance in attracting both meeting planners and delegates to a particular convention in a given destination. Convention site section variables include: 1) accessibility, 2) local support, 3) extra-conference opportunities, 4) accommodation facilities, 5) meeting facilities, 6) information, 7) site environment, and 8) other criteria (Crouch & Ritchie, 1998).

The convention site selection process is potentially very complex due to the multitude of variables that influence a decision (Clark & Mc Cleary 1995). The factors affecting the site selection decision can be broadly divided into site-specific and association factors (Weber & Chon 2002). Fortin, Ritchie, and Arsenault (1976) found that there is a relationship between the importance of site selection factors and the structure of association characteristics, past experience, association

policies, environmental conditions, and convention objectives. The following literature review helps to look at site selection factors so far studied in the literature.

Grant and Weaver (1996) shed more insight on what the attendees of conferences considered when selecting a meeting (networking, education, leadership and destination attractiveness and recreation/social program).

Oppermann (1996) pointed out, the meeting and convention industry generally involves three major players, namely, meeting suppliers (host destination, facility, service providers), meeting buyers (associations, corporations, government, meeting planners), and meeting attendees/participants. This suggests that researchers could examine different aspects of the three meeting players, and different MICE sectors should be fully explored. However, most of the previous research seems to focus on one aspect of the industry or the perspective of one player (Smith & Garnham, 2006). This may potentially oversimplify or underestimate the fragmented and complex nature of the industry, rather than exploring the relationships between and within it (Ladkin, 2002). In this respect, it is recommended that more work is needed on other elements/aspects of the industry in order to better understand how the various elements are interrelated and to examine their relationships within the industry (Smith & Garngam, 2006; Yoo & Weber, 2005).

Oppermann & Chon (1997) and Jago et al. (2003) studied factors influencing convention decision making and the relationship between the three main players identified in the model (international convention associations, international attendees and professional conference planners).

Oppermann and Chon (1997) studied the decision making process from the perspective of the main three players: the association, the destination and the potential delegates, where most emphasis was put on the last group. The authors identified four sets of variables influencing the participant decision process: the association/conference factors, locational factors, personal/business factors and intervening opportunities.

Crouch and Ritchie (1998) developed a descriptive model to explain the variables involved in the site selection process important to event planners. The model covered six site selection factors (accessibility, local support, extra-conference opportunities, accommodation facilities, information and site environment).

Hinkin and Tracey (2003) indicated that similar factors were of importance to both event planners and the meeting participants. Security was ranked as the most important factor while other variables included: staff, meeting rooms-sensory, guest rooms, pricing and billing, food and beverage, public areas, recreational amenities and convenience.



In a review of literature on site selection criteria there were nine destination selection factors most frequently identified in the studies: accessibility, availability of facilities (conference rooms, exhibit space, hotels, restaurants etc.), service quality, affordability, destination image and reputation, attractions, safety/security, previous experience with a destination and overall cost (Oppermann, 1996; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Crouch & Ritchie, 1998; Chacko & Fenich, 2000; Getz, 2003; Taylor & Shortland-Webb, 2003; Comas & Moscardo, 2005). They were used as a basis for conducting the present study.

Point of view, identified to three players in meeting and convention industry. Association meeting planners ranked availability of hotels/facilities as the most important criteria for site selection decision making. According to Fortin and Ritchie (1976), found the relative importance of the following 10 key variables that influence association meeting planners' site selection decisions: hotel service level, air accessibility, hotel room availability, conference room availability, price level, hospitality in the city, restaurant service and quality, personal safety, local interest, and geographic location. Meeting planners, Studies of both association and corporate meeting planners show a strong concern for the facilities at a location. For example, McCleary (1978) found the main concerns for corporate meeting planners were the meeting accommodations themselves, the facility's staff, and then location. According to Hu and Hiemstra (1996) in a study of 136 US meeting planners determined that price was the most important hotel attribute followed by location, guestroom comfort and meeting room properties. And attendees/participants attendees of conferences considered when selecting a meeting (networking, education, leadership and destination attractiveness and recreation/social program) and including the association/conference factors, locational factors, personal/business factors and intervening opportunities. According to Var, Cesario, and Mauser (1985) concluded that location was the key aspect, noting that "accessibility and attractiveness constitute by far the most important element in conference venue decisions". They conclude that the combined effects of emissiveness (individual differences in choice behaviour), attractiveness and accessibility give rise to a particular level of attendance at each conference. A location factor was also identified by Oppermann and Chon (1997) as having a bearing in several ways on the decision whether or not to attend a conference.

Table 1.Recent studies in destination images

Author	Sample	Attribute	Finding
Oppermann (1996)	Meeting planners	Climate , Hotel service quality , Nightlife , Clean/attractive location , Ease of air transportation access , Hotel room availability , Restaurant facilities , Exhibition facilities , Scenery/sightseeing opportunities , Meeting rooms/facilities , Food & lodging costs , Safety/security , Transportation costs , City image , Overall affordability	Using three case studies, it illustrates how individual destinations have different strengths and weaknesses.
Jun, Mc Cleary (1999)	Meeting planners	These factors are: logistics/attractiveness of site , cost/added value , distance/environment , Social elements. These clusters are: distance/environment-oriented meeting planners , social elements-oriented meeting planners , logistics/cost-oriented meeting planners.	The results of multiple discriminant analysis indicated that education, type of association, and type of meeting to be planned were the significant variables that distinguish one cluster from another.
Baloglu, Love (2004)	Association meeting planners	Restaurant/Retail/ Accessibility, Facilities, Logistics, City Image, CVB services & Support	The study found that association meeting planners have differentiated images and intentions for the convention cities.



			<p>The identified strengths and weaknesses, coupled with qualitative evaluations and importance of perceptual dimensions, provide important implications for the convention cities in terms target marketing, positioning, and communication strategy.</p>
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Author	Sample	Attribute	Finding
CHEN (2006)	association	Meeting and Accommodation Facilities , Cost , Site Environment , Local Support , Extra-conference Opportunities	The findings indicate that the AHP approach is a useful tool to help support a decision in convention site selection.
Robin et al (2008)	Meeting planners	Accessibility by air , Accessibility by road , Choice of restaurant , Variety of nightlife , First class hotel rooms , Brand name hotels , Exhibit space , Desirable destination image , Reputation for hosting successful events , Safety and security, Support services for events , Overall cost , Perceived value for money	Findings show that there are differences in the most important criteria used by each of the associations, with the International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) rating exhibit space, Meeting Professionals International (MPI) rating perceived value for the money, and Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) rating support services for events as the highest criteria.
Tosun (2015)	tourists.	Accommodation , Local Transport , Cleanliness , Hospitality , Activities , Language communication ,Airport services	The study's findings, perceptions related to language, accommodation, hospitality and activity services were found to have a positive and significant effect on the perception of the destination's affective image. Accordingly, destination management organizations (DMOs) are advised to adopt strategies to ensure that quality perceptions of tourists regarding language, accommodation, hospitality and activity services are addressed

Integrating AHP into MICE destination selection

Analytic hierarchy process (AHP), initiated by Saaty in 1971, has been widely used to deal with multi-criteria decision making problems, including ranking attributes, determining the optimal alternative, and synthesizing performance indicators in the fields of management, economics, marketing, tourism and engineering (e.g. Saaty, 2000; Udo, 2000; Ananda & Herath, 2003; Vaidya & Kumar, 2006; Ho, 2008; Hong, 2009). The AHP is a comprehensive framework designed to cope with the intuitive, the rational, and the irrational when decision makers make multi-objective, multi-criterion and multi-factor decisions with or without certainty about any number of alternatives (Harker & Vargas 1987). The AHP approach was designed to help decision makers incorporate qualitative (intangible) and quantitative (tangible) aspects of a complex problem. It systematically solves complex problems by decomposing the structure of a problem into hierarchies and the users then make pairwise comparison judgments as to importance or preference to develop priorities in each hierarchy. (Gerdria & Kocaoglu, 2007)

The AHP has been applied to a wide variety of decisions and the human judgment process (Lee et al. 2001). The approach is used to construct an evaluation model and has criterion weights. It integrates different measures into a single overall score for ranking decision alternatives. Applying it usually results in simplifying a multiple criterion problem by decomposing it into a multilevel hierarchical structure (CHEN, 2006).

Applying the AHP procedure involves three basic steps: (1) decomposition, or the hierarchy construction; (2) comparative judgments, or defining and executing data collection to obtain pairwise comparison data on elements of the hierarchical structure; and (3) synthesis of priorities, or constructing an overall priority rating (Harker & Vargas 1987).

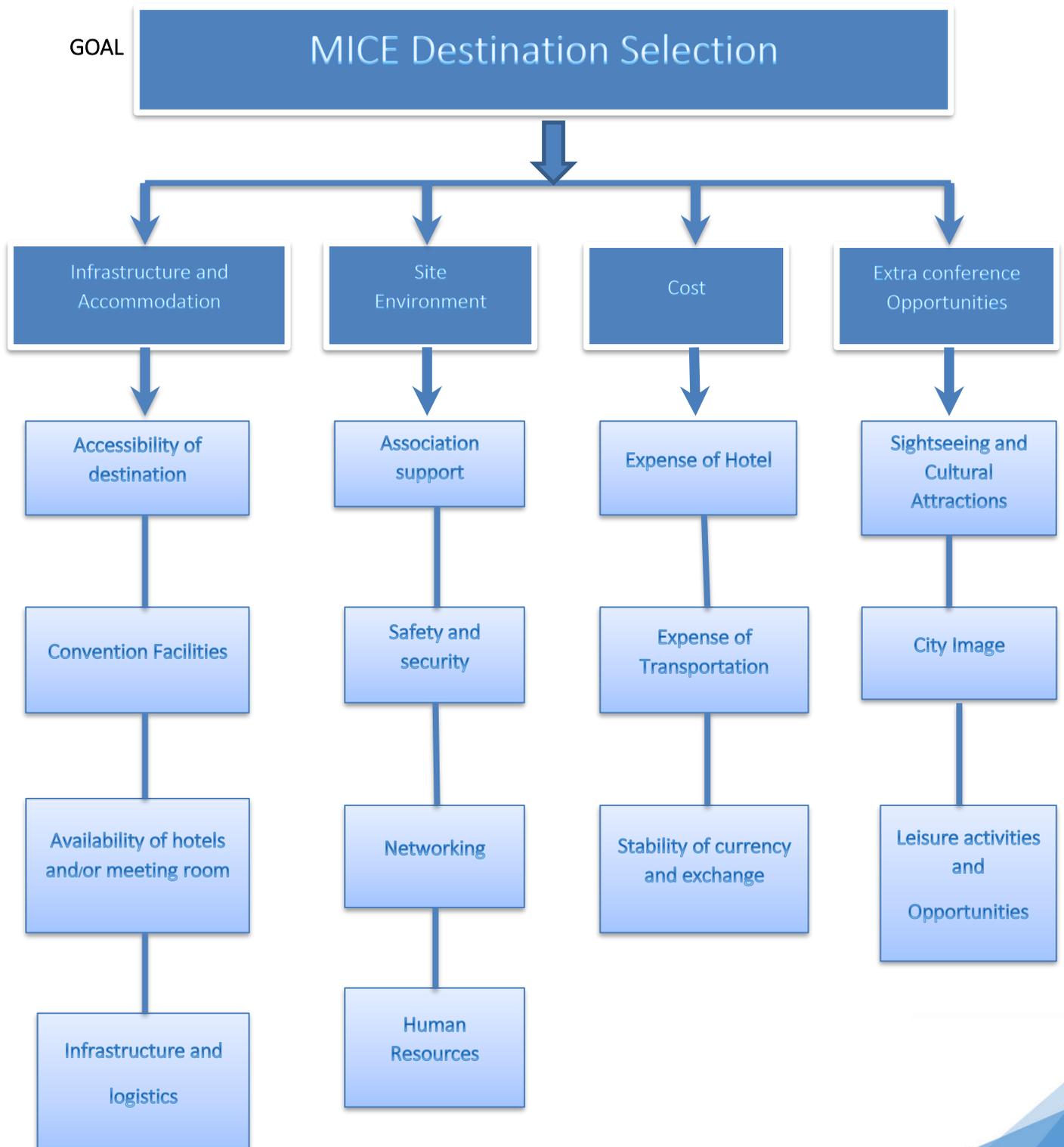
Enhanced MICE destination selection process: A Conceptual Model

A conceptual model of the MICE destination selection process (Figure 1) that illustrates the influence of these site-selection factors, A simple three-level hierarchical structure is first constructed. Based on reviewing the literature on convention site selection, a proposed hierarchy is constructed as figure 1. The highest level of the hierarchy is the overall goal. Under the overall goal, the second level represents the criteria (i.e., factors) affecting MICE destination selection, including Infrastructure and Accommodation, Site environment, Cost and Extra conference Opportunities. Various sets of subcriteria (i.e., attributes) associated with each factor in the second level are linked to the third level.

As seen in figure 1, there are 16 attributes in total in the third level. The Infrastructure and Accommodation factor consists of four attributes (1. Accessibility of destination 2. Convention Facilities 3. Availability of hotels and/or meeting room 4. Infrastructure and logistics). The site

environment factor consists of four attributes (1. Association Support 2. Safety and security 3. Climate 4.Human resource). The Cost factor consists of three attributes (1.Expense of Hotel 2.Expense of Transportation 3.Stability of currency and exchange). Finally,The Extra conference Opportunities factor consists of three attributes (1.Sightseeing and Cultural Attractions 2.City Image 3.Leisure activities and Opportunities)

Figure 1. THE HIERARCHY OF DESTINATION SELECTION



Infrastructure and Accommodation

- *Accessibility of destination* Attendees are concerned with accessibility because it is strongly correlated with traveling cost. Less accessible destinations tend to require attendees to travel for a long time via multiple transportation modes. A destination must be able to serve as many destinations as possible; therefore a great amount of airlines serving the local airport is essential for easy access to the destination. Also, it is essential that the primary mode of transportation accessing the destination is by air followed by railway and road. How often the destination is served by a transportation mode is an important issue as well, since it has to be easy to get to on a regular and frequent basis. (SCHÜTTER,2010)

- *Convention Facilities* It is generally argued that convention venues and facilities are regarded as the key site selection factors for holding international events (Montgomery & Strick, 1995; Upchurch, Jeong, Clements, & Jung, 1999).

- *Availability of hotels and/or meeting room* The hotel infrastructure in a meeting destination should be vast and diverse ranging from small inns to five stars hotels. These should also vary in their size and price range in order to accommodate all sorts of meetings and budgets. (SCHÜTTER,2010)

- *Infrastructure and logistics* According to the literature, ground transportation is regarded as a major site selection criterion for many corporations, associations, and meeting planners (Montgomery & Strick, 1995; Upchurch et al., 1999). With regard to public transportation, although the development of public transportation is a large project and requires a lot of investment, the Thai government needs to invest in this important infrastructure. Public transportation projects, such as bus, sky train, and subway systems, should be primary concerns and need serious attention from the government. This investment is needed to boost the country's economy, encourage foreign investment, and to benefit the social welfare of local residents. Efficient and adequate transportation would not only strengthen Thailand's economy and investment in the long term, but would also support the expansion of the tourism and MICE industries. (Aswin et al ,2009)

Site environment factors have been a growing concern in attendance decision as attendees are well aware of the impact of natural disasters, virus outbreaks, terrorism threats, and local violence. The aforementioned attributes of site environment have been known to affect destination image as well (Beerli & Martin, 2004).

- *Association support* Due to the strong competition in the region, cooperation among stakeholders is needed to enhance the competence and competitiveness of the industry (Aswin et al,2009). As a fragmented industry, there is a wide range of key players in the MICE industry, thus the scope of cooperation appears to be a challenge in coordinating the activities to provide a quality product that meets the needs of organizers and delegates. In particular, cooperation at both national and regional/local levels should be encouraged (Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, 2003).

- *Safety and security of destination* Tourism, including the meeting and convention industry, is especially vulnerable to the negative effects of safety and security concerns since it is heavily

dependent on people's perception of a destination (Campiranon, 2007; Fletcher & Morakabati, 2008). A destination that has very few strikes, especially in the transportation sector and energy supply sector, can be more successful than others since they are more stable and therefore more reliable. A destination has to have a level of social security if it wants to be successful within the meeting industry. (SCHÜTTER,2010)

- *Networking* A further motivation dimension which has been widely confirmed is networking. The conceptual framework outlined by Witt et al. (1995) suggests that networking is an important dimension, as does that of Oppermann and Chon (1997). They suggest that personal interaction with other likeminded people, keeping up with the changes in their field and learning new skills are all part of networking, although they term their factor 'Association/Conference Factors' (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). It is clear that networking plays an important role in the decision to attend an association conference and it may be argued that any framework intending to reflect the association conference attendance decision-making process should include reference to networking.

- *Human Resources* In a highly competitive market, human resources are ultimately crucial to sustaining the success of the industry, despite changing market conditions (Torraco & Swanson, 1995 cited in Dwyer & Mistilis, 1999). To prosper in the industry and compete with other leading destinations, the development of human resources in Thailand's MICE industry needs serious attention (Aswin et al,2009). Meetings and conventions are a complex business requiring staff skilled in areas such as management, marketing, budgeting, negotiation, interpersonal communication, and IT (Dwyer & Mistilis, 1999; MacLaurin, 2002; Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999). Academics suggest that developing sophisticated training and career development programs to provide staff with various skills may be important for the development of human resources in the MICE industry (Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999). All of the programs should be designed on the basis of understanding the MICE industry, its trends, and industry needs (MacLaurin, 2002).

Cost The cost concept presented by Var et al (1985). further stated that living expenses (hotels, meals, etc.) and air/ground transportation costs should be included in the costs of attending a meeting and that the "value of the time" involved in making the trip was also an important cost. One further dimension that is likely to figure in the attendance decision is the cost factor. This is of particular relevance to the association market, as delegates are often required to contribute to their attendance, or even to entirely finance their attendance, where not required to attend by their employer. Oppermann and Chon (1997) include cost as part of the personal/business dimension and relate this to the financial status of the delegate – funding is highlighted as an important part of the decision to attend.

- *Expense of Hotel* The finding from costs attribute shows the hotel cost (rate) is the most important attribute while Chacko and Fenich (2000) observe that airfare is highly regarded among the costs attributes.

- *Expense of Transportation* Transportation expenses are a subset of travel expenses, which are all costs associated with business travel, such as taxi fare, fuel, parking fees, lodging, meals,

tips, and cleaning and shipping. Transportation expenses are narrower in that they refer only to the use of or cost of maintaining a car used for business, or transport by rail, air, bus, taxi or any other means of conveyance for business purposes.

- *Stability of currency and exchange* Indeed, the political stability of the host nation is increasingly important as a site selection criterion for international MICE organizations (Weber & Ladkin, 2004). Stability and security are must haves for any leading meeting industry destination; stability in terms of economy, politics, currency as well as society.

Extra conference Opportunities Oppermann and Chon (1997) contended that extra convention opportunities, including shopping, local attractions, and recreational activities, have been appealing to attendees. Given that most attendance is funded by their organizations, attendees and or their spouses prefer to participate in conventions that offer more extra convention opportunities.

- *Sightseeing and Cultural Attractions* A destination which is rich in cultural offers can have great advantages in terms of attractiveness. Decision makers of meetings and events tend to look for a destination that can offer an attractive cultural background. For instance, leisure activities can motivate people attending an association event. People sitting inside the whole day listening to presentations want to enjoy and relax in the evening. Off-site events are often a big part of the conference and organizers seek appealing locations and activities to provide. Therefore, a destination needs to offer a culturally exceptional experience that is unique to the destination. (SCHÜTTER,2010)

- *City Image* City image is a sensual and spiritual remain of city life over people. People can shape their environment in definable and visible way. Perceiving city experience over and over in symbolic way and giving a new form to the city by using this experience is called “the city image” (Gölhan, 1997). It has been acknowledged that image perceptions will determine eventual destination choice (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991), and, for most destinations, the success or failure of the tourism industry is based on images held by potential visitors and how these images are managed (Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002).

- *Leisure activities and Opportunities* Severt, Wang, Chen, and Breiter (2007) also uncovered two factors that relate to the location of a conference, which they term ‘activities and opportunities’ and ‘convenience of the conference’. The activities and opportunities factor includes travel opportunities and visiting friends and relatives, whilst the convenience of the conference factor has variables such as reasonable travel time to conference and distance to conference loading on it.

Conclusion

The Hierarchy of MICE Destination Selection can be used to help understand which factors are important to consider when a destination wants to become a major competitor on the international meeting industry market. When looking at the structure and the most important parties involved in the meeting industry. However, all parties can use these factors as a guideline and possibly a first step to analyse one's destination to find out any room for improvements.

The findings of this study strengthen the destination management organizations (DMOs) in explaining their meeting attractiveness within the context of hosting more meetings to their cities.

For governments and authorities, this article can help to look at the meeting industry more carefully and consider it as a serious economic driver for a destination or city. With their support, the industry can prosper and will have beneficial impacts on the local economy and its residents. Convention bureaus can have a major effect on the success of a destination. They can represent the destination on the right trade fairs, design the right marketing campaigns and activities, and create an extensive knowledge about the industry. Recognizing the importance of a convention bureau will help destinations to be able to compete with the top meeting industry destinations.

Buyers can use this article as a guideline or even checklist when looking for a destination for their upcoming events and meetings. Suppliers can use these factors to compare them to the destination where they are located in and analyse their destination regarding its strengths and weaknesses and then identify opportunities and threats. These findings can be a great assistance for many destinations to improve their local meeting industry and produce a step by step plan of how to lead the destination to become successful and a major player on the global meeting industry market.

Due to limited time and resources, further research is recommended especially when a destination wants to make improvements to its meeting industry offers and services. Very often feasibility studies are necessary to be carried out. It is recommended that this paper be used by destinations that already record certain meeting industry movements in their destination and actively seek advice in how to develop this industry and become a competitor on the global market.

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The Readiness of Seminar Rooms in the Hotels to Support Songkhla MICE City

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Abstract

MICE industry is growing in importance worldwide. The Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau through the Project MICE city identify five cities in Thailand as MICE city. Hatyai in Songkhla though not part of the five cities has a lot of potential to become MICE city. Hotel business has been known to support the MICE industry. We therefore test the readiness of hotels in HatYai to support Songkhla MICE city. We used qualitative research method for this study by interviewing managers of three four star hotels in HatYai. The interview questions were developed from the TCEB MICE venue standard and the interview recorded and analyzed. The result showed that Hotel in Hat Yai are ready to host a MICE event or the declaration of HatYai as Songkhla MICE city.

Keywords: MICE, MICE city, MICE venue standard, TCEB, HatYai, Songkhla MICE city

Introduction

The MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition) industry is increasingly becoming very important to the economic development of countries and it causes direct income benefit to businesses and communities (Cameron, 2009). MICE industry can also promote the exchange of knowledge, the exchange of academic research, technology transfer, as well as technological advances including assisting in social development and culture and human resources development of the country (Cameron, 2009). The global MICE industry generated revenue of \$752 billion in 2016, and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 7.5% to reach \$1,245 billion by 2023 (Yash Doshi,2018).

Therefore, in order to promote Thailand as the destination for international business meeting, incentive travel, conventions and exhibitions, the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) was created in 2002 and started operating in 2004. The TCEB has recognized five cities in the country namely; Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Pattaya, Phuket and Khon Kaen as MICE cities through its project MICE City. These five cities are also the top tourism destinations in the country. We therefore test the readiness of HatYai City in Songkhla province of Thailand to become a MICE city since it is also a tourist destination. Hatyai city also shares border with Malaysia and receives lot of tourist every year. It is also a big economic city of Southern Thailand and the center of trade, education, transportation and the medical services of the South. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first research to test the readiness of Hatyai city in Songkhla to become a MICE city.

Literature Review

MICE city is defined as a city with the capacity and availability of destination for MICE tourism. The city has the potential to support MICE activities in four segments which include meeting, incentives conventions and exhibitions as well as to support the participants in each category (Dudsade et al., 2015). The potential of a city to host MICE events depends of many factors. The city must have modernized transportation infrastructure properly linked with the city and the surrounding environment should support the MICE event nationally and internationally (Xin, 2008). Tan Cheong Su (2007) found that the city of destination for the MICE industry must have facilities that can accommodate MICE activities center, conferences and exhibition. It should be a center of trade and investment (Jaeho & Narui, 2012) and have enough quantity and quality of venues and facilities to accommodate the MICE industry (Li-Ting & Zheng, 2012).

The importance of security and stability in a MICE city cannot be overemphasized. The TCEB also initiated MICE Security and Management System standard known as TISI 22300 and obtained some other ISO standards to strengthen the industry and provide assurance to the global marketplace that Thailand is indeed ready to host international standard events (TCEB, 2013). The city should also have good image and attractive tourist destinations for the participant to take part in tourism activities before and after the events (Tan Cheong Su, 2007, Natthakarn, 2009). Sanjay and Aliana (2007) stated that there should be availability of MICE professionals who have the skills to provide quality services and coverage and help in the planning for the visitors

Hatyai city in Songkhla province has a good transportation in Southern Thailand. It has international airport, train, private and public transport available for visitors traveling from the airport to their destination. In regard to amenities and attractions, there are more than 70 hotel accommodations available for both Thai and foreign tourists. Meeting Service in Hat Yai, Songkhla have The 60th Anniversary of His Majesty the King's Accession to the Throne International Convention Center which is the largest and most modern international convention center in the South of Thailand. There are also many hotels that can accommodate meetings. In terms of security, there are 3 checkpoints which include Sadao checkpoint, Padang Besar checkpoint and Prakob checkpoint. Hat Yai district, Songkhla province has continued to grow in terms of infrastructure, safety, public utility system, and tourist attractions. We therefore test the readiness of the hotels in Hat Yai to host MICE events.

The hotel business is a key component that affects the success of MICE industry. This is because participants of seminars traveling from one country to another will need rooms to stay during the period of the MICE events also the hotel can be the venue of the seminars, conventions, exhibitions or meetings (Nopparat, 2017).

Methodology

The Research of “The readiness of hotels in organizing seminars to supporting Songkhla MICE city” was undertaken by qualitative research technique. We interviewed three four star hotel managers in Hatyai. The interview questions were based on the Thailand MICE Venue Standard developed by Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB). The questions on the readiness of the hotel to host MICE events were divided into three parts; readiness of the physical conditions, technical conditions and services and management. A face to face interview was conducted and the interview was recorded for analysis.

Result

We present the transcription of some of the interview questions below.

The interview question: What plan do you have to prepare your hotel to support a MICE city?

“Technology, if customer needs more Equipment technology we can find to support and Equipment technology in our hotels is very modern, no matter what the customer wants we will find almost everything, because the next time will come again. And our hotel we have plan to develop for support customer and flexible even more. Both of the budget or other things. The hotel received the support of government, awards and various standards.” First interviewee

“We're now several agencies came to the meeting to give a MICE City hotel is trying to be. We received the Thailand MICE Venue Standard room almost every year, and to cooperate in the inspection.” Second interviewee

“Since the project Thailand MICE Venue Standard joined since the first year. We went through the assessment criteria of last year, have been TCEB Standard we get 2 years and we have to work in 9th Coach the. Coaches Program for MICE Industry on 20-21 April know that TCEB will encourage the Songkhla is MICE City we prepare that point.” Third interviewee

The interview question: In your view if the Songkhla Province becomes a MICE City, what do you think it will impact your hotel?

“I think it will have advantage for hotels because have a many customers will be using the service increased.” First interviewee

“I think have good effects because everything we wanted to make the economy be better.” Second interviewee

“I think the negative side should be not, it would be positive. But now it depends on how the hotel and convention center with big company in will be able to accommodate MICE form to apply was

much less. At least make the economy in terms of customers to come in terms of MICE whether Thai customers or is that a foreigner.” Third interviewee

One of the questions on venue standard is: Your seminar room can be change or flexible to customer needs?

“Type of rooms we can change and flexible for our customer needs be it classroom, theater, cocktail, and banquet.” First interviewee

“Is the point of our service, which we can modify and flexible to meet the needs of customers. Meeting, Seminar each unit is different, the field contact didn't come, who came to not contact, which communicate it sometimes does not. In my heart, like the contact you want classroom we tidy up, but the practice tells change is a U shape. We must transform the modification to the customer in a timely manner.” Second interviewee

“Type of room can be adjusted according to customer requirements can break the partition wall as far as the room can accommodate in each room, whether as a U shape, I shape, Classroom, Theater, and Banquet round tables, each of which form it. Capacity will not be equal.” Third interviewee

On the technological condition we asked questions like; Do you have audio system in your hotel?

“We have the projector is equipped with LED screens in every room, every inch LCD Projector with a picture and a meeting room to meeting room picture page lift. To see what kind of a meeting.” First interviewee

“Stereo mic symposium. Projector is ready We have named our “Best Audio”.” Second interviewee

“The system is controlled by the hotel to the Engineering control stand by a one person, per one job controlling the entire imaging system, lights and sound.” Third interviewee

One the service and management we asked questions like; In your hotel, how do you develop and improve skills of employees?

“We have training employees every month. Conference of Chief each department meeting in service training Let’s take a banquet waiter lot. It focuses mainly on the staff of the hotel before but if it’s not enough to outsource to external accessories.” First interviewee

“The General Manager hired the company to staff training. We have training always.” Second interviewee

“Training digest employees each department every month, a system of measuring KPI each function of the hotel, which are the main policies of the office. Each employee must be in both English and Thai. The speakers from the internal and external training.” Third interviewee

Conclusion

In conclusion, Hat Yai hotels are ready to host a MICE event and ready to support Songkhla as a MICE city. Some of the hotels already comply with the TCEB MICE venue standard.

“...We received the Thailand MICE Venue Standard room almost every year, and to cooperate in the inspection.” Second interviewee

“Since the project Thailand MICE Venue Standard joined since the first year. We went through the assessment criteria of last year, have been TCEB Standard we get 2 years...” Third interviewee

The hotels also have facilities to support MICE events. The three interviewees all said similar things when asked “Do you have seminar room material and equipment services in your hotel?”

“Equipment inside the seminars room of the hotel itself does not outsource it.” Third interviewee

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The Efficiency of Language Communication for MICE Industry

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Extended Abstract

The growth of tourism in Thailand results from the increase number of travelers which generates revenue for the countries economic development. Besides, MICE business is one of the major tourism sectors that gains 3 – 4 times higher revenues than other leisure travelers. The large number of MICE travelers who come to Thailand for the purpose of meetings, conventions or trade shows. Then, the business-sector should develop and become more efficient in Language communication. On the other side, all the hotels expressed more difficulties arise from departments other than MICE. The convention visitor bureau (CVB) have recognized an opportunity for further improvement in the capabilities of people currently in the industry especially young individuals with potential. The bureau believes that reaching out to students thus can ultimately enhance the complete edge of Thailand's MICE industry to a global level. Finally, the customers and the industry as a whole may consider a differentiation language program to include the full spectrum of the employees involved.

Keywords: MICE, Events, Language, Efficiency, Communication

Introduction

Tourism accounts for the highest financial contribution and plays what is considered a significant role within the hospitality Industry, it also accounts in large, for many countries GDP. It continues to enjoy the highest growth rate among other industries. Moreover, it tends to have a stable growth rate from the increasing revenue within the hospitality industry and therefore leads to a stronger economy. According to UNWTO (World Tourism Organization), the numbers of tourists have continued to increase every year since 1980 and it is estimated to reach 1.9 billion in 2040.

The Tourism Industry has the ability to generate more revenue from tourists by using local resources to increase the employment rate and development of public utilities in many areas. This has been the case since 1960, when The Tourism Authority of Thailand was first established. International tourism has made a mega impact on the Thai economy. More than 145 million tourists from China, Malaysia, Germany, Japan, United Kingdom, Russia, South Korea, Australia and France. As a direct result, the tourism industry in Thailand has become one of the major

priorities of the government. Even through an economy crisis, the tourism industry is able to support the economic system. (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2017)

Similarly, the MICE Industry can also generate income as a part of the hospitality industry. MICE: Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions or Events. The MICE Industry is both large and diverse by its nature and consists of organizers and suppliers engaging in the development and delivery of meetings, conferences, exhibitions and other relating events held to achieve a range of professional, business, cultural or academic objectives. (IBTM world, 2018)

The Efficiency of Language for Communication is of paramount importance within the MICE industry. Language impacts the daily lives of members of every race, creed and religion of the world. Language helps express our feelings and quires to the world.

Pattaya is a city located within The Eastern Economic Corridor in Thailand. Pattaya, associated with sea, sun and beachside fun, with a vibrant nightlife has evolved as another “City of MICE” due in no small part to its incredible variety of accommodations to fit all budgets. The diverse assortment of locations for creative meetings, incentives and events, also, three convenient and flexible exhibition centers designed with Thailand’s distinctive culture in mind. (Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, 2017)

In parallel, Pattaya has many venues and convention halls; such as (1) Nongnuch International Convention and Exhibition (NICE), one of the largest exhibition venues in eastern Thailand; and (2) Pattaya Exhibition and Convention Hall (PEACH) (3) Eastern National Sports Training Center occupying more than 6,000 square meters of land and has a capacity to accommodate more than 6,000 people.

As a consequence, all the writers have focused on the efficiency of language communication for MICE Industry. Wherewith communication is crucial to contact and negotiate with all exhibitors and participants, at all levels.

Literature Review and Methodology

The origin of meetings is traceable back to the beginning of recorded history has ranged from discussions about hunting plans to planning wartime defenses. Since then, its development has mainly been possible though the establishment of trade, fraternal or religious associations and advancements in transportation systems. In the US, the rise of association activities in the early 1900s led to the creation of its first convention bureau. The MICE industry has grown to become one of the most important contributors to travel and tourism industry revenue and national GDP though out the world. MICE has a number of definitions varying on the source and, in fact, proves to be somewhat problematic when examining the various ideas originating from varying sources. MICE includes 4 key categories: Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions. (Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, 2011)

Although, as has been stated, business travel and leisure travel share many facilities and services, the business travel sector depends, on their effective functioning, on a considerable number of stakeholders whose role is concerned largely or exclusively with providing the facilities

and services for this market. For the main buyers, intermediaries and suppliers for each of the business travel sectors will be identified, and their roles examined in detail

Table 1: Players in the business travel market

Business Travel Sector	Buyers	Intermediaries	Suppliers
Individual business travel	Corporate sector and other types of organization (voluntary sector, government bodies, etc.) Possibly through their own: - In-house travel managers/ travel coordinators - Secretaries/PAs	Business/corporate travel agencies Travel management companies Possibly through: - In-house - Dedicated online booking services	Transport providers Accommodations and catering operators Leisure and recreation suppliers
Meetings	Corporate sector Governmental sector - Local - Regional - National - Intergovernmental Associations - Professional - Trade - Fraternal - Religious, etc. Possibly through their own: - In-house travel managers - In-house conference organizers - Secretaries/PAs	Professional conference organizers/ meeting planners Venue-finding agencies Production companies Destination Management companies /ground handles Specialist marketing consortia Destination marketing organizations	Transport provides Accommodation and catering operators Leisure and recreation suppliers Conference centers Management training centers Hotels' meeting facilities Universities Unusual venues Audiovisual venues Telecommunications companies Interpreters
Incentive Travel	Corporate sector, possibly through: - In-house travel managers - In-house conference organizers	Incentive travel houses Business travel agencies Destination management companies/ground handlers Specialist marketing consortia Destination Marketing organizations	
Exhibitions	Manufactures and service provides	Exhibition organizer Exhibition contractors	Transport Providers Accommodations and catering operators

Business Travel Sector	Buyers	Intermediaries	Suppliers
		Destination marketing organizations	Leisure and recreation suppliers Exhibition centers Stand contractor
Corporate hospitality	Corporate sector	Corporate hospitality agents PR companies Event management companies	Marquee contractors Caterers Historic and unusual venues Sporting/ cultural events promoters Activity operators

Source: Davison and Cope, 2003

MICE is an acronym in English for meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions. It can define it as business tourism, tourism for meetings, congresses and exhibitions. The origin of this term goes back to Thomas Cook in 1841, he organized the transportation of a group of 540 people who were going to the annual congress of the Anti-Alcohol Association (Thomas Cook, 2018)

Another main point of the topic is communication – Communication is the process by which we use signs, symbols and behaviors to exchange information and create meaning. Never before has it been as easy to communicate with others, given the profusion of digital communication media and devices. Communication has many characteristics, describing the communication process requires more than just mapping out how it takes place. We also need to catalog its important features. In this section there are 6 topics:

1. **Communication relies on multiple channels:** some topics are channel-rich contexts – environment that incorporate multiple communication channels at once. Other situations are channel-lean contexts – environments that use relatively fewer channels. An example is tweeting, which relies on text alone; you don't experience a person's voice or gestures when he or she communicates with you on Twitter.

2. **Communication passes through perceptual filters:** anything put through a filter – such as air, water, or light – comes out a little bit differently than it went in. The same happens when we communicate: what one person says is not always exactly what the other person hears.

3. **People give communication its meaning:** when we write or speak, we choose our words deliberately so that we can say what we mean. A word is a symbol, or representation of an idea, but the word itself isn't the idea or the meaning. The meaning of the words and many other forms of communication comes from the people and groups who use them.

4. **Communication has literal meaning and relational implications:** nearly every verbal statement has a content dimension, or the literal information that the communicator is communicating.

5. **Communication sends messages, whether intentional or unintentional:** much of what we communicate to others is deliberate. When you set up a job interview, for instance,

you do so intentionally, having thought about why you want the job and how you will respond to the interviewer's questions.

6. **Communication is governed by rules:** Rules tell us what behaviors are required, preferred, or prohibited in various social contexts. Some rules for communication are explicit rules, meaning that someone has clearly articulated them. In contrast, many communication rules are implicit rules – rules that almost everyone in a certain social group knows and follows, even though no one has formally articulated them.

Five types of communication

Communication comprises of five basic types: intrapersonal, interpersonal, small group, public and mass. The types differ primarily with respect to the size of the audience, but they also call for different communication skills.

1. **Intrapersonal Communication** The form of communication that includes the smallest audience is intrapersonal communication, the communication you have with yourself. When you mentally remind yourself to do something, or rehearse an upcoming conversation in your mind, thus engaging in intrapersonal communication.

2. **Interpersonal Communication** when you exchange instant messages with a friend, talk on the phone, or face to face with your supervisor/ customer, you are engaging in interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is communication that occurs between two people in the context of their ongoing relationship, and research indicates that it is the most common form of communication we enact.

3. **Small Group Communication** almost all of this is interacting in small groups of people. Such as sports teams, study groups, organizational departments, and teams of students working on a class project. When we communicate with groups of about 3 to 20 people, we're engaging in small group communication.

4. **Public Communication** occurs when we speak or write to an audience that is larger than a small group. Such as a welcome speech at a convention for your fraternity or sorority or write a column for the convention's newsletter, you are engaging in public communication.

5. **Mass Communication** – communication delivered to a large audience is considered public communication unless it is being transmitted via electronic or print media, such as magazines, television, newspaper, blog, radio, and websites. The best example is social media. Communication that is transmitted by such media is considered mass communication. (Floyd, 2011)

Results

A qualitative survey was carried out by the staff of the Languages Department from Dusit Thani College to ascertain from the events management teams perspective on the use of languages in the MICE industry. Eight of the 10 hotels that were invited to participate in the survey graciously invited our team to their premises to assist in establishing their perspectives.

The management of all the hotels that were surveyed had a very good proficiency of English and an excellent understanding of the importance of the use of languages in order to perform their duties. All interviews for MICE positions in all of the hotels are carried out in English and all applicants are required to take an English test comprising of both written and spoken assessments in all of the hotels.

The general consensus was that although English is the most common language used to conduct business within the industry, there is also an increasing demand for the use of other languages. The principle ones being, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Russian. Only one of the hotels conceded that they were losing international business due to the lack of proficiency whereas the others were confident that they were in a position to bid for overseas contracts. One of the two hotels which did not participate in the survey apologized for not taking part; this was due to the fact that there was no one available to conduct an interview in English.

- 2 of the participating hotels have an in house English teacher. Their training programme is updated by using feedback from clients each month for both.
- 1 hotel runs a weekly training programme for key staff with an English language instructor from a local language center.
- 1 hotel runs a daily online language training course for all personnel who express an eagerness to improve their language proficiency. (This replaced a compulsory system)
- 1 hotel has a monthly training programme for Line staff (housekeeping-pool attendants etc.)
- 1 hotel runs an in house training programme for ALL staff, an external class for all management.

They also have a “Word of the Day” in various languages posted where staff can see, in the hope that this will improve basic communication with guests. They have Chinese, Japanese and Korean members of staff, who also teach staff about cultural differences of these countries.

- 1 hotel has a training manager who teaches basic English twice a week to all staff. They are also considering a specific course in Chinese as many of their clients are Chinese.

All the hotels believe that recruiting expat interns especially Japanese, Chinese and Korean would be extremely beneficial but find it difficult as most internees would prefer to intern in Bangkok, also visa requirements can be an issue.

The multi-national hotels have a distinct advantage over the local brand simply because of the fact that they have the resources of a global office network which can be used to communicate with all potential clients using native speakers to make one-on-one calls.

Discussion

Difficulties experienced due to a lack of foreign language skills.

All of the hotels expressed that most difficulties arise from departments other than MICE, such as housekeeping and F&B departments. Also there can be communication problems with technical terms for event set-ups.

When asked if further investment should be made in language training in these areas they all agreed. However, there is a reluctance to invest in this demographic as it has a large turnover of staff and the return of the investment is minimal.

Innovation

Wireless restaurant table systems. Tablet ordering systems, enhance guest experience. They allow the guests to browse a well presented menu which includes graphic food and beverage photographs, recommendations and promotions. This can be done immediately the guests are seated at their table. Thus, avoiding a sometimes long wait. The system also eliminates the possibility of any misunderstanding between the guest and server by increasing the accuracy of the order. Many of these systems provide a swipe and pay facility which not only gives the guest control but eliminates embarrassing communicative situations.

However, technology should not be a replacement for personal quality service, as we know Thailand prides itself on its Gracious Hospitality Culture. Anticipating the needs of customers and offering personal attention is always appreciated. Rather, technology should enhance efficiency and contribute to improving guest experience.

Therefore it is essential that staff have an ability to communicate with guests rather than shying away from a situation which can often lead to customer frustration.

Training

In differentiated classrooms, teachers begin where students are, not the front of a curriculum guide. They accept and build upon the premise that learners differ in important ways. The teachers proactively plan varied approaches to what the students need to learn, how they will learn it and or how they will show what they have learned in order to increase the likelihood that each student will learn as much as they can , as efficiently as possible.

“Students who may be struggling will need a more concrete assignment, while students whose readiness levels are the highest need more abstract assignments. Some students need both. A teacher can organize the same questions and the same goals, but although the tasks may be different for the students of a lower level, they still must be respectful tasks”. Don’t just give them a worksheet if the other students are making a movie. Instead, they could make a video of an advertisement or a digital poster using their new vocabulary. It is critical to learn student different interests, learning profiles, and readiness levels. (Carol, 2014)

“In a differentiated classroom, no student is left behind, and advance students don’t have to wait for the slower ones before they can move on”. (Deborah, 2006)

Conclusions

TCEB has recognized an opportunity for further improvement in the capabilities of people currently in the industry especially young individuals with potential. The bureau believes that reaching out to students thus can ultimately enhance the complete edge of Thailand’s MICE industry to a global level.

From the information gathered from our interviews with the hotel MICE managers in the Pattaya area, and the difficulties they encounter as a lack of foreign language skills, particularly in other departments, such as housekeeping, food and beverage and technical events set-up. In the opinion of The Dusit Thani College in Language Department, it may be advantageous to hotel management, customers, and the industry as a whole to consider a differentiation language programme to include the full spectrum of the employees involved.

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The Rise of Artificial Intelligence and the Fall of Employment in the Event Industry

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Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Technology, Event, Organizer, Employment, Displacement

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) will soon revolutionize the event industry, and fewer human employees will be needed to work in the event organizing field (Groot, 2017). Many types of events, such as meeting, incentive, convention, and exhibition, have traditionally been slow to adapt to their changing environment, specifically the adaption of new technologies, with many event organizers believing that their industry is all about “high touch,” not so much about “high tech” (Pearlman & Gates, 2010). Even though some progressive event organizers have already successfully utilized AI to hold meetings and special events – with less human help, most event organizers do not yet have a clear understanding of what AI is and how it may be employed to address business needs. That is about to change. Undeniable, AI is becoming increasingly more relevant in these times of changes and has already disrupted many other industries displacing humans in communication, entertainment, financial services, healthcare, logistics, marketing, music, retail, and technology industries; for instance (PwC, 2017). Within the event industry, the boundary of AI applications seems limitless ranging from setting up efficient event webpage copy, to producing an exclusive visual identity for the event, to ensuring face recognition for attendee identification, to enhancing the event translation, to gaining access to the mass communication option, and many more (“This is How AI”, 2018). Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to create awareness among employees in the event industry that, due to the technology advancement of artificial intelligence, their jobs, like many others, are as well at stake. The scope of this paper discusses the domains of professional event organizers’ works, the rapid development and revolution of AI despite the unawareness of the coming displacement situation in the event industry, and how AI can help.

The Domains of Professional Event Organizers’ Works

Events bring people together to share some sort of experience and produce a measurable outcome. Any type of event is held for a reason, and once an event is initiated, it needs to be organized, whether it is an anniversary, a charity fundraiser, a civic celebration, a company picnic, a convention event, a corporate product introduction, an exhibition, a family reunion, a grand opening, a hospitality reception, an incentive program, a sports event, or a wedding. Event organizing is the integrated implementation of all the logistical and operational necessities of an event, depended on the scope of event elements incorporated into the event design. It is the job of the professional event organizers to put together and manage that event experience (Silvers, 2012). An event organizer is, no doubt, an exceedingly complex profession. Event budget, quality,

scope, and time, as well as the expectations of the event stakeholders including clients, hosts, sponsors, exhibitors, visitors, and others, need to be managed by event organizers. They also have to be mindful of administrative affairs, design parameters, legal issues, logistical matters, marketing implications, and risk management ramifications. To put in simple, each event organized, event organizers are required to make hundreds or even thousands of decisions, and have to handle the details that emerge from those decisions. (Silvers, 2012).

There are many ways to approach the complexity of organizing an event. To help professional event organizers making certain that attention is given to the whole scope of the event, within the budget and time limit, and that it is structured and thorough, a coalition of experts in event management have devised the Event Management Body of Knowledge – EMBOK Model. This model includes a definition of the core values, phases, processes, and domains. It is these domains that provide a comprehensive and systematic approach to the responsibilities associated with all types of professional event organizers. The domains are made up of five areas of management and can be subdivided into seven classes as shown below:

Administration	Design	Marketing	Operations	Risk
financial	content	plan	Attendee	compliance
human resources	theme	materials	Communications	decisions
information	program	merchandise	Infrastructure	emergency
procurement	environment	promotions	Logistics	health and safety
stakeholders	production	public relations	Participants	insurance
systems	entertainment	sales	Site	legal
time	food and beverage	sponsorship (donor)	technical production	security

(EMBOK Model, 2018)

Even after structured, these domains or scopes are still very difficult for event organizers to make certain that attention is wholly given to. One of the biggest challenges for event organizing companies, even before managing the event itself, is to manage employees. Central to the employee planning is introspectiveness of three different forms of flexibility: functional, numerical, and temporal. In the ideal situation, event organizing companies would always prefer the perfect number of employees, providing numerical flexibility; to be available when they are required, providing temporal flexibility; in order to satisfy customer wants and needs, providing functional flexibility. In reality, this perfectly just-in-time approach to employee management is rarely totally achievable. A well-trained, well-rounded, highly motivated, and perfectly reliable employees who can deploy generic skills in a wide variety of contexts and situations would take time to develop. Besides event organizing companies, operating in increasingly internationalized and extremely competitive markets, rarely have a budget for this. Equally, these highly trained employees are

unlikely to be able to bear the insecurity and anti-social nature of unpredictable working hours and therefore earnings. The balance between securing the perfect employees and the budget of doing so seldom happens (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2017).

All of the hardship putting into employee management, however, suddenly becomes pointless when considering what Julia Rutherford Silvers (2012, p.1), an owner of a professional event organizing company, discussed. She stated that to a regular attendee showing up at an event, everything from decorations to food to tents to music, is usually already set and ready to use without realization of organizing team even being there. In other words, to someone not involved in the world of event organizers, attending an event operated by humans or AI, should not make any difference in term of experience. So, what the difference does it make if all event employees are replaced by an AI system?

The Rapid Development and Revolution: The Unawareness of the Coming Displacement Situation

In the eyes of event organizers, the idea of being displaced by an AI system just seems unimaginable. But what is AI, really? And how soon will it fully hit the job market? The idea of newer innovations replacing the old commons could be difficult to let in sometimes. Take a classic example of Jean-Baptiste Say, a famous 19th century French economist, who wrote in 1828 about the seemingly bizarre possibility of cars being used in place of horses (Braudel & Reynolds, 1992, p. 539).

Nevertheless... no machine will ever be able to perform what even the worst horses can – the service of carrying people and goods through the bustle and throng of a great city.

In his wildest imagination, Say could never have dreamed of cars being the main source of transportation. Two centuries is not exactly long by historical standard, and so just like a snap of fingers, horses were being displaced (Deahl, 2018; Huffman, 2018; Rajkomar, 2018).

In addition to the displacement situation, it is also important to mention that the length of time between technological inventions and their widespread, everyday use is continuously being reduced (Booker, 2017; Makridakis, 2017). It took two centuries from the time Thomas Newcomen devised a crude steam engine to pump water out of coal mines in 1712 to the time Henry Ford was able to launch the Model T, a reliable and affordable car, in October 1908 (“Henry Ford Biography”, 2017; “Thomas Newcomen Biography”, 2017). The length of time got shorter to about a century between the time Benjamin Franklin proved his electricity idea by conducting the famous kite experiment in 1752 to Thomas Edison invented the electric light bulb (“Who Discovered Electricity?”, 2017). And the length of time got even shorter to only a couple decades between the time the 30 tons Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer (ENIAC) was built in 1946 to the time personal computers (PC) were first introduced by IBM in 1981 (“A BRIEF COMPUTER HISTORY”, 2018). And when the first ever public mobile phone call was made from a 1.1Kg handheld device by Martin Cooper in 1973, it took only a decade for commercial mobile phone to be introduced to the public by Motorola in 1983 (Goodwin, 2017).

The development and revolution have become even more rapid when it comes the time for digital revolutions. Arthur (2017) stated that in the 70s and 80s, the first morphing of digital revolutions arrived with personal computational assistance – integrated circuits. With that, engineering companies could use computer-aided design programs, oil companies could discern strata and calculate the chance of oil, and warehouses could track inventories in real time. Then in the 90s and 2000s, the second morphing arrived with the connection of digital processes. Telephonic, fiber-optic, and satellite transmission got computers linked together into local and global networks. Offshoring took off. Production concentrated wherever was cheapest. As a result, the age-old importance of geographical locality had slowly vanished and modern globalization arrived.

Finally, from roughly the 2010s, the third morphing has arrived with cheap and ubiquitous sensors, but when they were meshed together into wireless networks, masses of data arose. As a result, what became notable was the development of intelligent algorithms, methods, and methodologies for recognizing things, collecting data, and using that data. These intelligent algorithms were put together by using masses of data to do what believed only humans could do – forming association. AI can now recognize complicated pixel patterns and able to translate them to communicate with humans; for example, an image of an event attendee can be formed into a particular pixel pattern, so when an AI “sees” this particular person, it “knows” who she or he is. Basically, intelligent algorithms are associations made possible by statistical methods using oceans of data. And so, digital assistants, digital language translation, face recognition, inductive inference, and voice recognition are no longer out of reach (Arthur, 2017; McIvor, 2013). Fast-forward to 2018, the breakthrough technologies of this year such as Artificial Embryos, Cloud-based AI, Google Assistant, and Smart Compose, which seemed like a pure science fiction not long ago, are available today (MIT Technology Review, 2018). Given these rapid and continuous developments, the big challenge is not only to predict the major artificial intelligence innovations, nor predict how they may affect the job market in the next decade, but also to create awareness of such potential displacement to employees in the event industry today, not to repeat Jean-Baptiste Say’s short-sightedness of power of innovations.

No Human Employees? AI Can Help

Attendees nowadays love accessing to digital experiences, especially those that can increase their face-to-face interactions (“This is How AI”, 2018). According to American Express Meetings & Events’ 2018 Global Meetings & Events Forecast (Jouaneh, 2018),

Technology is expected to continue to transform meetings and events. In 2018, we expect that technology will continue to make an impact on the overall end-to-end management of the delivery of meetings and events, and also on the attendee experience perspective. The ongoing evolution of mobile apps and hybrid meeting solutions, combined with the potential applications for newer technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI), have exciting implications for meeting owners and attendees alike. Modern attendees expect an online experience will be available to enhance their face-to-face experience and are eager

to deploy technologies that facilitate personal event attendance goals, such as networking and interacting more deeply with content.

Therefore, in order for event organizers to respond to attendees' expectation today, AI will most likely be used, which can impact the way events are being planned and organized. Soon event organizing companies and event attendees alike will be able to experience and enjoy the results of advanced technology without the help of human employees. Touching back on the domains part of the EMBOK Model and view how some of the AI perks would gradually, but surely replace the need for human capital when organizing events.

A key visual of an event is like a face of it. Creating a visual is not only very important for the event, it is also not easy. It requires a creative mind and skill, time, and of course, money to hire a designer or a professional creative. AI can help. It can produce a visual identity for the event. New sites are offering AI-based design services, which for instance, can design an event logo with no human designer needed. All required are only chosen text, colors, and design styles. Then a number of random logos will be given to choosing from, so AI can recognize preferences for the event. In the end; in matters of minutes, in fact, the event logo will be created and shown how it looks on different merchandising products ("This is How AI", 2018).

After the event has its key visual, wordings come next. Copywriters are usually asked to write text of advertisements or publicity material. AI can help. It will be able to set up an efficient event webpage copy. In spite of the fact that the concept is still relatively new, a few platforms are already promising to deliver powerful copy that is aligned with a given event's goals, intentions, and values. Only keywords are needed to be inserted, and the text will be generated automatically. Soon a copywriter may no longer be needed for creating an event page ("This is How AI", 2018).

Just like any business, communication is an extremely important part of organizing events. In the past, event organizers often got bombarded with a litany of questions or doubts from attendees. A team of concierge is sometimes set up to support inquiries, but it was hardly possible for human staff to respond to everything in a timely manner. AI can help. AI enhanced systems and assistants, similar to Siri and Alexa, offer meaningful interaction for attendees and exhibitors. These automated assistants are becoming increasingly sophisticated and can be adopted for many functions at events. It can, for example, act as a concierge answering queries tirelessly, communicate efficiently, and providing all the information attendees need in a timely manner. In addition, with the use of voice activation, AI like chatbots can respond to voice commands and make suggestions on potential sessions that attendees may be interested in based on their personal preferences. Moreover, since chatbots do not require an app download or website login prior to use, the technology could enable all event content delivered through a Facebook Messenger chatbot making it even easier to access for attendees.

Even sometimes there are certain barriers, such as language, which prevents communication, AI can help. It can eliminate this barrier by improving the event translation and offer language translation services for attendees from foreign countries to enable activities like ordering products, customer support information, and more. Although, there is a problem of cultural aspects that cannot be translated exactly through AI technology, yet many event



organizing companies are already designing and developing AI instant translation apps to replace the use of human translators. To put it simply, AI system can get event organizing companies to access the mass communication option and improve attendee engagement (Groot, 2017; Owen, 2018; "This is How AI", 2018).

Using AI to communicate with attendees goes beyond just giving out information. Take matchmaking practice, for instance. While at a typical networking event, attendees may be matched manually with other attendees according to a manual form filled out pre-event, causing a tedious and expensive process for event planners, not to mention that the match not always being a good fit. Imagine attending a large networking event at IMPACT Exhibition and Convention Center, the biggest convention center in Thailand, sometimes exhibitions will match exhibitors with visitors automatically to help with networking. Most of the time, these matchmakers are too far off, creating bad matches at the event. AI can help. Personalizing event experience is probably the biggest game changer AI brings to the table. Tim Groot, co-founder and CEO at Grip, a UK-based event networking platform powered by AI, wrote that the scale and levels of personalizing and recommendations for event attendees that AI can offer were previously unheard of. Groot (2017) stated,

55% of people surveyed say they made a connection using Grip's AI matchmaking engine that they wouldn't have made otherwise. That's because, working with real-time recommendations, AI learns from your behavior as you interact with it, so attendees receive better recommendations the more they use it.

Lecun, Bengio, and Hinton (2015) mentioned that computational models can learn representations of data with multiple levels of abstraction using an AI function called Deep Learning, which has dramatically improved the state-of-the-art in speech recognition, visual object recognition, object detection and many other domains. Deep Learning basically relies on pattern recognition, taking sensory input, like data, and adding a component of reasoning to form new actions based on that reasoning. This brings one of the biggest advantages of AI over human capability – the ability to tirelessly learn and recognize patterns when exposed to oceans of new data. AI can now easily take already available registrant data from the event organizer and arrange the best possible match combinations, creating rich networking experiences for event attendees. Even more impressive, AI matchmaking systems can interpret data from attendee's social media profiles like Facebook and LinkedIn, to make recommendations of the best sessions to attend, networking opportunities, or even products that would best suit their business interests. Attendees can schedule meetings pre-event, or indicate they are not interested in the recommendations from the system during the event period, which helps improve the next set of recommendations. This type of intelligent matchmaking can also work in the favor of exhibitors, having access to information that tells them what potential visitors are interested in. Exhibitors not only can plan time, space, and staffing (if still needed) for the greatest visibility, but they also can also personalize their offerings to the potential ones for the greatest opportunities (Groot, 2017; Owen, 2018).

Event organizers can as well enjoy the benefits of AI ability to learn and recognize patterns. Groot (2017) stated that the organizers can anticipate what logistical requirements are needed at an event in terms of food & beverage, crowd control, etc., as the event progresses in real time. For example, an AI system can read footfall and registration data at an event and then calculate and report requirements necessary immediately. Making the anticipation even more accurate, the AI system could make judgments on the requirements based on data input from other or previous events of similar sizes and requirements. Owen (2018) also mentioned that since AI can monitor sentiment passively, it can identify and notify the event organizers of potential problems; from when cups, drinks, or product samples are running out to when event staff members are too busy and missing potential customers, for example. This will be an extremely useful technology for attendees, exhibitors, and event organizers, who may have to focus on many components simultaneously. It truly is a virtuous cycle.

During the event period, security is one of the most important aspects. Often, there is not sufficient security at an event. Owen (2018) mentioned that he has experienced thieves stealing items from an event space. When there are not enough security guards at an event, AI can help. It can support event security by identifying threats and notify organizing team members. In August of 2017, Chinese police in Shandong province arrested 25 suspects using a facial recognition system that was set up at the Qingdao International Beer Festival. In April 2018, Chinese police, once again, used facial recognition technology to catch one economic-crimes suspect while attending a 60,000-crowded concert in Nanchang City; a seemingly impossible task for the police if not supported by the AI system ("Chinese man caught", 2018).

Another important aspect of security is data protection. With all the input of data, some very personal ones, at the event, data protection and integrity are very concerned nowadays. A data protection compliance has to be strictly practiced while increasingly sophisticated analysis is applied in order to ensure high quality of data. The question is, how much can humans be trusted with this private matter? AI can help. When AI uses data to look for networking intent, users are anonymous to each other unless they indicate they are interested to meet each other. And private messages are private. It is important to draw deep insights while protecting attendees' privacy (Groot, 2017).

AI can also help eliminate lines for attendees. It does not matter how great an event is, if much time is taken in line before even entering the event, attendees' satisfactions already decrease right off the bat. Thus, due to the fact that AI can ensure face recognition for attendee identification, reference their face with their registration, and guide them through the line faster; increasing number of face recognition companies are interested in developing services for event organizers to help them set up efficient check-in dynamics. Long waiting lines and delays during the check-in procedure will soon be forgotten. AI can speed up event check-in faster than any human employees can, by eliminating the traditional processes which normally created event space constriction. (Owen, 2018; "This is How AI", 2018).

Organizers collect attendee feedbacks and often find out what is working and what is not from a survey that they ask attendees after the time of engagement. AI can help. It can take out all



the work of asking attendees how they felt since AI can also be used to monitor attendees' behavioral patterns and common characteristics, which will create a new found honesty and transparency for event organizers in terms of feedback. AI can even monitor multiple metrics on facial recognition, flow, and social media. In other words, AI can monitor sentiment passively; something that humans cannot. AI can, therefore, be used to drive event attendance, enabling event planners to identify and get involve with their target attendees as well as discover new, potential ones. The data collected can then be used to build a profile of the event's ideal target market and direct marketing efforts to target the most promising segmentations (Owen, 2018).

Final Thoughts

AI will soon revolutionize the event industry and play a central role in growing events. There is no point in denying the great impact AI technology can have on the way an event is designed, planned, and ran. Both event organizers' work and attendees' experience will shift greatly due to these new tools. AI offers many key benefits that event professionals can take advantage of in order to build and improve attendee engagement, add personalization to the event experience, and organize events more efficiently and competitively, among other things. All these benefits require no human employees. In conclusion, it is important for the event industry and especially the employees to ensure they are continuously keeping up with new ideas and technologies. Otherwise, they will soon be displaced by AI.



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THE PROVISION OF ISLAMIC HOSPITALITY SERVICE THROUGH THE LENS OF MUSLIM AND BUDDHIST EMPLOYEES IN THE MICE INDUSTRY IN SOUTHERN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

The findings presented in this paper, which are based on a research project, aimed at examining the influence of Islam on hospitality and customer service standards in the MICE industry in Southern Thailand. This paper focuses on the views of 'MICE' workers, both Buddhist and Muslim, in Southern Thailand on the religious requirements of Muslim customers. The paper seeks to identify what MICE staff understand about Muslim customers and their needs, and to analyse how the services that MICE employees indicate that they provide comply with Islamic practices. Results are based on interviews conducted with MICE staff in three venues. It concludes by discussing these issues by utilising thematic analysis. The paper reveals that although there is not a significant difference between the views of Muslim and Buddhist staff, a few interesting points were raised.

Keywords: Islamic hospitality services; customer service standards; the MICE industry

Introduction

The Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) industry is one of the fastest growing niches in tourism (UNWTO, 2012), particularly in Thailand. The MICE industry, which has played an important role in the Thai economy, is likely to grow in Southern Thailand because of its location, situated in the heart of Southeast Asia (Campiranon, 2006; Andrews & Siengthai, 2009). At the same time, this area also holds the largest Muslim population in Thailand. In addition, this part of Thailand is close to Malaysia, and serves as a gateway to Indonesia. Both countries also

have large Muslim populations. Thus, not only is Southern Thailand a popular MICE destination, it is also a substantial destination for domestic and international Muslim tourists.

According to the Sutapa et al. (2016), a combined total of more than 230,000 tourists visited Southern Thailand from the predominantly Muslim nations of Malaysia and Indonesia in 2015, more than double the 165,000 tourists who visited South Thailand from these countries in 2014. As more than 50% of the Malaysian and Indonesian populations are Muslim (Mastercard & CrescentRating 2016), it can then be predicted that there are more than 230,000 Muslim tourists visiting Southern Thailand in 2018. Despite the large numbers of Islamic tourists visiting Southern Thailand, and a growing awareness of the fact that Muslim customers may come with specific consumer needs and demands, there has been very little research into this target segment in the MICE market.

This paper, which is based on a research project, thus examines the influence of Islam on hospitality and customer service in the MICE industry in Southern Thailand. The study will reflect on the findings of Muslim and Buddhist staff participants, regarding their awareness of Islamic belief and practices, followed by their understanding of Muslim-friendly amenities. In addition, their opinion on how religious diversity has played a role in the MICE sector will be presented.

Methods

Face-to-face interviews in this study were conducted with 62 participants who were MICE staff, in Southern Thailand. To be more specific, this research project involved conducting 18 Buddhist and 44 Muslim, seeking their opinions on the influence of religion in their own lives, and religious diversity in MICE venues. As neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves (Creswell & Clark 2011, Creswell 2014), and this study intends to capture interplay between Muslim and Buddhist staff of diverse backgrounds, mixed methods approach was employed. In order to capture a range of perspectives, interviews were carried out in three of the largest MICE venues in three provinces in southern Thailand (Songkhla, Krabi, and Phuket), each of which have a substantial MICE Industry. The researcher-administered interviews, which contain both open and closed questions, were used in this study. With respect to data analysis, the closed-ended questions were compiled using the computer program Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS), Version 20.0, whereas the qualitative data from open-ended interview questions were analysed using both manual coding and the NVivo software program (Bazeley 2013). An

analysis of the former and latter was performed by attempting to group the key issues in different ways in looking for similarities and differences between issues. As this study incorporated qualitative data, thematic analysis was also used because it is understood as the study of language in use and there are many different approaches to this (Gee 2014).

Results

Staff were asked to assess their level of Islamic knowledge. Somewhat surprisingly, there were not significant differences between the Muslim and Buddhist interviewees' reported knowledge of Islam (see Table 4.1): both sets of participants admitted to only partially understanding Islam, with around one quarter conceding limited knowledge.

Table 1: Islamic knowledge of MICE staff (N=62)

Self-reported knowledge of Islam	Muslim staff (n=44)	Buddhist staff (n=18)
No knowledge at all	2 (4.5)	2 (11.1)
Limited knowledge	14 (31.8)	5 (27.8)
Partial Understanding	19 (43.2)	8 (44.4)
Knowledgeable	7 (15.9)	2 (11.1)
Very knowledgeable	2 (4.5)	1 (5.6)

The more specific questions relating to how MICE services should comply with Islamic principles elicited significantly different viewpoints from Muslim and Buddhist participants (see Table 2). The three main points on which there was diversity of opinion was in regard to the consumption of alcohol, pork, and gambling. Surprisingly, 75.0% of Muslim staff reported that alcohol and gambling should be allowed on MICE premises, whereas 61.1% of Buddhists thought both should be banned. From a dietary perspective, as could be expected, the vast majority of Muslim participants replied that pork should not be served in any of the food or beverage outlets at a venue. On the other hand, nearly a quarter of Buddhist participants, indicated that pork consumption should be made available.

In regard to the duties and religion of MICE staff, even though most Muslim (93.2%) and all Buddhist (100.0%) participants indicated that they would be willing to be trained in services that reflect Islamic principles, the vast majority of Buddhist staff (83.3%) did not believe that in order to attract Muslim customers most venue employees should be Muslim. However, 45.5% of Muslim staff felt that only Muslims could truly understand the needs of fellow Muslims.

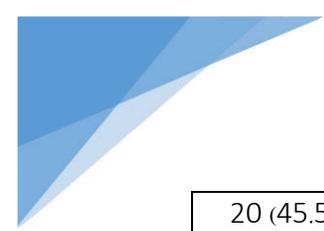
The findings also showed that the vast majority of Muslim (93.2%) and Buddhist (83.3%) participants not only had a good understanding of halal, but 59.1% and 61.1% respectively agreed that male staff should serve men and female staff women and families in order to comply with Islamic principles.

Table 4.2: Staff understanding of Muslim-friendly amenities (N=62)

(T = true, U= untrue and US = unsure)

Muslim staff (n=44)			Buddhist staff (n=18)		
1. Staff have sufficient expertise in / provide good customer service.					
T	U	US	T	U	US
23 (52.3)	17 (38.6)	4 (9.1)	6 (33.3)	6 (33.3)	6 (33.3)
2. Toilets should not be placed to face the direction of Mecca.					
T	U	US	T	U	US
34 (77.3)	3 (6.8)	7 (15.9)	5 (27.8)	1 (5.6)	12 (66.7)
3. Art in the venue should depict the human form.					
T	U	US	T	U	US
4 (9.1)	39 (88.6)	1 (2.3)	1 (5.6)	14 (77.8)	3 (16.7)
4. The venue owner must contribute a proportion of revenue to Zakat (charitable acts).					
T	U	US	T	U	US
38 (86.4)	5 (11.4)	1 (2.3)	17 (94.4)	-	1 (5.6)
5. The prayer room is considered as one of the most crucial facilities for Muslims.					
T	U	US	T	U	US

28 (63.6)	13 (29.5)	3 (6.8)	15 (83.3)	1 (5.6)	2 (11.1)
6. It is not necessary to providing religious information such as the location of nearby mosques or prayer times and nearby halal restaurants.					
T	T	T	T	T	T
2 (4.5)	2 (4.5)	2 (4.5)	2 (4.5)	2 (4.5)	2 (4.5)
7. The consumption of alcohol and gambling should not be banned in the premises.					
T	T	T	T	T	T
33 (75.0)	33 (75.0)	33 (75.0)	33 (75.0)	33 (75.0)	33 (75.0)
8. Pork should not be served in any of the food or beverage outlets at the venue.					
T	T	T	T	T	T
42 (95.5)	42 (95.5)	42 (95.5)	42 (95.5)	42 (95.5)	42 (95.5)
9. The venue should educate their staff on cross cultural communication to allow them to treat Muslim tourists with respect and consider recruiting staff who are aware of Islamic hospitality services.					
T	T	T	T	T	T
41 (93.2)	41 (93.2)	41 (93.2)	41 (93.2)	41 (93.2)	41 (93.2)
10. The concept of halal does not only cover food but can also be applied to manufacturing, processing and distribution of products, medicine, cosmetics, personal care products, clothes and services.					
T	T	T	T	T	T
42 (95.5)	42 (95.5)	42 (95.5)	42 (95.5)	42 (95.5)	42 (95.5)
11. Male staff should cater for single men and female staff should serve women and families.					
T	T	T	T	T	T
26 (59.1)	26 (59.1)	26 (59.1)	26 (59.1)	26 (59.1)	26 (59.1)
12. Most staff should be Muslim.					
T	T	T	T	T	T



20 (45.5)	20 (45.5)	20 (45.5)	20 (45.5)	20 (45.5)	20 (45.5)
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Following the closed-ended interview results regarding Islamic knowledge and halal-friendly MICE amenity understanding from Muslim and Buddhist staff participants, open-ended interview findings giving the views of the two religious groups on the influence of religion in their own lives, and religious diversity in MICE venues are now discussed. Although there is not a significant difference between the views of Muslim and Buddhist staff, a few interesting points were raised. The interviews indicated that Islam is expressed in a number of ways, such as a total belief system, worshipping only one God and widespread misconceptions about its belief and practice. It was apparent that the majority of Muslim participants in this study are likely to observe their Islamic practices, such as halal consumption and daily rituals that help them to lead a good Muslim life. However, a small number of Muslim participants (both those who have spent most of their lives studying Islam, and those who were born in a Muslim community) stated that they are totally, 100% committed to all Islamic principles and set themselves the highest standards in carrying out these obligations.



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Keywords: *Tourist, Loyalty, local Event, Festival, CFA, SEM*

Abstract

Since festival success requires the loyalty of the participants, it is important to understand which factors may influence it. Therefore, this study comes up a comprehensive model for analysis the local festival participant loyalty. More specifically, this study tested the value of the festival, the satisfaction of festival, and destination images on the loyalty of specific festivals. The study also learns the relationship between loyalty and predictors. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation model (SEM) were used for empirical testing. Firstly, in this research, perceived festival value affected satisfaction and destination image. The findings showed that perceived festival value influenced perceived destination image and satisfaction. Secondly, in this research, perceived high satisfaction affected destination image and festival loyalty. Finally, perceived specific destination image affected d festival loyalty. This research had important theoretical implications: first, the research focused on the traditional mega cultural festival, which had seldom been addressed. Second, the research explored attendees' perceptions of the traditional local mega cultural festival, which had seldom been investigated in the literature that published relate with Thailand. Third, the research focused on the Northern Thailand region, which had received little attention. Fourth, this research developed a comprehensive model of attendee loyalty. Incorporating various predictors of attendee loyalty into a model helps to better understand which factors lead to attendee loyalty. Fifth, the research investigated the relationships among the predictors. Although the relationships among festival value and satisfaction had been investigated in the festival literature, the roles of destination image had been neglected.

Keywords: *Tourist, Loyalty, local Event, Festival, CFA, SEM*

Introduction

Event is a significant driving force for tourism and occupy a prominent position in the development and marketing plans of most tourism destinations. The role and impact of planned events in the tourism industry are well documented, and their importance to the competitiveness of destinations is increasing (Getz, 2008). Cultural event tourism literature usually includes cultural celebrations, including festivals, carnivals, religious events and general art and entertainment events (mainly concerts and theatre performances) (Richards, 2007). Since the 1980s, festivals, one of the fastest growing types of cultural event, have increased concerning quantity, diversity, and popularity (Yang & Cen, 2011; Getz, 2008). From Grappi and Montanari's point of view, the festival is defined as: a special theme of the celebration and the public is invited in a limited time, such celebrations can be held once a year, or less frequently, and include a single event (Grappi & Montanari, 2011). At the same time, Grappi and Montanari point out that festivals are an effective strategy that can increase the reputation of destinations and have a positive impact on the long-term or short-term for economics, social, and cultural destinations (Grappi & Montanari, 2011).

Many kinds of literature mention that festivals can be seen as a strategy for realizing the development of the regional economy, the way to create a positive image of the host destination, is also a stimulus to tourism demand and promote the expansion of the tourism market in the host destination. At the same time, it also maintains the lives of residents, enhances the employment and income of residents, and the sense of pride. And it is undeniable that the holding of festivals also improves the cohesion of society (May 1997; McKercher & DuCros, 2006; Mehmetoglu & Ellingsen, 2005; Lee, 2014; Getz, 2008; Lee et al., 2009; Weber & Ali-Knight, 2012). It cannot be overlooked that local festivals are considered to be an excellent way to promote sustainable tourism by improving understanding of unique cultural heritage, ethnic backgrounds and local customs (Yoon et al., 2010).

Festivals event offer tremendous benefits to local communities because they significantly impact the local economy (Getz, 1993) and reinforce social cohesion within communities (Rao, 2001; Diane & Marion J., 2010; Boo, Busser, James A., 2005). Controllable environmental characteristics, such as food quality and planned program content, affect patron emotions including consumer satisfaction, and these emotions mediate the impact of the festival environment on loyalty to the festival. (Yong-Ki Lee, Choong-Ki Lee, Seung-Kon Lee, & Barry J., 2008; Yoo-Shik Y., Jin-Soo L., Choong-Ki L., 2010; GÖKÇE & OSMAN, 2009). The festival had an impact on the tourism industry of the municipality, as it seemed to have resulted in an increase in the variety of entertainment in the municipality where the locals were able to showcase their talents. (Ande & Luna, 2015; ANC, 2013).

Chiang Mai is the second largest city in Thailand with an excellent natural environment and warm hospitality of local people. In the meantime, as the centre of Lanna culture in northern Thailand, Chiang Mai has its own unique culture and cultural heritage. To show fertility of the beauty of the unique nature and culture of Chiang Mai, it also pushes for a global event to promote

tourism including career promotion for local tourism practitioners, such as hoteliers, travel agencies, souvenir producers and so on in Chiang Mai. Chiang Mai Provincial Administration Organization Chiang Mai municipality and Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Chiang Mai office, held the annual Yi Peng festival called "Chiang Mai Loi Krathong Festival," in the evening of every full moon of the 12th month in the traditional Thai lunar calendar, for so many years. In the past ten years more and more private tourism event planning companies are also involved in the festival planning and organizing. Private companies have engaged into it, so that tourists on the more luxurious experience of the Yi Peng festival, but also increased the value added and the brand of Chiang Mai Yi Peng festival and Ching Mai as the tourist destination. The Chiang Mai Yi Peng festival is one of the top three events held in Chiang Mai every year, only behind the Songkran in size and scope and beyond the Flower festival. As a representative of Lanna culture, Yi Peng or Loi Krathong Festival in Chiang Mai attracts a large number of domestic and foreign tourists every year. Loi Krathong coincides with the Lanna (northern Thai) festival known as Yi Peng, and the festival is meant as a time to make merit. For at least three days the Chiang Mai Yi Peng Festival will consume the entire centre and surrounding area of Mueang Chiang Mai city. In this particular days, swarms of sky lanterns are launched into the air and crowds of krathongs (water lanterns) are launched into the river. Just like what we can see from Fig. 1 To Fig. 3 All elements of the event are beautiful and attractive to tourists every year.



Figure 1. Release the water lanterns (source: author)



Figure 2. Release the sky lanterns (source: author)



Figure 3. Monks release the sky and water lanterns (source: author)

Therefore, development and improvement of the festival in subsequent years to be a global festival. Analysis and measuring of the tourist loyalty within the festival are very important for the best development.

Literature Review

Festival value

From many kinds of literature, we know that value is a perceivable difference, reflected in the individual's consideration of benefits and costs, as well as between harvest and expenditure (Lee, 2008; Lee et al., 2009). It is worth mentioning that value can be defined as four different aspects: 1. Low price can be considered as a value. 2. Value is what we want from a product. 3. The value can also be that consumers get high-quality products through spending. 4. Value is also the product that every consumer receives (Kim, 2010). In short, the value is the trade-off between quality and price. In other words, high quality leads to high-value perception, while other contributions may reduce value (Rigatti & Mason, 2010). Maybe we can call it cost, such as material cost (price) and non-material cost (time and emotion) (Yang et al., 2011).

Some empirical efforts have been made to investigate the role of value in the festival literature on the table.

Year	Another	Main fond
2006	Gursoy et al.	Festival value influenced festival attendance.
2007	Lee et al.	Festival value influenced festival satisfaction
2008	Lee et al.	Festival value influenced loyalty.
2009	Lee et al.	Festival value is an important predictor of loyalty to both first and repeat visitors.
2010	Rigatti and Mason	The festival value in terms of functionality will have a negative impact on visitor satisfaction and willingness to revisit.
2010	Yoon et al.	Festival value influenced festival satisfaction
2011	Lee et al.	The festival value in terms of emotion will influence visitor satisfaction.
2011	Yang et al.	The festival value can predict visitors' intentions

According to the works of literature, Event value cover such as program, souvenirs, food, and facilities affect value, which then contributes to visitors' satisfaction and loyalty (Crompton & Love, 1995). From the above table, we can see that festival value has a certain influence on festival satisfaction and festival loyalty. At the same time, the festival value also affects the evaluation of the festival, we called it as a festival image.

Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1. The festival value has a positive impact on event satisfaction.

H2. The festival value has a positive impact on attitudinal loyalty.

H3. The festival value has a positive impact on event image.

Festival satisfaction

“Satisfaction is an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with a good or service over time (Andreson & Lehmann, 1994).”

From a cognitive perspective, the factors that make satisfy or dissatisfied the experience depends on the consumer's expectations and the actual performance of the experience. If the experience is higher than expected, consumers will be satisfied, and if the performance does not meet expectations, they are dissatisfied (Lee et al., 2008; Mason & paggiaro, 2012). The degree of satisfaction with a particular transaction is the immediate exam after purchase or positive experience of a recent transaction experience (Oliver, 1993). It shows that individuals use their personal experience to form a cognition and efficient evaluation of service relationships, thus creating satisfaction (Storbacka, Standyik and Gro€nroos, 1994).

From an emotional point of view, the factors that satisfy or dissatisfied the experience depending on the feeling of experience that is triggered (Lee & Back, 2008). The experience satisfaction structure discussed in this study extends from the concept of festival satisfaction and examines service satisfaction and the influence of tourists in specific situations. Many empirical studies investigate the role of satisfaction in festival literature. For example, Song et al. (2014) concluded that the satisfaction of tourists establishes the trust. Chang et al. (2013) examined the influence of loyalty on the satisfaction of residents and tourists. Their results show that residents who are satisfied with the festival are more likely to revisit the festival.

Lee (2014) and Kim et al. (2011) concluded that the satisfaction of the participants affected revisiting and recommendation, at the same time, they also mentioned the potential impact of satisfaction on festival values and festival images.

Previous studies also concluded that participant satisfaction is an essential predictor of participant loyalty (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Bolton & Drew, 1991; Cole & Illum, 2006; Lee, 2014).

Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4. The festival satisfaction has a positive impact on festival image.

H5. The festival satisfaction has a positive impact on attitudinal loyalty.

Destination image

The destination image research has become one of the leading areas of academic tourism research because the destination image research has high practical significance for destination management, marketing and brand building. Promoted in specific markets Successfully, “a destination must be favorably differentiated from its competition, or positively positioned, in the minds of the consumers” (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003, p. 37).

A desirable differentiation and positioning are often achieved by destination marketing organizations creating and managing the perceptions, or images, that potential travelers hold about the destination (Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010). Thus, studying Destination image helps destination marketing organizations to be better understand how to control existing Destination images, to repair damage inflicted by adverse events occurring at a destination, and, ultimately, to project desirable images of the destination in economically essential markets. The destination image is fundamental for consumers to choose their destination. It affects consumer behaviour in two ways: decision making and post-decision conditions such as participation (festival value), evaluation (satisfaction), intention (recommendation and loyalty) (Lee et al., 2005).

The research by Lee et al. (2005) studied Korean's destination image formed by the 2002 World Cup. Their study focused on several behaviour intentions (recommendation and loyalty). Tourists choose destinations based on their image and motivation to meet their needs and motivations. Chen & Tasi (2007) implements visitors' behaviour models including destination images among variables at different stages of consumer behaviour. The results show that the destination image has a direct and indirect influence on the action and intention of the tourists. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H6. The destination image has a positive impact on attitudinal loyalty.

Loyalty

The subject of tourist loyalty has the extraordinary charm for both scholars who investigate in the tourism field and marketing managers. Most companies specialized in the market researching, take the loyalty as a critical business area that indicates the importance of such a concept for tourism industry (Shahriari et al., 2014).

In the scientific literature, the loyalty is defined as Customer Commitment (Hawkes, 1994) and Customer Survival (Rust, 1993). On the other hand, tourist loyalty is a measure for testing the festival value (Yang et al., 2011). However, a group of loyal tourist will allow the tourism practitioners to maximize the price of their products because loyal tourist intends to purchase and spend more time and money (Dall et al., 1997). Previous researchers suggest that loyal tourist of a festival event act as the event lawyers by positive word of mouth advertising, so they are the most

valuable groups of tourist for a destination could embrace (Ganesh et al., 2000; Zeithaml et al., 1996).

In this research, we consider the impact of festival value on tourist behavioural loyalty using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model and Structure Equation Model (SEM). In the previous studies, the relation between festival value and loyalty (Leong, Yeh, Hsiao, & Huan, 2015) have investigated. Therefore, in this research, festival satisfaction (Westbrook and Oliver, 1991) and festival image (Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010) have been added to the model to examine their effects.

Research design and methodology

This study was developed with literature and feedbacks from experts and stakeholders. The concept was under the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model and Structure Equation Model (SEM) to confirm the compositions of Chiang Mai Yi Peng that Chiang Mai government proposed and some private company proposed. There is four main place to hold this event around Chiang Mai, three places were held by private companies and one place offered by the government in public area. Our research team conducted the same survey of different places.

Data collection procedure

The study was conducted in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The data was collected at the Chiang Mai Yi Ping Festival in November 2017. Domestic tourists and foreign tourists attending the Chiang Mai Light Festival in 2017 and leaving the festival are required to participate in the investigation under the guidance of researchers. Due to the different nature of the activities, we divided the venues to distributed questionnaires into two categories: free-to-play venues and paid-in venues (there are three paid venues). Since the main events of this festival take place in the evening and late evening, the distribution of the questionnaires is conducted late at night and evening in the entrances and exits of each venue. Since the population of tourists was unknown, convenience sampling method was used. 700 questionnaires were distributed to the tourists, and the questionnaire is available in Thai, English and Chinese. Among the surveys obtained from the 682 respondents, 58 ones were incomplete and thereby were eliminated. Finally, 624 questionnaires were usable, resulting in 89% efficient response rate.

Measurement instrument

Self-administered questionnaires are used to collect empirical data for this study. Based on a comprehensive review of the literature, a project for measuring constructs was extracted, and a questionnaire was developed. The survey consists of two parts. The first part deals with the demographic characteristics of respondents. The second part has the problem of measuring items. In the second part, respondents were asked to rate the significance of the items on a five-point

Likert scale (1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree). Table 1 summarizes all of the Constructs in research questionnaire.

Five items measured festival value: Location and accessibility, Venue facility, Service quality, Festival size entertainment and Timing, which were adopted from previous research. (Yang et al., 2011; Yim King Penny Wan, 2011; Yoo Shik Yoon 2008). Festival Satisfaction was measured by three items: right decision, meeting expectations and pleasure, which were taken from previous research (Westbrook and Oliver, 1991; YooShik Yoon 2008; Lee, 2014).

Destination image was measured by seven items: Enjoyment, Reputation, Awareness, Entertainment opportunities, safety, unique & authentic and timing, which were taken from previous research (Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010; Back & Parks, 2003; Boo et al., 2009; Sai et al., 2015; Echtner & Ritvhle, 1993).

Three items measured loyalty: recommendation, revisit Intention and willingness to pay more, which were taken from previous research (Leong, Yeh, Hsiao, & Huan, 2015; Xu, Jin & Lin, 2017).

Table 1: Constructs in research questionnaire

Construct	Definition	Item	Source
`Festival Value(EV)	All direct and indirect experience during the events (Yang et al., 2011)	Location and accessibility	Yim King Penny Wan (2011)
		Venue facility	Yim King Penny Wan (2011)
		Service quality	Yoo-Shik Yoon (2008)
		Festival size entertainment	Yim King Penny Wan (2011)
		Timing	Yim King Penny Wan (2011)
Event Loyalty(EL)	Measured using revisit intention (Leong, Yeh, Hsiao, & Huan, 2015)	Recommendation	Yongfei Xu, Wei Jin, Zhibin Lin(2017)
		Revisit Intention	Yongfei Xu, Wei Jin, Zhibin Lin(2017)
		Willingness to pay more	Yongfei Xu, Wei Jin, Zhibin Lin(2017)

		Overall, I am satisfied with event	Yoo-Shik Yoon (2010)
Event Satisfaction(ES)	The post consumption evaluation of a product or services (Westbrook and Oliver, 1991)	As a whole, I am happy with the event	Yoo-Shik Yoon (2010)
		I believe I did the right thing in attending the event	Yoo-Shik Yoon (2010)
		Enjoyment and it is a good deal	Back and Parks (2003)
Destination image(EI)	One part of the more global concept of brand, which results from the associations created with brands (Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010)	Reputation	Boo et al. (2009)
		Awareness	Boo et al. (2009)
		Entertainment opportunities	Sai et al. (2015)
		Safe and secure environment	Echtner & Ritvhle (1993)
		unique and authentic	Sai et al. (2015)
		Timing	Sai et al. (2015)

Conceptual Framework

This paper aims to establish an efficient and reliable model to assess the factors that affect event loyalty. The primary consideration is that participants include the views of local participants and international participants. Figure 4 illustrates the conceptual framework for this study.

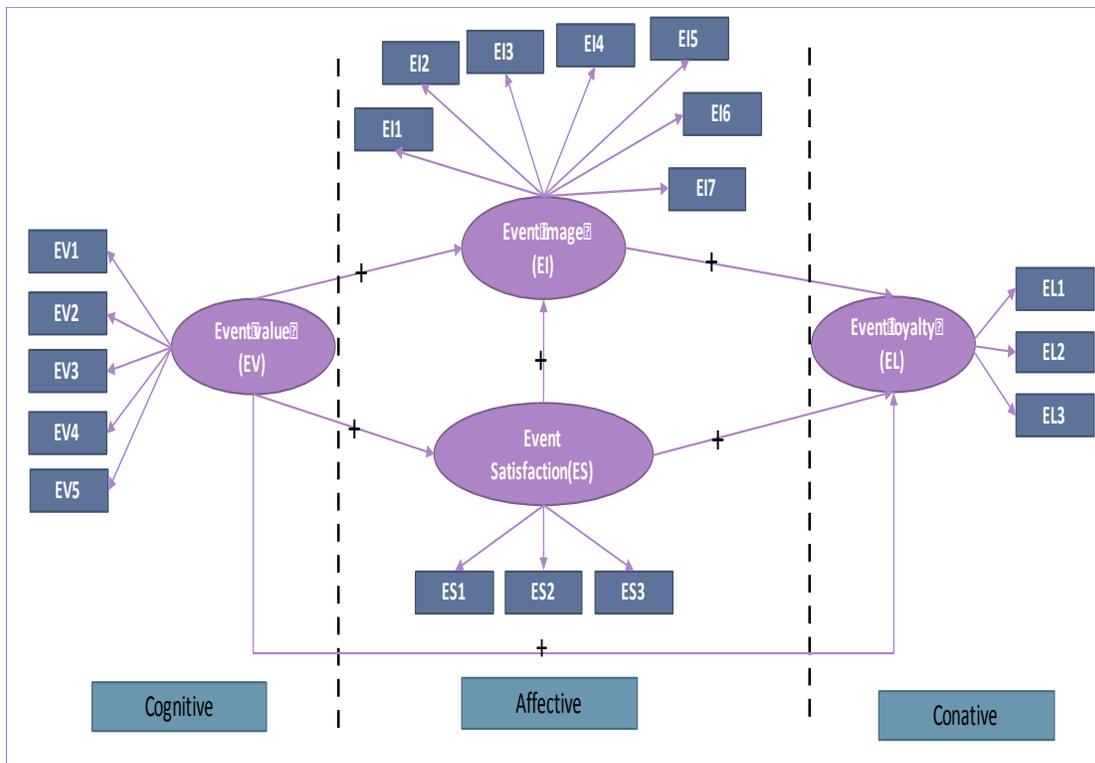


Figure 4 Conceptual Framework (source: author)

Data analysis

Excel and R programs were utilized for data analysis. A two-step approach was used to validate the scales and examine the dynamic relationships among the constructs of the study. First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with maximum likelihood estimation was conducted to validate the measurement scales of the constructs. Reliability and validity measures were tested. Next, structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed to test the proposed model and hypotheses. The maximum likelihood procedure was employed to estimate the measurement model and structural model. Commonly used model fit indexes were examined for model fit.

Results

Demographic characteristic of respondents

Descriptive analysis was performed to obtain the demographic profile of the respondents. Out of 624 participants, 58.33% were Female and about 75.16% respondents were younger than the ages of 35; 52.08% had earned a four-year Bachelor degree; 45.3% listed their nationality as being Thai; 28.69% had a full-time job, and 66.19% indicated that it was their first visit to Yi Ping Festival. Detailed information about the respondents is provided in Table 2 and Table 3 as follow.

Table 2

Sample profile (n=624)

Composition		Number	Percentage %
Gender	Male	256	41.03%
	Female	364	58.33%
	Other	3	0.48%
Age	<25	292	46.79%
	25-34	177	28.37%
	35-44	80	12.82%
	45-54	33	5.29%
	>55	31	4.97%
Education	Less than Primary	1	0.16%
	Primary school	9	1.44%
	Secondary school	73	11.70%
	College	98	15.71%
	Bachelor degree	325	52.08%
	Graduate	128	20.51%
Working status	Full-time Job	179	28.69%

	Part-time Job	5	0.80%
	Work for oneself	115	18.43%
	Retired	19	3.04%
	Unemployment	28	4.49%
	Student	278	44.55%
Ever attended	First time	413	66.19%
	Second times	45	7.21%
	3rd times	80	12.82%
	More than 3 times	87	13.94%
Nationality	Thai	278	45.3%
	Chinese	189	30.3%
	Non-Chinese		
	Foreigner	157	25.2%

Table 3

Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix of latent variables

Construct	FV	FS	DI	FL
Festival value(FV)	1	0.382	0.399	0.312
Satisfaction with festival (FS)		1	0.506	0.508
Destination image (DI)			1	0.449
Loyalty(FL)				1

(Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.)

Reliability and validity of measurement scales

Reliability and validity of the measurement scales were assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), respectively. Reliability is supported if Cronbach's alpha value equal to 0.7 at least or above. As shown in Table 4, the Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the threshold of 0.7, suggesting that the scales had high reliability. Most of the fit

indices were within the recommended thresholds, indicating an acceptable fit. Z-value and standardized factor loading of all items exceeded the thresholds, supporting the convergent validity. Furthermore, correlations among the constructs were lower than 0.7, a signal of measure distinctness.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to assess the overall model fit for the full measurement model. The results showed that the chi-square differences were significant, supporting the discriminant validity. Thus, reliability and validity of the scales were supported. The model yielded a reasonably good model fit to the data (Chi-square is 390.704, with 98 degrees of freedom. P-value is 0.000. CFI= 0.944. TLI= 0.931. RMSEA=0.070. SRMR=0.040.). The goodness-of-fit statistics exceed the baseline values recommended by previous researchers, indicating that the values of TLI and CFI are greater than 0.90 and that the value of RMSEA is less than 0.08(Byrne, 1998; Turner & Reisinger, 2001.). These results confirm the convergent validity of the constructs.

Table 4

Reliability and validity of measurement

Construct	item	Mean	S.D.	SFL	Z-value	Cronbach alpha
Festival value	Location accessibility	3.74	1.08	0.651	14.42	0.737
	Venue facility	3.58	0.97	0.789	10.47	
	Services quality	3.62	1.05	0.678	13.91	
	Entertainment space	3.73	1.90	-	-	
	Timing	3.73	1.86	-	-	
Satisfaction with festival	Pleasure	3.88	0.93	0.835	9.93	0.748
	Meet expectations	3.89	1.00	0.717	14.55	
	Right decision	3.67	1.15	-	-	
Destination image	Pleasure	3.93	0.97	0.773	14.96	0.879
	Reputation	4.01	0.95	0.755	15.24	
	Awareness	3.79	1.01	0.641	16.31	
	Entertainment opportunities	3.77	1.01	0.747	15.34	

	Safe and secure Environment	3.91	0.93	0.649	6.26	
	Unique and authentic	3.98	0.94	0.771	14.99	
	Timing	3.82	0.96	0.662	16.17	
Loyalty	Recommendation	3.97	0.97	0.806	13.67	0.869
	Revisit Intention	3.82	1.05	0.837	12.67	
	Willingness to pay more	3.8	1.07	0.721	15.29	
	destination branding	3.98	1.01	0.802	13.76	

(SFL= Standardized factor loading; Fit indices of measurement model: Chi-square = 390.704(P = 0.000), df = 98, Chi-square/ df = 3.98, CFI = 0.944, TLI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.070, SRMR = 0.040)

Hypotheses testing

Path analysis using R was conducted to test the hypotheses. The overall fit of the structural model was examined before the assessment of the hypothesized relationships, and the fit indices indicated that the model was a good fit to the data.

As show in table 5, the results the positive and direct influence of festival value on festival satisfaction ($\alpha_1 = 0.769$, z-value = 11.899, $p < 0.05$) and destination image ($\alpha_2 = 0.309$, z-value = 4.840, $p < 0.05$). Festival satisfaction had the positive and direct influence on destination image ($\alpha_3 = 0.644$, z-value = 9.931, $p < 0.05$) and loyalty ($\alpha_4 = 0.714$, z-value = 5.486, $p < 0.05$). Finally, destination image was found to have the positive and direct impact on loyalty ($\alpha_5 = 0.237$, z-value = 1.828, $p < 0.05$). Thus, H1, H3, H4, H5 and H6 were supported.

Table 5

Hypotheses testing

	Hypotheses	Estimate	Std. error	Z-value	P-value	Result
H 1	The festival value has a positive impact on festival satisfaction.	0.769	0.065	11.899	0.000	Supported

H 2	The festival value has a positive impact on attitudinal loyalty.	-0.111	0.073	-1.514	0.130	Non-supported
H 3	The festival value has a positive impact on destination image.	0.309	0.064	4.840	0.000	Supported
H 4	The festival satisfaction has a positive impact on destination image.	0.644	0.065	9.931	0.000	Supported
H 5	The festival satisfaction has a positive impact on attitudinal loyalty	0.714	0.130	5.486	0.000	Supported
H 6	The destination image has a positive impact on attitudinal loyalty.	0.237	0.130	1.828	0.068	Supported

(Fit indices of measurement model: Chi-square = 390.704(P = 0.000), df = 98, Chi-square/ df = 3.98, CFI = 0.944, TLI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.070, SRMR = 0.040)

Discussion

Finding

Since festival success requires the loyalty of the participants, it is important to understand which factors may influence it. Understanding the predictors of participants' loyalty provided information for festival managers to prioritize their duties and organize the festivals so that festivals can be better build the loyalty of the participants. Therefore, this study comes up a comprehensive model for analysis the local festival participant loyalty. More specifically, this study tested the value of the festival, the satisfaction of festival, and destination images on the loyalty of specific festivals. The study also learns the relationship between loyalty and predictors. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation model (SEM) were used for empirical testing of 624 domestic and international tourists, who participated in the 2017 Yi Ping Festival, in Chiang Mai, which is the most important city in Thailand,

Firstly, in this research, perceived festival value affected satisfaction and destination image. The findings showed that perceived festival value influenced perceived destination image and satisfaction. It means that if the festival were perceived as valued, it would be more likely to be perceived as specific destination image and be more likely to have satisfied attendees.

Secondly, in this research, perceived high satisfaction affected destination image and festival loyalty. It seems that attendees who perceived the festival as high satisfaction were more likely to perceive the festival as specific destination image, and festival loyalty. It implies that if attendees

were satisfied with the festival they were more likely to be loyal to the festival. Satisfaction was found to be a significant predictor of loyalty, which means that attendees tended to be loyal to the festival if they satisfied with the festival.

Finally, perceived specific destination image affected festival loyalty. It means that if the festival perceived specific destination image, it would be more likely to be perceived festival loyalty.

Theoretical implications

This research had important theoretical implications. The findings enriched the festival literature in several ways. First, the research focused on the traditional mega cultural festival, which had seldom been addressed. Second, the research explored attendees' perceptions of the traditional local mega cultural festival, which had seldom been investigated in the literature that published relate with Thailand. Third, the research focused on the Northern Thailand region, which had received little attention.

Fourth, this research developed a comprehensive model of attendee loyalty. Incorporating various predictors of attendee loyalty into a model helps to better understand which factors lead to attendee loyalty. Fifth, the research investigated the relationships among the predictors. Although the relationships among festival value and satisfaction had been investigated in the festival literature, the roles of destination image had been neglected.

Practical implications

In addition to theoretical implications, these findings provide some practical implications for festival managers. Festival managers must work hard to build loyalty among the participants because the loyalty of the participants is seen as a major factor in their success. As the findings suggested that satisfaction and destination image were significant predictors of loyalty, the managers can conduct their festivals in a way which the festivals create superior destination image to attendees, satisfy their needs and wants. For example, providing goods and services that met local traditional cultural characteristics, and, try to satisfy the tastes of tourists at the same time, who come from different regions in the world. Loyalty can be enhanced by offering authentic and quality products to perform the stated functions well. Festival value is another factor to strengthen the relationships with attendees.

To develop the destination image, the findings suggested that perceived festival value are good factors which should be improved. Festival managers can improve the festival value in several ways: 1) increase variety of the goods and services, 2) provide products at reasonable prices, 3) train employees so that they understand how to present and service participants, 4) provide a



clean environment, 5) provide well-designed festivals and 6) locate festivals, especially in places where tourists visit most places, and for Participants provided adequate facilities.

Limitations

As with any research, the current research had several limitations which must be noted. First, the research was limited to one city of one region. Second, the research was limited to as traditional cultural and one type of festival (Yi Ping festival). Although the research investigated domestic and international participants, did not make full use of the collected data. For example, if this study can run the data for international and domestic tourists separately, the results should be more practical and more interesting. Fourth, convenience sampling method was used to collect the data. Since a convenience sample does not represent the entire population, a correct sampling method should be used in future research. Fifth, although this research proposed a comprehensive model examining the relationships among festival value, destination image, satisfaction and loyalty, the research ignored some other constructs. Therefore, future research is encouraged to include the other predictors of attendee loyalty in the model.

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ATTENDEES SATISFACTION: EVIDENCE FROM COACH THE COACHES PROGRAM FOR MICE INDUSTRY

INTRODUCTION

This research aims at analyzing the attendees's satisfaction form the 9th Coach the Coaches Program for MICE Industry event which will be held International Convention Center in Hatyai Thailand on 20th to 21st April 2018. The event's success does not only reply on the budget and that is why it is extremely important to track the satisfaction of attendees because that determines the attendance in the future.

METHODOLOGY

The main method of research will be quantitative research by distribute the survey questions to the 150 delegates.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- The "International Handbook of Survey Methodology" (De Leeuw et al.) gives a detailed report which covers everything from 'The psychology of asking questions' and 'The problem of nonresponse' all the way to data analysis. It does not explicitly cover conference attendees' satisfaction surveys but the theory given in this handbook is extremely useful for survey and data analysis in general.
- Another literature that will be used is a report "Conference Attendees' Satisfaction: Evidence from Belgrade (Serbia)" (Dunjić et al.). This covers many topics needed for my own research beginning with the analysis of the importance of such study continuing with a detailed methodology and analyzing the data from the surveys.
- The third source is a website giving "The Ultimate Guide to Conference and Event Surveys" (Barrett) which gives a lot of updated information on the newest trends in evaluating this type of event as well as several suggestions for the survey questions. It is not as detailed as the previous sources but has some tricks and pieces of advice which can be useful for creating the survey.

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CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN EXHIBITION INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY IN HATYAI

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Abstract

The Crisis Management in Exhibition Industry is a substantial area that the exhibitors or relevant stakeholders of the exhibition industry^[1] shall be aware of the major problems that could occur. Importantly in well-known convention in Thailand. This study will focusing on the Southern Thailand as a focussed geographical selection.^[2] The aim of this research is to identify the crisis that may occur within the exhibition in Hatyai; and to identify the solution towards the crisis^[3]

Methodology



Qualitative research
In-Depth Interview



Target groups

- The 60th Anniversary of His Majesty the King's Accession to the Throne International Convention Center
- Event group Company Limited



Hatyai district,
Songkhla province

Result

The results show that the top 3 crises that had most affect to Exhibition in Hatyai are ;

- (1) Nature crisis
- (2) Internal Crisis
- (3) Economical Crisis.

Moreover, the stakeholders of the exhibition industry in Hatyai have not prepare for any crisis management plan



Conclusion

The study can identified the crisis that occur in exhibition in Hatyai and the solution of each situation. Almost stakeholders in exhibition industry in Hatyai don't have long term of crisis management plan exception large organization that have plan to solving the problem in short and long term. So stakeholders in exhibition in Hatyai should to carry more about crisis management plan not only quick fix for each situation.

The further research on how to establish the longerm crisis management model for exhibition industry shall be considered.

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Thailand MICE

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Economic Impact of Thailand's MICE Industry

- The study aims to demonstrate the extent to which the local MICE segment industry supports the economy in Thailand.
- The study will analyze the economic benefits from the MICE industry i.e. how much each baht spent in the MICE industry will generate for the entire Thailand economy

	Spending	Value Added
Direct Impact		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event Organizers • Delegates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EO Spending • Delegate Spending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VA of EO (PCO,PEO,DMC) • VA of EO spending • VA of delegate spending
Indirect Impact		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendors • Investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor Spending • Investment Spending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VA of vendor spending • VA of investment spending
Induced Impact		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees of MICE industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MICE Employee Spending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VA of employee spending
	Total Expenditures	GDP Contribution



A Snapshot of Thailand MICE Economic Impact

MICE Expenditure (2015) :
฿ 222.7 billion

MICE GDP Contribution (2015) :
฿ 113.5 billion

Government Tax :
฿ 10.4 billion

Job Creation :
164,427 jobs

Beyond economic benefits:



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Guideline for Attraction on "Tourism for all concept"

Evaluation, Routes of World Tourism Day 2016:

Khon Kaen Province.



Wannida Sarirut, Kamittha Charoenwiphat and Nisarut Chatbubpha

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Introduction

In 28-29 September 2016, Khon Kaen province is co-host with Bangkok Organized "The World Tourism Day 2016" it makes the tourism of Khon Kaen Province has been known globally. (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2016) . So this study was conducted to study and analyze tourism attractions according to "The World Tourism Day" at Khon Kaen province. evaluate tourism attractions according to "The World Tourism Day" at Khon Kaen province and offer guidelines to promote tourism that focuses on the importance of equality in humanity.

Objective

1. To study the tourist route in Khon Kaen according to the concept of tourism for all.
2. To evaluate the tourist route in Khon Kaen according to the concept of tourism for all
3. To propose tourism promotion guidelines. Focus on the importance of equality in humanity based on the assessment. Travel destinations based on the concept of tourism for all. According to the world tourism day in Khon Kaen

Methodology

Objective	Review	Population	Sample	Research Tools
1. To study the tourist route in Khon Kaen according to the concept of tourism for all.	Source and importance of the concept of tourism for all.	Related agencies	The number of research sample from Khon Kaen Provincial Tourism and Sports Office is 1 person.	Checklist Observation Interview Evaluation
2. To evaluate the tourist route in Khon Kaen according to the concept of tourism for all	Guidelines for evaluate access to tourist destinations based on concepts tourism for all. Activity path to study visit of World tourism day 2016 in Khon Kaen.	Physical limitations and normal person	400 persons	Interview
3. To propose tourism promotion guidelines. Focus on the importance of equality in humanity. Based on the assessment. Travel destinations based on the concept of tourism for all. World Travel Day in Khon Kaen	Activity path to study visit of World tourism day 2016 in Khon Kaen.	Physical limitations and normal person	400 persons	Interview

Inspection Tools: The research team brought the complete design of interviews, Questionnaire, Checklist and observation record to the consultant to check the accuracy. In the assessment form, Faculty members from the Faculty of Architecture and Faculty of Business Administration and Accounting will check the accuracy.

Remarks and Conclusions

The evaluate tourist attractions based on the concept of tourism for all. According to the world tourism day in Khon Kaen found Phra Mahathat Kaen Nakhon Temple, Khon Kaen Hospital, Central Plaza Khon Kaen and Khon Kaen University pass in the concept of tourism for all but Sri Chant Road, Khon Kaen City Pillar Shrine, Community learning center at Ban Hua Fai Thailand women's cooperatives, Sa Thong Ban Hua Temple by are not pass in the concept of tourism for all which should be improved to be in line with the concept of tourism for all following:

1. Management should have responsible for clarity.
2. Service and public relations should have promoted for the local authorities to more.
3. Environmental building and place should improve ramp handrails bathroom for the disabled to have more standard.

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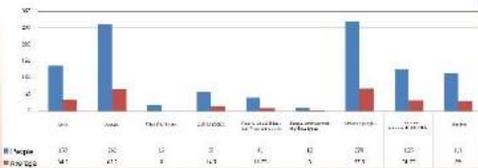
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<https://www.mots.go.th/press.php?id=7883&tkname=index>

Results and discussion

Place	Management	Service And public relations.	Environmental Building and place
Phra Mahathat Kaen Nakhon Temple	Determine the mission and scope of service in the policy. Including a balanced operating orientation.	The welcome service for tourists with a smile and enthusiasm. Providing Service equipment facilities such as wheelchair and stroller.	No signage facilities provided for special groups. Accessible toilet increased by 1.
Khon Kaen Hospital	Determine the mission and scope of service in the policy. Including a balanced operating orientation. Organizing training every year and listening to resolve complaints (including patient suggestion).	The welcome service for tourists with a smile and enthusiasm. Providing services to the disabled and the elderly properly.	Signage. Disabled bathroom. Tarking Handrails get standard.
Sri Chant Road	Determine the mission and scope of service in the policy. Including a balanced operating orientation.	Providing service equipment and facilities by seating is available for every 200 meters and there is hydraulic bus service.	Signage on the walkway make a barrier for Wheelchairs. Ramp gridding tactile on all complex on both sides of Sriehon Road.
Khon Kaen City Pillar Shrine	Determine the mission and scope of service in the policy. Including a balanced operating orientation.	Providing service equipment and facilities by seating is available for every 200 meters and there is hydraulic bus service.	The walkway and the garden lane around the area is still rough.
Central Plaza Khon Kaen	Determine the mission and scope of service in the policy. Including a balanced operating orientation. Organizing training every year and listening to resolve complaints including customer suggestions.	The welcome service for tourists with a smile and enthusiasm. Providing Service equipment facilities such as wheelchair and stroller.	Signage. Disabled toilet. Parking Handrails get standard.
Khon Kaen University	Determine the mission and scope of service in the policy. Including a balanced operating orientation. Organizing training every year and listening to resolve complaints including personnel and students suggestions.	Medical services at Sravakam Hospital	Accessible toilet. Parking Handrails get standard but there are not enough signs, including the ramp to be improve.
Community learning center at Ban Hua Fai Thailand women's cooperatives	Determine the mission and scope of service in the policy. Including a balanced operating orientation.	The welcome service for tourists with a smile and enthusiasm.	There are accessible bathroom but there are not enough signage, including the ramp to be improve.
Sa Thong Ban Hua Temple	Determine the mission and scope of service in the policy. Including a balanced operating orientation.	The welcome service for tourists with a smile and enthusiasm.	There are disabled bathroom and Ramp for wheelchairs but there are not enough signs including the ramp to be improve.

Quantitative

1. The results of general data analysis of 400 respondents.



2. This assessment is based on three aspects: management, service and public relations, and environmental buildings. The place must have a total score of not less than 76 points to pass the criterion 30%.

Place	score	criteria
Phra Mahathat Kaen Nakhon Temple	10	Pass
Khon Kaen Hospital	64	Pass
Sri Chant Road	57.5	Not pass
Khon Kaen City Pillar Shrine	51	Not pass
Central Plaza Khon Kaen	92.5	Pass
Khon Kaen University	88.5	Pass
Community learning center at Ban Hua Fai Thailand women's cooperatives	47	Not pass
Sa Thong Ban Hua Temple	22	Not pass

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SUSTAINABLE MICE

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Introduction

In MICE industry, each event gathers a large number of people who can have a potential negative impact on the environment and the community, especially contribute climate change through greenhouse gas emission. So, event organizers must take sustainable planning into consideration about. They are responsible for natural resources and local communities and need to minimize potential negative impacts.

Objective

1. To be aware of impacts in economic sustainability
2. To be aware of impacts on social sustainability
3. To be aware of impacts in environmental sustainability

Methodology

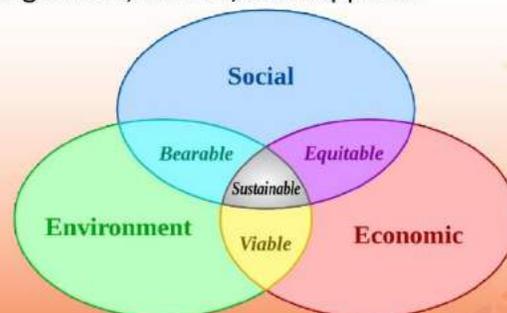
A qualitative study was used for this research by analysis and synthesis from literature review, and it studied about the impacts of sustainability.

Remark and conclusion

Many organizers can make a demand for sustainable consumption result in a benefit for a supplier to produce goods and services. Then goods and service price will become cheaper than making a positive impact on customers. Because of that, people will attend to Sustainability Development Goal (SDG) throughout the government and private sector organization to support MICE market.

Result and discussion

Managing a sustainable event was a long-term process, so we should have a good beforehand planning for achievement. A sustainable event had to be responsible for the environment, society, and economy. For example, waste reduction, reuse, and recycling, low emission transport, attention to equal opportunities, sensitivity to cultural or religious groups, encouraging participation of the local community, resources, goods, and services, employing the locals, money saving for better efficiency, and avoidance of corruption. For financial advantage, there were saving cost as a result of the reduction, reuse, and recycling, and purchasing local products. For the improved image, there were promotions which organizers or hosts of any sustainable events would raise the profile of the events. For the social benefit, involving small and medium regional enterprises (SME) could promote better working condition and social inclusion. It could create a job for each region. Selecting a venue and supplier was extremely important in bringing sustainability into implementing and development for event organizers, venues, and suppliers.



Sustainable picture from

<https://www.google.co.th/search?q=sustainable&tbm>

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THE BEGINNING TO GREEN MICE



Khewika Sukiam and Varissara Sam-ang
Liberal Arts and Sciences, Kasetsart University Kampeangsean Campus

Introduction

Nowadays all countries are facing global warming. It has severe effects on creatures on the earth. Most climate scientists agree that the main reason for the current global warming is human expansion, which is the cause of the “greenhouse effect”. On the earth, many human activities are changing the natural greenhouse, for example, burning fossil fuels like coal and oil, agriculture, development and expansion of industries, shipping, cutting trees, having electricity for events, traveling of visitors, and using many plastics in events. The effects of global warming on the earth are environmental and social change such as rising temperature in all countries, melting ice in the Antarctic, etc.

Objective

1. To concern about the greenhouse effect
2. To reduce, recycle, and reuse energy in MICE industry

Remark and conclusion

Green is not only occurring in MICE industry, but it affects the service industry. For example, in the hotel business, there is the Green Leaf Hotel which has 5 leaves. In tourism, Green Tourism means natural-conserved tourism. Now, it is time to concern the green to make people safe and healthy. (Jackson, 1993) Green Leaf Foundation from www.google.co.th/imgres?

Methodology

A qualitative study was used for this research by analysis and synthesis from literature review, and it studied about the impacts of the greenhouse effect.

Result and discussion

In MICE industry, it was realized of the greenhouse effect and the reduction of energy consumption in many events and countries for greater goods. It should be noted that events could be a part of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions by offsetting the carbon in event operations. Moreover, using materials that could be recycled, reduced and reused in every event in the long-term process would be sustainable for MICE. There were many ways of saving sources and budgets, and participants could respond to reducing non-renewable.

Finally, if every part in MICE industry could be reused, reduced, and recycled, it could be developed from Green MICE into Sustainable MICE.



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THE DEVELOPMENT OF GASTRONOMY EDUCATION PROGRAM TO PREPARE FOR PROFESSIONAL CHEF STUDENTS IN MICE INDUSTRY OF THAILAND

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Introduction

Gastronomy education has become an interesting and exciting for students, cooks and professionals to get various opportunities and chances in the assortment of new professional chef of culinary careers' paths (Scheuerman, Christina, & Christopher, 2004). This program will provide new Thai chef students with disciplined standards required in the MICE careers to learn a variety of professional culinary arts skills in terms of standard cooking competencies, advanced cooking personality abilities, cooking techniques, including ingredients terms, the nature of ingredients, equipment and utensil terms, cooking terms, and professional communication skills that might be possibly needed for both program and MICE industry development.

Objectives

1. To create a specific gastronomy education program at the tertiary level in Thailand.
2. To investigate the impacts of key professional chef development components on the achievement of the total gastronomy education program at a tertiary level in Thailand.

Methodology

The research utilizes mixed methods of both qualitative and quantitative approaches which focus on semi-structured interviews with 20 key informants or professional chefs responsible for banquet event and MICE management chosen from five luxury hotels in the Northeastern region and collect quantitative data by using a questionnaire based on the proposed conceptual framework (see Figure 1). The targeted quantitative sample groups are 400 culinarians working in the five selected luxury hotels. The participants are purposively and randomly selected based on the list of Thai Chef Associations.

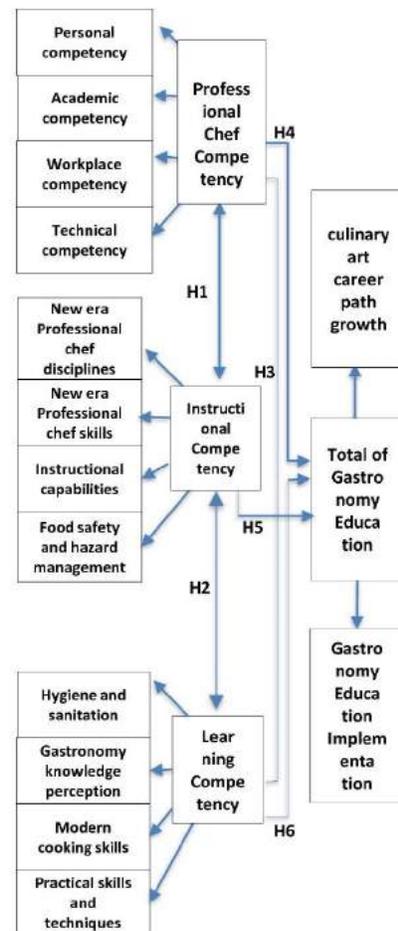
Results and discussion

Based on the proposed conceptual framework, the guideline in the development the gastronomy education program to prepare for a MICE career as a professional chef is comprised of four key components of 1) professional chef competency, 2) instructional achievement, 3) learning achievement, and 4) the total achievement of the culinary arts program. According to the conceptual framework, the research identifies the process of how the researcher will develop the gastronomy education program as the outcome of the current study, including hypothesis model of the study in Thailand. It is believed that the current research will help researchers, MICE educators and practitioners understand and obtain insightful practical culinary arts program a foundation for the competencies and capabilities needed for the entire entry-level gastronomy education especially for MICE industry in Thailand.

Remarks and conclusions

It can be said that the current study will give the worthy opportunities for new Thai chef students to be well-educated with wide ranges of knowledge and skills in gastronomy education standards in order to be accepted to work successfully as a new professional chef in the MICE food and service industry in the future.

Figure 1: The Underlying Components of Developing Specific Gastronomy Education in Thailand



A Proposed Conceptual Framework of Total Gastronomy Education Development with Hypothesis Model of the Study in Thailand



THE EXPLORATION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES IN MICE AND EVENT CAREER OPPORTUNITY

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INTRODUCTION

Anyone can manage an event. However, to be an event manager requires a complex and diverse set of skills, many of which will be specific to the type of business the company or individual will be trading in. The event industry itself is hugely diverse and its requirement for suppliers covers an enormous breadth of professions with an abundance of other trades in between. Significant career development plan and supported evident must have it available for students or a new entry level of the applicant in MICE and Event Management jobs.



OBJECTIVES

This study will focus on collecting the relevant information resources of career choices and support evident distinct of job scope throughout the career perspective by conducting an in-depth interview with the MICE management individual in Thailand.



LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Kanchan (2014), the most growing industry at this 21st century is an Event management industry at the rate of 150% per annum. It is good career choice for a new generation to pursue at these years [2]. Furthermore, agreeing with the best books for your career 2016 stated that when it comes to career reinvention, too many people expect easy answers and neat formulas. But in practice, finding your purpose is more of a path than a plan. Serendipity happens, but most of the time it takes hard work [3].



METHODOLOGY

The selected target group are:

- | | | |
|--|--|----------|
| | (1) Personnel from Faculty of Management Sciences , Prince of Songkla University | 1 person |
| | (2) Personnel from Queen Sirikit National Convention Center (QSNCC) | 1 person |
| | (3) Personnel from The 60th Anniversary of His Majesty the King's Accession to the Throne International Convention Center | 1 person |
| | (4) Organizers from Rightman Public Company Limited | 1 person |
| | (5) Organizers from CMO Public Company Limited | 1 person |



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INTRODUCTION

In Thailand, the simple answer is they search for a MICE destination that is effectively dissimilar from others, and offers benefits for delegates. These advantages include convenient accessibility to, from and within the country; modern infrastructure; international standard venues, an abundant choice of quality accommodation together with a variety of entertainment and recreational activities, to name just a few along with value for money combined with excellence. Located in the heart of ASEAN and serving as a major hub of this region (Business events Thailand, 2017).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To predict the future trends meetings in Thailand's B world class venues.
2. To assess the innovations of the meetings that organized the Thailand's B world class venue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A meeting is several people assembled together, usually at a pre-stated date and time, to discuss a topic for the purpose of presenting information, swaying opinion, formulating a decision, practicing a skill, and/or developing a plan of action (Eck, 2007). Those at the meeting may belong to the same group, to different groups, or perhaps not to any group at all. A meeting might be called by an individual or by an organization. Usually the people meeting convene together physically within a designated area sometimes, however, meetings are held by people thousands of miles apart via telephone conference calls or videoconferencing (Reinboersen, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

In order to get the full insight story of the major venues in Thailand, in depth interview is most suitable methodology to conduct research in this study. There will be eight interview sessions with eight management team of the major MICE venues that have the top standard in Thailand.

THE FUTURE MEETING THAILAND'S B WORLD CLASS VENUE

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AREA SCOPE





THE HOSPITALITY CRISIS MANAGEMENT PRACTICE IN BANGKOK FIVE-STAR HOTEL VENUES: A SWOT ANALYSIS

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Introduction

The Deadly Indian Ocean Tsunami on 26 December 2006, one of the most severe natural disasters in recorded history, and the terrorist attack of 11 September 2011 (9/11) which caused a great damage, suffering, and shock in the USA (Laws, Prideaux, & Chon, 2007) marked a significant change in the impact of terror on travel, tourism, and hospitality industries (Israeli et al., 2011). The 2008 global economic crisis caused turbulence in almost everyone's mind, especially in the hospitality industry (Cornell University, 2009). Signs of the latest global financial and economic crises emerged early on from the housing and financial crisis in the USA (Kritayanavaj, 2009) in 2008 have taken a toll on the U.S. lodging industry, which was faced with growing supply, shrinking demand, and lower room rates (Smith, 2009). It is clear that the impacts of these three key crisis factors, the 1997-2010 worst economic conditions, the 2010-2011 severe floods, and the 2005-2011 local political conflicts, could threaten total business operations and human resources of Bangkok luxury hotel venues in Thailand inevitably. Hence, this paper aims to investigate hospitality crisis management practices within the service quality execution of the hotel industry in Bangkok.

Objectives

1. To investigate hospitality crisis management practice of Bangkok luxury hotels when they faced the crises.

Methodology

The research explores crisis management issues focus on service quality performance of luxury hotel chains in Bangkok by applying SWOT analysis to reveal results. It is a qualitative study of how 3 environmental, political, and economic situations lead to a downturn in hotel consumption which result in a crisis lesson in five selected luxury hotel chains. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants chosen from the top management. Data collection was undertaken in Bangkok from October to May 2015. The study yielded 5 sufficient informants due to saturation and consensus of adequate informants that did not produce any new themes emerging from the qualitative data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Results and discussion

Strengths are service quality monitoring, resource audit and evaluation, service quality improvement, learning and growth driving. **Weaknesses** include limitations of staff's capabilities, rival standards, turnover rates, old properties, Thai staff disciplines, strategic planning of a firm's entity, and customers' expectations caused by higher competitive degree in an overall service quality excellence measure of the competition among Bangkok hotels. **Opportunities and threats** of economics, politics, and environments are identified to maintain better service quality improvement, standard, and pay more heed to risk and crisis management issues, while threats are country instability fear of safety and security in traveling and staying in Thailand. **Crisis management practice** is to deal with opportunities and threats, the Bangkok hotel venue management finally need sustain core values, brand standards, security and safety and market to domestic and new segments, and property innovation and renovation.

Remarks and conclusions

The study has provided insights into nature and extent of crisis management practice and service quality pertaining to Thai hotel venue industry.

**Table 1 SWOT analysis findings:
Internal factors**

KEY ANALYSIS (INTERNAL FACTORS)	Strengths Due to Crisis Events	Weaknesses Due to Crisis Events	Crisis Management Practice
1. Service quality performance monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service implementation • Effective productivity • More values/standards • Absent management • Absent outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unoriginal service culture • Staff's capabilities • Absent quality standards • Absent of Thai staff • Absent strategic planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining highest service quality of all levels
2. Resource audit and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent self-assessment • Absent of resources • Absent practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent controlling • Absent of cost increasing • Absent research application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the number of workers per week
3. Service quality improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service product initiatives • Absent productivity innovations • Absent value-added transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent price competition • Absent of available room • Absent sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent of processes and offers and value-added transformation
4. Learning and growth driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High information system • Absent of employee capabilities • Absent of innovation in career growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent of knowledge management • Absent of corporate alignments • Absent of government engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent of reliance on outsourcing • Absent of implementing commitment

**Table 2 SWOT analysis findings:
External factors**

KEY ANALYSIS (EXTERNAL FACTORS)	Opportunities Due to Crisis Events	Threats Due to Crisis Events	Crisis Management Practice
Political factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service quality improvement • Absent of standard development • Absent of heed to crisis issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent of political tensions • Absent of emergency state of safety and security in traveling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent of (value) standard • Absent of maintaining highest security and safety
Economic factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent of new market segments • Absent of campaign cooperation • Absent of strengthening business performance development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent of business slowdown • Absent of market segment change • Absent of visible quality risk due to cost reductions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent of marketing to domestic and new segments • Absent of implementing business development plan
Environmental factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent of property improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent of service quality atmosphere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent of property innovation and renovation



The Impact of Destination Image: Songkhla Old Town

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry plays a very important role in driving many countries economically and socially. Songkhla Province is a center for commerce as well as for history of the lower southern part of Thailand. It is an old town consisting of ancient communities, ancient sites, ancient artifacts, traditions, traditional entertainments.[1].

The image of tourism are important to the decision to visiting tourists, both in the present and future includes also tourist image is vital for the sustainability of attraction.[2].

OBJECTIVES

To assess the destination image of factors Songkhla old town.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the factors influencing image of Songkhla old town?

LOCATION

- Nakhon-nok road
- Nakhon-nai road
- Nang-ngam road



POPULATION

- Songkhla heritage society group
- People in local community

LITERATURE REVIEW

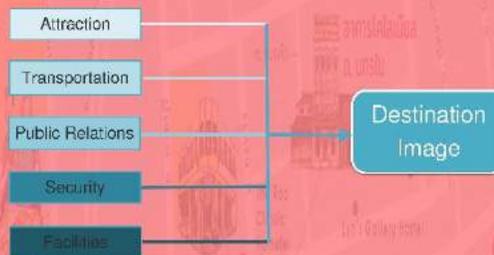
The factors used to Measure the image of Tourism attraction. It consists of eight factors: (1). Experience comes from the standards of tourism. (2). Attractiveness such as education, history or museum. (3). Relax or feel the atmosphere in the tourist attractions. (4). Learning or gaining new experiences from traveling. (5). The price is reasonable and the environment is good, no sewage. (6). Exciting and adventurous. (7). The population has a similar lifestyle. Harmony interaction. And (8). Reputation[3].

Moreover, there are also other factors involved with the factors used to measure the Image of tourism attraction such as, to measure the tourist's image from the general characteristics of the traveler's mind, or to measure the tourist image that is the highlight of each tourist attraction.[4].

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative methodology is applied in the research. The researcher conducted. The interview with Songkhla community.

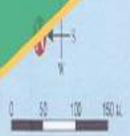
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Source: Coursehero.com. (2018).

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The Study of MICE Customer's need for Hotel catering in Bangkok



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Introduction

MICE industry in Thailand is the industry with customers from Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions, which generates revenue from MICE business group who comes from abroad, is three times the size of the Leisure group (TCEB, 2015). So the hotel business is a venue in the MICE industry. Especially hotel catering, it should have understanding and development of the correct marketing mix to meet the needs of the customer. Enhancing competitiveness and promote service in Thailand in the right direction.

Results and discussion

1) most respondents were from government agencies within the service business that have been operational for more than 5 years. They used hotel catering services for meeting arrangements. 2) the most important factor that influenced their selection is the product factor. The second factor was people, prices, processes, places, physical evidence and the presentation and promotion respectively.

Objectives

- 1) study customer's need for hotel catering.
- 2) to recommend the format of catering services within the MICE industry.

Methodology

The research instruments were a questionnaire and data analysis using percentages, mean and standard deviations. The samples of this research were of 100 persons collected from 20 organizations, using Krejcie & Morgan by selecting five persons in charge of preparing board meeting per organization.

Remarks and conclusions

Therefore, the establishment should focus on the meeting rooms to be appropriate to the needs of the user service facilities to clean, and provide a variety of food and drink. Anyway, expansion of study areas from the provincial level to the national level in the future.

Types of Business Involving Organizations	Quality	Total %
---	---------	---------

Service Business	55	55%
Educaions	15	15%
Customer Business	10	10%

Type of MICE Business	Quality	Total %
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Meeting	89	53
Incentive	16	10
Convention	37	22
Exhibition	25	15

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UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF THE BUSINESS TRAVELERS: A CASE STUDY IN PHUKET





400 Business Travelers
who stay in 4-5 stars hotels



8 months



Phuket province.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, Tourism is one of the world's largest economic sectors (Scowill, 2017). According to Turner and Freiermuth, stated that in 2015 the World Travel & Tourism Council reported travel and tourism directly contributed US\$2.3 trillion (Turner and Freiermuth, 2017). People travel for different reasons, but the two main reasons are for pleasure and for business (Walker, 2009). In 2016, 75.8% of all travel spend was as a leisure travel, compared to 23.2% from business travel (Turner and Freiermuth, 2017).

According to Tourism Industry in Thailand, the tourism industry is one of Thailand's main economic sector, accounting for 6-7% of its GDP. In 2016, Thailand welcomed a record number of 32.6 million visitor and revenue reached THB 2.5 trillion or USD 71 Billion. Most notable, besides leisure tourism, business tourism to Thailand has been on the rise as well. Business travel spending accounted for 23.4% of the travel and tourism industry's contribution to GDP in 2015, which was valued cumulatively at USD 1.1 trillion for the year. (Tourism Industry in Thailand, 2017).

Within the business travel sector, the meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) category in Thailand is a tantalizing prospect both for its high growth rate and its coveted high dollar per visit spending patterns. (The report Thailand, 2016)

Thailand is the ultimate business travel destination. Fast becoming a regional business hub ranking alongside countries like Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia, Thailand has admirably met it's responsibilities to the world's business community. For the business travelers, Thailand's hotels are a joy. Second to none for quality, services and facilities, many maintain business centres that offer the same facilities your office at home might offer. Thailand also has a fine tradition of serviced offices (Business Travel in Thailand - Thailand Travel Information, n.d.). Therefore, business travelers are a significant market for hotels to attract and retain. Understanding to the needs of business travelers is important for the hotel industry because of understanding what kinds of service amenities are significant to the hotel guests (Vuthipongse, 2001).

This research present an insight understand to needs and wants of business travelers from services in the hotels that they are satisfied. Recommendations will be given on how to improve service quality to attract and retain business travelers in hotels. It will be conducted by survey questionnaires from business travelers to use service for hotel in Phuket province, Thailand. According to TCEB, stated to the Phuket was the MICE city in Thailand. There are popular for business travelers and there have many hotels to welcome for business travelers. The results of this study should be helpful to hotels when providing services to business travelers. (bureau, 2014)

Objectives

1. To study the needs for Business Travelers who use service for hotels in Phuket.
2. To identify the quality of service to attract and retain business travelers for hotel in Phuket.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Business Travelers Needs

Business travelers are looking for a home away from home and an office away from the office (Seo, 1997). Most business travelers wanted hotel rooms to make them feel like they were at home. Therefore, they wanted cleanliness, comfort, safety, attentive service and peace and quiet (Pierson, 1995). According to Spano (1998), security seemed to be a primary factor. Moreover, business travelers needed to be productive when they travel for business. Business facilities—such as High-speed Internet access, copying machines, fax machines, cable services, computers, telephone jacks for computer modems, and other types of service and equipment—were increasingly needed and were expected by business travelers (Spano, 1998).

According to Stephens (1990), business travelers are usually in a hurry and want fast service in every department of the hotel. Automatic check in/out and quick, efficient breakfasts were good examples.

Service quality

The concept of service quality and customer satisfaction. From the last decade, the service sector has become greater economic importance. The elimination of waste due to poor quality and meeting customer expectations are the major challenges facing managers in the service sector. The reasons why we should measure service quality, customer satisfaction in hotel industry as well as their measures. Time by time, different researchers tried to find out the way to measure of service quality and customer satisfaction in the hotel industry. Next scientist generation improved the model of the precedents or invented a new one. Among all, three most popular models to measure customer satisfaction and service quality in the hotel industry are SERVQUAL, HOLSERV and LODGING QUALITY INDEX. (Na, 2010)

METHODOLOGY

The research of understanding the needs of the business travelers, a case study hotel in Phuket was undertaken by quantitative research technique. The overall purpose of this research is to study the satisfaction of needs and wants for business travelers who use service for hotels in Phuket, and to identify the quality of service to attract and retain business travelers for hotel in Phuket.

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An Economic Impact Assessment of a Flagship Festival in Thailand: A Case of Chiang Mai Flower Festival 2018

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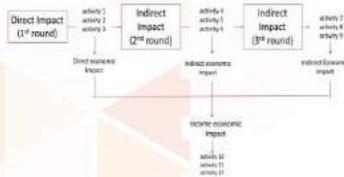


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

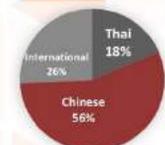


Figure 2: Nationality



Figure 3: How to get to the event?

Introduction

Chiang Mai Flower Festival is the biggest event during winter season in Chiang Mai which more than 150,000 visitors from around the world coming to Chiang Mai each year. This year event happened in 2nd – 4th February 2018.

Objectives

This paper aims to study the statistical data of visitors who were joining the Chiang Mai Flower Festival 2018 and analyses an economic impact of the event.

Methodology

- Scope area: the Nawarat bridge and Suanbuakhad garden.
- Data: The data were collected from 440 visitors who were joining the event through the self-administrative questionnaires. The 2010 I-O table from the Office of National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) was used to calculate the multiplier index of 16 main sectors refer to Chiang Mai's economy.
- Data analysis: input-output table model (I-O model) through the multiplier effect approach.

Results and discussion

From 3 days survey, there are more than 183,569 visitors joined the event during 3 days, including 15,041 visitors who joined the flower parade at the Nawarat bridge on 3rd February 2018.

1. From 440 sample respondents, 205 people are Chinese, 137 people are other foreigners, and 98 people are Thai, 20 – 30 years old mostly.
2. 81% of them are first time attendant. Generally, the visitors came to the event with friends (51%), family (29%), and themselves (13%). Thai visitors were attending the event by motorbike and personal cars mainly (80.6%), while Chinese and other international visitors were attending by walk and public red car (31.87% and 29.53% respectively).
3. All respondents were spending mainly THB 3,232 in accommodation, souvenir about THB 333.42, and transportation about THB 250.18.
4. during 3 days of the event can generate more than 48.7 million THB to the area in total, which is from Chinese mostly (56.93%). This event creates 47.96 million THB in direct impact from visitors' spending, 371,212 THB in output indirect impact, and 370,410 THB in income indirect impact.
5. whole event creates 8,600 job positions in total, which is 5,375 positions in service sector, 2,476 positions in industry sector, and 749 positions in agricultural sector, respectively.

In addition, the visitors were asked about the outstanding activity of the event, the result found that "the flowers exhibition and contest" and "Flower parade" are the most outstanding activities for all visitors.

Remarks and conclusions

- **business opportunities for the future:** This suggested flowers and event's photo contest, the rare tree auction and the online flower trading. Chinese visitors suggested photo contest, business matching, and are tree auction the most. Thus, the organisers may provide the other new activities to attract the new groups visitors.



Figure 4: Spending during the event (THB)

Table 1: An economic impact of Chiang Mai Flower Festival 2018

Economic Impact	Thai	Chinese	International	Total
Direct Impact	3,658.37	27,317.48	16,992.1	47,967.93
Output	30,536.2	210.03	130.6	371,212
Income	43.68	201.44	125.30	370.41
Indirect Impact				
Total	3,732.58	27,718.95	17,248.0	48,708.55

Note: Thousand THB

Table 2: Employment Impact

Sectors	Employment multiplier	Direct Impact (person)	Indirect Impact (person)	Total employment (person)
Agriculture	30.38	25	723	748
Industry	12.53	1	2,475	2,476
Service	34.13	6	5,369	5,375

Table 3: Business opportunity for the future event

No.	Thai	Chinese	International
1 st	Photo contest (42%)	Photo contest (55.34%)	Photo contest (35%)
2 nd	Rare trees auction (27%)	Business matching (25.2%)	Rare trees auction (20%)
3 rd	Online flower trading (18%)	Rare trees auction (22.8%)	Online flower trading (14%)
4 th	Academic Conference related to the flower festival (8%)	Academic Conference related to the flower festival (23.33%)	Academic Conference related to the flower festival (13%)
5 th	Business matching (7%)	Online flower trading (20.4%)	Business matching (13%)

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Introduction

The development of the MICE business (Meetings, Incentive Travel, Conventions, Exhibitions) to be in the form of "Halal", that is the one method in developing the MICE business in various forms and can support the number of Muslim visitors that are being popular to travel for the business more than the past (Master Card & Crescent Rating, 2017).

What is Halal ?

Halal is defined as "That which is permitted, with respect to which no restriction exists, and the doing of which the Law-Giver, Allah, has allowed" (Al-Qaradawi, 2013, p.XXV).

Objectives

- 1) To study the composition of MICE city destination that is suitable for measuring the readiness of the Halal service in the meeting business and to study about the detail of the Halal service in each component.
- 2) To build and develop the scale for measuring the readiness of the Halal service in the meeting.

Research Methods

Method

- Survey questionnaire for data collection of the meeting service provider (n = 400).
- The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity to measure sampling adequacy with recommendations on the KMO > 0.5 ; Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant at (p < 0.05)
- Confirmatory factor analysis with recommendations on fit indices : $\chi^2/df < 3.0$; GFI and AGFI > 0.9 ; RMS < 0.08 ; TLI and CFI > 0.95 ; RMSEA < 0.05
- Internal consistency with recommendations on α -coefficient > 0.6
- Multicollinearity with recommendations on VIF > 3.0 ; tolerance test < 0.33

Scale Development Process

The Halal meeting service readiness scale development was combined the scale development process by Churchill (1979) and the scale development steps by Morgado et al. (2017).

Scale Constructs

The composition of the MICE city destination 10 sides (Piboonrunroj et al., 2015 ; Sealin, 2015) based on the factor in evaluating the capacity of the city for being the destination of the MICE city in Thailand (TCEB, 2014) consist of ;

1. Accessibility
2. Amenity
3. Activity
4. Area (Venue)
5. Attraction
6. Accommodation
7. Agency
8. Accountability
9. Award
10. Advance in Business Opportunity

Remark and conclusions

Halal service in the meeting is a new fundamental of MICE business that initiates in order to cater Muslim visitors need while they are attending the meeting. The initiative of developing the scale for measuring the readiness of Halal meeting service will be focus more on the Halal service concept in each component of the MICE city destination because Muslim visitors are always seeking for the Halal (friendly) services when they are attending.

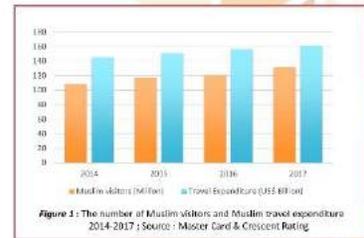


Figure 1: The number of Muslim visitors and Muslim travel expenditure 2014-2017; Source : Master Card & Crescent Rating

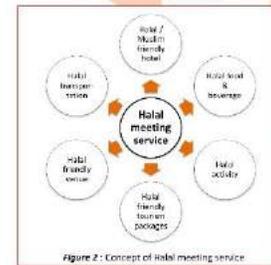


Figure 2: Concept of Halal meeting service

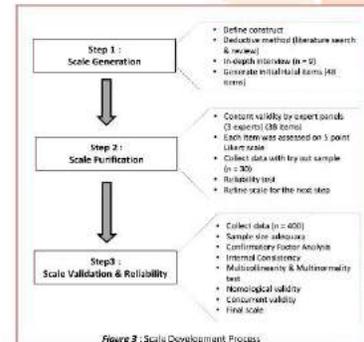


Figure 3: Scale Development Process

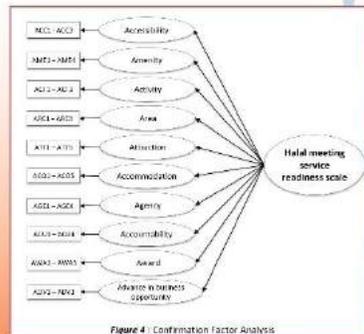


Figure 4: Confirmation Factor Analysis

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1st INTERNATIONAL MICE
CONFERENCE AND FORUM
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Motivation

- Gaps in the literature:
- 1. Lack of a complete measurement of MICE impact in Northern part of Thailand (Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang and Mae Hong Son)
- 2. Limited studies of MICE impact in Northern part of Thailand Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang and Mae Hong Son)

Objectives

1. Making awareness of the importance of the MICE industry
2. Assessment the economic impact of the MICE industry which is occurred in Northern Province of Thailand
3. Analyzing the impact of the MICE business related to the 16 branches of the economy



Estimating the Economic Impact of MICE Business, Using Input-Output Model

Chanamart Itapan, Pimpika Chawalit and Pairach Piboonrunroj, Ph.D

Contributions

1. The summary of the direct and indirect impacts of MICE industry in Northern Province of Thailand Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang and Mae Hong Son)
2. New measurement method of MICE industry impacts (using I-O table)

Research Methods and Results

Methods: Input-Output Model (2010) was selected as model prototype from Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board

Results:

1. The economic impact of the output
2. The economic impact of the income

Summarize the economic impact of MICE activities. (unit: million Baht)

Direct Impact	M	I	C	E
Output	2,995,823.51	1,841,335.43	1,981,627.65	2,344,049.22

Indirect Impact	M	I	C	E
Output	4,708,713.43	2,894,136.06	3,114,641.67	3,684,281.14
Income	4,469,487.57	2,747,099.68	2,956,402.51	3,497,101.50

Table1: Impact on productivity of international conference and exhibition activities.

	Conventions	Exhibitions	Total
Impact on output	3,086,269.314	6,028,303.37	11,124,599.68
Direct impact	1,981,627.648	2,344,049.22	4,325,676.868
Indirect impact	3,114,641.666	3,684,281.14	6,798,922.806

Table2: Impact on the revenues of international conferences and exhibitions activities.

	Conventions	Exhibitions	Total
Impact on revenues	4,938,038.16	5,611,250.72	10,579,288.88
Direct impact	1,981,627.65	2,344,049.22	4,325,676.87
Indirect impact	2,956,402.51	3,497,101.50	6,453,504.01

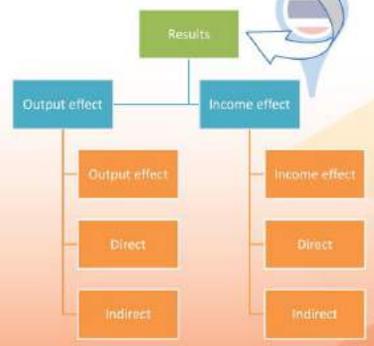
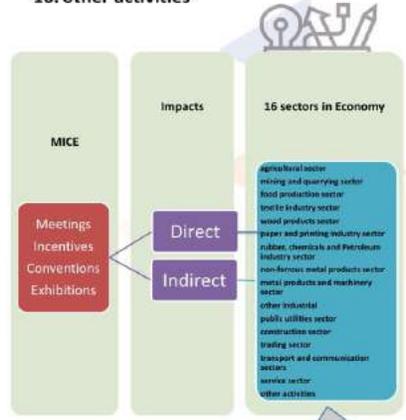
“Transport and communications sector is the sector that has been most affected by the MICE industry.”

A Future Direction

The importance of MICE industry has been recognized. And it has a great relationship with various manufacturing branches. Therefore, this report hopes to have the benefit of the relevant agencies, both public, private sector and civil society. The various sectors of society should support MICE activities. Since these activities can generate income and productivity for the economy and in order to promote the province as a prime choice for MICE activities. This will create the economic growth of tourism in the Northern Province sustainably into the future.

Constructs

- 16 sectors in the economy include
1. agricultural sector
 2. mining and quarrying sector
 3. food production sector
 4. textile industry sector
 5. wood products sector
 6. paper and printing industry sector
 7. rubber, chemicals and Petroleum industry sector
 8. non-ferrous metal products sector
 9. metal products and machinery sector
 10. other industrial
 11. public utilities sector
 12. construction sector
 13. trading sector
 14. transport and communication sectors
 15. service sector
 16. other activities



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THE ANALYSIS OF GUIDELINES FOR THE STANDARD PREPARATION OF THE MEETING ROOMS IN THAILAND.

Natthanittha Singbura-Udom, Nug-rob Rawangkam, Sinthawa Khamdit, Somboon Cheng, and Narongrit Neelayothin*

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Introduction

The meeting rooms standard is an important strategy for promoting venue and service quantity and quality in order to serve both domestic and international customers.

Therefore, the process of the standard preparation is very essential to ensure that the standard is useful and applicable for all those who involved in the MICE industry.



Objectives

To analyze the guidelines for the standard preparation of the meeting rooms in Thailand.

Research Result

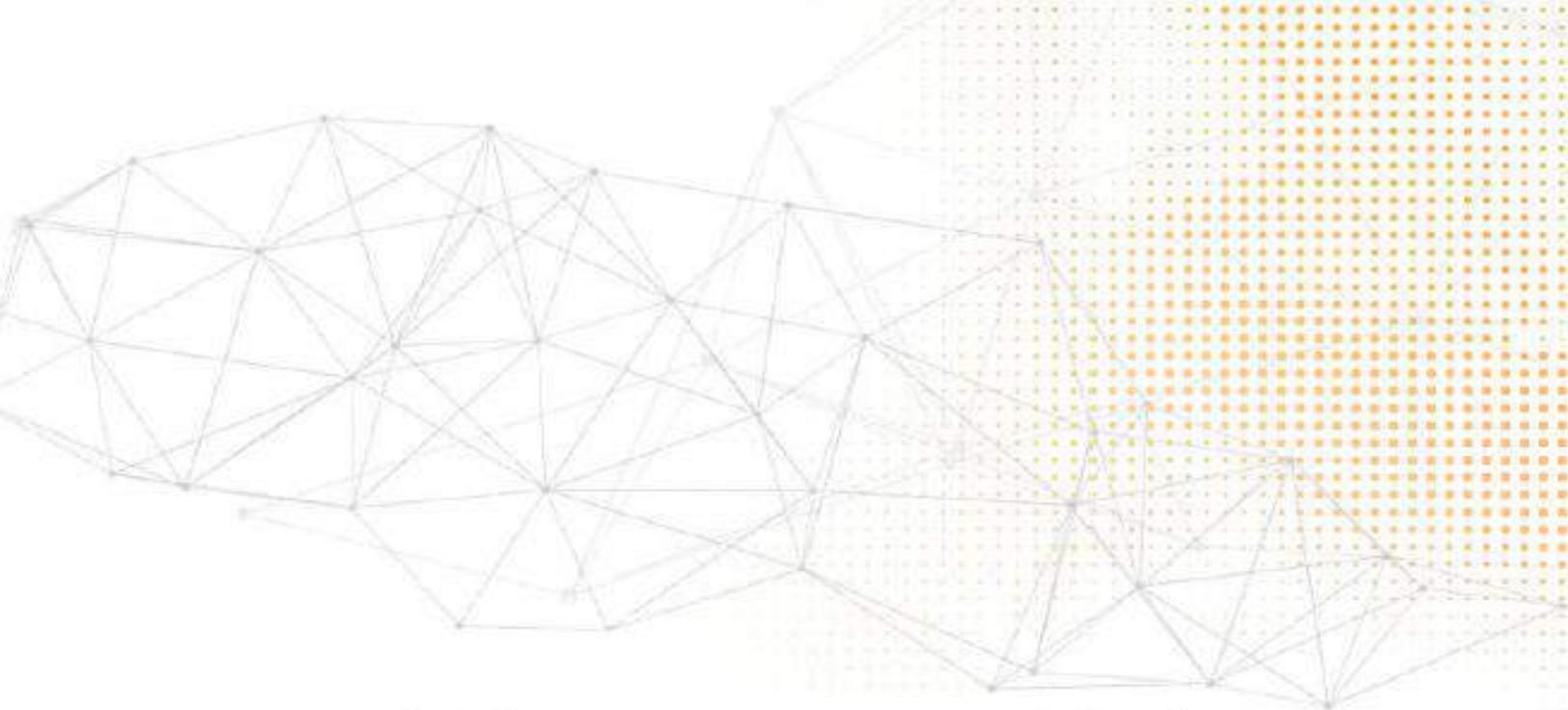


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