European Journal of Social Sciences
ISSN 1450-2267 Vol.28 No.3 (2012), pp. 401-407
© EuroJournals Publishing, Inc. 2012
http://www.europeanjournalofsocialsciences.com

Expectation and Satisfaction of Tourists Traveling to Historic Town of Ayutthaya

Noppanon Homsud
Marketing Department, Faculty of Management Science
Silpakorn University, Petchaburi, Thailand
E-mail: noppanon@ms.su.ac.th
Tel: +66-32-594031; Fax: ++66-32-594029

Thitiporn Samransart
General Business Department, Faculty of Management Science
Silpakorn University, Petchaburi, Thailand
E-mail: luk.jeabkung@hotmail.com
Tel: +66-89-2385738; Fax: ++66-32-594029

Abstract

The objective of this research is to compare between expectation and satisfaction of tourists who travel to The Historic Town of Ayutthaya. The study used questionnaires in 382 samples who were tourists. It was found that satisfaction was less than expectation in historic places, people, architecture, religious place, cultural place, handicraft, activities, shopping place, souvenir, and toilet, while satisfaction was more than expectation in travel to historic town, travel in historic town, expense, drink, food, and local food. Moreover, satisfaction did not differ significantly from expectation in direction sign, monument, museum, information center, art gallery, scenery, atmosphere, and climate.

Keywords: Historic Town of Ayutthaya, Satisfaction, Expectation

1. Introduction

Phra Nakorn Si Ayutthaya, the former capital of Thailand, has been the center of civilization for a long time, around 417 years. This city has been collecting prosperous art and culture since in the past to the present. Although Krung Si Ayutthaya was destroyed by the war against neighbors, there are still evidences of this Kingdom expressing wisdom and great potentials of ancestors who ever dedicated themselves to create prosperous art and culture as well as wealthy through Siam land. Even any foreign countries can see this wealthy. As appeared on December 13, 1991, UNESCO organization by World Heritage Committees in Carthage, Tunisia resolved Historic Town of Ayutthaya to be existed in the World Heritage List. This makes Thai people have been proud of valuable beauty and history, until Phra Nakorn Si Ayutthaya becomes a crucial tourist place which attracts both numerous Thai and foreigner tourists to visit every year. For the tourists, not only travel for the purpose of private tourism but also for the historic knowledge.

Each year, Phra Nakorn Si Ayutthaya promotes important festivals to support the existence of nice culture and tradition to attract tourists. This makes a result of increasing income within the province and also distribute to communities. Hence, the development and support of sustainable tourism is really important. This can be carried out by linking among local knowledge together, which

include the knowledge of history, culture, biological variety, ancient remains, antique as well as community-based tourism management themselves to let them have alternatives through the development by their own and also to let them can apply or use local resources from tourism sustainably.

One of the crucial processes to generate sustainable development is that to make the tourists have revisiting. In the meaning of tourism, it means how to satisfy the tourists until they come back to revisit or forward the stories to others through one of the channels to perceive the appreciation they got. At any rate, the satisfaction of individuals has expectation to be the important element as well. Chon and Olsen (1991) explained that if a place or an environment was as the same as other places but a person expected this place highly, when he/she visited and found that it wasn't meet his/her expectation, surely he/she would be dissatisfied. And vice versa, if a person didn't expect too much but he/she found that it was better than ever expected, he/she would be satisfied. Therefore, this research aimed to study the expectation and satisfaction of Thai tourists who visited Historic Town of Ayutthaya.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this research was to study the expectation and satisfaction which Thai tourists received from the visit of Historic Town of Ayutthaya as well as comparison the difference between expectation and satisfaction received by the tourists. The hypothesis of this research was that Thai tourists who visited Historic Town of Ayutthaya had no difference in expectation and satisfaction.

3. Research Methodology

The research methodology was divided into 3 parts which included: population and sample, research instruments, and data analysis. The details in each part were as follows:

3.1. Population and Sample

The population for this research was Thai tourists who visit Historic Town of Ayutthaya. All of them cannot find the information from any organization both governmental and private sections. Therefore, the researcher used survey data of Tourism Authority of Thailand (2009) which reported that in 2007 there were Thai tourists visiting Phra Nakorn Si Ayutthaya for the number of 2,593,106 persons in total. Nonetheless, the data on the number of tourists visiting Phra Nakorn Si Ayutthaya in 2008-2009 hasn't been reported by any organization.

The number of samples was calculated according to the formula of Yamane (1967) with significance level of 0.05. The number of samples was 400 persons in total, approximately.

While the random sampling was carried out by Convenience Sampling method and because this research aimed to know both expectation and satisfaction, therefore the data collection had to be collected from the samples who had visited all programs determined at an acceptable level.

With the reason mentioned above and for the data distributed, the researchers selected the time of data collection around the afternoon time of 03.00 – 05.00 p.m. on Saturdays-Sundays of August for 3 weeks within 4 main tourism places of Historic Town of Ayutthaya consisted of Wat Chai Wattanaram, Wat Phra Mong Kol Borpit, Wat Yai Chai Mongkon and Wat Panancheung.

3.2. Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this research was questionnaire. The step of creating questionnaire started from reviewing the literatures, ideas and theories related to the tourism research, historical places and satisfaction. This questionnaire was improved from the research of Huh (2002). Then, asked

2 experts of tourism and consumer behaviors, after that, test the questionnaire with 30 samples. The reliability of questionnaire revealed that the coefficient of Cronbach (alpha) was equal to 0.828.

The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts as follows:

First part; general data had 5 items including gender, age, hometown, income per month and educational level.

Second part; tourism behaviors in Historic Town of Ayutthaya of 5 items consisted of the visit within 3 years, number of time which ever visit, time period used for acquiring the data, channel of acquiring the data and persons who accompanied.

Third part; items valued the expectation and satisfaction of tourists towards visit in Historic Town of Ayutthaya for 24 items by Likert Scale 5 levels. Level 1 referred to expect/satisfied at the least level, 2 referred to expect/satisfied for a little level, 3 referred to expect/satisfied at moderate level; 4 referred to expect/satisfied at much level and 5 referred to expect/satisfied at the most level. However, the measure of expectation and satisfaction after the tourists had ever used the service was in accordance with the method of Huh (2002) and Pizam and Millman (1993).

3.3. Data Analysis

The data analysis was divided into 3 parts: The first part; general data, second part; tourism behaviors in Historic Town of Ayutthaya. The data in this part was analyzed by using frequency and percentage. The third part; hypothesis test between expectation and satisfaction received from tourism in Historic Town of Ayutthaya. This part was analyzed by using mean and hypothesis testing by t-test statistics by testing the equal of variance with Levene statistics. All of data analysis was carried out by Minitab program version 15 (Trial Version).

4. Results

The research results were divided into 4 parts; general data, tourism behaviors in Historic Town of Ayutthaya, hypothesis testing between expectation and satisfaction from tourism in the Historic Town of Ayutthaya, divided into the level of expectation and satisfaction as the details as follows:

4.1. General Data

According to general data, the participants were 229 females and 153 males.

The participants were between 26 – 35 years old the most, 136 persons (26.44%), the second was between 18 – 25 years old, 101 person (35.60%), 36 – 45 years old, 73 persons (19.11%), 46 – 60 years old, 39 persons (10.21%) and more than 60 years old, 33 persons (8.64%), respectively.

The participants had the domicile at the central part the most, 153 persons (40.05%), the second, the domicile was in Bangkok and metropolitans, 72 persons (18.85%), north region, 58 persons (15.18%), north-east region, 40 persons (10.47%), east region, 25 persons (6.54%), west region, 22 persons (5.76%) and south region, 12 persons (3.14%), respectively.

The participants income between 0 – 19,999 baht the most, 280 persons (73.30%), the second was between 20,000 – 29,999 baht, 57 persons (14.92%), between 30,000 – 49,999 baht, 22 persons (5.76%), 50,000 – 99,999 baht, 18 persons (4.71%), more than 100,000 baht, 5 persons (1.31%), respectfully.

The participants had the educational level at bachelor degree the most, 221 persons (57.85%), the second was higher than bachelor degree, 63 persons (16.49%), high school level, 59 persons (15.45%) and lower than high school level, 39 persons (10.21%), respectively.

4.2. Tourism behavior in Historic Town of Ayutthaya

The participants ever visited Historic Town of Ayutthaya in the last 3 years, 233 persons (60.99%) and had never visited before since the last three years, 149 persons (39.01%).

The participants ever visited Historic Town of Ayutthaya 1 time the most, 207 persons (54.19%), the second was ever visited 2 – 3 times, 70 persons (18.32%), had never visited before, 62 persons (16.23%), ever visited 4 – 5 times, 32 times (8.38%) and ever visited more than 5 times, 11 persons (2.88%), respectfully.

The participants prepared themselves before visiting at Historic Town of Ayutthaya for 7 days – 1 month the most, 125 persons (32.72%), the second was preparing for 3 – 7 days, 114 persons (29.84%), preparing less than 3 days, 106 persons (27.75%), preparing for 1 – 3 months, 31 persons (8.12%) and preparing themselves more than 3 months, 6 persons (1.57%), respectively.

The participants visited Historic Town of Ayutthaya with the family the most, 192 persons (50.26%), the second was visited with the spouse/girl or boyfriend, 104 persons (27.23%), visited alone, 56 persons (14.66%) and visited with friends, 30 persons (7.85%), respectively.

The participants prepared to visit Historic Town of Ayutthaya by internet the most, 165 persons (43.19%), the second was prepared to visit by asking from acquaintances, 130 persons (34.03%), from television program, 60 persons (15.71%), newspaper, 15 persons (3.93%) and magazine, 12 persons (3.14%), respectively.

4.3. Hypothesis Test between Expectation and Satisfaction Received from Historic Town of Ayutthaya

The test result of hypothesis could be presented by 3 subtitles consisted of items which the satisfaction were higher than expectation by significance; the items which satisfaction were lower than expectation by significance; and the items which the satisfaction and expectation was not different. The details were as follows:

4.3.1. Items which the Satisfaction were higher than Expectation

The test result of hypothesis revealed that there were items which measured the expectation and satisfaction of the tourists towards the visit to travel to Historic Town of Ayutthaya for 6 items which the satisfaction was higher than the expectation by significance at 0.05 level which consisted of travel to Historic Town of Ayutthaya, travel within Historic Town of Ayutthaya, expense, drinks, food, and local food. The details were shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean of satisfaction, mean of expectation, and Sig. of items which satisfaction were higher than expectation at 0.05 significance level

Item	Mean of Satisfaction	Mean of Expectation	Sig.
Travel to Historic Town	4.54	3.28	0.000
Travel in Historic Town	4.46	3.98	0.000
Expense	4.32	3.35	0.000
Drink	4.23	3.98	0.001
Food	4.23	3.92	0.000
Local Food	4.10	3.20	0.000

4.3.2. Items which the Satisfaction were Lower than the Expectation

The test result of hypothesis revealed that there were 10 items to measure the expectation and satisfaction of tourists towards the visit to Historic Town of Ayutthaya which the satisfaction was lower than the expectation by significance at 0.05 level consisted of historical place, people, architecture, religious place, cultural place, handicraft, activity, shopping place, souvenir and toilet. The details were shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean of satisfaction, mean of expectation, and Sig. of items which satisfaction were lower than expectation at 0.05 significance level

Item	Mean of Satisfaction	Mean of Expectation	Sig.
Historical Place	3.87	4.34	0.000
People	3.82	4.02	0.023
Architecture	3.75	4.20	0.000
Religious Place	3.61	4.07	0.000
Cultural Place	3.37	4.04	0.000
Handicraft	2.87	3.23	0.001
Activity	2.85	3.20	0.001
Shopping Place	2.54	3.93	0.000
Souvenir	2.46	3.92	0.000
Toilet	2.28	4.00	0.000

4.3.3. Items which the Satisfaction were not Different from Expectation

The test result of hypothesis revealed that 8 items which measured the expectation and satisfaction of tourists towards the visit to Historic Town of Ayutthaya which the satisfaction was not different from the expectation by significance at 0.05 level which consisted of direction sign, monument, museum, information center, art gallery, scenery, atmosphere, and climate. The details were shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean of satisfaction, mean of expectation, and Sig. of items which satisfaction were not different from expectation at 0.05 significance level

Item	Mean of Satisfaction	Mean of Expectation	Sig.
Direction Sign	4.01	3.88	0.117
Monument	3.48	3.36	0.256
Museum	3.30	3.46	0.159
Information Center	3.10	3.24	0.202
Art Gallery	3.09	3.30	0.065
Scenery	2.82	3.03	0.062
Atmosphere	2.81	2.93	0.242
Climate	2.54	2.73	0.062

4.4. Items Divided into the Level of Expectation and Satisfaction

To divide all of 24 items in accordance with the level of expectation and satisfaction of the tourists who visited to Historic Town of Ayutthaya used the average to be the criteria. If any item had the average higher than the total average, it indicated that that item had expectation/satisfaction at a high level. Vice versa, if any item had the average lower than the total average, it indicated that that item had expectation/satisfaction at a low level. According to the calculation of average of expectation and satisfaction, it revealed that the total average of expectation was equal to 3.61 whereas the total average of satisfaction was equal to 3.44.

From the total average of tourists who visited Historic Town of Ayuttaya which could be calculated, it was found that there were 12 items at the high level and 12 items were at a low level.

While the total average of satisfaction of tourists who visited Historic Town of Ayuttaya which could be calculated found that there were 12 items which the satisfaction calculated were at a high level and 12 items which the satisfaction calculated were at a low level.

When bringing the level of expectation and satisfaction calculated to create the matrix, it was found that matrix 2 x 2 had 8 items of expectation were high and the satisfaction were at a high level and had 4 items of expectation were at a low level and the satisfaction at a high level. There were 8 items which had the expectation at a low level and the satisfaction was at a low level. Moreover, there are 4 items of expectation were at a high level and the satisfaction at a low level. The details were shown in Fig. 1.

Figure 1: Matrix of Items by Expectations and Satisfactions

Low	**High**		
Expectations			
	Historical Place	Satisfactions	High
	Architecture		
	People		
	Religious Place		
Cultural Place	Food		
Shopping Place	Travel in Historic Town		
Souvenir	Direction Sign		
Toilet	Drink		
Museum	Monument		Low
Art Gallery	Expense		
Scenery	Travel to Historic Town		
Handicraft	Local Food		
Activity			
Information Center			
Atmosphere			
Climate			

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

According to the research results, the tourists had satisfaction towards historic city less than expected. This is not the good sign for Historic Town of Ayutthaya much. As it is common known that the tourists who visit Historic Town of Ayutthaya, they would like to visit the historic city to be the main. If satisfaction happens, it is highly possible that there will have no-revisit anymore. The tourists may forward to someone they know via one of the channels with they found. This result may be possible to affect like chain.

Therefore, the administrators involved with the tourism in this area have to carefully consider there should not be exaggerated by the advertisement and public relation about the places through the tourists to let them imagine exaggeratedly. Moreover, it should have the improvement by making the historic place to be more interested without affecting the previous historic environments, such as it may have cultural exhibition or movie to create appreciation to the tourists. According to the literature review from Glasson (1994), it was found that the tourist feel satisfied with those historic places up to 80% and planned to revisit. Thus, the tourism administrators may have to study or visual education/observe activities to improve Historic Town of Ayutthaya to be better.

Another point which should be considered is shops and souvenir shops which are the crucial factor to increase income to communities and help create the sustainable development. However, the tourist had high expectation but low satisfaction. The research result cannot be concluded that the shops or souvenir shops of Phra Nakorn Si Ayutthaya isn't good but it isn't as good as the customers expect. Thus, the involved have to try very much to develop the products as well as the channel of distribution to be better and better.

Because of the climate condition in Phra Nakorn Si Ayutthaya is hot almost all over the year; therefore the tourists may not visit by this reason. The administrators may suggest the new way of tourism by allowing the tourists to visit the place at night time using light and sound system which help reducing climate problem which is hot to very hot at daytime.

The main outstanding of Historic Town of Ayutthaya is about the expense. The tourists expect that there are numerous expenses but in fact the expenses in Phra Nakorn Si Ayutthaya is rather cheap,

for example, a car which gives a service around the city is only 7 baht per time or the travel fare from Bangkok is only 50 baht, approximately. Moreover, in various places, there are no charges for the fee and this can attract a lot of tourists to visit. However, the tourism administrators have to consider the number of tourists as well since this can disturb or ruin the ancient remains and antiques within the historical city.

This research is the primary research which the interest can apply or test with other historic areas, such as historic city of Sukhothai and satellite towns, Phu Phrabat Historical Park or Ban Chiang archeological resources, etc. in order to get the wider views. In addition, there may have to study the main factor for the revisit or satisfaction in overall images of the tourists.

References

[1] Chon, K.S., and M.D., Olsen., 1991. "Funtional and Symbolic Approaches to Consumer Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction", *Journal of the International Academy of Hospitality Research* 28, 1-20.

[2] Glasson, J., 1994. "Oxford: a heritage city under pressure", *Tourism Management*. 15(2), 137-144.

[3] Huh, J., 2002. "Tourist Satisfaction with Cultural / Heritage Site: The Virginia Historic Triangle" *Master of Science in Hospitality and Tourism Management, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.*

[4] Pizam, A., and A., Millman., 1993. "Predicting satisfaction among first-time visitors to a destination by using the expectancy-disconfirmation theory", *International Journals of Hospitality Management.* 12(2), 197-209.

[5] The Tourism Authority of Thailand., 2009. "Internal tourism in Ayutthaya", *Available from http://www2.tat.or.th/stat/web/static_index.php Access on 12 July 2009.*

[6] Yamane, T., 1967. *Statistics, an Introductory Analysis,* 2nd Ed., New York: Harper and Row.