

THM

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La Toscana

Suan Phueng

Photo by Pratchaya Leelaprachayanont

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Tourism and Hospitality *Trend*

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Tourism and Hospitality Trends and Analysis, Quarter 3 2013

• Tourism Trends and Analyses

With the growth in tourism demand from its neighboring countries (e.g. Myanmar and Vietnam), Thailand's tourism industry has to learn new skills (e.g. languages and cultural sensitivity) in dealing with the upcoming ASEAN Economic Community. Tourism investment will continue to support the regional tourism development. The Thai government needs to consider promoting new destinations to take advantage of the opportunities for its own growth in the regional market, especially the provinces in the southern part of Thailand.

Bangkok was awarded as the "World's Best Tourist Destination" by the MasterCard Global Destination Cities Index 2013. This recognition can definitely help promote tourism mainly for Bangkok and other provinces in Thailand.

It was recently announced that the visa for Thai tourists visiting Japan will be waived. This development can definitely boost tourism in Japan since it is one of the most popular destinations for Thais. This move by the Japanese government will obviously have an impact on that country's economic recovery. For the same reason, the US government has taken steps to use tourism as one part of the rescue package to bring its economy out of deep recession.

• Hospitality Trends and Analyses

Thailand's hospitality industry enjoys a strong position in the Asian market because the country just recently received an award for being the most popular hospitality investment market in Asia from the Asia and Pacific Hotel Investment Conference. Clearly, this indicates a good sign for the long-term hospitality business environment.

The MICE industry of Thailand is growing strongly and rapidly as several MICE organizations prepare themselves for AEC. Business matching and forming new business partners around ASEAN are the main activities at the moment for many MICE companies and the goal of becoming the MICE hub of Asia may be closer to reality. One of the important steps for Thailand to be the MICE hub of Asia we firstly need to start and show the strengths in Southeast Asia.

For the airline industry, rising competition has never been more intense. The airlines with the greater capability to expand will have the better market position. The key factor of success is not only dependent on just the size of the business, but also on the speed of expansion. In the next two to three years, we should see increasing business integration, especially in ASEAN and Asia.

Article by:

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Thailand: An Emerging Hub of Medical and Leisure Tourism

Nowadays, our world is full of pollution and people with unhealthy lifestyles. A research paper entitled, "Health Planning for the Future" published in the UK reveals that the leading causes of death are smoking, alcohol, overweight, obesity and insufficient consumption of fruits and vegetables. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, the top five deadly medical conditions for adults in the United States are stroke, diabetes, heart disease, and respiratory disease. There are medical treatments available to address these. With the advances in technology, it is now easier for people to undergo medical surgeries and other treatments whether in their home countries or overseas, hence, there is now a significant awareness of medical tourism.

The cost of medical surgeries such as heart bypass or surgical repair in developed countries like the UK and the US is five to 10 times higher than in a developing country like India, whereas the medical equipment and qualification of doctors are similar. "A heart bypass surgery in India costs US\$ 6,500, while in the US it costs between US\$ 30,000 and US\$ 80,000." Due to the higher cost of medical treatment in developed countries, there is a higher chance for medical tourists to seek affordable alternatives in developing countries. Along with the most popular destinations such as India, Singapore, and Malaysia, Thailand is considered as one of the top choices among medical tourist destinations for foreigners due to the reasonable prices, accredited hospitals, and beautiful sceneries suitable for leisure activities. With the fast growth of medical tourism, it is essential to study it closely because most patients who have more spending power have a tendency to stay for a longer period of time during and after receiving medical treatments. This opportunity should be taken into account as Thailand is also a well-known destination that is suitable for health recovery. This research paper studied medical tourism in Thailand in order to verify whether people choose Thailand for the combined benefits of a relaxing vacation and a good medical treatment.

According to our study, Thailand promotes its medical tourism sector using India's promotional campaign as an example. The Thai government estimates that 1.6 million foreign tourists will come to Thailand each year for medical purposes. We investigated the relationship between leisure and medical tourism in Thailand in order to help the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), public and private sectors in tourism and hospitality businesses in forecasting and planning for further improvement, as there is a potential growing rate on medical tourism in the country. Our hypothesis focused on the relationship between medical tourism and leisure tourism.

Importance of Leisure Tourism

Based on a survey we have conducted, 61 out of 100 respondents said they know Thailand is famous for medical tourism. In addition, 44 out of these 61 respondents said that leisure tourism also influenced their decision in choosing medical tourism destinations.

The majority of them chose Thailand for its many beautiful tourist attractions. Thailand was ranked as the top country in Asia in terms of tourism in 2012 by Leisure Plus Travel. Thailand scored 89.87%, compared to Singapore's 84.2%. In addition, Bangkok, Phuket and Koh Samui were ranked among the top 10 destinations in Asia (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2012), a fact that would encourage tourists to come to Thailand for leisure purposes in addition to medical tourism. Choosing Thailand as a medical tourism destination was the second choice.

"Beaches" comprise the top destination that respondents chose to go to after medical surgery followed by "Bangkok," "Natural Attractions," "National Parks," and "Historical Destinations." Five per cent of respondents preferred to go back to their home countries which could imply that those respondents emphasized medical tourism only. Four percent of respondents have chosen "Others" wherein they have specified their own reasons for their visit: Relatives or friends.

As a sub-result of the research itself, beaches are also the most popular destinations in Thailand while city life is ranked

second. Therefore, while patients are recovering after surgery, patients can travel to other places in Thailand for relaxation. From the data analysis, majority of our respondents chose the significance of follow-up / rehabilitation service when choosing Thailand as a medical tourism destination.

The result confirmed the initial hypothesis that there is a strong relationship between medical tourism and leisure tourism in Thailand. Most of the medical tourists match Erik Cohen's definition of medical tourist proper and vacationing patient. More research on the behaviors and preferences of these types of tourist is needed. Medical and leisure tourism should be enhanced in order to come up with suitable activities in the intersection of both types of tourism. It can be a progressive motivation for Thailand to develop better tourism facilities in order to serve a massive amount of tourist arrivals, which are expected to increase every year. As medical tourist proper and vacationing patient are the top visitors coming to Thailand for medical treatments, a practical strategy on promotions, marketing channels, local communities' support, sustainable strategies, and evaluation methods should be in place.

Ultimately, this research is only a guideline for tourism sectors to consider about further developments on medical tourism alongside leisure tourism, as the sample size was very limited. Nevertheless, the results seem to suggest the need for further studies in the intersection between leisure and medical tourism.



เรื่อง:

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ประธานกลุ่มสาขาวิชาและอาจารย์กลุ่มสาขา
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ความสำคัญของความหลากหลาย การรองรับการท่องเที่ยวของแหล่ง ท่องเที่ยว

(The Importance of Tourism Carrying capacity of
Tourism Destination)

สิ่งที่สำคัญมากที่สุดประการหนึ่งสำหรับการบริหารจัดการการท่องเที่ยวก็คือ การรู้ถึงความสามารถในการรองรับนักท่องเที่ยวซึ่งมีความสำคัญเป็นอย่างยิ่งสำหรับธุรกิจท่องเที่ยวแต่ยังคงเป็นเหมือนเรื่องที่ไม่ได้มีการกล่าวถึงและมีความจริงจังในการศึกษาและให้ตัวความรู้แก่ ดังนั้นใน THM Quarterly Review ฉบับนี้จะได้แนะนำถึงหลักการในการพิจารณาถึงความสามารถในการรองรับนักท่องเที่ยวในการรองรับนักท่องเที่ยวที่มีความสัมพันธ์กับด้านต่าง ๆ กระจาย ด้านเช่นการจัดการนักท่องเที่ยวในพื้นที่ที่ต้องการดูแลเป็นพิเศษเช่นอุทยานแห่งชาติ หรือพื้นที่ ๆ มีความแออัดเนื่องจากความนิยมที่เพิ่มมากขึ้นของนักท่องเที่ยว เช่น ชายหาด หรือจุดท่องเที่ยวที่สำคัญต่าง ๆ ความสามารถในการรองรับการท่องเที่ยว หรือ Tourism Carrying Capacity อาจนิยามได้ว่า เป็นการระบุถึงจำนวนของคนหรือนักท่องเที่ยวที่มากที่สุดที่เข้ามาท่องเที่ยวในสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวหนึ่ง ณ ช่วงเวลาหนึ่งโดยที่ไม่ก่อให้เกิดความเสียหายต่อสิ่งแวดล้อม ทางด้านต่าง ๆ เช่น ทางด้านกายภาพ เศรษฐกิจ สังคม และวัฒนธรรมและการเดินทางเข้ามาท่องเที่ยวของนักท่องเที่ยวที่มากขึ้นนั้นจะต้องไม่มากจนทำให้นักท่องเที่ยวมีความพอใจในคุณภาพของสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวนั้นน้อยลง

หากเราพิจารณาถึงสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวที่เป็นที่นิยมต่าง ๆ จะเห็นได้ว่ามีปัญหาเช่น รถติด ร้านอาหารไม่เพียงพอต่อความต้องการทำให้ต้องรอนานมาก คุณภาพของการบริการตกต่ำลง หรือบางธุรกิจท่องเที่ยวอาจฉวยโอกาสปรับขึ้นราคาค่าสินค้าหรือบริการท่องเที่ยวให้แพงมากขึ้นเพื่อสร้างกำไรระยะสั้นเพิ่มขึ้น ซึ่งการกระทำดังกล่าวจะส่งผลเสียในระยะยาว ไม่ใช่เฉพาะกับร้านค้าดังกล่าวและจะส่งผลเสียต่อแหล่งท่องเที่ยวนั้นอีกด้วย ดังนั้น ใน

การพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยวอย่างยั่งยืนจึงควรให้ความสำคัญกับเรื่องของความสามารถในการรองรับนักท่องเที่ยวที่เหมาะสม

ในสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวทางธรรมชาติบางแห่งอาจใช้วิธีกำหนดโควต้าต่อวันเพื่อที่จะให้นักท่องเที่ยวเข้าไปเพื่อป้องกันผลกระทบทางลบในด้านต่างๆ เช่น รบกวนสัตว์ในพื้นที่ธรรมชาติ เป็นต้น

ในที่นี้จะขอยกตัวอย่าง แนวทางในการคำนวณความสามารถในการรองรับการท่องเที่ยวทางกายภาพต่อวันของสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวดังนี้

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{ความสามารถในการ} \\ \text{รองรับนักท่องเที่ยว} \\ \text{(จำนวนคน)} \end{array} = \begin{array}{l} \text{พื้นที่ท่องเที่ยว} \\ \text{(ตารางเมตร)} \end{array} \times \begin{array}{l} \text{นักท่องเที่ยว} \\ \text{ต่อตารางเมตร} \end{array} \times \begin{array}{l} \text{ระยะเวลาในการให้} \\ \text{บริการของสถานที่} \\ \text{ท่องเที่ยว (1 วัน)} \end{array}$$

หมายเหตุ:

โดยทั่วไปนักท่องเที่ยว 1 คน ต้องการพื้นที่ประมาณ 1 ตารางเมตรในการเดินทางท่องเที่ยว

เมื่อมีความเข้าใจและให้ความสำคัญกับเรื่องของความสามารถในการรองรับนักท่องเที่ยวแล้ว สถานที่ท่องเที่ยวต่างๆ ก็จะสามารถบริหารจัดการในเรื่องของความพร้อมของสิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกที่พัก ร้านอาหาร และการขนส่งเดินทางต่างๆ ก็จะเป็นไป อย่างเหมาะสม และนักท่องเที่ยวก็จะมีประสบการณ์ท่องเที่ยวที่ประทับใจก่อให้เกิดความจงรักภักดีต่อสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวนั้นๆ ต่อไป

Article By

Asst. Prof. Chanin Yoopetch

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The Roles of Festival Tourism in Tourism Development

Thai tourism has relied heavily on its culture and heritage tourism resources. One good thing about traveling in Thailand is that tourists can experience at least one festival a month.

In fact, festival tourism is not a new category of tourism products. Local festivals are used as a tool for tourism development around the world. Most festivals are closely linked to religions, culture and ways of life of the local people.

Festival tourism can be viewed as a unique tourism product because each festival represents specific characteristics of activities, such as Songkran festival where splashing people with water is part of celebrating the festival.

There are several benefits to support the festival tourism, as follows:

1 Festivals help increase tourism demand for the local community, allowing the tourists to stay at the destination longer.

2 Festivals can positively provide the positive image of the destination, providing new tourism dimensions for the destination. For example, Chiang Mai province is well-known for its beautiful natural scenery and at the same time the province attracted both Thai and international tourists to its Songkran festival, which is one of the biggest Songkran festivals in Thailand, indicating that this festival gives an opportunity for tourists to see Chiang Mai in a new perspective.

3 Popular festival events support the locals' cultural conservation activities, generating social and economic impacts in the long run.

There are great opportunities for Thailand to promote local festivals to invite the international tourists. Due to greater coverage of air transportation, tourists can conveniently travel to smaller provinces in Thailand with ease. Thanks to the competition in the airline industry, especially among low-cost carriers, both Thai and foreign tourists can even fly longer distances at affordable prices.

To support festival tourism, destination management organizations should provide more information about the festivals, especially by printing brochures in many languages, helping the tourists to understand Thai festivals better and to enhance tourists' experience. In addition, local transportation and quality of accommodations must be improved to meet the expectations of the guests.

In summary, festival tourism with the right types of support from all stakeholders can be highly crucial for local tourism development for Thailand.

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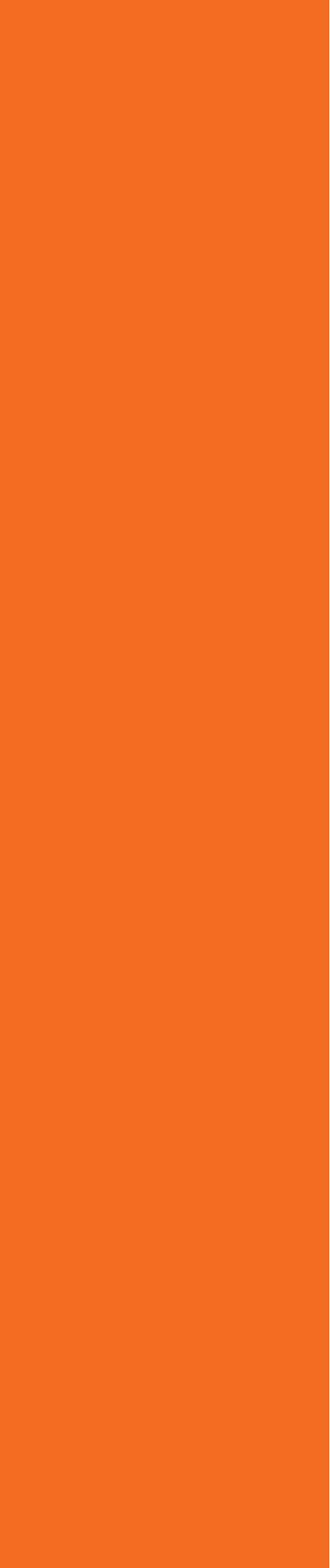
The Problem of Employee Turnover in the Hotel Industry

The weakening of the global economy has recently caused employers to reduce payrolls, hire a relatively fewer number of people, and treat employees as a replaceable commodity. Employees have been pushed for higher productivity, become more stressful and experienced hostile work environments, and these are irresistible. Having seen fewer opportunities and less meaningful work in their jobs, the problem of employee turnover is likely to occur.

In an ideal business world, employees would not leave their jobs and dedicate themselves to their organizations until their retirement. However, in reality, it is totally different, in which employee turnover is a key business issue for several organizations, and this problem has continuously increased. Certainly, there is no exception for the hospitality industry. Nevertheless, while many companies recognize the significance of the problem and put more effort on employee retention, some accept the issue of employee turnover as a normal occurrence of doing business and remain regardless. The causes of this problem contain various aspects. First, many managers do not realize that maintaining a stable workforce by providing employees meaningful work and pleasant work atmosphere is a practical approach to obtain increasing productivity. Second, managers are not aware of additional costs tied in with a high level of turnover. Last, they do not understand the relationship between employee retention and profitability.

Employee turnover has long been a major concern of the hospitality industry. Turnover rates can be varied from hotel to hotel. Even organizations within the same region have experienced different rates of turnover. When the problem of employee turnover arises, it creates great impacts on one's business, including excessive costs and reduced service quality, which eventually results in the loss of profitability.

Some industry experts mentioned that voluntary turnover — an employee's decision to terminate the employment relationship — incurs significant costs, both in terms of direct costs, such as replacement, recruitment and selection, temporary staff, and management time; and indirect costs, including morale, pressure on remaining staff, costs of learning, product or service quality, and organizational memory. Some researchers and human resource leaders also agreed on the incredible costs of losing critical employees that the average company loses approximately US\$ 1 million for every 10 managerial and professional employees who left the organization. Furthermore, recruiting new employees probably costs 50 to 60 percent of first year's salary of one employee and up to 100 percent for expert, high-skilled employees.



In Thailand, even though statistics on hotel-employee turnover rates are not publicly available, the high turnover problem is recognized nationwide. While the economic downturn and the previous political crisis reduced a possibility of voluntary turnover in the hotel business section, the turnover problem is likely to continue due to the high demand of workforce in the hospitality industry that may encourage the opportunity for employees in finding a new workplace, according to the Ministry of Labor.

Article by

By Ms. Bussabong Preeyaporn

(Awarded "Outstanding Trainee")

Trimester 2/2012-2013, Batch 52, Blue Team

THM-MUIC *Inside*

The Three-month Internship at Salaya Pavilion Hotel and Training Center

I had the time of my life during my internship at Salaya Pavilion Hotel and Training Center. I had learned much about different aspects of the hotel industry. The training I underwent in the past three months at Salaya Pavilion Hotel did not only taught me to be a more professional hotelier, but also shaped me into a better person. I am now more aware of myself, of what I am capable of, and what I prefer to do with my career. The training I received truly made my vision of my future to become even clearer. It assured me that working in hotels is undoubtedly the career path I should take.

During my three months' training at Salaya Pavilion Hotel and Training Center, I learned various skills that would certainly be useful in the future. I am now able to work as part of a team and be more open-minded to different ideas that others have raised and shared in order to achieve each task. I became more aware that no one could always be independent. It required the efforts and abilities of everyone in the team to achieve success. Since the first day of the internship, I was gradually trained to be punctual. I consider punctuality as one of the most important qualifications every hotelier should have. Salaya Pavilion Hotel instilled in me this essential value. Moreover, I became more patient. My training at Salaya Pavilion

Hotel allowed me to face different kinds of difficulties

and taught me effective ways to handle them. These are lessons I can use in the field. Standing on high heels at all times was very painful on my first day of training in the Food and Beverage Department, but after days of practice, the pain eventually went away and I became more confident and professional in my posture. I always felt happy whenever we receive compliments from the guests about our professional appearance knowing that our pa-



tience had finally paid off. As for being a service-provider, I also learned to handle guests' complaints and provide for their needs satisfactorily. Housekeeping was a tough and exhausting job that required both strength and patience. The time pressure in having to clean up rooms and make them ready for guests was the force that drove me to be a stronger person. It had taught me that if I could endure what I consider as one of the toughest jobs, there would be nothing I could not do. Though housekeeping was hard and tiring, it was also one of the departments where I enjoyed working the most.

Salaya Pavilion Hotel and Training Center gave me an opportunity to have a hands-on experience with the hotel industry that I have never had from the classroom. Training in all four departments helped me see and understand the operation side of the hotel rather than the management aspect that I had learned in my classes. Nevertheless, while learning the operation side of the hotel, my knowledge about hotel management became even clearer and more understandable. I really appreciate this chance I had with Salaya Pavilion because it showed that to be able to manage, one needed to be able to operate as well. The training offered me a chance to be in a different role in the service industry, to be a service provider rather than a service user. I could now perceive the industry in another point of view. I was part of the hotel team utilizing all processes to produce products and provide the service to guests instead of being the person that consumes the finished product. I am now fully aware that nothing is easy while working in this industry. After the training, I began to appreciate more every service I received daily as well as have a higher level of tolerance to wait for the service knowing that a lot of effort had been carefully put together for me to be served.

The three-month apprenticeship would definitely not be as memorable as it is without the love and care shown to me by all P'Staff and Ajarn Nate-tra. I was new to this operation side of the hotel when I started the internship. There were only a few tasks that I was able to perform well. However, with the warm-hearted welcome from Ajarn Nate-tra and all staff, I became more and more familiar with the various hotel jobs each day without difficulties. All essential details needed in working in the hotel were all taught and explained patiently day by day to me from the beginning. Any questions or inquiries I had about the work were all answered and clarified with no hesitations. Difficulties I had or the hard times I faced were made easier by staff with their assistance. With their unstinting support, I adjusted easily to the working environment in no time. I always received constructive feedback on most of the things I did. It was a great way for me to learn more about myself, of what I could do to improve myself and become a better person. The empowerment and autonomy that were given to me during the internship made me feel a great sense of belonging, feeling like I was actually part of the hotel and not just a trainee. I was always taught and encouraged to take risks and to never be afraid in

attempting any jobs I had never experienced because that was the most effective way to learn. The P' Staff and Ajarn Nate-tra shared with me these knowledge and skills unconditionally. They gave away what they could to form me from 'nothing' into 'something.' I would not be where I am now without them.

Lastly, the internship would be nothing without the friendships that blossomed. I have to thank every member of The Blue Team (Kwang, Up, White, Vivan, Nae, Boun, Alice, P'Ong, Ham) for the good times we shared, for being good co-workers and supporters, and for making this internship the most enjoyable time in my life. Three months at first seems so short and I have not imagined that a strong friendship between team members would develop, but it incredibly did. Most importantly, I would have to give special thanks to all Batch 52 members for putting every effort to make this internship as successful as it could ever be. Theme Night was surely complex for all of us, but we had been through the hard process together from the start and it resulted in an amazing outcome. Thank you everyone for giving me the lifetime experience that is both valuable and incomparable.