The Impacts of Service Quality in Tourism on the Visitor's Behavioral Intention at the Historic City of Ayutthaya, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

The Historic City of Ayutthaya as cultural capital for tourism which indicates a growing trend to Niche tourism market and competitive situation under the quality assurance as the World Heritage site and to meet the demand of tourists. It is an urgent improvement and development for service quality in tourism based on the quality standard of cultural tourism at all levels. This information can be used to predict visitors' behavioral intentions at the Historic City of Ayutthaya and achieve the vision of the Blueprint for new tourism, therefore; the researcher was interested in studying the impacts of the service quality in tourism on visitor's behavioral intentions at the Historic City of Ayutthaya. Data were collected from a total of 400 purposive Thai visitors at four archeological attractions which gained in popularity at the Historic City of Ayutthaya by means of a questionnaire. The statistics used to analyze the data were Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis.

The findings revealed that the service quality in tourism was positively related with visitors' behavioral intentions. Factors of service quality in tourism affecting visitors' behavioral intentions at the Historic City of Ayutthaya included Activities, Information Service, and Health and Safety.

Keywords: Service Quality in Tourism, Behavioral Intention, the Historic City of Ayutthaya, Cultural tourism, Archaeological tourism, Historical tourism, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

The Historic City of Ayutthaya was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site which name of property was the Historic City of Ayutthaya and Associated Historic Towns, Identification No.574 on the fifteenth ordinary session of the World Heritage Committee that was held in Carthage, Tunisia in 1991. This cultural property was included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criterion III (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2011). At the present time, the Historic City of Ayutthaya is archaeological attraction which is popularity both inbound and outbound tourist who concentrates to travel to experience, historical study, architecture, multi-cultural tourism through folklore or arts, and pilgrimages. The Historic City of Ayutthaya had revenues from tourism sectors in 2007 amount of 6,549.53 million baht. There were 3,784,617 visitors who visited at the Historic City of Ayutthaya that there were the seventh of tourism attraction in Thailand (Ayutthaya Studies Institution, Pranakorn Si Ayutthaya Rajabhat University, 2008) which as a result of using the concept of archaeological resources as cultural capital led into performance of historical park management for tourism which the focus changed from the original concept to manage the archaeological evidence for the study as a conservation only but these was a guideline for value-added to archaeological resources, useful for economy in tourism sector of Thailand, which cloud divide into 2 parts: (a) the use of cultural heritage was to be apart of brand and branding, and (b) the use of archaeological resources as asset for services and tourism (Praicharnchit, 2005).

The 3rd Regional Office of Fine Arts, Pra Nakorn Sri Ayutthaya province, Bureau of Archaeology Fine Arts Department has reported that the Historic City of Ayutthaya has run up against serious problem. According to Mr. Anusorn Wongwan, Minister of Culture said later the meeting of Ayutthaya World Heritage Site Conservation Project at the Fine Arts Department on May 28, 2008 that the meeting was discussed with the Deputy Director of the Department of Fine Arts, Member of Parliament in Ayutthaya province and so on who concluded the serious problem that needs accelerate to improve at the Historic City of Ayutthaya had the eight issues which the problem of tourism service development was included. (Ayutthaya World Heritage Site runs up against serious problems, 2008); however, the study of tourism service development must understand visitors' perception behavior, therefore; service quality in tourism is a key component of reaction of the needs or the expectations of visitors (Edvardsson, 1997; Lloyd-Walker & Cheung, 1988).

Service quality in tourism and Behavioral intention is an important concept in the field of marketing which is the key success factor of the organization or Travel agent or Tour operator. Although, In several researchers have focused on these concept; likewise, that based upon the literature review found that the majority researchers has studied the services quality in tourism on the functional and technical measurement, such as the relationship between service quality, satisfaction, behavioral intentions, decision-making and so on, whereas the context of archaeological, historical, and cultural tourism are applied narrowly with this concept. Furthermore, service quality is also critical issues of cultural tourism (Howat et al., 1996). Therefore, the researcher was interested in studying the impacts of service

quality in tourism on visitor behavioral intentions at the Historic City of Ayutthaya, useful of improve, examine and develop service quality in cultural tourism of the Historic City of Ayutthaya, Historical Park, and other archaeological sites with a similar service feature. Also it can be forecasting the number of visitors at the Historic City of Ayutthaya, useful for the management and strategic planning for service tourism development of new tourism towards sustainable tourism in the near future.

The main research objectives are shown as follows: (1) to investigate the relationships between service quality in tourism and visitors' behavioral intention at the Historic City of Ayutthaya; (2) to study the impact of service quality in tourism on visitors' behavioral intention at the Historic City of Ayutthaya.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Conceptual framework of this paper used Integrative Approach to determine the Service Quality in Tourism variable consisted of 3 concepts: (a) the concept of service quality evaluation (RATER) (Collier, 1991), (b) the concept of service experience in tourism (Otto & Ritchie, 1996), and (c) the concept of the evaluation of historical attraction standard (Environmental Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University, 2006), the Integrative Approach was used to determine the Visitors' Behavioral Intention variable as well which consisted of two concepts: (a) the concept of behavioral consequences of service quality (Zeithaml et al., 1996) and (b) the conceptual of domain of service loyalty (Johns & Taylor, 2007), in conformity with theory of planned behavior and the context of historical, archaeological, and cultural tourism of Thailand which appeared in Figure 1.
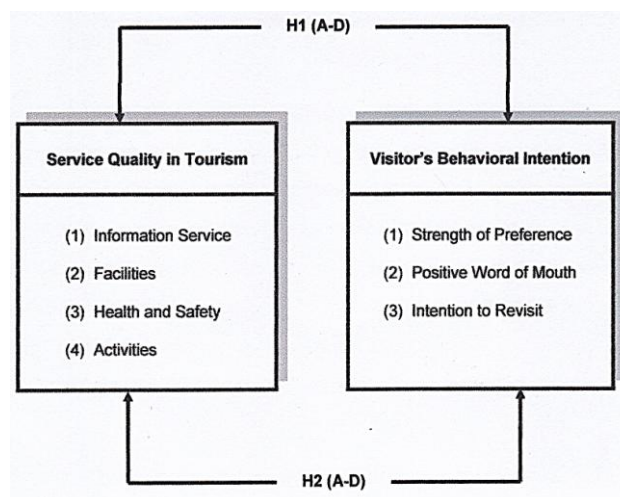

Figure 1, Conceptual framework

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relationship between Service quality in tourism and Behavioral intention

1. Information Service and Behavioral Intention

Information Service is variable that it can be measured the service quality in tourism (Obenour et al., 2006), inasmuch as the Information Service as the linkage of service experience that tourists has received (McCrackan, 1987). The providing of Information service in tourism must accurate performance, promptness, and response of the visitors' needs. For example, Lee, Graefe, and Burns (2004) revealed that the service quality on the dimension of information and staff direct affected to behavioral intention on the dimension of word of mouth and intention to revisit. Similarly, Jeong and Carolyn (2001) found that the adaption of information quality model affected behavioral intention to use lodging website and intention to word of mouth. Based upon the literature had been used to test the conceptual framework which appeared hypotheses as the following:

H1 (A): Service quality in tourism on the aspect of Information Service correlated with visitors' behavioral intention.

H2 (A): Service quality in tourism on the aspect of information service affected visitors' behavioral intention.

2. Facilities and Behavioral Intention

Tourism facilities is the aspect of service quality in tourism that the focus on comfort and a good sense of tourists who visit to the attraction. In addition tourism facilities is not the tourism core product, but it is the additional product without any form of tourism that involves either (Sigala & Leslie, 2005). Facilities base on three parts: (a) people, (b) processing, and (c) attraction (Teicholz, 2001), there are fundamental composition which are related in the system, the people expect with the service and tourism attraction that the facilities support with tourist such as parking, toilets, public phones, medical services and so on. The facilities will be providing services which respond to the needs of tourists. The facilities based on service experiences in tourism and satisfaction. For example, Lee et al. (2004) revealed that facilities direct effected to behavioral intention. Based upon the literature had been used to test the conceptual framework which appeared hypotheses as the following:

H1 (B): Service quality in tourism on the aspect of Facilities correlated with visitors' behavioral intention.

H2 (B): Service quality in tourism on the aspect of Facilities affected visitors' behavioral intention.

3. Health and Safety and Behavioral Intention

Health and Safety is an important factor that researchers have applied for assessment of the service quality (Richter & Richter, 1999), because tourists have increased the demands and expectation to health and safety, and this issue must take into response of expectation and satisfaction with tourists. These will be affecting behavioral intentions on the aspect of Strength of Preference, Positive Word of Mouth

and Intention to Revisit. For example, Lee et al. (2004) revealed that health and cleanliness affected behavioral intention on the aspect of Word of Mouth and Intention to Revisit. Based upon the literature had been used to test the conceptual framework which appeared hypotheses as the following:

H1 (C): Service quality in tourism on the aspect of health and safety correlated with visitors' behavioral intention.

H2 (C): Service quality in tourism on the aspect of health and safety affected visitors' behavioral intention.

4. Activities and Behavioral Intention

Tourism activity is an important variable to assess the service experience after tourist visited at the Historic City of Ayutthaya that it demonstrates promptness. In addition, tourism activities also as value-added to tourism attraction, which can be responded to the tourists, that expectations have exceeded, and it may be affected to behavioral intentions (Lew, 1987; Page et al., 2001). For example, Qu, Kim, and Im (2011) revealed that the dimension of Cognitive Image influenced to the overall brand image which direct affected to behavioral intention on the dimension of intentions to revisit and recommend. Based upon the literature had been used to test the conceptual framework which appeared hypotheses as the following:

H1 (D): Service quality in tourism on the aspect of activities correlated with visitors' behavioral intention.

H2 (D): Service quality in tourism on the aspect of activities affected visitors' behavioral intention.

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected from a total of 400 purposive Thai visitors at four archaeological attractions which have gained in popularity at the Historic City of Ayutthaya from February through April 2010. The questions in questionnaire were designed, which based upon the real feature of the Historic City of Ayutthaya, literature review, and conceptual framework. The questionnaire was revised to ensure construct validity and content validity by professors. Pilot study and reliability assessment was taken away from Cronbach α-coefficients (Cronbach, 1951) that values of reliability coefficients for this research were all above 0.70 levels, which appeared in Table 1. Discriminant Power used Item-total Technique .05 r_{38} = .20 (Nunnally, 1979), values within the range of 0.380 - 0.831 for service quality in tourism, 0.580 – 0.782 for visitors' behavioral intention. The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts: Part 1 dealt with characteristics of respondents such as gender, age, education, and monthly income with 4 items, Part 2 dealt with the measurement of visitors' opinions with service quality in tourism with 23 items that comprised of 4 aspects were Information Service, Facilities, Health and Safety, and Activities, Part 3 dealt with the measurement of visitors' behavioral intentions with 11 items that comprised of 3 aspects were Strength of Preference, Positive Word of Mouth, and Intention to Revisit, all of items of part 2 and 3 were measured by a five point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Table 1, Research constructs, measurement, and reliability assessment

Research Constructs	Measure Components	Cronbach α- Coefficients
Service Quality in Tourism (23 items)	1. Information Service (5 items) 2. Facilities (6 items) 3. Health and Safety (6 items) 4. Activities (6 items)	0.930
Behavioral Intention (11 items)	1. Strength of Preference (3 items) 2. Positive Word of Mouth (4 items) 3. Intention to Revisit (4 items)	0.933

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH OUTCOMES

The results of research were consisted of two sections as the following:

Section 1, to test for the first hypothesis: H1 (A -D), service quality in tourism correlated with visitors' behavioral intention at the Historic City of Ayutthaya using analysis by Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result of correlation coefficient analysis reported in Table 2. The result revealed that service quality in tourism as a whole and on the aspect of service quality in tourism which rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that there were the significantly different at the 0.05 level ($P<0.05$), which indicated the service quality in tourism was positively related with visitors' behavioral intentions. The resulting value of Pearson r falls between the ranges of 0.312 - 0.598 that meant the Effect size of service quality in tourism was medium to large (Cohen, 1988).

Table 2, Correlation coefficient between Service Quality in Tourism and Visitors' Behavioral Intention

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.QINFOM	1.000	0.583*	0.534*	0.534*	0.802*	0.513*	0.407*	0.341*	0.502*
2.QFACIS		1.000	0.693*	0.557*	0.831*	0.474*	0.360*	0.348*	0.471*
3.QHESAY			1.000	0.507*	0.834*	0.476*	0.352*	0.312*	0.453*
4.QACTIS				1.000	0.792*	0.485*	0.457*	0.408*	0.541*
5.QST					1.000	0.592*	0.479*	0.428*	0.598*
6.BSEPRE						1.000	0.597*	0.429*	0.796*
7.BPOWOD							1.000	0.558*	0.867*
8.BINRES								1.000	0.819*
9.BIT									1.000

*. Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

Note. QINFOM: Information Service; QFACIS: Facilities; QHESAY: Health and Safety; Total of Service Quality in Tourism: QST; Strength of Preference: BSEPRE; Positive

Word of Mouth: BPOWOD; Intention to Revisit: BINRES; Total of Behavioral Intention: BIT.

Section 2, to test for the second hypothesis: H2 (A -D), service quality in tourism affected visitors' behavioral intention at the Historic City of Ayutthaya using analysis by the Stepwise Multiple Regression, which reported in Table 3 and Table 4. The first, Table 3 revealed that the visitors' behavioral intention at the Historic City of Ayutthaya was linearly related with group of independent variable on the aspect of Activities, Information Service, and Health and Safety, $F(3,396) = 78.051$, $p<0.05$ that there were the significantly different at the 0.05 level. The overall multiple R, and the overall regression equation, was the significantly predictive of visitors' behavioral intention by using a prediction equation. The second, Table 4 revealed that there was provided information about model fit, the multiple R of 0.610 was the correlation between visitors' behavioral intention and service quality in tourism at the Historic City of Ayutthaya; because the regression equation had three predictors: Activities (QACTIS) was the first factor which was the most influential predictor of visitors' behavioral intention, the second was Information Service (QINFOM), and the third was Health and Safety (QHESAY) respectively, multiple R was equivalent to the Pearson r between two variables. Adjusted $R^2 = 0.367$ which were predictable visitors' behavioral intention. Therefore, the proportion of variance explained was a small. The constant provided the estimated value of regression coefficient (b), the intercept (b = 1.916) was significantly different from 0; $t(396) = 12.325$, $p<0.05$, which could predict the visitors' behavioral intentions together with the intercept that three values could create the raw score prediction equation to predict visitors' behavioral intention at the Historic City of Ayutthaya as the following:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + ...+ b_kX_k$$
$$BIT = 1.916 + 0.269QACTIS + 0.202QINFOM + 0.124QHESAY$$

Table 3, The Linear relationship between Service Quality in Tourism and Visitors' Behavioral Intention at the Historic City of Ayutthaya

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	40.373	3	13.458	78.051	0.000*
Residual	68.278	396	0.172		
Total	108.651	399			

* is significant at 0.05 level

Table 4, Correlation between Visitors' Behavioral Intention and on the aspects of Independent variable in the Multiple Regression Equation

Service Quality in Tourism	Visitors' behavioral Intention		t	Sig.
	Regression Coefficients (b)	Standard Error of Partial Regression Coefficient		

		(SE.B)		
Constant	1.916	0.155	12.325	0.000*
QACTIS	0.269	0.040	6.727	0.000*
QINFOM	0.202	0.042	4.768	0.000*
QHESAY	0.124	0.040	3.139	0.002*

R = 0.610 Adj. R^2 = 0.367

* is significant at 0.05 level

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The finding of this research support the conceptual framework that the Integrative Approach of Theoretical is used to determine the aspect of Service Quality in Tourism variable at the Historic City of Ayutthaya, which are enhanced understanding in holistic analysis and fragment analysis of service quality in tourism at the Historic City of Ayutthaya. Despite of the results of hypotheses testing shows in three aspects of Activities, Information Services, and Health and Safety can predict visitors' behavioral intention but the magnitude have not at the high level, however; it does not means service quality in tourism, is not key factor with the visitors' behavioral intentions, similarly, that does not means service quality in tourism, is not necessary for visitors' behavioral intention. In the other word, Service Quality in Tourism may not be the key element which can assess the behavioral intention to visit at the Historic City of Ayutthaya that because of:

1. The Behavioral difference for cultural tourism of visitors who expected and focused on multi-cultural of service experiences which the factor of tourism activities was a variable indicative the extension of core products in natural form. Visitors could touch with tourism experience and assessment of service quality was the most prominent. Owing of the aspect of Activities was the most influential predictor of behavioral intention at the Historic City of Ayutthaya.

2. The act of traveling to archaeological attraction at the Historic city of Ayutthaya was categorized as Niche Market which the characteristics of visitors or cultural tourists were upscale, well-educated, well-traveled, and sophisticated visitors who was looking for a unique of cultural tourism attraction. The common features of cultural tourism attraction consisted of 5 features: (a) Tell a story, (b) Make the asset come live, (c) Make the experience participatory, (d) Make the experience relevant to the tourist, and (e) Focus on quality and authenticity, Consequently; factor of Information Service was the linkage with the visitor who could access to the core product of cultural tourism both direct and indirect.

3. The External factor on tourism such as differences in political opinion, economic issues in local and global communities, capitalist economy development, issues of crime and terrorism, the cultural differences throughout the clinical development and public governance and so on. Owing to the visitors emphasized on the factor of hygiene and safety which was an indicator of risk and as a consideration in choosing a behavioral intention to visit attractions that were planned and controlled, safety and public governance both life and property of visitors.

Whereas the aspect of facilities did not affecting visitors' behavioral intention might due to the Department of Fine Arts or the office of Ayutthaya Historical Park,

which has developed and improved this factor under the master plan of continuing. Moreover; the factor of facilities, it was one of the key components of tourism attraction. This was the fundamental of factor that the tourism attraction emphasized in order to demonstrate its, readiness to accommodate and provided for services to visitors. The behavior of visitors focused on the needs to touch cultural experience, and a multi-cultural in the other form but Facilities was one component that the tourism attraction should be considered in providing services to visitors. Although visitors will be weighted from other factors that can response the needs of visitors somehow.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research had several limitations for the future research: (1) the periods limited for data collection because the number of visitor did not equal all month, especially in high season. (2) The sample of research were limited who focused on Thai visitors only, while the Historic City of Ayutthaya is the World Heritage Site. Therefore, the results of research may not be generalizable to International tourist. For future research should be study the impact and the relationship between Service Quality in Tourism, Behavioral Intention, Cultural Heritage Management, Cultural Tourism Experience, Participation of all Stakeholders, and Cultural Tourism for Sustainable of the Historic City of Ayutthaya which is to guide the development of a new tourism of the Historic City of Ayutthaya for sustainable in the future.

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