THE RANGE OF CRITERIA FOR SERVICES PROVIDED TO CUSTOMERS AFFECTING DECISION TO CHOOSE HOMESTAY ACCOMMODATION IN KOH SAMUI DISTRICT, SURAT THANI PROVINCE, THAILAND

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the guiding principles of value creation in customer services that influence the decision to choose homestay accommodation in Samui District, Surat Thani Province, and to develop guidelines for homestay accommodation management. The experimental group was 400 Thai tourists who had some experience staying in homestay accommodations in Koh Samui District, Surat Thani Province. The research employed a random convenience sampling method, and the data were analyzed using statistical methods such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The results revealed that: most of the interviewees are women, age 31-40, single, with a bachelor's degree or equivalent. Most of them are private sector workers with a monthly income between 20,001 and 30,000 baht. Hypothesis testing using multiple regression analysis techniques revealed that the value of customer service affects the level of decision-making when choosing a place to stay in Koh Samui District, Surat Thani Province. The statistics show that service personnel influence the decision level the most, followed by physical characteristics, service process, price, and product and service, marketing promotion, advertising, distribution channels, and public relations, respectively.

Keyword: value creation guideline, service marketing mix, integrated marketing communications, decision making, Canvas Business Model
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Introduction

The tourism business is the activity of providing services related to tourism, such as tourist services, hotel accommodation services and travel services. The tourism industry is an area of trade and services that contributes to foreign exchange earnings. Tourism provides employment and income and promotes other related businesses such as hotel and restaurant business, souvenir trade, transportation and tourist services. The tourism industry continues to grow, albeit below the established indicators due to the instability of the economic crisis in the country. However, the tourism industry continues to generate income for the country.

The business model is changing rapidly due to the development of communication technologies that is convenient and helps to reach target customers quickly, and which also offer very beneficial conditions to the customers in the situation with growing business competition. Therefore, business operators need to find a way of doing business that is pleasing to their customers, create maximum satisfaction for them. This is a weak point and a topical issue for entrepreneurs in many business spheres.

The hotel business is one that has a direct relationship with the tourism industry. And it is a type of business that generates income and creates a lot more jobs. There are different types of hotel businesses, such as a hotel, resort, guest house, condominium, apartment, motel, hostel, and homestay.

Each accommodation type is divided into different types of rooms. And the price per room varies depending on the size of the accommodation, facilities, services, and security. The type of accommodation that tourists choose depends on many factors, such as the cost of a hotel room and attractions that can be easily reached from the accommodation. The hotel business can bring the country a lot of income from the stay of both Thai and foreign tourists and their choice of various accommodation services.

Homestay is a type of tourism service that emphasizes the involvement of locals. The owners of such accommodation also provide the visitors with tourism activities connected with culture and traditions of the community such as experiencing the way of life and culture of local traditions, watching folk cultural performances, and enjoying nature (Sangkakorn K., 2012)

The demand for homestay accommodation has increased together with the growth of tourism in the country. In addition, competition in the market affects the choice of services. The capacity of homestay hotel operators' services is increasing in accordance with the needs of tourists. Therefore, the researcher is interested in studying the criteria that influence customers when deciding to choose a hotel accommodation in Koh Samui district, Surat Thani province. The entrepreneurs in the tourism industry, who are aware of the demand for home stays and who want to create appropriate competitive advantages, are really interested in these criteria.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the research is to study the range of criteria in services provided to customers affecting decision to choose homestay accommodation in Koh Samui district, Surat Thani province.
Literature review

Chotiphong (2017) in the study ‘Marketing Mix and Decision-Making Process of Homestay Services of Tourists in Bangkok and its Vicinity’ states that the objective of this work was to study the marketing mix of homestay services, which are considered when deciding to choose homestay accommodation, and the customers’ feedback after using homestay accommodation. 385 homestay tourists were interviewed in this research.

The conclusion of the study is that the marketing mix influencing the decision-making process of tourists to use homestay was the price, location, promotion, appearance, and condition of the hotel. It was proven that the experience of using homestay accommodation matters significantly at the level 0.05.

Kerdmemoon (2018) in the study ‘Factors Affecting Foreign Tourists Staying in a Homestay Accommodation in Thailand’ describes a case study of homestays in the southern region. The objective of this research was to study the factors affecting foreign tourists' stay at homestays in Thailand. The experimental group is foreign tourists aged 15 years and over. The total number of people in the experimental groups in the study was 400 people.

The statistic used to analyze the data is the data analysis using frequency, mean, standard deviation and statistical analysis of variance T-test and F-test at the significance level of 0.05. It was found that the marketing factors such as accessibility of information about homestays, marketing promotion, personnel service affect the foreign tourists' decision to stay at homestay accommodation. There are some recommendations for homestay operators to improve some services such as the condition of the house, accessibility of owners’ contacts, excessive information about homestays, promotion actions or travel packages to attract more tourists to travel and stay at homestays.

Panarak (2018) states that the objectives of the research were to study the factors of marketing factors that influence the decision in favour of private hospital services in Muang District Phuket Province and compare marketing promotion tools which influence the decision to choose private hospital services in Muang district Phuket province.

The experimental group is 400 people who use private hospital services in Muang district, Phuket Province. The method used to collect data is a questionnaire. The statistics used to analyze the data were frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation using t-test statistic and One-way ANOVA analysis.

It should be noted that marketing activities, followed by advertising and public relations, promotion, direct communication, gender, age, education level, occupation, marital status, average monthly income, and the frequency of using the service were different. The influence of marketing tools on the decision-making to use private hospitals in Muang district, Phuket Province differed statistically at the 0.01 level.

Materials and Methods

This research used description statics analysis and inferential statistics analysis using statistical data analysis according to the following research objectives:

1. Descriptive statistics include: frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation to describe the characteristics of personal factors marketing mix strategy, integrated marketing communication strategies and decision-making levels of homestay accommodation services.
2. Multiple regression is used to find a marketing mix strategy pattern and integrated marketing communication strategies of homestay businesses influencing the level of decision-making in the choice of homestay accommodation by homestay users in Koh Samui district, Surat Thani province.

Results and Discussion

Part 1. Feedback from respondents about staying at homestay accommodations, considering their gender, age, and social status. The details are as follows:

Personal Data
The results of the study of general information of the respondents:
It was found that most respondents were female 62.5%, aged 31-40 years 41.3%, were single 76.3%, had a bachelor’s degree 61.5%, had a career as a private company employee 33.5%, and had monthly income between 20,001-30,000 baht 30.8%.

Criteria that most influenced the choice
Criteria that influenced the choice of homestay accommodation. The respondents gave the most importance to the cleanliness of the accommodation, followed by the safety of the accommodation, reputation and image of the property, facilities within the accommodation, the accommodation designed in proportions to give a feeling of privacy and comfort with beautiful interior, with an average of 4.52, 4.49, 4.48, 4.46, 4.39, and 4.36 respectively.

Pricing Criteria. The respondents emphasized the importance of clear pricing for the accommodation, followed by accommodation that was appropriate for the price, then a selection of rooms at different prices and the reasonable pricing compared to other homestays, with an average of 4.51, 4.46, 4.43, and 4.40 respectively.

Booking Criteria. The respondents gave importance to booking accommodation through the Internet the most, followed by convenience of contacting the owners of accommodation, then the accessibility of information service on the website of the accommodation and booking accommodation through travel agents, with an average of 4.46, 4.43, 4.42, and 4.19 respectively.

Promotion Criteria. The respondents gave the highest priority to discounts to frequent customers, followed by discounts on long-term or group stays, seasonal accommodation price packages and organizing interesting activities for service users with an average of 4.48, 4.46, 4.45, and 4.39 respectively.

Staff Criteria. The respondents emphasized the importance of employees with good human relations, politeness and manners the most, followed by employees who were attentive and enthusiastic in service, then to employees’ problem-solving abilities, to employees with knowledge, understanding and skills to provide service, to employees with personality and neat uniforms in line with the appearance of the accommodation, and the employees with the knowledge of foreign languages, with an average of 4.62, 4.54, 4.53, 4.49, 4.48, and 4.44 respectively.

Service Criteria. The respondents emphasized the importance of the service that was the most accurate to the needs of the service users, followed by the acceptance of various payment methods such as cash, credit card, money transfer, fast service of both the booking
and hotel check-out, the informational service for the customers and the adequate number of personnel to provide services, with an average of 4.49, 4.48, 4.46, 4.44 and 4.41 respectively.

Facility Criteria. The respondents emphasized the importance of an appropriate security system such as CCTV, fire protection system, etc. the most, followed by good telephone and wi-fi signal, then good weather conditions, quiet neighborhood, beautiful scenery, and entrance-exit corridors, fences, electricity, etc., with an average of 4.53, 4.52, 4.50 and 4.49 respectively.

Publicity Criteria. The respondents emphasized the importance of the online advertising on the Internet, Facebook, Instagram the most, followed by the advertisement on radio, television, newspapers, cable TV, brochures, etc., then different promotions such as discounts, then promotions of the accommodation in public activities such as various exhibitions, and travel experts who recommend not only accommodation but know the main attractions nearby the property, with an average of 4.59, 4.32, 4.25, 4.22 and 4.19 respectively.

Part 2. The criteria of decision-making in choosing homestay accommodation in Koh Samui district Surat Thani province according to research assumptions can be summarized as follows:

The H hypothesis, pricing criteria influence the level of decision-making in homestay accommodation. The statistical sub-assumptions are as follows:

The HA sub-assumption, the decision-making criteria for choosing homestay accommodation with component weight (beta) 0.088 statistically insignificant 0.05, therefore the HA hypothesis is not accepted.

The HB sub-assumption, the price criteria for choosing homestay accommodation with component weight (beta) 0.003 statistically insignificant 0.05, therefore the HB hypothesis is not accepted.

The HC sub-assumption, the location criteria for choosing homestay accommodation with component weight (beta) -0.141 statistically insignificant 0.05, therefore the HC hypothesis is not accepted.

The HD sub-assumption, the promotion criteria for choosing homestay accommodation with component weight (beta) -0.066 statistically insignificant 0.05, therefore the HD hypothesis is not accepted.

The HE sub-assumption, the staff criteria for choosing homestay accommodation with component weight (beta) 0.235 statistically significant 0.05, therefore the HE hypothesis is accepted.

The HF sub-assumption, the service criteria for choosing homestay accommodation with component weight (beta) 0.139 statistically insignificant 0.05, therefore the HF hypothesis is not accepted.

The HG sub-assumption, the facility criteria for choosing homestay accommodation with component weight (beta) -0.181 statistically significant 0.05, therefore the HG hypothesis is accepted.

The HH sub-assumption, the publicity criteria for choosing homestay accommodation with component weight (beta) -0.251 statistically significant 0.05, therefore the HH hypothesis is accepted.
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Conclusion

Most of the experimental groups had their opinions about the range of criteria for services provided to customers who affect choose of homestay accommodation in Koh Samui District, Surat Thani Province.

Overall, the marketing mix is an important component of the homestay business. It is a factor that entrepreneurs can control. Entrepreneurs therefore needs to determine the marketing mix that is appropriate for their marketing strategies to be able to meet the needs of consumers. When considering each criterion, it was found that the highest mean was Staff Criteria statistically significant 0.05.

Consistent with the research of Pengtowong & Boonmee (2016) studied on Service Marketing Factors Influencing Accommodation Selection Behavior of Foreign Tourists in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, the objective of this research was to study service marketing criteria influencing accommodation selection by foreign tourists in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province. The results of the study found that the criteria which influence the foreign tourists’ choice the most are service, staff and price. The second important criteria are location, facilities and promotion.

Consistent with the research of Thepdaeng et al. (2017) on marketing factors affecting selection of accommodation of Thai tourists in Muang District Chiang Rai province, the objective of this research was to study the marketing factors affecting the decision to choose accommodation among Thai tourists in Muang district Chiang Rai province and in Chiang Rai.

The results of the study found that marketing factors affecting Thai tourists’ choice of accommodation decisions in Muang District Chiang Rai provinces are arranged in the following order staff, price, service, location, promotion followed by facilities statistically significant 0.05.

Consistent with the research of Chotiphong (2017) studied marketing mix and decision-making Process for tourists' homestays in Bangkok and its vicinity, the objective of this research was to study the marketing mix of homestay services. The results of the study found that marketing mix that influences the decision-making to use homestays are as follow: price, location, promotion, service and facilities with significantly at the 0.05 level.

Suggestion

Homestay accommodation establishments and related businesses personnel should be developed to provide better services to tourists in every aspect:

1. Politeness and courtesy, problem-solving skills, and ability to communicate in foreign languages.

2. Good security system for tourists as well as telephone and wi-fi connection, etc.

3. Publicity in many channels by focusing on various online media channels such as the Internet, Facebook, Instagram which are the channels that tourists can easily access, and advertising through brochures or posters, and numerous websites.
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