

EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS OF TOURISM DESTINATION ATTRIBUTES
AFFECTING TOURIST PERCEPTION OF A DESTINATION BRAND: A CASE STUDY

OF SONGKHLA LAKE BASIN, MUANG DISTRICT, SONGKHLA PROVINCE*

การศึกษาองค์ประกอบเชิงสำรวจคุณลักษณะของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวที่ส่งผลต่อการรับรู้ตราสินค้าแหล่งท่องเที่ยวของนักท่องเที่ยว: กรณีศึกษาลุ่มน้ำทะเลสาบสงขลา

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บทคัดย่อ

This study aimed to identify the tourism destination attributes affecting tourist perception of Songkhla Lake Basin (SLB) brand, Muang district, Songkhla Province. Therefore, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) method was used to determine the underlying dimensions governing the full set of 46 items of SLB destination attributes. The study was conducted on 420 cases of Thai tourists by purposive and convenience sampling survey methods. The survey instruments used in the research were tested for validity and reliability before application. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.894. The factor analysis generated 17 underlying dimensions of the destination attributes, which explain 74.153% of the total variance.

The finding indicated acceptable appropriateness of the indicators used for factor structure detection as measured by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) of 0.599 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). According to the EFA study, component 1 consisting of travel convenience, a variety of public transportation, clear signage availability, and a variety of tourist activities, was perceived most favorably by Thai tourists, holding the greatest variance of 10.773%. In addition, independent t-test

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analysis was employed to identify factors influencing the destination brand's perception. The study revealed only 2 components were identified as significant ($p < 0.05$), consisting of component 1 - accessibility and activity ($p = 0.008$) and component 5 - destination management ($p = 0.042$).

Keywords: Destination Attributes; Tourist Perception; Destination Brand; Songkhla Lake Basin

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อระบุคุณลักษณะของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวที่ส่งผลต่อการรับรู้ตราสินค้าแหล่งท่องเที่ยวพื้นที่ลุ่มน้ำทะเลสาบสงขลา อำเภอเมือง จังหวัดสงขลา ดังนั้นการวิเคราะห์องค์ประกอบเชิงสำรวจได้ถูกนำมาใช้เพื่อจำแนกองค์ประกอบคุณลักษณะของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวซึ่งประกอบด้วย 46 คุณลักษณะ การศึกษาได้ดำเนินการกับกลุ่มตัวอย่างนักท่องเที่ยวชาวไทยจำนวน 420 คน โดยวิธีการสำรวจแบบเจาะจงและตามความสะดวก เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยได้ผ่านการทดสอบความเที่ยงตรงและความเชื่อมั่นในระดับตีก่อนที่จะนำไปใช้จริง ซึ่งมีค่าสัมประสิทธิ์效 reliabilty ของครอนบัคโดยรวมที่ระดับ 0.894 ผลการศึกษาพบว่าปัจจัยคุณลักษณะของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวลุ่มน้ำทะเลสาบสงขลาประกอบด้วย 17 องค์ประกอบหลัก ซึ่งสามารถอธิบายความแปรปรวนรวมกันได้ร้อยละ 74.153

ผลการศึกษายังพบว่า ตัวชี้วัดมีความเหมาสมในการวิเคราะห์โครงสร้างปัจจัยโดยมีค่าไคเซอร์-เมเยอร์-โอลคิน (KMO) ในระดับ 0.599 และค่าทดสอบของบาร์ตเล็ตต์ (Bartlett's test of sphericity) มีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ($p < 0.001$) จากการวิเคราะห์องค์ประกอบเชิงสำรวจพบว่าองค์ประกอบที่ 1 ซึ่งประกอบด้วย การเดินทางที่สะดวกสบาย ความหลากหลายของการบริการขนส่ง ความพร้อมใช้งานของป้ายบอกทางที่ชัดเจน และความหลากหลายของกิจกรรมในแหล่งท่องเที่ยว เป็นองค์ประกอบที่ได้รับการยอมรับจากนักท่องเที่ยวชาวไทยมากที่สุด โดยมีค่าความแปรปรวนอยู่ที่ 10.733% อีกทั้งได้ทำการทดสอบที่เพื่อหาปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการรับรู้ตราสินค้าแหล่งท่องเที่ยว พบร่วมกับองค์ประกอบจำนวน 2 องค์ประกอบเท่านั้นที่มีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ($p < 0.05$) กล่าวคือ องค์ประกอบที่ 1 การเข้าถึงและกิจกรรม ($p=0.008$) และองค์ประกอบที่ 5 การบริหารจัดการแหล่งท่องเที่ยว ($p = 0.042$)

คำสำคัญ: คุณลักษณะของแหล่งท่องเที่ยว; การรับรู้ของนักท่องเที่ยว; ตราสินค้าแหล่งท่องเที่ยว; ลุ่มน้ำทะเลสาบสงขลา

Introduction

As tourism is fast growing industry, brand is becoming an essential tool for distinguishing a destination from its competitors. Therefore, the growth of tourism and the importance of destination were concerned. Tourism plays a key role in the country economic structure in the whole society, enhances gross domestic product and generates employment opportunities (World Tourism Organization, 2017). The growth in the global tourism sector has caused an aggressive competition between tourist destinations to attract potential visitors. Among the same resources, the different choice of destination is determined.

As tourism destinations, they provide a variety of products and services amid comparable qualities, such as stunning scenery, affordable lodging, and kind hosts. As a result, establishing a strong destination brand is even more important for a destination. (Pike, 2005; Qu et al., 2011; Shani & Belhassen, 2009). A destination brand combines all the attributes associated with its tangible and intangible products and services. A successful destination brand needs to deliver the expectations, promise, and unforgettable experience which are associated with the destinations (Hassan et al., 2010). As it is known, the strong destination brand can draw potential tourists to the place. Thus, destinations are required to create images that are associated with the brand to strengthen the satisfaction of visitors with their travel experiences, as it tends to enhance their behavior and turn it into satisfaction and loyalty to the destination (Mahdzar & Gani, 2018). The destination efficiency, therefore, can be evaluated by the tourist perception of the destination's attributes to boost market segmentation and promotion. The assessment of destination attributes helps management to recognize the level of satisfaction of tourists and, therefore, leads to the destination's competitiveness and provides management with useful information for the tourist destination planning process (Vodeb & Nemec Rudež, 2017).

Songkhla Lake Basin (SLB) is Thailand's largest lake which is located across three provinces in southern Thailand, named Phattalung, Songkhla and Nakhon Si Thammarat. It has a long history over 6,000 years and the complex ecosystem of SLB with both natural and cultural resources, creating a life supportive structure, that really has long supported both living and several other economic development for SLB residents (Prachyakorn Chaiyakot & Parichart Visuthismajarn,

2012). There is a great amount of tourism spots in the area such as mountain ranges, foothills, lowlands, lake, rivers, waterfalls, hot spring, coast and beach, lifestyle, folklore museums, local traditional events, handicrafts, temples, monument, archaeological and historic sites. At present, the utmost benefits of diverse tourist destinations in SLB are not efficiently applied because their development do not relate to subsequent tourism in SLB.

A study of the literature revealed that, whereas prior findings relating destination brand characteristics had been discovered in numerous researches, the detected dimensionalities were not clearly consistent. The goal of this research is to fill a knowledge gap by identifying the essential components that underlie destination attributes in tourist perceptions of Songkhla Lake Basin brand, Muang district, Songkhla province. Destination planners and marketers are shown to be likely to put up an appropriate marketing strategy that conforms to tourist expectations.

Research Objective

To identify destination attributes that influence SLB destination brand perception, Muang District, Songkhla Province.

Hypotheses

H1: The destination attributes influence the SLB destination brand perception

Methodology

Data Collection

Population and Samples

The target population was Thai tourists who visited Muang district, Songkhla province during the study period and were not less than eighteen years old. The average number of tourists is used as the population size to calculate the sample size for this study. Table 1 presents the average number of tourists to Songkhla province over the period 2014 to 2018 was used as the population size to calculate the sample size in the formula of Yamane (1973) for this study. 420 cases were surveyed using purposive and convenience sampling survey methods.

Table 1 Thai Tourists Arrival to Songkhla Province During the Year 2014 - 2018

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	5-year Average
Thai	3,831,735	4,038,146	4,157,186	4,396,474	4,614,546	4,207,617
Total	3,831,735	4,038,146	4,157,186	4,396,474	4,614,546	4,207,617

Source: National Statistical Office (2020)

Purposive sampling technique is used to identify SLB tourists and collect the data from them, who visited the lake basin at Muang district, Songkhla province while convenience sampling technique is utilized in conformance with the above-mentioned technique. The aim of convenience sampling is to gather data from people who meet certain criteria; for example, easily accessible to the researcher, readiness to participate and availability (Etikan et al., 2016; Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012; Marshall, 1996).

Research Instrument

The questionnaire is designed as a research instrument for the study. The accuracy and consistency of the survey were validated by using the Item-Objective Congruence Index (IOC), evaluated by three experts. The outcome was those two items from a total of 44 questions, consisting of the SLB slogan and its key communication message, had a mean score of 0.33, which is lower than the cut-off value of 0.50, and were thus eliminated from the questionnaire. Then, the items were validated with 30 cases, resulting a Cronbach's alpha of 0.894.

Data Analysis

Data analysis consists of descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, means, and standard deviations, which are used to describe the basic information in the questionnaire. Meanwhile, inferential statistics consisting of t-test and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with principal components analysis, together with the Promax rotation method, was used to determine the underlying primary dimensions governing the full set of 46 items of destination attributes affecting tourist perception of the SLB brand.

Results

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 2 presents the results of the descriptive statistics of socio-demographic characteristics consisted of gender, age, location, religion, marital status, education, occupation, and monthly income. The analysis found that

75.24% of respondents were female (316 persons) and 23.10% were male (97 persons). In terms of age, about half of the respondents (49.3%) were between the ages of 21 and 37 years old, followed by those between the ages of 38 and 53 years old (33.1%). Considering the location of respondents, it is found that 243 respondents (57.9%) were from the southern part of the country, followed by 116 respondents (27.6%) from the Bangkok metropolitan area. For religion, the study revealed 348 respondents (82.9%) were Buddhist. According to the majority, 232 respondents were married, accounted for 55.2%, followed by 147 respondents who were single at 35%. Considering the respondents' educational background, a bachelor's degree was held by half of the respondents (50.2%), while 166 respondents with less than a bachelor's degree accounted for 39.5% of the total. As for occupation, this analysis showed 87 respondents (20.7%) were college/university students followed by 63 respondents (15%) were private-business employees. In terms of the monthly income, it was discovered that 124 respondents (29.5%), the largest group, had an average income of THB 10,001-20,000.

Table 2 Frequency and Percentage of Respondents Based on Socio-Demographic Profiles

No.	Topic	Socio-demographic Profiles	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	97	23.10
		Female	316	75.20
2	Age	Below 21 years old	2	0.50
		21-37 years old	207	49.30
		38-53 years old	139	33.10
		54-72 years old	65	15.50
		Above 73 years old	5	1.20
3	Location of Residence	Southern part	243	57.90
		Northern part	16	3.80
		North-eastern part	4	1.00
		Eastern part	10	2.40
		Central part excl. Bangkok	31	7.40
		Bangkok metropolitan	116	27.60
4	Religion	Christian	14	3.30
		Buddhist	348	82.90
		Muslim	57	13.60
5	Marital Status	Single	147	35.00
		Married	232	55.20
		Divorce	22	5.20
		Widow	19	4.50

Table 2 Frequency and Percentage of Respondents Based on Socio-Demographic Profiles (Continued)

No.	Topic	Socio-demographic Profiles	Frequency	Percentage (%)
6	Education	Below a bachelor's degree	166	39.50
		A bachelor's degree	211	50.20
		Above a bachelor's degree	41	4.50
7	Occupation	Civil servant	40	9.50
		Private-business employee	63	15.00
		Business owner	58	13.80
		Student	87	20.70
		Pensioner	16	3.80
		Retired	29	6.90
		Housewife	40	9.50
		Unemployed	29	6.90
		Part-time officer	57	13.60
8	Income (Thai Baht)	Below THB 10,000	85	20.20
		THB 10,001-20,000	124	29.50
		THB 20,001-30,000	81	19.30
		THB 30,001-40,000	38	9.00
		Above THB 40,001	6	1.40
		No income	86	20.50

Exploratory Factor Analysis

EFA was used to identify what destination attributes influence SLB destination brand perception. Using principal components factor analysis with Promax rotation, the underlying primary dimensions governing the entire set of 46 destination attributes influencing tourist perception of the SLB brand were determined. The indicators were encoded, and the result of analysis found as demonstrated in Table 3. The sample was appropriate for using factor analysis as measured by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The overall KMO was 0.599 and the Bartlett's test sphericity was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). The eigen value greater than 1.0 criterion was used to determine when factors cease to add significantly to the amount of variance extracted. The items with factor loading greater than 0.4 were grouped for each factor derived.

The factor analysis generated 17 underlying dimensions of the perceived attributes on SLB destination brand by tourists, which make good conceptual sense and explain a total of 74.153 percent of the cumulative total variance. Therefore, the factor structure of attributes of SLB destination brand detected by the EFA was composed of four variables for component 1, 2 and 12, three variables for component 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 15, and two variables for component 8,

9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 17. The percentages of variance characterized by component 1 - 17 after the rotation were 10.773%, 6.781%, 6.053%, 5.801%, 4.626%, 4.385%, 4.193%, 4.098%, 3.854%, 3.704%, 3.414%, 3.356%, 2.974%, 2.796%, 2.556%, 2.444% and 2.406% respectively, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Rotated Component of Destination Attributes Affecting Tourists Perception of SLB Brand

Component	Factor loadings	Eigen value	% Variance explained	Cumulative %	Cronbach alpha
Component 1: Accessibility and Activity					
- Travel convenience	.911	4.956	10.773	10.773	.804
- Variety of public transportations	.856				
- Clear signage availability	.846				
- Variety of tourist activities	.425				
Component 2: Amenities (1)					
- Availability of internet/Wifi	.905	3.090	6.718	17.492	.755
- Availability of tourist information center	.836				
- Availability of bank / ATM	.795				
- Availability of a standard hotel & accommodation	.478				
Component 3: Price (1)					
- Reasonable price of the entrance fee	.919	2.784	6.053	23.544	.820
- Value for money of the travel expenses	.904				
- Reasonable price of product & services	.655				
Component 4: Safety & Hygiene (1)					
- No criminal	.942	2.128	4.626	33.971	.688
- Political stability	.940				
- No terrorism	.676				
Component 5: Destination Management (1)					
- Knowledge sharing about value of tourist attraction & natural conservation	.922	2.128	4.626	33.971	.688
- Community participation	.836				
- Sustainability management	.573				
Component 6: Destination Management (2)					
- Sufficient number of officers on duty and provide quality service	.936	2.017	4.385	38.356	0.747
- Willingness to service	.902				
- Availability of modern technology for service	.476				
Component 7: Activity					
- Opportunity to join activity with local people	1.030	1.929	4.193	42.550	.607
- Opportunity to exchange knowledge with local people	.948				
- Variety of shopping destinations	.440				
Component 8: Destination Image (1)					
- Acceptance of community/local host	1.001	1.885	4.098	46.648	.859
- Politeness & friendliness of local people	.973				
Component 9: Tourist Destination (1)					
- Location/geographical area	.979	1.773	3.854	50.502	.367
- Variety of tourist destinations	.962				

Table 3 Rotated Component of Destination Attributes Affecting Tourists Perception of SLB Brand (Continued)

Component	Factor loadings	Eigen value	% Variance explained	Cumulative %	Cronbach alpha
Component 10: Safety & Hygiene (2)					
- Clean toilet	.852	1.704	3.704	54.206	.704
- Road safety	.804				
Component 11: Destination Management (3)					
- Easy to access the destination information	.882	1.570	3.414	57.620	.671
- Availability of local tour guide	.862				
Component 12: Destination Image (2)					
- Reflecting history & local way of life	.917	1.544	3.356	60.977	.630
- Touchable essence of local community	.849				
- Destination charming	.532				
- Local participation in destination management	.413				
Component 13: Amenities (2)					
- Availability of local restaurants/shops	.949	1.368	2.974	63.951	.709
- Availability of local souvenir shops	.830				
Component 14: Tourist Destination (2)					
- Reflecting history	.978	1.286	2.796	66.747	.588
- Tradition & culture reflecting the local essence	.889				
Component 15: Safety & Hygiene and Image					
- Disease control management	.888	1.176	2.556	69.303	.567
- Clean tourist destination	.801				
- Good renown	.400				
Component 16: Tourist Destination (2)					
- Destination attraction	.926	1.124	2.444	71.747	.630
- Identity of tourist destinations	.782				
Component 17: Price (2)					
- Reasonable price of souvenirs	.875	1.107	2.406	74.153	.588
- Reasonable price of accommodation	.797				

As clearly stated, destination attributes affect tourists' perception and it influences tourists' behavioural intentions (Mahdzar & Gani, 2018; Mistry, 2018; Ragavan, Subramonian, & Sharif, 2014). Therefore, it is important to understand whether any significant differences exist among those 17 dimensions affecting the tourists' perception of SLB brand. The factors were tested by independent t-test analysis to understand their influence on the destination brand. According to the analysis, the researcher used the mean scores as representative of each component to test the significant differences in the perception variables. Table 4 shows that only 11.76% (2 items) were significant, consisting of component 1 - accessibility and activity as well as component 5 – destination management. Both components have significant differences ($p < 0.05$) at 0.008 and 0.042 respectively.

Table 4 The Analysis of Dimensions Affecting the SLB Brand Perception

Component	Brand Perception	N	Mean	t	Significance
Component 1 Accessibility and Activity	1. Available of SLB destination brand	299	4.3261	3.671	.008
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.1222	3.408	
Component 2 Amenities (1)	1. Available of SLB destination brand	299	4.2709	.864	.904
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.2271	.852	
Component 3 Price (1)	1. Available of SLB destination brand	299	4.2676	3.060	.338
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.0972	2.903	
Component 4 Safety & Hygiene (1)	1. Available of SLB destination brand	299	4.1488	.702	.823
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.1042	.708	
Component 5 Destination Management (1)	1. SLB destination brand is available	299	4.3835	2.870	.042
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.2278	2.670	
Component 6 Destination Management (2)	1. SLB destination brand is available	299	4.3735	1.879	.344
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.2750	1.796	
Component 7 Activity	1. SLB destination brand is available	299	4.2486	-.446	.182
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.2694	-.458	
Component 8 Destination Image (1)	1. SLB destination brand is available	296	4.4189	-.184	.219
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.4292	-.180	
Component 9 Tourist Destination (1)	1. SLB destination brand is available	299	4.2341	-.069	.534
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.2375	-.067	
Component 10 Safety & Hygiene (2)	1. SLB destination brand is available	299	4.3311	-.234	.659
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.3458	-.234	
Component 11 Destination Management (3)	1. SLB destination brand is available	299	4.4064	1.388	.490
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.3250	1.318	
Component 12 Destination Image (2)	1. SLB destination brand is available	296	4.4296	1.437	.761
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.3639	1.445	
Component 13 Amenities (2)	1. SLB destination brand is available	299	4.4649	1.838	.735
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.3583	1.857	
Component 14 Tourist Destination (2)	1. SLB destination brand is available	299	4.4214	.695	.788
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.3833	.693	
Component 15 Safety & Hygiene and Image	1. SLB destination brand is available	299	4.4972	2.386	.535
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.3819	2.381	
Component 16 Tourist Destination (2)	1. SLB destination brand is available	299	4.4766	-.1.561	.370
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.5583	-.1.542	
Component 17 Price (2)	1. SLB destination brand is available	299	4.5050	2.974	.371
	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.3500	3.071	

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate destination attributes affecting tourist perception of the Songkhla Lake Basin brand, Muang district, Songkhla province, Thailand. According to research result, there were 17 underlying dimensions of the perceived attributes on SLB destination brand by tourists.

Among the dimensions identified, component 1 - accessibility and activity, which includes travel convenience, a variety of public transportation, clear signage availability, and a variety of tourist activities, is perceived most favorably by Thai tourists, holding the greatest variance of 10.773%. While component 17 - price, which includes a reasonable price for souvenirs and accommodations, is perceived least favorably by tourists who visited SLB. Furthermore, independent t-test analysis was employed to understand any influence of the dimensions on the destination brand perception. The result represented that only 11.76% (2 items) were significant, representing component 1 (accessibility and activity) as well as component 5 (destination management). Both components have significant differences ($p < 0.05$) at 0.008 and 0.042 respectively.

Only 2 of the 17 dimensions were found to have significant differences. It can be explained that most of the Thai tourists who participated in the survey were local people and from nearby southern provinces. Thus, they considered the remaining dimensions did not have any influence or significant differences to their perceived experiences, for example, location, tradition and culture, opportunity to exchange knowledge with local people, and the hospitality of the hosts, etc. Another reason could be related to the COVID-19 pandemic that resulted in the traveling restrictions of the local government announced during the survey period. It caused limited travel by the normal visitors to SLB; thus, only people from its province and neighboring provinces visited SLB during the said period. Therefore, based on the results of this study, it was revealed that hypotheses 1 was accepted as tourists considered SLB destination attributes in component 1 - travel convenience, a variety of public transportation, clear signage availability, and a variety of tourist activities, and component 5 - knowledge sharing about the value of tourist attractions and natural conservation, community participation, and sustainability management, which were represented in their perception of the SLB destination brand. It aligns with the study of Assaf and

Josiassen (2012) who claimed that destination attributes will affect the destination image in the minds of tourists and influence tourist behavior during a destination selection process (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Focusing on these significant dimensions, this study justified those Thai tourists paid greater attention to how they could access the destination and what they could do at the tourist attractions. The accessibility of the location was regarded as significant to Thai tourists since they required a quick journey to that destination, and the ability to plan and manage their schedule accordingly. The accessibility, in the opinion of Thai tourists, focused on a variety of public transportation such as flights, cars, trains, etc., which provided travel options for them. The convenient road, equipped with clear signage, was in the minds of Thai tourists, especially those who loved travelling by car. These results were similar to those of the study by Prebensen et al., (2014) who revealed that tourists increasingly seek convenience and rapidity when travelling due to time limitation. In addition, this also similar to Siripen Dabphet (2016) who explored accessibility and transportation was a key pull factors for first time tourists to visit a destination. Despite accessibility, the activities that tourists could do at the destination were also regarded as significant to Thai tourists since they considered this as part in the decision process. They were influenced by activities when deciding where to go, noting that activities could enhance new experiences, such as traditional culture and local ways of life, as well as provide relaxation, fun, and enjoyment both physically and emotionally. Furthermore, Thai tourists expressed their views about the knowledge gained from the visit, consisting of the value of the destination, natural conservation, and sustainability management. It is supported by the study of Wong (2011) who explored major destination attributes consisting of travel value and leisure attractions were among the identified themes. Normally, Thai tourists want to understand the destination's values so that they can immerse themselves in the history or background of the place. As a global trend, it is also accepted that Thai tourists pay more attention to sustainable tourism. They consider sustainable programs in which they can participate or consider whether the place has proper sustainable management at sites, then decide to choose the destination. The last result revealed by the study was about community participation. As part of destination management, Thai tourists tend to consider tourism through community participation as they can

learn about the unique experiences that are inserted into the tourism activities, and at the same time, they can also support local economic distribution in the place where they visit. It aligned with the study of Kulvadee Lamaijeen (2015) who explored that community participation is the process of community enhancement by giving their opportunities and chances for them to direct and handle their own benefits.

The results revealed by this study differed from prior findings, which were conducted to identify attributes that attract tourists to a destination (Atinifu & Muuz, 2017; Boit, 2013; Chahal & Devi, 2015; Hossain & Islam, 2019; Kim, 2014; Mahdzar & Gani, 2018; Mistry, 2018; Ragavan et al., 2014; Toral, et al., 2018). However, this study discovered more about the destination attributes that influence tourists' perceptions of the destination brand. As such, to elaborate more the benefits of this research, the result might be great interest to local government and SLB tourism marketers as well as planners to focus and consider applying in the process of promotion and marketing of the identified destination attributes that should be considered to make a destination attractive to tourists in recognizing tourist satisfaction and brand perception levels and boosting the destination's competitiveness (Vodeb & Nemec Rudež, 2017).

.Body of knowledge

It can conclude the research result that destination attributes influence the SLB destination brand perception as follows.

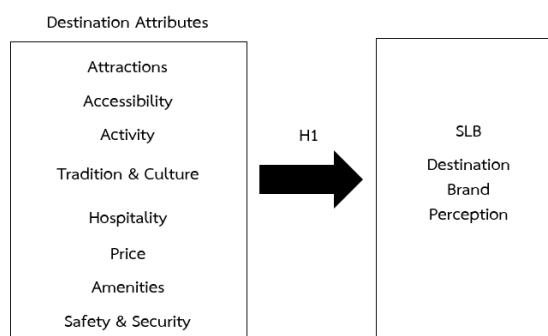


Figure 1 Destination Attributes and Destination Brand Perception

For SLB brand, the tourists expressed their opinion about destination brand perception in relation to component 1 - accessibility and activity as well as component 5 - destination management.

Recommendations

The researcher has suggestion for this study as follows:

Implementation Suggestion

It is recommended that relevant local government agencies and SLB tourism marketers and strategists concentrate on and probably apply inside the process of marketing and promotion of the identified destination attributes which should be considered while designing a destination attractive to tourists in realizing tourist satisfaction and brand perception levels and boosting the destination's competitive strength.

Future Research Suggestion

Future research should include international tourists as the survey period for this study was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, only Thai tourists were explored.

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