

## The image of historical tourism in the area of the Ayutthaya Historical Park affecting the decision to visit of Thai tourists in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya

Dr.Pakamas Chairatana<sup>a</sup>, Dr.Piyaphong Supanyo<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Tourism Management University of Phayao,

<sup>b</sup>Tourism Department School of Business and Communication Arts University of Phayao, Thailand

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**Abstract:** This research study aims to 1) study the personal factors influencing the decision to visit among Thai tourists visiting the Ayutthaya Historical Park area 2) study the image and decision making in the historical tourism in the Ayutthaya Historical Park of Thai tourists. The study was a quantitative research. The sample was 400 Thai tourists traveling to Ayutthaya Province. The research tool was a questionnaire. The data were analyzed by using statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and multiple regression analysis. The results of the research found that the level of opinion on the historical tourism image in the Ayutthaya Historical Park area in terms of the image towards the overall place was at a high level ( $\bar{x} = 4.17$ ). When considered individually, it was found that the item with the highest average was Ayutthaya Historical Park as a valuable tourist attraction for society and the nation ( $\bar{x} = 4.34$ ), followed by the Ayutthaya Historical Park, which is a historic tourist attraction ( $\bar{x} = 4.25$ ), Ayutthaya Historical Park was a valuable tourist attraction in the field of art ( $\bar{x} = 4.20$ ), Ayutthaya Historical Park was a world famous tourist attraction ( $\bar{x} = 4.09$ ) and the Ayutthaya Historical Park was a tourist attraction with a revered temple ( $\bar{x} = 3.99$ ), respectively.

**Keywords:** image, historical tourism of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province

### 1. Introduction

Thailand has a wide variety of tourism resources. At present, tourism in Thailand has expanded considerably. The growth of the tourism sector has to be adapted to keep up with the times. Tourism development must be balanced through niche marketing, promoting Thai ways and building confidence among tourists, which will give tourists confidence in their safety including things that will enhance the experience for tourists. The issue is set out in a government strategy that focuses on enhancing image, quality and safety. Developing the image and confidence in quality will focus on communicating the value and image of Thailand as a high - quality preferred destination to tourists and creating awareness among tourists through various channels (National Tourism Policy Committee, 2017) {1}

In promoting the marketing and image of Thailand to many civilized countries, the public sector has focused on promoting the identity of Thailand and local. In this regard, the Thai identity will be communicated to be understood in the world stage, such as creating Thai value in products and services through the "Thainess" symbol on products and services that maintain the Thai identity and communicating Thai identity through creative and innovative media. It also promotes domestic tourism and balanced tourism by building awareness of products, services and tourist attractions, as well as promoting domestic tourism under the project "Thai Teaw Thai" such as marketing campaigns with specific goals. In this regard, the government has promoted cooperation with stakeholders by promoting cooperation among various sectors in marketing, such as cooperating with communities to create tourism products and services that reflect the community identity, promotion of public-private marketing and promotion of the use of marketing support technologies such as applications that promote tourism marketing and online databases about Thai tourism (National Tourism Policy Committee, 2017) {2}.

Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province is very outstanding in terms of cultural tourism resources due to the presence of a historical park that has been registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Ayutthaya Historical Park is a place full of various ancient sites built since the Ayutthaya period. The 417-year prosperity of the Ayutthaya Kingdom has created a very valuable civilization, whether it is the places that remain until the present. Even though they are just the ruins of the consequences of past wars, these places are still valued by their unique beauty. Ayutthaya Historical Park has been declared a World Cultural Heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at the 15th Commonwealth of the World Heritage Committee in Carthage, Tunisia on December 13, 1991, it is the World Heritage List on the list of 576 (Arts and Culture Club, 2017) [3].

The researcher is therefore interested in studying the historical tourism image that affects the decision to visit in Ayutthaya Province. This may be something that can be used for the development of the Ayutthaya Historical Park. It is also a way to create a tourism image for tourists traveling in the Ayutthaya Historical Park area including the publicity of tourist attractions in the area is better known. As a result, tourism in the Ayutthaya Historical Park can be a sustainable tourism area in the future.

## **2. Research Objectives**

The objectives of this research article were:

- 1) To study the personal factors influencing the decision to travel to the Ayutthaya Historical Park of Thai tourists.
- 2) To study the image and decision making in the historical tourism in the Ayutthaya Historical Park of Thai tourists.

## **3. Research Methods**

### **Research scope**

#### Area of Studies

In this research study, the researcher conducted the study in the Ayutthaya Historical Park area, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province.

#### Data source scope

The researcher has collected the primary information (Primary data) in the following way.

1. Questionnaire Surveys were characterized by Closed-ended question and Open-ended question.
2. 400 questionnaires were applied to Thai tourists taking historical trips in the Ayutthaya Historical Park area.
3. Quantitative data collection, the researcher collected data from a sample of 400 Thai tourists in the Ayutthaya Historical Park area.

#### Study duration

The researcher conducted the research from January 2020 to January 2021.

### **Methodology**

#### 1. Resources

The researcher assigned Thai tourists traveling in the Ayutthaya Historical Park area to be the sample used in the study. The researcher could not know the exact size of the population, but did know that the population was large. The researcher then determined the sample size using the Cochran formula (referenced in Theerawut Ekakul, 2000) [4] by estimating the proportion of the population. Thus, a sample group of 400 respondents was obtained.

#### 2. Data Collection Tools

From the research study on "Historical tourism image influences the decision to visit Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province" was a quantitative research. The researcher then created a questionnaire to obtain complete information covering the content of the study by creating a data collection tool.

#### 3. Data Collection

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#### 4. Data analysis

The researcher had set the statistics for data analysis of the study as follows.

1. The personal factor variables of the respondents were used to determine the number of qualifying samples only. Therefore, the appropriate statistics for studying such variables were frequency and percentage.
2. For personal factors and the decision to travel to visit the Ayutthaya Historical Park of Thai tourists, the appropriate statistics for studying such variables were mean (" $\bar{x}$ ") and standard deviation (S.D.) (Kalaya Wanichbancha, 2012) [5].

3. Analysis of key data of interval scale variables using assessment as a rating scale based on the Likert's Scale, the sequence was displayed as interval scale divided into 5 levels, starting from 1 least to level 5 at most. Therefore, the statistics used for correlation testing were multiple regression analysis to study the image of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya historical tourism that affects the decision to travel in the Ayutthaya Historical Park area of Thai tourists.

#### 4. Results

The table showed the number and percentage of the respondents on the image of historical tourism in the Ayutthaya Historical Park area. The researcher analyzed the data and presented the results of the analysis in all 6 areas as follows:

<b>Personal factor</b>	<b>Number of people</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	181	45.2
Female	219	54.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 20 years	47	11.8
20-29 years	160	40.0
30-39 years	120	30.0
40-49 years	50	12.5
50-59 years	6	1.5
60 years and over	17	4.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Status</b>		
single	192	48.0
Marry	140	35.0
Widowed / Divorced	68	17.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Education</b>		
Lower than bachelor's degree	129	32.3
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	214	53.5
Higher than bachelor's degree	57	14.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student / student	89	22.3
Government officials / state enterprises	70	17.5
Private company employee	155	38.8
Private business	33	8.2
Self-employed	53	13.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Monthly Income</b>		
Less than 15,000 baht	94	23.5

Personal factor	Number of people	Percent
15,001-20,000 baht	131	32.8
20,001-25,000 baht	95	23.8
25,001-30,000 baht	15	3.8
30,001-35,000 baht	36	9.0
35,001-40,000 baht	17	4.3
More than 40,000 baht	12	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From the table, it was found that the majority of the sample was 219 women (54.8 percent), followed by 181 males (45.2 percent), respectively.

Most of the sample were between 20-29 years old, with 160 people (40 percent), followed by age between 30-39 years, 120 people (30 percent), age between 40-49 years, 50 people (12.5 percent), age less than 20 years, 47 people (11.8 percent), age 60 and over, 17 people (4.2 percent) and age between 50-59 years, 6 people (1.5 percent), respectively.

Most of the samples were unmarried, total 192 people (48 percent), followed by the marital status of 140 people (35 percent) and widowed / divorced status of 68 people (17 percent), respectively.

From the table, it was found that most of the sample group had an education level at the bachelor's degree or the equivalent of 214 students (53.5 percent), followed by lower than a bachelor's degree, 129 people (32.3 percent) and higher than a bachelor's degree of 57 people (14.2 percent), respectively.

Most of the sample were private company employees, 155 people (38.8 percent) followed by students, 89 people (22.3 percent), civil servants / state enterprises, 70 people (17.5 percent), freelance, 53 people (13.2 percent) and self-employed, 33 people (8.2 percent), respectively.

Most of the sample groups had monthly income between 15,001-20,000 baht, number of 131 people (32.8 percent), followed by monthly income between 20,001-25,000 baht, 95 people (23.8 percent), monthly income less than 15,000 baht, 94 people (23.5percent), monthly income between 30,001-35,000 baht, 36 people (9 percent), monthly income between 35,001-40,000 baht, 17 people (4.3), monthly income between 25,001-30,000 baht, total 15 people (3.8) and monthly income of more than 40,000 baht, totaling 12 people (3), respectively.

The table showed the mean and standard deviation of tourism image in terms of overall tourism attractions in the Ayutthaya Historical Park area.

Tourism image	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Results
<b>Image of the attraction</b>			
1. Do you think that Ayutthaya Historical Park is a valuable tourist attraction for society and the country?	4.34	0.70	Highest level
2. Do you think that Ayutthaya Historical Park is a tourist attraction with historical value?	4.25	0.65	Highest level
3. Do you think that Ayutthaya Historical Park is a valuable tourist attraction in the field of art?	4.20	0.58	High level
4. Do you think that Ayutthaya Historical Park is a world famous tourist attraction?	4.09	0.81	High level
5. Do you think that Ayutthaya Historical Park is a tourist attraction with a respectable temple?	3.99	0.80	High level
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.17</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>High level</b>

From the table it was found that the sample group had a high level of opinions about tourism in the Ayutthaya Historical Park area of the overall location ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.17) (S.D. = 0.47). When considered individually, it was found that the items with the highest mean: tourists thought that Ayutthaya Historical Park is a valuable tourist attraction for society and the country ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.34) (S.D. = 0.70), followed by tourists thought that Ayutthaya Historical Park was a tourist attraction with historical value ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.25) (SD = 0.65), tourists thought that Ayutthaya Historical Park was a valuable tourist attraction in the field of art ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.20) (SD = 0.58), tourists thought that Ayutthaya Historical Park was a world famous tourist attraction ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.09) (S.D. = 0.81) and tourists thought that

Ayutthaya Historical Park was a tourist attraction with a respectable temple (" $\bar{x}$ " = 3.99) (S.D. = 0.80), respectively.

## 5. Discussions

The results of the study of historical tourism image in the Ayutthaya Historical Park area that correlate to the travel decision of Thai tourists

The results of the study showed that there were two aspects of image correlating to Thai tourists traveling decisions in the Ayutthaya Historical Park area: 1) image of perception 2) image of the place as a whole The researcher would divide the points in explaining the results of the research study as follows:

1. Image of perception - The image of perception in the sense that tourists may be exposed to media such as television, print media, Big Data media, or even social media, this was consistent with the research of Siripen Dabphet (2018) [6] that had been studied in the areas of tourism components and communication channels, the image of tourism for future tourists: case study of Phitsanulok Province. The results of the research revealed that tourists had a communication channel for perceiving Phitsanulok tourism information through traditional media (sayings of relatives / friends and television) and electronic media (social media) were the main communication channel for tourists, the details of the communication channel include magazines or journals related to tourism, word of mouth (of relatives, friends or acquaintances), Ads from television programs, social media, and websites that can provide information to tourists.

2. Image of the place as a whole - This also included tourism experiences that were relevant to the area of the Ayutthaya Historical Park, for example, the famous annual festival of Ayutthaya Province was "Ayutthaya World Heritage Fair" which was held annually in the Ayutthaya Historical Park area. Therefore, it made tourists perceived about the historical park area. Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya very well, even though I have never traveled on a historical trip formally. At the same time, tourists may become aware of traveling to make merit in various important temples in the Ayutthaya Historical Park area because it was an area with many temples and was not far from Bangkok. The area around the Ayutthaya Historical Park is therefore popular for continuing to make merit. This is consistent with the research of Manoch Phrompanya and Siriwan Serirat (2015) [7] that had studied the sustainability of tourist attractions, motivation and attitudes towards temple tourism behavior in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya district. The research found that Thai tourists viewed the sustainability of the tourist attractions at the 4 temples: Wat Phanan Choeng Worawihan, Wat Yai Chaimongkol, Wat Na Phra Meru Rachikaram, and Wat Tha Ka Rong were in a very high level of "sustainability".

In addition to being mentioned, the Ayutthaya Historical Park was also considered a relatively famous historical tourist attraction. As it was registered as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site, the area has frequently appeared in the media.

All of this may be part of the tourism awareness of the context of the area, thus leading to the decision to travel to experience this valuable resource.

## 6. Recommendations

From research studies, it was found that the Ayutthaya Historical Park still had some interesting things and the information obtained in this time could be used to promote and develop the Ayutthaya Historical Park as follows:

1. In terms of publicizing the image of tourist attractions in the Ayutthaya Historical Park, all sectors should continue to promote and publicize in order to create greater awareness among tourists.

2. Advertising could promote the strengths of historical and archaeological values in various channels that tourists can easily access, whether in the old channels such as television media and various print media and new channels should be promoted to suit the times, such as social media or the exchange of travel experiences in order to reinforce the identity of the destination to be more prominent.

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