

# MARKETING STRATEGY ON SERVICE INDUSTRY IN THE NEXT NORMAL: A CASE OF SAMUTSONGKHRAM PROVINCE

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to find out the suitable marketing strategy development model for service industry in the next normal in Samutsongkhrum Province by studying the relationship between changing customer behavior after Covid-19 and the marketing mix of 4Es. This study used the quantitative method of analysis by distributing an online questionnaire to 400 respondents. Descriptive statistics used in this research were percentage, mean and standard deviation, and correlation. The result of this study showed that travelers with different genders, ages, education levels, occupations, and average monthly incomes have different decisions on travel at a statistically significant level of 0.05. Results confirmed that there are four factors influencing the service industry; Experience, Exchange, Everywhere, and Evangelism. They play important roles in marketing strategies to develop the sustainability of the service industry from the customer's aspects in the next normal.

**Keywords:** Marketing strategy, 4Es, Service Industry, Next Normal Era

## INTRODUCTION

The past COVID-19 situation has affected the economy in a wide area. Many countries around the world have to face economic problems. Governments in many countries around the world have issued lockdown measures to control international travel. As a result, the number of tourists around the world contracted to a record. The tourism industry which used to generate huge amounts of income for the country was also affected. Therefore, tourism behavior has also changed. Changing business models that emphasize the use of modern technology including attention to health and hygiene. The changing tourism landscape affects the demand patterns of tourists and the business model of hoteliers. Including looking for new business opportunities. related to tourism as well as creating links with other sectors in the tourism value chain. whether the local community or even other businesses. Thailand's tourism and hotel businesses, which are growing rapidly and generating large amounts of income for the country each year, are faced with an unprecedented crisis from the spread of COVID-19. The impact this time is severe and tends to last. Based on the analysis of the direction of the recovery of the tourism sector under the changing social and economic context. as well as offering

guidelines for adapting the hotel business during the transition period. as well as analyzing the future tourism landscape in the post-pandemic crisis. To help tourism business operators and hotels to adapt to the changing context. Entrepreneurs rush to adjust to being able to continue their business, for example, by reducing room prices. Change the form of service focusing on the domestic tourism market, reducing expenses and earning income from related businesses, etc. Many hotels offer work from hotel services instead of Work From Home, as well as collaborating with online food ordering applications from hotel restaurants. (Mostly 4-5 star hotels) (Weera Weerasophon, 2021). In addition, many hotels (some of them cooperate with medical institutions/hospitals) provide quarantine services in Bangkok and its vicinity (Alternative State Quarantine: ASQ) and 9 other provinces (Alternative Local). State Quarantine: ALSQ) are Phuket, Surat Thani (Koh Samui), Chonburi (Pattaya), Prachinburi, Buriram, Mukdahan, Chiang Mai, Phang Nga, and Chiang Rai (information as of January 8, 2021) to accommodate foreign customers entering Thailand and having to quarantine according to government policies. At the same time, many medium and small hotels have to close their business.

However, tourism trends are expected after the COVID-19 situation. Most of them agreed that the tourism behavior of tourists would change from the original, such as Prof. Dr. Apiwat Rattanawaraha, a future researcher. has synthesized the future base of Thai tourism, for example, tourists will increasingly prefer lifestyle and experience travel. Tourists will seek community engagement activities in the tourism area and sustainable long-term outcomes. This means that tourists are friendly to the environment and local communities, etc. It was found that the factors that will occur have a high impact. This will be the future base of Thai tourism when tourism recovers, for example, small-group tourism will be a new trend. Tourism businesses must adapt to be able to serve small groups. It is destination management (Destination management) to have more creative activities when tourism recovers. The concentration of tourism and the deterioration of tourism resources. will turn into a challenge that must be solved before natural resources deteriorate to the point of being irrecoverable, etc. It can be seen that when tourist behavior patterns change, the tourism business, including tourist attractions, must also be adjusted, especially in the marketing strategy that has to change from the original as well. to accommodate new normal tourist patterns and behaviors that will occur after COVID-19 (Mingsan Khaosaard, 2021)

Samutsongkhram Province It is a small province consisting of 3 districts, which are Mueang Samutsongkhram District, Amphawa District, and Bang Khonthi District, but is a tourist destination for both Thai and foreign tourists. In addition, it is a tourist city that many companies include in the tour program when tourists come to buy tours as well. because there are famous tourist attractions and not very far from Bangkok, which is the center of the country. The floating market is a tourist attraction that is well known to tourists and is also the destination of travel for many people such as Amphawa Floating Market. Bang Noi floating market, etc. Currently, when the outbreak of COVID-19 occurs, tourism and hotel businesses, as well as various tourist attractions, have been temporarily closed due to a lack of tourists Including strict measures that greatly affect tourism activities However, it is still a tourist attraction that many people are interested in. but must comply with the established measures

Although the floating market attractions in Samut Songkhram Province have already adjusted according to the measures in the future after this situation Adjustment of marketing strategies to present a new image of the floating market in line with the behavior and needs of tourists is still unclear or may not have been planned. Despite the things that need to be accelerated to be used in the development of tourism not only adjusting only according to measures. For this reason, the research team also foresees such problems that it is necessary to study the marketing strategies of the new normal life service industry. of Samut Songkhram Province To be used as a guideline for business owners and related people in the area.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The service Industry nowadays has been digitized, for the most part, therefore, the 4Ps, although still a base for business plans with the adaptation, have become less crucial. As time changed, Brian Fetherstonhaugh, on board of Ogilvy One Worldwide, was one of the leading businesses that suggested 4Es to replace 4Ps. There are 4 types of 4Es strategies:

1. Product to Experience; In the past, a business usually put an emphasis on how the product should fit the customer's expectation, and focuses on putting a product to the market, which is found to be ineffective since the consumer nowadays has more control over what they want to buy, therefore, this idea suggested that it is better to change the emphasis from products to the customer's experience throughout the Customer Journey

2. Price to Exchange; It was suggested that if the price of a service or a product is lower, a business should gain more advantage in the market. This used to be a popular idea to do business in the past, however, the Exchange has played a more crucial role in the business for the consumer in the present.

3. Place to Everyplace; Business in the present, if not all, has been digitized to create more selling platforms, unlike in the past when there was only an offline platform, aiming to be reachable to the consumer while not interrupting, learning the behavior of the consumer to fulfill their needs as much as possible.

4. Promotion to Evangelism; It is stated that a promotion would get only short-term attention from the consumer. Therefore, it was suggested that building Evangelism is a better way to stay relatable to the consumer.

### **Research objective**

1. To analyze marketing strategies of tourism and accommodation businesses in the area of Samut Songkhram Province

2. To explore the attitudes of tourists towards the marketing strategies of tourism and accommodation businesses in Samut Songkhram Province.

## Research framework

### Independent variable

Situation analysis of the tourism and service industry in Samut Songkhram Province

Marketing mix of tourism and service industry (4Es)

### Variable based

Image of the tourism and service industry in Samut Songkhram

Marketing strategies that are suitable for the service industry to a new way of life in the area of Samut Songkhram Province

## METHODOLOGY

This research is developmental because it focuses on the acquisition of knowledge datasets that will lead to the development of tourism activities that are suitable for local resources. Samut Songkhram Therefore, qualitative and quantitative research was designed. The qualitative results were obtained from a survey of information from government and private agencies related to tourism, such as the Samut Songkhram Provincial Tourism and Sports Office, Sub-district Administrative Organizations, tour operators, community leaders, and those involved with driving tourism. A total of 20 representatives from each organization were used and this study also used the quantitative method of analysis by distributing an online questionnaire to 400 respondents. Descriptive statistics used in this research were percentage, mean and standard deviation, and correlation. The result of this study showed that travelers with different genders, ages, education levels, occupations, and average monthly incomes have different decisions on travel at a statistically significant level of 0.05.

## RESULTS

General information of the respondents found that most of the tourists were female, 203 people, representing 50.7 percent and male, 197 people, representing 49.3 percent, most of them were 38 - 53 years old, 167 people, representing 41.8 percent, followed by down to 21-37 years of age, 145 people, representing 36.3 percent, followed by 51 people aged 54-72 years, representing 12.8 percent, followed by under or equal to 20 years of age, 27 people, representing 6.8 percent and Age over 72 years, 10 people, accounting for 2.5%

Most of them were married, 254 people, representing 63.5 percent, followed by single status, 128 people, representing 32 percent, and widowed/divorced, 18 people, representing 4.5 percent.

**Education level;** Most of them were bachelor's degrees, 205 people, representing 51.2 percent, followed by 144 people below bachelor's degrees, representing 36 percent, and 51 people after bachelor's degrees, representing 12.8 percent.

**Income;** Most tourists have an income between 20,001 – 30,000 baht, 226 people, representing 56.5 percent, followed by an income between 10,001-20,000 baht, 85 people, representing 21.3 percent, followed by an income between 30,001-40,000 baht, 48 people, representing 12 percent, next, with an income of less than or equal to 10,000 baht, 37 people representing a percent 9.3 and the last one is earning more than 40,000 baht or more, 4 people, representing 1%.

**Occupation;** Most tourists are working as employees of private companies, 135 people, representing 33.8 percent, followed by government service/state enterprises, 98 people, representing 24.5 percent, followed by private business/trade, 66 people, representing 16.5 percent according to With other occupations such as engineers, lawyers, doctors, nurses, salesmen, hotel staff, guides, 37 people, representing 9.3 percent and still students/students of 36 people, representing 9 percent, the last is unemployed / housewife, butler, 28 people, representing a hundred 7 each.

Data on tourist behavior found that Most of the tourists came for the second time, 160 people, representing 40 percent, followed by this trip for the first time, 140 people, representing 35 percent, followed by this trip for the third time, 89. people, representing 22.3%, and traveling this time more than 3 times, 11 people, representing 2.8%

Accompanied persons It was found that most tourists traveled with friends, 146 people, representing 36.5 percent, followed by traveling alone, 89 people, representing 22.3 percent, followed by traveling with family, 77 people, representing 19.5 percent. is traveling with a lover (girlfriend/husband and wife) of 50 people, representing 12.5%

Travel style; It was found that most tourists traveled by private car, 316 people, representing 79 percent, and traveling by public transport, 84 people, representing 21 percent, respectively.

Expenses for use within tourist attractions It was found that the cost of living in tourist attractions was between 1,001 – 1,500 baht, 298 people, representing 73.8 percent, followed by between 501 – 1,000 baht, 63 people, representing 15.8 percent, followed by more than 1,500 baht or more, 29 people, representing 7.2 percent. and less than or equal to 500 baht, 13 people, representing 3.3%

Reason for traveling Found that tourists come to travel Most of them want to come to reminisce, 96 people, representing 24 percent, followed by the trend from social media, 94 people, representing 23 percent, followed by a favorite lifestyle by the water, 54 people, representing percentage 13.5 Next is interesting activities of 47 people, representing 11.8%, followed by vacations, 34 people, representing 8.5%, followed by to buy local products, 33 people, representing 8.3%. their place of residence, 31 people, accounting for 7.8 percent, and other reasons Consisting of changing the atmosphere from the original style to working in private the amount of 13 people, representing 3.3 percent.

Most favorite activities found that tourists come to travel. Most of them want to come to eat out of 112 people, representing 28 percent, followed by taking pictures at tourist service points 74 people, representing 18.5 percent, followed by a lifestyle cruise 67 people, representing hundreds. 16.8 percent, followed by shopping for souvenirs and local products, 59 people, representing 14.8 percent, next, paying homage to important temples nearby, 39 people, representing 9.8 percent, followed by traveling at important places, 37 people Representing 9.3 percent, followed by to buy local products of 33 people, representing 8.3

percent. Finally, other reasons. consists of sitting and watching the atmosphere and talking to villagers Visit the architecture along the river, 13 people, representing 2 percent.

Mean and Standard Deviation of Tourist Demand towards Marketing Mix of Floating Market Attractions Samut Songkhram Province. Overall, it found that the overall picture was at a high level ( $x = 3.93$ ), with all items at a high level when considering each item, in descending order as follows:

1. Experience (Experience) ( $x = 4.14$ )
2. Safety and hygiene ( $x = 3.92$ )
3. Increase sales opportunities (Everywhere) ( $x = 3.90$ )
4. Evangelism ( $x = 3.84$ )
5. Exchange ( $x = 3.83$ )

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the level of tourist demand towards the marketing mix of tourist attractions in the category of floating markets Samut Songkhram Province. Experience found that the overall picture is at a high level. Tourists have demands for tourism activities in the area due to traditional cultural capital and products that reflect local wisdom and way of life. And it is the product that promotes and maintains the traditional occupations of the local people in the top two respectively. And there is a need for landscape preservation/land management that tries to preserve the authenticity of natural and cultural areas, such as cooperation in not creating anything that is out of the area's identity or causing bad views, establishments such as restaurants, beverages Hotels, and accommodations, etc. that offer services and decorations that are consistent with the context of the area, such as a good interior atmosphere. Interesting menus, maintaining the waterfront architecture style or improving but maintaining the original identity along the canal and river and the format of tourism interpretation in the area that creates awareness and understanding to tourists about information of the area such as signs, public relations points, etc., which are consistent with the local context at a high level, in descending order, respectively mentioned.

The analysis of the level of tourist demand towards the marketing mix of tourist attractions in the category of floating markets Samut Songkhram Province. In terms of exchange, it was found that the overall picture and all issues were at a high level. Tourists have demanded in descending order as follows Products and goods sold within valuable tourist attractions should be bought back or kept as a symbol that reflects the area, and establishments. As well as products and products that have value creation through local tourism stories, services of operators within tourist attractions that make an impression and feel worth the expense of tourists, such as all levels of service equality, etc., the quality of products and products within tourist attractions that are worth the price set by operators and creating various promotions of establishments As well as tourism products and services to create value for tourists to use the service.

The analysis of the level of tourist demand towards the marketing mix of tourist attractions in the category of floating markets Samut Songkhram Province In terms of increasing sales opportunities (Everywhere), it was found that the overall picture and all issues were at a high level. Tourists have demanded in descending order as follows Using technology to increase

sales channels or providing services to tourists more conveniently and quickly in the establishment, such as using a wireless queue (Calling Queue) to reduce congestion, etc., using technology to increase sales channels or provide services to tourists more conveniently and quickly in terms of tourism, such as boat queue services through various apps, increasing communication channels about tourist attractions through social media. To attract tourists and focus on conveying the experience that will be gained from tourism within the destination more Both the promotion of public relations from the public sector. Or the cooperation of people involved in the area, such as presenting through IG TIKTOK, etc., and increasing marketing communication channels of various establishments in the area, such as IG TIKTOK or participating through App Delivery such as Lineman Grab, etc., to increase the experience. with more tourists both in the area and in the vicinity of the area as well

An analysis of the level of tourist demand towards the marketing mix of tourist attractions in the category of floating markets Samutsongkhram Province In terms of customer motivation (Evangelism), it was found that the overview and all issues were at a high level. Tourists have demanded in descending order as follows establishments in the area by building relationships with tourists, such as contributing revenue from tourists buying their products to feel part of helping society Or organizing workshop activities, or allowing tourists to try making products or participate in the purchased products to create experiences for tourists themselves, creating activities in the area by building relationships with tourists, such as accepting plastic donations resulting from product purchases or local food for recycling This makes tourists feel good about being a part of helping society and tourist attractions to be sustainable. or organizing various workshops, etc., creating travel stories through various tourist service points such as walking routes in the area, etc., and dividing zones in the distribution of products or types of products to create interest and convenience to buy products.

An analysis of the level of tourist demand towards the marketing mix of tourist attractions in the category of floating markets in Samutsongkhram Province which similar result with Sasitorn Chetanont and Benjaporn Yamjameung (2014), In terms of safety and hygiene, it was found that the overall picture and all issues were at a high level. Tourists have demanded in descending order as follows Operators and service providers should wear personal protective equipment at all times while providing services to customers. More than 50 percent of establishments within tourist attractions should also meet the Health Safety Standards (SHA). Attraction facilities meet the Health Safety Standards (SHA), and Signs should be installed. That represents the SHA standard of hygiene safety precautions and facilities for cleaning hands and taking temperature before providing services or visiting tourist attractions.

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