

WELLNESS TOURISM ACTIVITY MODEL DEVELOPMENT TO PROMOTE TOURISM MARKET FOR THAI ELDERLY TOURISTS IN CHIANG RAI PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research on Wellness Tourism Activity Model Development to Promote Tourism Market for Thai elderly tourists in Chiang Rai Province were to (1) explore and collect information on Wellness Tourism Activities in Chiang Rai Province, (2) examine travel behavior of tourists, and (3) develop a model of wellness tourism activities in order to promote tourism marketing for elderly Thai tourists in Chiang Rai province. Research sample was the elderly Thai tourist who traveled to Chiang Rai and tourism related person in Chiang Rai. Focus group, interview and 410 questionnaires were used as data collection tools. Key findings from the study are; (1) Factors that most impressed tourists are varieties of tourist attractions e.g. variety of ethnic groups, cultural diversity, unique and beauties of landscape and architecture buildings, friendliness of local residents, easy go life style and local dialect, well organized and standard of tourists services and facilities provided which meet with national standard as well as easy access and travel from tourist home town to Chiang Rai and from Chiang Rai to destinations within Chiang Rai. (2) In term of form of wellness tourism, it was found that activities in the form of slow tourism such as culture and religion activities, temple tour, meditation learning and practice were rated as famous tourism forms. (3) In term of tourism activities organize to promote wellness tourism in Chiang Rai, it was found that visiting flower garden and tea and coffee plantation were amongst the most satisfied activities. The study illustrated that top four activities that should be promoted and organized for elderly tourists in Chiang Rai were Dhamma Therapy (meditation), Herbal Therapy, Taste Therapy and Natural Therapy.

Keywords: Wellness tourism; Elderly tourist; Tourism market.

INTRODUCTION

It is obviously that the number of elderly people around the world is increasing. It was found that world population statistics illustrated the number of people aged 60 and over in 1950 were about 200 million (8 percent of population at that time) and up to 760 million (11 percent of the population at the time) and is expected to reach 2 billion by 2050, 22 percent of the population expected at that time, and the United Nation World Tourism (UNWTO) forecast that there will be more than 611 million elderly tourists by 2030 (Yonwikai, 2019). In Thailand, it was clear that there are more than 12.2 million in number of people aged 60 and overs or 17.64%

of population nowadays and it was forecasted that Thailand will be stepped up to aging society by 2031 and number of elderly people will increase up to 28 percent of total population (National Agenda on Elderly Society, 2018).

Becoming aging society country will make the country more burdensome to care for the elderly and members of society must cooperate and promoting the health of the elderly is imperative to reduce the opportunity and time they depend on for care and the burden of excessive expenses (Duangkaew & Dej-Udom, 2007). Improved physical and mental well-being have a good quality of life and be able to live happily in society at the end by encouraging the elderly to do activities is one of the methods that are widely used. Because participating in activities causes happiness, fun, and recreational activities. Meet and socialize, join in activities with friends of the same age will encourage the elderly to adapt well to changes in various aspects and feel proud that they still have the ability are important and valuable to society.

Tourism is considered as one of famous options to attract elderly people to opt in order to make them living their life enjoyable and fruitful. Although tourism is not a basic necessity of life and someone may consider Tourism is a waste but it is about leisure and pleasure which people need both to cope and enhance physical and mental health as tourism is also consider as stress relief. It was also considering as the way to explore new experience and new world and build good relationships as well (Siribennarat, 2010). Elderly tourist market is one of those markets that have a high growth potential in the future. It is a huge market with more potential and attractiveness. This is due to the structure of society has entered the society of the elderly. Elderly tourists will have different forms and behaviors of tourism from general tourists, focusing on tourism and services of good quality and value. Focus on buying with reason, not emotion. Prioritizes satisfaction take a long break, have the ability in spending and purchasing high-priced services.

Thailand was ranked number 4 by UNWTO (2020) in term international tourism receipts be hide USA, Spain and France and ranked number 10 in term of international tourist arrival. Thai government has released a set of national tourism policy and plan and forecast that tourism industry will generate gross domestic product (GDP) with an average growth of 6.7% per year by 2027 and tourism industry will be worth approximately 2.71 trillion baht or 14.30% of gross domestic product (Tourism Development Strategic Plan 2018-2021, 2018).

In case of the study context, Chiang Rai, is one of the most famous destinations in the northern region of Thailand. The rich fullness of tourist attractions, culture, uniqueness of life style of local resident and local food, traditions and festival, historical park, beauties of architectural buildings and temples and the easy access to Chiang Rai by Thai tourists via air and road transport are key advantages factors to attract tourist to visit and to promote tourism in Chiang Rai. According to the Ministry of Tourism and Sport (MOTS) at the end of the year 2019 there were more than 3 million tourists (both domestic and international) visited and generated over 909 billion US dollars (MOTS, 2019). Recently, Chiang Rai was ranked number one for the Best Second Destination City campaign in Thailand amongst over 60 cities in the country (MOTS, 2021). The statistic also illustrated that significant growing number of long-stay tourists in Chiang Rai who were age fall into the group of elderly or senior tourists (MOTS, 2019) has attracted and formed the interest of both private and government sectors to shed the light on in order to promote and enhance tourism opportunity for the city.

As illustrated in the previous paragraph, it could be addressed that vital reason and purpose of this study is to explore and collect information on wellness tourism activities in Chiang Rai province, to examine travel behavior of tourists, to develop a model of wellness

tourism activities in order to promote tourism marketing for elderly Thai tourists in Chiang Rai province. This due to the consideration that Thailand will go into the aging society country by 2031.

The envisage contribution of the study is to investigate and provide guidelines and marketing opportunities for both relates tourism government and private sectors in Chiang Rai province in order to be able to generate and organize well plan and well management to make Chiang Rai ready for becoming one of the best destination choices for elderly Thai tourists.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It's such a real-world phenomenon that changing in ageing society nowadays is spreading rapidly and cause mega change to every sector including tourism sector. The study focusing on the connection between elderly people and tourism activity is considered as the way in which tourism entrepreneur and relates organization could be able to cope with the changes properly. Literature of this study highlights the idea of elderly people and tourism and how there were connected.

Elderly People and Tourism

According to Chaichanavichit et al. (2009) elderly people could be divided into 3 groups as below

1. The best group, this group is currently 51-56 years old. Liking for modernity keep up with technology focus on health care and take care of internal and external image in order to always making a good looking, use quality products to enhance personality and fancy going to the gym for exercise. This group loving to travel both within the country and abroad and hold at least 2-3 credit cards. The Best group tends to buy goods and services at department via the website.
2. The bright group, this group is currently aged 55-62 years. They intend to focus on health care both physically and mentally by the natural way of practicing dharma exercise from natural sources prefer to eat organic food, take vitamins or supplements to promote health. Use only one credit card and pick up products and services based on their worth. Leisure activities are watching television, reading a book, or meeting with close friends as a group.
3. The basic group, this group is currently aged 61-69 years and being retired. The main activities are watching television, reading books, interested in products that can be easily used. Uncomplicated and easy to see desirable products and services are direct selling products with product catalogs. Home delivery service and buy consumables Consumers that are used at home by themselves at reasonable prices because of their high thriftiness (Chaichanavichit et al., 2009).

While in Thailand, the National Statistical Office (Chaichanavichit et al., 2019) has divided elderly people into 3 groups: early elderly refer to people aged 60-69 years, middle elderly referred to people aged 70-79 years and late elderly referred to people aged 80 years and over.

Kotler et al. (2006) argued that the structure of the world's population has changed. Entering an aging society, resulting in long stay tourism with the aim of recreation and this form of tourism has been very popular in the last 21st century. Because the population in the “Baby Boomer” or “Gen X” era has entered retirement from work and this population have a very high purchasing power and the ability to spend money. And there is no worry about the cost because they are experienced in living so they are careful in choosing products and services. Three mains focus of elderly tourist are;

1. Focus on tourism and good quality services,
2. Consider the worthiness of purchasing the service
3. Need to ensure safety

According to Kotler et al. (2006), it could be argued that classify elderly tourists into different groups using their behavior, needs and wants could benefit in term of making them more satisfied as type of elderly tourists will be classified in next section.

Types of Elderly Tourists

As illustrated in previous section about elderly tourist classification, Shoemaker (1989) has divided elderly tourists into 3 groups. The first is the group that satisfied a short trip and prefers to return to the same place rather than visit a new place. The second group is called “Active resters”. This group likes to meet people, socialize and relax. The third group is the group that choose to take package so-called ‘all-inclusive tour package’ and love spending time at resort accommodation. Like Shoemaker (1989), Lieux et al. (1994), divided elderly tourists into 3 groups. First is a group of people who are near retirement age and have good income and are seeking for new experiences or so-called as novelty seekers. Second group is similar to the first group as they are people who are near retirement age and has good income but interest in travelling to the area or destination with warm and hot weather and spend longer time than the first group. Alternatively, active enthusiasts are the name of this group. Third is the group of people who have less income and only able to take a short trip. This group also known as reluctant travelers.

According to the study of Backman et al. (1999), on behavior and motivation of elderly tourists. They divided elderly tourists into 5 groups: First, those who like education and nature. Second, those who like adventurous, trekking and camping/tenting. Third, those who traveling for socializing. Fourth, those who traveling for recreation. Fifth, those who traveling to study and learn things.

It could be said that having a good knowledge of characteristic of each group of tourists will be to generate clear understanding of how to deal with them and this will be explained in more details in next section.

Elderly Tourists’ Behavior

Understanding elderly tourist behavior is very important as their behavior will be the key for tourism entrepreneur to know and plan how to satisfy their needs and meet their expectation. The increasing number of trips they made, how they spending, what they buy and what they like or dislike will help entrepreneur analyze and develop products and services to sell their needs.

According to Bowen and Clarke (2009), elderly tourists (or senior tourists) are another group of tourists who, considering their age-specific factors (age numbers), may appear to behave in the opposite direction of young tourists. In all matters, the important issue is how old are you considered to be elderly tourist. Many elderly tourists still appreciate and love adventure travel. Still eager to travel in the same manner as young people. It also attaches importance to enhancing the quality of life through tourism. Especially in those over 50 who have self-confidence and is recognized as having high purchasing power and have a stable income ready to spend on travel, have a lot of free time and ready to travel during the off-season. The characteristics of this group of tourists may be classified as follows;

1. Some of them pay attention to non- traditional tourism activities intended for elderly tourists such as volunteer tourism activities, long haul travel activities, various types of adventure tourism activities such as horse riding, mountain climbing, driving/cycling on the mountain, sports tourism activities that provide new experiences, extreme sports activities such as bungee jumping and focuses on risky tourism. Activities that will make you them look younger.
2. Some plan and organize their own tour program via online. Do not use the service of the company, tour guide or travel agency.
3. VFR is the famous form of traveling.
4. Traveling with couples rather than with family trip.

It could be argued that elderly tourists have tourism behavior in a manner that is not different from extreme youth tourists. However, the fact is that every person over 50 or 55 years of age has the potential and readiness to be a traveler. Financial status is an important factor. The increase in the number of elderly people is due to advances in medical science. Entering an aging society will increase the number of elderly people. Health care costs and living expenses are cited compared to the costs that would be spent on travel. Seniors or elderly people (aged 55 years and over), most will be near retirement age or may retire from full-time work. The income factor is therefore an important factor. Some seniors may need to look for extra work as a source of extra income from their pension for normal living expenses and for travel expenses. Elderly or senior tourism is likely to become a growing niche (OECD, 2014), especially because by 2050, the population aged 60 years and older will take more than 2 billion international trips, far more than the 593 million they took in 1999 (Patterson, 2006).

According to the above mentioned, appropriate form of tourism for elderly tourist is considered as important factor in order to satisfy needs and wants of them. Less adventure, health related tourism activity or so-called health tourism or wellness tourism is considered as one of appropriate form of tourism for elderly tourism. This will be discussed in more details in next section.

Wellness Tourism

There was a famous question of what is wellness tourism? According to the tourism service standard on the provision of services in the tourism establishment health (Department of Tourism, 2014) defines wellness tourism, as health tourism, as a physical activity tourism related to health care by receiving wellness services which means providing services that result in well-being (Wellness), such as exercise for health, healthy eating, massage or herbal compress for health including weight loss program practicing yoga, Tai Chi, and meditation. In addition, medical tourism is also considered as part of wellness tourism. In addition, it is also considering as tourism that is related to providing health services to provide tourists with good physical and mental health through the use of service providers or staff who provide services directly such as Thai massage, foot massage, oil massage, reflexology, body scrub and mud wrap. Sonthirak (2010) also defined wellness tourism as Health Tourism or Wellness Tourism, as a travel trip to escape the cause of suffering from daily life to a destination that adjusts and finds the perfect fit in life, which is a travel experience that tourists get through. According to Esichaikul (2014), wellness tourism could be divided into two types as follows;

Health Promotion Tourism

This refers to activities such as traveling for recreation, visiting beautiful tourist attractions, natural and cultural attractions to learn the way of life. By allocating part of the time from tourism to do activities to promote health both in the camp and outside the camp in the right way according to academic principles and with standard quality, such as mineral baths/hot springs, Thai traditional massage, herbal steam, aromatherapy services and hydrotherapy. Main purpose of health promotion tourism is to promote and maintain physical and mental health, medical treatment and restoring health. As well as having the opportunity to exchange experiences and social gatherings to promote good health with others during travel by promoting health for tourist to be expressed in the form of exercise and sports weight control. The popularity of food and beverages with herbs those are beneficial to health, calming the mind through meditation as well as the use of medicinal herbs.

Health Healing Tourism

This refer to activities that aims to relax by dividing some time to do activities for the treatment of diseases or to restore health such as physical examination, dental practice dental care surgical treatment cosmetic surgery or gender reassignment, in a hospital or medical facility of standard quality, or sometimes called Medical Tourism with natural health tourism activities, cultural health tourism including balancing food, strengthening of strength, adjust the mind to feel relaxed, eliminate stress and balance the body. Health tourism or Medical Tourism is an activity that aims to generate recreation. Tourists also want to travel to receive medical services.

It could be said that there are two types of wellness tourism. These including health promotion tourism which focus mainly on pleasure and relax purpose while the other is health healing tourism and focus mainly on to restore health. The type of wellness tourism could generate an idea in order to design and enhance proper tourism activities in order to fit with needs and wants of elderly tourists by organizing tourism activities into different forms of tourism. As Li & Chan (2021) said that the connection between senior tourist and tourism is the investigating of engagement of social interaction, creating and recalling memories, renewing life meanings and purposes, inspiring novelty and enhancing their health and amusement. According to Li and Chan, it could be argued that selecting proper forms of tourism will considered as one of the ways in order to connect needs and wants of elderly tourist. In next section, differences of forms of tourism will be explained.

Form of Tourism

There are many forms of tourism. The World Tourism Organization or UNWTO (1997) defines three main forms of tourism as follows.

Natural Based Tourism

Ecotourism

This form refers to tourism in natural, endemic and cultural sites related to ecosystems with the collaborative learning process of those involved in environmental management and

tourism with local participation in order to focus on creating awareness of sustainable ecosystem preservation.

Marine ecotourism

Marine ecotourism sometime called responsible for endemic marine natural resources and tourist attractions related to marine ecosystems. There is a collaborative learning process of those involved in environmental management and tourism, engage local people to focus on creating awareness of sustainable ecosystem preservation.

Geological tourism or geo-tourism

This form refers to tourism in natural resources that are rock cliffs, sandstone terraces, hollow tunnels, caves, stalactites and stalagmites to see the beauty of the landscape with the strange changes of the world area. Study the nature of rocks, soils, minerals and fossils, gaining knowledge and gaining new experiences based on responsible tourism. Have a sense of care for the environment where local people are involved in tourism management.

Agrotourism

This refer tourism organize in the agricultural areas, agricultural plantations, agroforestry, herb gardens, livestock farms and raise animals to appreciate the beauty, success and enjoyment in the agricultural garden. Gain knowledge and new experience on the basis of responsibility. Have a conscience towards preserving the environment of that place.

Astronomical tourism or astrological tourism

This is the means of traveling to see the astronomical phenomena that occur in each agenda such as the solar eclipse, meteor shower, lunar eclipse and watching the zodiac stars that appear in the sky each night to learn the solar system. Increased knowledge, impressions, memories and experiences based on responsible tourism, conscious of preserving the local environment and culture where local people participate in sustainable co-management.

Cultural Based Tourism

Historical tourism

This refers to the means of traveling to archaeological sites and history to enjoy the sights, gain knowledge and understanding of history and archeology. Local basis of responsibility and awareness of preserving the cultural heritage and values of the environment, the local councils contribute to tourism management.

Cultural and traditional tourism

This is the means of traveling to see various traditions. That the local people in that area have been amazed in the aesthetics to study beliefs, acknowledgment respect various rituals and gain knowledge and understanding social and cultural conditions, to have new experiences and

increased on the basis of responsibility and have a consciousness of preserving the environment and cultural heritage with the local community participating in organizing travel.

Rural tourism or village tourism

This is the means of traveling in a village that has a way of life and creative works that are unique outstanding for enjoyment and knowledge, see the creations and folk wisdom, to have an understanding of local culture on the basis of responsibility and awareness of cultural heritage preservation and the value of the environment. The local people are involved in tourism management.

Special Interest Tourism

Health tourism or wellness tourism

This refers to tourism in natural and cultural sites to relax and learn how to maintain physical health and the mind can enjoy and aesthetics. Have knowledge on preserving values and good quality of life; be aware of the preservation of the environment and local culture, with the participation of local people in tourism management. Some of this tourism may be formatted as tourism for health and beauty.

Educational and religious tourism or edu-mediation tourism

This form of tourism is aims to travel for excursions. To exchange learning from religious philosophies, seek knowledge, the truth of life, practice meditation, to gain new experience and knowledge, increased value and good quality of life, conscious of preserving the environment and local culture where local people are involved in tourism management.

Ethnic tourism

This form of tourism aims to study ethnic groups or minority cultures, way of life and culture of the villagers.

Sport tourism

This form of tourism is for sports lover who intends to play sports or join the sport events such as golf, diving, fishing, surfing, water skiing.

Homestay tourism and farm stay

This form of tourism is attracting tourist to love to live closer to their visiting local families for learning local wisdom and local culture and gain more life experience with awareness of environmental protection and local culture.

Long stay tourism

This form of tourism is mainly focus on duration of trip and staying period of tourist at their destination. This might be up to 1 month or more for each time of traveling.

Incentive tourism or incentive travel

This form of tourism is the form that specializing design and organizes for a group of people or organizations.

MICE tourism

(M: Meeting, I: Incentive, C: Conference, E: Exhibition) is a tour arrangement for a group of customers who organize a meeting with a pre-meeting tour program and organizing tours after the meeting by organizing travel programs in various forms throughout the country to serve the attendees directly.

According to details mentioned above, differences forms of tourism offer different opportunities for tourist to experience and fulfill their need. In particular for elderly tourist, the growth and impact of forms and activities of tourism has provided benefits for both tourists and tourism entrepreneurs. Consequently, gathering and incorporating sufficient and proper data toward wellness tourism activity development in Chiang Rai will generate good understanding of how to develop and market Chiang Rai as potential destination for elderly Thai tourists. The study method will be discussed in next section.

METHODOLOGY

Based on literature review and related studies this research has been carrying out by both quantitative and qualitative techniques. For quantitative, questionnaire was used as the data collection method. The questionnaire consists of items related to socio-demographic variables (age, gender, employment status, and household constitution), items related to tourist satisfaction and items related to patterns and forms of traveling. The questionnaire involved elderly Thai tourists over 55 years of age for total number of 410 tourists based on Yamane's formula and with an error level of 5% and a 95% confidence level. In term of qualitative method, a constructed interview was used to obtain data from 12 key informants selected from the representative of three tourism related groups who recognized as tourism expertise. These consist of a group of local tour guide, a group of travel entrepreneur, and a group of government officers who work in tourism related organizations. Data collection has been divided into three steps. First, documentation research in order to obtain grounded data and information towards tourism in Chiang Rai province. Second, analyze the potential of each tourist attraction in Chiang Rai and study the behavior of elderly tourists, their satisfaction on the potential of tourist attractions in Chiang Rai and the possibility to promote and market Chiang Rai for elderly tourism. This stage using questionnaires to collect data from a group of elderly tourists and in-depth interviews for a group of local key informants. Third, what we process in this stage is to double check and examine whether data and information obtained from the first and second stages are valid able and acceptable. In term of data analysis, we use content-based for data obtaining from in-depth interview by dividing the data into groups, then interpreted, synthesized, and analyzed with

principles and reasons, create inductive conclusions and discuss the findings. For data obtaining from questionnaire, (the demographic characteristics of the respondents, satisfaction on form of traveling, tour package) we analyzed with statistical; frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation (S.D.) and t-Test. statistical analysis to compare the differences of tourist activity patterns and a multiplicative paired test on the tourism activities organized for elderly Thai tourists.

FINDINGS

Majority of respondents were female, 252 people (61.46%), and males 158 people (38.54%). Most were aged between 55-59 years, 165 people (40.2%). Most of them graduated with a bachelor's degree, of which 125 people (30.5%). Most of their monthly income was lower than 5,000 Baht, 101 people (24.6%). Most had domiciled in Chiang Mai, 57 people (13.9%) follow by Bangkok, 52 people (12.7%). The main purpose of travel is mainly for tourism / leisure, 339 people or 82.7%, the frequency of traveling more than 3 times a year, 124 people (30.2%). The duration of tourism in each time is 2-3 days (29.8%). The most desired tourist attraction is the historical sites of 242 people (59.0%), most of whom like to travel during the holidays, 209 people (51%). Those who participated in travel advice were family/ relatives of 280 people (68.3%). Those who participated in travel decision making were family/ relatives, 313 people (76.3%). Most of them traveled with family/relatives of 315 people (76.8%). Most of them traveled by themselves, 350 people (85.4%), preferring to travel by private cars, 275 people (67.1%), and 339 people (82.7%) prefer to stay overnight and 209 people (51%) choose to stay in hotels. There are 225 people (54.9%) travel on all occasions according to convenience, with travel expenses each time between 5,001-10,000 baht of about 111 people (27.1%). In term of traveling, if there is an opportunity to travel for health tourism for the elderly, they will choose to travel with relatives of about 257 people (62.7%). Health tourism for the elderly information was mostly obtained from websites of 191 people (46.6%). What make they are interested in travel, the most was the convenience of travel and access, of 116 (28.3%) and 103 people (25.1%) responded said that key obstacle to travel is health condition. There are 161 people (39.3%) had visited Chiang Rai more than 4 times and majority respondents, 248 people (60.6%), said that key reason to choose to visit Chiang Rai is because of historical sites and ancient sites such as Wat Phra Kaew, Wat Rong Khun, Rai Cheung Tawan, the ancient city of Chiang Saen. In term of famous forms and patterns of wellness tourism (health tourism) activities in Chiang Rai are as the following, respectively; (1) Chiang Rai Beautiful Flowers Fair during December - February each year at Tung and Khom Garden, (2) Visiting Tea plantation and tea tasting, (3) Visiting coffee plantation and coffee tasting, (4) Visiting and making merit on Buddhist holy days at the famous temples such as Phra Kaew Temple and Phra Singh Temple, Pa Archa Thong Temple. (6) Visit Chertawan Meditation Center and (7) Visiting the 9 precious pogodas in Chiang Rai. In term of tourist satisfaction, it was found that overall satisfaction of elderly tourist toward tourist attractions are at the highest level as well as cleanliness of places, hotel, restaurants, safety standard, quality of tourism products and services and staffs. In particular, the unique architecture style (Lanna style) of buildings, cultural and religion activities at the temple, beauty of natural attractions and its environment, wellness and health package such as spa therapy and massage.

DISSCUSSION

Elderly people take a vital important part of tourism industry both for domestic and inbound tourism. Increasing in number of elderly people and the number of them turn into tourism sector and number of trips they made will be generate a big change for tourism. Our findings illustrated that rich fullness of tourism attractions of Chiang Rai is the key reason to attract elderly Thai tourists to visit especially the unique culture of Chiang Rai. According to Li and Chan (2021), one of the reasons that elderly tourists take a tour is to connect happiness and well-being which are deeply grounded in the broad social and cultural context. While Losada et al. (2016) argued that the reason why women elderly tourist travel more frequently than men is based on their self- perceived of economic status. In case of Chiang Rai, the northern most province in Thailand and one of the most popular destination, it is important to prepare well plan and well management in order to make it ready to welcome and satisfy them. According to key findings from the study we have proposed tourism activities which will suit the need of elderly Thai tourist, as well as foreigners, in the form of tourism routes and options. These include (1) Dhamma (meditation) therapy which consists of the visiting to important temple and meditation center, worship and making merit, join religion activities, (2) Herbal Therapy which consists various health promotion activities such as Traditional Lanna (northern style) Medicine, massage, hot spas, (3) Taste Therapy which consists of visiting tea plantation and tea tasting, visiting coffee plantation and coffee tasting, learning local cooking and tasting and (4) Natural Therapy which consists of visiting natural landscape and attraction, winter fruit and flower plantation, visit and various flower garden and botanical garden in Chiang Rai including the annual flower festival of Chiang Rai which hold during December to February each year.

Regard to our findings, it could be said that Chiang Rai is one of the best destination options for elderly Thai tourist to visit when considering to tourist attractions, in particular when focusing on 5As factors of tourism.

CONTRIBUTION

The vital contribution of the study is to what extend we are going to do next. It is to progress our finding into action. These include to hand over data gathered from this study to tourism policy- maker of Chiang Rai for preparing and providing well plan and well management. This will help acknowledge them to adapt mindset of local tourism related organizations and government organization to prepare not only infrastructure for elderly tourist but also quantity and quality of facilities and staffs especially safety of traveling around and traveling to and from Chiang Rai and destination. It could be said that elderly tourists will be the bright and profitable opportunity for Chiang Rai tourism due to the spending they made and the time they spend longer in destination compare to another group of tourists as well as frequency of their trip per year and increasing desire to travel and increasing number of elderly people due to longer life expectancies.

CONCLUSION

As we had conducted this research during the spreading of pandemic COVID-19 we had troubled many difficulties especially for data collection which is considered as the most difficult thing to do due to government four months shut-down policy. We spend time beyond our scheduled as well as budget. However, we were lucky enough when the pandemic of COVID-19 is get better when the government's shut-down policy has end.

For further study, as our study focus mainly on promoting and marketing Chiang Rai as destination for elderly Thai tourists and findings will represent only for Thai tourists. So that, we would suggest researchers to study beyond that such as how to promote and market Chiang Rai as destination for elderly foreign tourists in particular hub for elderly tourists in the GMS region.

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