LOYALTY AS MEDIATOR ON THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG
SERVICE QUALITY, SATISFACTION, CORPORATE IMAGE AND
BEHAVIORAL INTENTION OF HEALTH TOURISM CUSTOMERS IN
UPPER NORTHERN REGION OF THAILAND

PANCHAKHAN NUTTHAPORN, NATEPRADIT NAPAWAN, SUKPATCH KASSARA

1Ph.D. Candidate Faculty of Management Sciences, Lampang Rajabhat University, Thailand.
2Department of Management Sciences, Ph.D. program Lampang Rajabhat University, Thailand.
3The Graduate School of Tourism Management [GSTM] National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Thailand.
E-mail: 1nuinuttha16@gmail.com, 2nok_napawan@hotmail.com, 3kassara70@gmail.com

Abstract- The purpose of this research was to study both direct and indirect relationship factors of loyalty on service quality, satisfaction, corporate image and behavioral intention of health tourism customers in the Upper Northern Region of Thailand. Nowadays the self-care health tourism is currently popular. There are a lot of attractive sites in the northern part of Thailand where the weather is cool and with abundant of natural resources, especially the hot spring. There are 48 out of 112 hot springs scattered in the north1. The local custom of the north is very famous such as their dressing, foods and colloquial language which is quite unique. Hot spring health tourism business is the whole health promotion: body, mind, emotion and spirit. It can help the tourist for relaxation and comfort. Using the loyalty in the health tourism business due to its quality satisfaction, service and corporate image give rise to the behavioral intention. There are only a few studies have been carried out with no research on Thailand. So this study will provide benefits to the tourist agency to improve their services and physical image for satisfaction which leading to the loyalty and behavioral intention. The government’s policy and strategy emphasizes on health tourism business and spa to advocate Thai tradition and self-care in the near future. This study was the mixed research derived from literature reviews that related to the concept of loyalty, quality service, satisfaction, corporate image and behavioral intention. Studied population was the natural hot spring tourists at 5 provinces in upper north of Thailand which is Chiangrai, Chiangmai, Maehongson, Lampang and Phrae. Calculated sample sizes was provided by parameter derived from Cohen2, together with G*power 3.0 program. Total cases were 350 cases selected from the hot spring attractions in the studied provinces. Questionnaires were performed and issued by e-mail, postal mail and interview. Quantitative analysis was performed to find out the relative factors by structural equation from Structure Equation Model (SEM) which formulated by PLS Graph program. Qualitative analysis was performed by interview and analysed the contents to support the quantitative research that concerned to health business spa.

Keywords- Loyalty, Service Quality, Satisfaction, Corporate Image, Behavioral Intention, Customer’s Health Tourism, Hot Spring.

I. INTRODUCTION
Tour industry is the key performance to national economics and social. United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) predicts in the year 2020 there are 1,800 million international tourists[1]. and annual estimated growth of world tourism is up to 4.3%. Besides the tourists go to the Southeast Asia as their destination continuously are probable to 187 million too. One-third of the tourist is the young generation who tend to find out the new destination [2].

For this reason Thailand is still be the target potential tourist destination. In 2011 the comparison between other countries in Asia-Pacific, Thailand ranked in level 41 followed Singapore, Hongkong, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan and China consecutively [3]. For Asian country Thailand is the third rank followed Singapore and Malaysia [4]. Speed up the economics and social by tourism is remarkable, especially Thai style health tourism. The 24 out of 48 natural hot spring in the upper north of Thailand are developed by Department of tourism and sport. They located in 5 provinces that is Chiangrai, Chiangmai, Maehongson, Lampang and Phrae. The 8 developed natural hot spring are in Chiangrai and Chiangmai. Four are in Maehongson and two in Lampang and Phrae. Total cost was up to 40.9 million bath per year and individual income was 89,620 bath per year [5]. Because the health tourism promotes in every profile (body, mind, emotion, social and spirit ) So the concept of loyalty used in health tourism business due to quality service, satisfaction and corporate image can get the result to the behavioral intention. Reviewed literature showed that there are a few studies on the loyalty and behavioural intention in hot spring sites, besides no research in Thailand in case of satisfaction which the tourist will tell their good experience to the others and it is enable to link the other new tourist destination. The researcher would like to study the factors that linked the loyalty to the relation among the quality service, satisfaction, corporate image and behavioral intention of any customers who visit to the health tourism business in the northern hot spring. The result will be useful for the national tourist management and the goal for health tourism business in the future.
II. PURPOSE

1. To study both direct and indirect relationship factors of loyalty on service quality, satisfaction, corporate image and behavioural Intention of any tourist customers who visit to the health tourism business in the Upper Northern Region of Thailand.

2. To study the influence of the quality service, satisfaction, corporate image and the loyalty to the behavioural intention in health tourism business in the Upper Northern Region of Thailand.

III. SCOPE

Collected data are 350 cases of the customer or tourist who visit the developed natural hot spring in 5 provinces in the Upper Northern Region of Thailand.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Health Tourism Context

Health tourism business is the organization related to the hot spring sites in the Upper Northern Region of Thailand. Where consists of promotion health activities such as relaxation, strolling around, mineral water bathing or soaking and Thai massage or spa. Spa is the Latin word “Sanus per Aquam” or “Sanitas per aquas” mean the water therapy. On the other hand it means the holistic health treatment by using water together with the selective medical treatment. Five sensation which is image, taste, smell, sound and touch is the main factor which can create the balance of body, mind, emotion, social and spirit. Besides spa is the relax place for the holistic health. The other definition of International Spa Association (ISPA) [6] means the service in the hot spring sites, or namely Mineral Spring Spa.

B. Related variable words

1. Service Quality means the perception of the service quality level in the hot spring attraction in 3 dimension that is reliability, assurance and responsiveness. [7] Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry, 1985 developed the tool called "SERVQUAL" for the business evaluation. This carried on the difference between the expectation and perception of the customers as the main point. [8] Chieochankitkan & Sukpatch, 2014; [9] Byeong Park & Nunkoo, 2013; [10] Bryan Chun, 2012; [11] Chung, 2009 told that the materialized measurement evaluation for service is the first important thing to do for the speed-up-service business. It will impact to the organization that influenced to satisfaction, behavioral intention, loyalty and mouth words.

2. Satisfaction means the feeling or the positive thinking of the tourist to the hot spring sites. It can evaluate the Attribute Satisfaction by measurement the 4 Destination Components that is attractions, amenities, ancillary services and accessibility. Chieochankitkan & Sukpatch, 2014; [12] Kuo-Ming Lin, 2009; [13] Chi & Qu, 2008; Bryan Chun, 2012; Chung, 2009; [14] Copper.et.al., 2008; [15] Kantiman Jindaprasert, 2013; [16] Wiwat Chankington, 2013. told that The American Customer Satisfaction Index Model was available in many tourism business. However “Attribute Satisfaction” is relevant and can use for the site’s improvement and so on. Variable analysis gave rise to the research hypothesis 1 which is service quality has influenced on the positive relation with satisfaction.

3. Corporate Image means the specific feeling of the tourist to the hot spring profile. [17] Kotler, 2000. The marketing expert had explained the meaning of Image as the overall of believe, thought and impression of individual to something. [16] Wiwat Chankington, 2013; Chi & Qu, 2008; Chung, 2009; [18] Chen & Tai, 2007; [19] Lee, 2009. told that the attractive image let the tourist be delightful and result to loyalty and behavioral intention. Variable analysis gave rise to the research hypothesis 2 which is Service Quality has influenced on the positive relation with corporate image.

4. Loyalty means the deep emotion of the hot spring tourist to patronage the hot spring site and they will be back regularly. Such an attitudinal loyalty as suggestion and keep this hot spring as preferable place in mind. Byeong Park & Nunkoo, 2013; [20] Ahmad Paad Mat Som.et.al., 2012; Kuo-Ming Lin, 2009; [21] Yuksel.et.al., 2010; [22] Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Lee, 2009; Wiwat Chankington, 2013.; Kantiman Jindaprasert, 2013 told that the loyalty of the customer or the tourist got the competitive advantage. As the connection between person and the place which unchanged. Variable analysis gave rise to the research hypothesis 3 which is Service Quality has influenced on the positive relation with loyalty, hypothesis 4 which is corporate image has influenced on the positive relation with loyalty and hypothesis 5 which is satisfaction has influenced on the positive relation with loyalty.

5. Behavioral Intention means the expression of behavioral loyalty of the hot spring’s tourist to be back again. Chieochankitkan & Sukpatch, 2014; Bryan Chun, 2012; Chen & Tai, 2007; [23] Baloglu.et.al., 2003; [24] Alen & Fraiz, 2006; [25] Alen.et.al., 2007; Lee, 2009; Kantiman Jindaprasert, 2013 told that behavioral Intention was the action to do it again at the old place. It can
measure the behavioral Intention continuity due to their favor, impression and happiness in every visiting. It is the business goal that give rise to the highly income and benefits later. Variable analysis gave rise to the research hypothesis 6 which is loyalty has influenced on the positive relation with behavioral intention, hypothesis 7 which is corporate image has influenced on the positive relation with behavioral intention, hypothesis 8 which is satisfaction has influenced on the positive relation with behavioral intention and hypothesis 9 which is corporate image has influenced on the positive relation with behavioral intention

V. THE METHODOLOGY AND MODEL

Mixed-methods research was performed by integrated the quantitative (survey research) and qualitative research (interviewing). This research was the collective data that developed from basic review literature that related to the loyalty, quality service, satisfaction, corporate image and behavioral intention. Together with the conceptual development and related theory. This research were divided to 2 items as following :

1. Quantitative research conducts the step as: developed measurement, questionnaire distribution, descriptive statistics from structural equation model (SEM) and using the PLS Graph program. The result is concluded and discuss together with the additional suggestion from the opened-end questionnaire. Finally compare to the qualitative research.

2. Qualitative research was performed by constructed semi-structure interviewing from the review literature to coverage this topic. The researcher scrutinized the perfect data and finally getting the result from structural equation model analysis to further discussion, conclusion and suggestion.

VI. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

From chapter 2 (review literature) the concept and hypothesis concluded as follow:

![Conceptual Research](image)

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Tourist’s loyalty to the natural hot spring attracts play the important role to health tourism business which result to the behavioral intention. Many factors are combined to create the loyalty, especially the quality service factor that made the customers got their satisfaction. Corporate image also gave the positive feeling by the identity context at the hot spring. It results to the customer’s satisfaction and accumulated expectation to get back in the future again.

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