

TO STUDY THAI TOUR GUIDES' DESIRES FROM TOUR COMPANIES IN SUPPORTING THEIR OPERATION

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Abstract - The objectives of this study were to examine Thai tour guides' desires from tour companies in supporting their operation and guideline for responding the needs of Thai tour guides from tour companies. This study applied mixed method of qualitative and quantitative research.

Research tool was a questionnaire; the sample was selected from 2 groups: 111 Thai tour guides in Bangkok, using haphazard or accidental sampling by using frequency and percentage for data analysis, and interviewing 10 senior tour guides who had held position in associate both public and private section or tour guides with more than 15 years of tour experience or academic tour guides who were acknowledged in tourism industry. The data were collected by in-depth interview; using purposive sampling method, discussion and presentation by descriptive statistic.

The findings of 111 tour guides who were a tour guiding in Bangkok pointed out that most tour guides required tour companies provided welfare for them, the most desirable welfare is safety supervision. Tour guides gave a guideline that tour companies should provide the travel insurance for tour guides in all cases as same as tourists. The second important issue was regarding welfare, especially freelance guides that tour guides, they wanted tour companies considered the welfare on social security for freelance guides like other occupation. The payment of social security can be deducted from freelance guides' allowances.

The results of 10 senior tour guides who had held position in associate both public and private section or tour guides with more than 15 years of tour experience or academic tour guides who were acknowledged in tourism industry indicated that the main requirement was reserve money management, tour companies should provide full amount of reserve money to tour guides, if not, the companies should urgently reimbursement to tour guides within 3-5 days.

Keywords - Desires, Thai Tour Guides, Tour Companies, Operations

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism in the world is steadily growing. The World Travel and Tourism Council: WTTC reported that in 2017 the gross domestic product of tourism in the world was valued at 2.3 trillion US dollars and accounted for equal to a percentage of 3.1 of the total gross domestic product of the world which is considered a continuous positive growth for the seventh consecutive year. [1]

Thai government aims to encourage foreign tourists to travel to Thailand which will increase tourism industry income. One of the important mechanisms makes a good impression and causes repeated visit or return or persuade others to come to Thailand is "Guide" who is the closest to, accommodates, educates about arts and culture, prevents problem and also negotiates with variety of people, whether tourists or business people. Therefore, guide must use the skills appropriately for each job. [2]

Guide is one of the important occupations that should be developed and taken care of by relevant parties because guide is responsible for providing services, as well as providing knowledge and advice to tourists. In addition, the tour guide will be responsible for other duties such as planning tour services, bringing guests to the accommodation, creating entertainment etc. The duties of guide therefore requires a variety of skills, such as speaking, service, psychology, including planning and making decision on various issues etc. [3]

According to the information of the Department of Tourism, it is found that the number of guides is increasing, resulting in a highly competition. From the recent news showed that there was a guide mob claiming the benefits that they should be gained. This may be due to the reason that guide profession has a limitation, different from other career such as the instability of career and income, non- salary, non government benefits or even tour companies they work, non credit, cannot apply for a bank loan because there is no salary and most income is not stable, including economic, social, political issues or many other current restrictions. [4]

From the above reason, the researcher's opinion is that the study of Thai tour guides' desires from tour companies in supporting their operation should be useful for relevant parties whether the tour companies or the Department of Tourism or tour guides. The results should allow the concerned parties meet their needs, the possibility of collaboration and make the overall of the tour guides and tour companies are orderly and sympathetic with each other. Therefore, the tour business should be aware of the needs of tour guides about how they want to perform their duties, which make tour guides and tour companies understand each other's needs. These are complementary to tour guides and enable them to work happily and willing to work which will have a good effect on the tour and creates impression for tourists in further.

II. DETAILS EXPERIMENTAL

The researcher has specified the research methodology by using the mixed methods research of qualitative and quantitative research.

2.1. Research methodology

The study on Thai tour guides' desires from tour companies in supporting their operation was an integrated research by collecting data by using questionnaire and interview 2 groups of tour guide. Group 1: 111 tour guides who were tour guiding in Bangkok, using haphazard or accidental Sampling. The data were gathered from the opinion of tour guides in the classification, sorted the needs in descending order, then used frequency and percentage as a quantitative research.

Group 2: 10 senior tour guides who had held position in associate both public and private section or tour guides with more than 15 years of tour experience or academic tour guides who were acknowledged in tourism industry, was selected by using purposive sampling, which direct related samples that researcher chose by myself in order to get more quality data. The data collection was used in-depth interview with questionnaire. The respondents could provide information of tour companies' tour guides in their aspects. Then, the researcher gathered the first three opinions of the same type with suggestions that were useful to the tour companies. This section would be a qualitative research.

2.2. Tools and validation

Questionnaire was used as a tool for collecting data that study the data related to the needs of Thai tour guides from tour companies in supporting their operation then creating the questionnaire and was verified by expert to find out the reliability. The improved questionnaires were tried out by 20 populations with the same qualification of the samples, inspecting the completeness and then recorded data to the computer. The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts as follows:

Part 1: Personal data of tour guides. This contained general information of tour guides in Bangkok, including gender, status, age, tourism experience, characteristic of work and occupation, with selective answers.

Part 2: Interview questionnaire which study of Thai tour guides' desires from tour companies in supporting their operation. The researcher collected the data by asking for cooperation of the data from tour guides who were tour guiding in Bangkok.

Part 3: Interview questionnaire for senior tour guides who had held position in associate both public and private section or tour guides with more than 15 years of tour guiding experience or academic tour guides who were acknowledged in tourism industry by asking the needs of tour guides from tour companies in supporting their operation. The researcher

collected the data by asking for cooperation of the data from the samples in Bangkok. Taking notes, recording or dictation was used for data collection with permission from interviewee or participants in order to checking and review the correctness later.

2.3. Data analysis

Data analysis of qualitative and quantitative research by using mixed method research and statistics as follows:

Part 1: Basic data analysis of 111 respondents (Demographic characteristic) included gender, marital status, ages, and tour guide experience characteristic of work and occupation of tour guides who were tour guiding in Bangkok. The data was analyzed by quantitative research, using Frequency Table and Percentage.

Part 2: The analysis of Thai tour guides' desires from tour companies in supporting their operation.

Part 3: The analysis of senior tour guides who had held position in associate both public and private section or tour guides with more than 15 years of tour guiding experience or academic tour guides who were acknowledged in tourism industry by analyzing the needs of tour companies in supporting the operation. Part 2 and part 3 were separated the categories according to the various needs of the tour guides from tour companies into various areas of opinions with suggestions. Grouping the similar needs and recommendations of tour guides, and found out the average and percentage, arranged the needs of tour guides in descending order, then descriptive statistic were used for describing.

2.4. Hypothesis

Thai tour guides needed the tour companies supporting tour guides more than the operation.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1 Results of Qualitative Research

The findings of 111 respondents of tour guides who were tour guiding in Bangkok that most of the samples were 59 respondents or 53.15 percentages included female, 57 people were single, equivalent to 51.35 percentages, most of them aged up to 51 years were 31 respondents, equivalent to 27.93 percentages. Regarding experience in tourism, most of them have experienced in tour guiding up to 15 years were 36 respondents, equivalent to 32.43 percentages, 65 independent guides or 58.55 percentages. The main occupation of 79.27 percentages of them or 88 respondents included tour guides.

In term of Thai tour guides' desires from tour companies in supporting their operation, it found that tour guides needed tour companies supporting them with first 5 issues as follows:

First, most requirements of welfare service were 62 opinions, equivalent to 28.31 percentages. The first

issue should be focused was safety because it made tour guides feel warm-hearted, comfortable, which affected working well. However, the law has forced tour companies to provide travel insurance for tourists, including tour guides but some companies were disinterested, making tour guides feel unsafe.

Second, the desire for improving disbursement process of tour guiding was 53 opinions, equivalent to 24.20 percentages. The delay in disbursement after work was due to tour guides must reserve cost of tour guiding (more common in Chinese tour guiding) for food, entrance ticket, tourist attractions instead of tour companies but tour companies always processed a delay in reimbursement. Most tour guides suggested that the tour companies should take this issue seriously because tour guides were in trouble, disadvantageous and unfair. Therefore, the company should prepare enough budgets for each job or clear the expenses that the tour guide reserved once the work was finished. The Tourism Business and Guide Act (No. 2) B.E. 2559, states that tourism business entrepreneur must pay compensation as usual or refund expenses paid by tour guides in case of an emergency and is necessary and must be returned to the tour guide within fifteen days from the end of the tour.[5] In addition, under Section 58 of Tourism Business and Guide Act 2008, which states that when undertaking work as a tour guide, the tour guides are not allowed to pay or provide any other benefit to the tourism business entrepreneur or allow themselves to be responsible for all or part of the expenses in order to obtain the tour guiding. The penalty for those who do wrong is to be punished with a 6-month prison sentence with a fine of 50,000 baht. In both cases, it can be seen that there are still loopholes in the law that makes travel agencies use this vulnerability to take advantage of giving. The tour guide must reserve the money for the tour instead of the tour company first, causing the tour guide suffered. All guides therefore wanted travel agencies to improve on the said issue.

Third, the need for tour guide's adjustment of wage and allowance to be reasonable was 28 opinions, equivalent to 12.79 percentages. They commented that the wage or allowance which not suitable with workload were increased. Tour guides stated that the companies should focus on this issue because if they have high compensation, making high quality of work as well. Under Section 4 of Tourism Business and Guide Act (No. 2) B.E. 2559 stated that the compensation or protection that a tour guide and tour leader should receive from a tourism business entrepreneur, with compensation not less than one thousand baht per day, but many tour companies do not do so unless they still hire a reciprocity guide or a tour guide that they have specified.

Fourth, the need for providing information, coordinator and communication among tour companies, tour guides and tourists should be clear was 16 opinions, equivalent to 7.31 percentages. The

tour guide stated that the tour companies should provide information on tourists' needs, scope of work, clear terms and conditions, included preparing the documents for the tour such as programs, luggage tags, immigration certificates, entry and exit documents in various countries, etc. If not, it may be caused malfunctions. Moreover, the tour companies should notify scope of work, terms or conditions, customers' information which are comprehensive and accurate. Also, the companies should give the tour guides the power to make a decision in their work.

Fifth, selection a tour guide and scheduling of work should be fair and focus on ability, should not be biased or choose a guide that has a personal familiarity were 11 opinions, equivalent to 5.02 percentages. There was an opinion that in accepting a tour guide, it was necessary to recruit a qualified, experienced and knowledgeable foreign language tour guides because the tour guide occupation must mainly use language in tourism.

3.1.2. Results of Qualitative Research

The findings of 10 respondents of senior tour guides who had held position in associate both public and private section or tour guides with more than 15 years of tour guiding experience or academic tour guides who were acknowledged in tourism industry showed that the tour guides needed tour companies supporting them with first 3 issues as follows:

First, the tour companies should pay allowances and reserves as the same standard in all tourism markets, reserve money for the tour guiding 95-100 percentage and urgently reimbursed 3-5 days after completion of each job, including set a fast reimbursement system as well.

Second, providing welfare to tour guides, especially the freelance guides, because they did not receive a regular salary, and also the same benefits as a regular tour guide. The welfare that the freelance guides needed the most was Social Security, medical expenses, personal money accumulation; it was willing to be deducted from each wages so that they will feel secure and comfortable when leaving work or retirement.

Third, tour guides needed a description of work assigned by tour companies. The documents as job order and relevant documents should be clear and accurate, including updating the information on access various places before assigning.

3.2. Discussions

The findings of the study of Thai tour guides' desires from tour companies in supporting their operation indicated that the tour guides needs welfare at the highest level and the issue on safety was needed to improve with 62 opinions or 28.30 percentages. The tour companies should focus on this matter because it made them feel warm-hearted and comfortable. It is in line with the research of Mathana Morakul (2012) study the satisfaction of personnel towards the human

resource management of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, pointing out that term of compensation and welfare, and participating in various activities which is provided by tour companies was at the highest level. It can be said that the personnel of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University are the most satisfied with the participation in various activities that provided by the university.[6] Moreover, in referent to the research of Ngamjit Inthawong (2013) studied the welfare needs of employees of Rajamangala University of Technology Tawan-ok, Bangphra District, Chonburi Province, it found that the overall of the welfare needs of employees of Rajamangala University of Technology Tawan-ok was at the highest level. [7] In addition, it is related to the research of Niramom Tantisirianusorn (2015) studies the behavior on efficiency working of the operation worker, a case study of Inno Fresh International Company Limited attached great importance to all personnel in order to promote the working behavior of employees to be effective, therefore providing an appropriate welfare, salary and compensation allocation according to the educational background, and appointed the committee for considering the promotion of special employees. It can be seen that every departments of the organization wanted to have welfare, included medical care, salary and compensation. [8]

The result found that the needs of tour guides were that tour companies should support their tour guides, especially the freelance guide, who felt neglected due to their daily wages, uncertain, which is different from regular tour guides that have a regular salary and tour guiding. They were pleased to pay the social security, medical expenses, savings money by deducted from their allowances for creating security and safety in life as well as others. It is in line with the research of Kanokphon Bunrungsri (2001) examined the working condition and quality of working life of the guides, it showed that the compensation of guides under the tour companies, has been received both monthly and each job, but freelance guides are paid on a job basis, are not paid monthly and do not have a good benefit. [9]

IV. CONCLUSION

The findings of 111 tour guides who were a tour guiding in Bangkok pointed out that most tour guides required tour companies provided welfare for them, the most desirable welfare is safety supervision. Tour guides gave a guideline that tour companies should provide the travel insurance for tour guides in all cases as same as tourists. The second important issue was regarding welfare, especially freelance guides

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