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MARKETING FACTORS IN MUSEUM ECONOMY: A CASE STUDY OF SAISUDDHA NOBHADOL MUSEUM (BANGKOK, THAILAND)

This study aims 1) to explore the decision making and behaviour of Thai visitors in Saisuddha Nobhadol Museum, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University; 2) to investigate the museum marketing factors influencing visitors; 3) to find out visitors' opinions on museum development; 4) to compare differences in decision-making among the respondents by different demographic factors. The finding revealed the top 3 factors of each 4P that influenced the respondents' decision making as follows: the museum's unique architectural style, its fame as the old palace, the fame of the university — for the product; opened to public free of charge, value-for-money of the visit, discounts for group visits — for the price; museum's location in vicinity of government offices, its location in the old quarter of Bangkok, its linkage with other attractions nearby — for the place; and lastly, the development of programs that link with the Vimanmek Palace nearby, souvenirs availability, and organizing university's annual events/festivals — for the promotion.
Keyword: marketing factors; museum marketing; Bangkok; 4P.

Сіріпен Яйманя

МАРКЕТИНГОВІ ФАКТОРИ МУЗЕЙНОЇ ЕКОНОМІКИ: НА ПРИКЛАДІ МУЗЕЮ САІСУДДА НОБХАДОЛ (БАНГКОК, ТАЇЛАНД)

У статті проаналізовано туристичну поведінку тайських відвідувачів музею Саісудда Нобхадол Університету Суан Сунанда Раджабат. Також досліджено, які маркетингові фактори впливають на рішення відвідати музей. Виявлено відмінності в маркетингових характеристиках такого вибору за демографічними показниками. Крім того, відвідувачі музею були опитані щодо їх бачення подальшого розвитку музею. У межах концепції 4Р виділено такі маркетингові фактори, що впливають на вибір музею (три на кожен параметр): унікальний архітектурний стиль, слава колишнього палацу, відомість університету — для категорії «продукт»; безкоштовне відвідування, співвідношення вартість-цінність, знижки на екскурсії для груп — у категорії «ціна»; близькість до урядових офісів, розташування в старому кварталі Бангкоку, зв'язок з іншими пам'ятками району — в категорії «розташування»; розвиток спільних туристичних програм з іншими палацами, наявність сувенірів, щорічні фестивалі та інші заходи — в категорії «просування».
Ключові слова: маркетингові фактори; музейний маркетинг; Бангкок; 4Р.
Табл. 3. Літ. 10.

Сирипен Йяманя

МАРКЕТИНГОВЫЕ ФАКТОРЫ МУЗЕЙНОЙ ЭКОНОМИКИ: НА ПРИМЕРЕ МУЗЕЯ САИСУДДА НОБХАДОЛ (БАНГКОК, ТАЙЛАНД)

В статье проанализировано туристическое поведение тайских посетителей музея Саисудда Нобхадол Университета Суан Сунанда Раджабат. Также исследовано, какие маркетинговые факторы влияют на решение посетить музей. Выявлены различия в маркетинговых характеристиках такого выбора по демографическим показателям. Кроме того, посетители музея опрошены на предмет их видения дальнейшего развития музея. В рамках концепции 4Р выделены следующие маркетинговые факторы, влияющие на выбор музея (по три на каждый параметр): уникальный архитектурный стиль, слава бывшего дворца, известность университета — для категории «продукт»; бесплатный вход, соотношение стоимость-ценность, скидки на экскурсии для групп — в категории «цена»; бли-

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зость к правительственным офисам, расположение в старом квартале Бангкока, связь с другими достопримечательности района — в категории «расположение»; развитие совместных туристических программ с другими дворцами, наличие сувениров, ежегодные фестивали и другие мероприятия — в категории «продвижение».

Ключевые слова: маркетинговые факторы; музейный маркетинг; Бангкок; 4P.

Introduction. Saisuddha Nobhadol is one of 32 historical buildings in Italian Renaissance style (Mankatitham, 2008), located in the area around Sunandha Palace. Saisuddha Nobhadol is among the 6 buildings that have remained until today and have received continuing restoration. The building is located on campus of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. It is significant because of its colonial architecture and being a former royal residence of H.H. Princess Saisavali Bhromya, the royal consort of King Rama V. The construction of the palace followed King Rama V's initiation to use the palace as his private garden and the residence of his consorts and daughters. Later, the residence became the learning centre for all ladies-in-waiting who were to be trained here (Kiatrasamee, 2008). The building at present has been transformed into a museum and acts as the Arts and Cultural Centre of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, where a collection of antiques and over 100 paintings of flowers all being more than 80 years old are displayed. The building comprises a bedchamber, dressing room, and a foyer connecting with the porch.

Literature review. Museums are important in representing art and cultural heritage. Museums with touristic attractiveness should have appealing characteristics, which usually comply with their historical and cultural values. Museums today are considered important for the growth of urban tourism. Visitors who travel to cities often have an intention to visit museums (Corbos and Popescu, 2011). A factor that promotes the development of museum tourism is the gradual growth of creative economy. Techniques of gathering information, presenting and communicating it are augmented today by advanced ICT. Storytelling methods are used in turning traditional boring museum experience into a more amusing one. Museums become a mediator of information and knowledge for a range of users to access on their own terms, through their own choice and within their own place and time, a "multifaceted, outward looking role as hosts who invite visitors inside to wonder, encounter and learn" (Schauble et al. (1997) in Kelly, 2007: 13). In terms of the tourism industry, the creative economy concept creates value to tourism products. Cultural and historical sites are made alive by stories, presented through impressively personalized interpretation. This commoditization creates a sense of place and value added for visitors.

Cultural tourist defined by (McKercher and du Cros (2002): cited in K. Mee Mee Htun and M. Chaisawat, 2008) is "someone who visits a named cultural or heritage attraction, a museum, art gallery, historic site, goes on a cultural or heritage tour, attends a festival, sees a live performance, or participates in some other defined activity at some point during their trip, regardless of the reason for visiting the destination". Tourists who visit a city thereafter do somehow manage their time to visit one of these mentioned, especially in old cities and heritage sites. Bangkok is considered to be the city of this kind, with its long history, richness of old sites, cultural and historical icons scattered around the city.

However, in some tourism destinations, especially in Asia, despite their fame of cultural tourism, museums may not be adequately attractive, gain lower interest, and require more development in terms of museum marketing, physical facilities and service improvement, for instance, in museum routes, signage, interpretation and museum staff ability to communicate in foreign languages. The study on marketing strategies for promoting cultural tourism in Myanmar revealed that international tourists visiting Myanmar had lower level of importance-performance perception towards museums, whereas local people and lifestyle, local food and drinks, art and crafts gained more attention (Mee Mee Htun and Chaisawat, 2008).

Historic buildings are valued as heritage, and many of them are renovated for today's use, for instance accommodation, restaurants and museums. The preservation movement and the popularity of historic buildings and districts had been felt in many countries, like the United States where The National Historic Preservation Act 1966 was approved as the most important legislation to preserve historic properties (National Historic Preservation Act, 1966). The significance of historic buildings and districts has been arising from the desire to preserve the valuable surviving assets of the past in the form of buildings and group of buildings located in old quarters. The significance of historic buildings encompasses not only the architectural aspect, but also the intrinsic values of buildings and the cultural landscape around them. Historic buildings and districts today in many countries play a significant role in urban economies. Museum economy therefore is part of it.

Museum sector of Thailand is relatively young, and its main markets are children, school or university students. Museum in Thai context may not be viewed as a mainstream tourist attraction, but rather a learning centre or a place to spend a weekend. In other words, a museum visit is not widely practiced among Thai adults enough to reckon it as an industry. However, many museums have been transformed from old historic buildings into newly built, special museums such as the insect museum, or even a museum called "living museum" which is a way to promote communities where people are still living according to old-time pace (Othakanon, 2010).

In regards to this change and contemporary development of museum economy in urban settings, development and improvement of Saisuddha Nobhadol Museum, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University was addressed. Being not privately-owned, the museum is not widely known. Visitors are normally those who attend Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for academic and meeting purposes, or students. Therefore, this paper investigates the museum marketing factors that influenced visiting behaviour of Thai nationals, and to find out their opinion on museum development, utilizing the case study of Saisuddha Nobhadol Museum, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok. With its historical, cultural and architectural values, the museum has served the university's vision, to be developed as an urban tourist attraction in connection with other palaces nearby, such as Vimanmek Mansion. The findings of this paper are expected to benefit the university in furthering improvement of the museum in various aspects, for instance, the university's image as the institution that promotes cultural tourism and a center of significant arts and culture, drama and royal culinary culture, by implementing the studied marketing factors.

Methodology. This paper aims to explore the decision making and behaviour of Thai visitors to Saisuddha Nobhadol Museum; to investigate the museum marketing

factors that influenced visitors; to find out their opinion on museum development; and to compare the differences in decision-making among the respondents by different demographic factors. The population of the study was Thai visitors, who attended Saisuddha Nobhadol Museum during June-August, 2012. Simple random sampling method was applied; the total of 153 samples were collected. Self-administrated questionnaire written in Thai was employed. A five-point Likert scale (from the most important to the least important) was used to identify which marketing factors were the influencing determinants for visitors in making a decision to visit this museum. The traditional 4Ps marketing mix was used as demonstrated in Table 1. Two types of statistics were used in this study. Descriptive statistics included frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation; whereas inferential statistics used to test the hypotheses included independent-sample t-test, one-way ANOVA, LSD post hoc test and Chi-square.

Table 1. **4Ps marketing mix as applied to the case,** *author's*

4Ps	Operationalized Factors
Product	- Variety of displayed collections - Provision of signs and information kiosks, boards within the museum - Authenticity of the displayed collections - Unique architectural style - Parking convenience - Informative staff - The museum's fame as the training center of Thai art and culture - The museum's fame as a former royal residence - The museum's fame as the source of royal cuisine - The fame of the university
Price	- Open to public free of charge - Open to public with small fee - Discount for group visits - Value-for-money of the visit
Place (Physical evidence/ accessibility/ communication channels)	- The museum is located in the old quarter of Bangkok - The museum's is linked to other attractions nearby - The museum is located in the vicinity of government offices - Convenience of travel by road - Convenience of travel by river - Public relation via the university website - Public relation by words of mouth - Public relation via social networks - Public relation via brochures or pamphlets - Recommendation from museum staff - Emailing campaigns during special occasions
Promotion	- Development of programs with Vimanmek Palace nearby - Traveling exhibitions - Themed exhibitions within the museum - Organizing the university's annual events/ festivals - Handicraft trainings for women - Development of virtual tours - Souvenirs availability - Organizing familiarization trips - Organizing museum-related and academic seminars

Findings. The research findings reveal that most of the respondents (60.8%) visited a museum once a year. Their information source was websites of museums (52.29%), followed by inquiring from others (16.34%). The findings also reveal that most of the respondents did not know about Saisuddha Nobhadol Museum before (74.5%). Those who knew about this museum reported they knew this museum from the main website of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (39.2%), followed by friends and colleagues (37.9%).

Concerning the purposes of visiting this museum, the study revealed they visited the museum while attending seminars held by the university; and during their seminar stay, visited to appreciate the collections displayed, and for collecting and studying information about history, art and culture (36.6, 30.1 and 25.5% respectively).

When investigating marketing factors that influenced the respondents' decision-making, using the scale of importance, the study found that all marketing factors were ranked "highly important", but they could be ranked from highest to the lowest as follows: promotion (M = 3.980, SD = 0.820), price (M = 3.920, SD = 0.850), product (M = 3.890, SD = 1.000), and place (M = 3.870, SD = 0.870). The ranking also reported the top 3 factors of each 4P that influenced the respondents' decision-making (Table 2).

Table 2. **Top three influential factors in 4P of Saisuddha Nobhadol Museum,** *author's*

4Ps	Factors	$\bar{x}$	SD
Product	1. Unique architectural style	4.140	2.475
	2. Its fame as the old palace	4.130	.864
	3. Fame of the university	4.050	.814
Price	1. Open to public free of charge	4.060	.905
	2. Value-for-money of the visit	3.910	.825
	3. Discount for group visits	3.850	8.41
Place	1. The museum is located in the vicinity of government offices	4.070	.840
	2. The museum is located in the old quarter of Bangkok	4.010	.795
	3. The museum's linkage with other attractions nearby	4.010	.835
Promotion	1. Development of programs along with the Vimanmek Palace	4.050	.776
	2. Development of souvenirs sector	4.050	.801
	3. Organizing the university's annual events/ festivals	4.010	.795

In terms of opinions on the museum development, the findings (Table 3), presented the respondents' opinions on the development of the following items, ranked from the most selected to the least selected one: 1) establishing a restaurant that serves royal Thai cuisine (M = 0.590, SD = 0.612), 2) providing relaxing areas (M = 0.570, SD = 0.497), 3) developing souvenirs and shopping zones (M = 0.500, SD = 0.502), 4) opening coffee shops near the museum (M = 0.490, SD = 0.619), 5) occasionally organizing light and sound exhibitions (M = 0.470, SD = 0.501), 6) providing a parking lot (M = 0.460, SD = 0.500), 7) providing Rattanakosin costume dress-up and photo service (M = 0.440, SD = 0.499), 8) providing tourist guide service (M = 0.440, SD = 0.499), and 9) designing tour programs in connection with the tourist attractions nearby (M = 0.390, SD = 0.488).

The test of the differences in the decision-making behavior by the demographics factors indicated that there was a difference between males and females in receiving information about the museum and in the visit purpose. An analysis of variance revealed the findings that the respondents with different age, income and education had different behaviours in terms of frequency of museum visits, ways of searching information, receiving information, visit purpose and the decision to revisit.

Table 3. **Ranking of museum development,** *author's*

Items of museum development	$\bar{x}$	SD	Rank
1. Establishing a restaurant that serves royal Thai cuisine	.590	.612	1
2. Providing relaxing areas	.570	.497	2
3. Developing souvenirs and shopping zones	.500	.502	3
4. Opening coffee shops near the museum	.490	.619	4
5. Occasionally organizing light and sound exhibitions	.470	.501	5
6. Providing a parking lot	.460	.500	6
7.1. Providing Rattanakosin costume dress- up and photo service	.440	.499	7
7.2. Providing tourist guide service	.440	.499	7
8. Designing tour programs in connection with other tourist attractions nearby	.390	.488	8

Discussion. The findings of this study reflect the significance of historical and architectural values, the leisure atmosphere of the old quarter and inner city, packaging and memorability of the museum. Suggestions on further development of marketing for Saisuddha Nobhadol Museum, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University could be as follows.

Regarding product factors, firstly, programs or walking trails in the museum with interpretation should be created. Digital media should be adopted. In heritage interpretation, digital media makes the experience more sophisticated, particularly, in promoting learning and entertaining environment. In terms of managing visitors' experience particularly in museums, digitalization applied in museum interpretation allows visitor-object interaction, visitor mobility and visitor's personal meaning making. Secondly, a museum foyer should be highly reconsidered in order to prepare visitors for an introduction to the inner court living, history and architecture of buildings, objects, places, people and events of the related times. Interpretation skill and English communication trainings for the museum's officers should be provided.

Pricing strategy may not be a significant task, the museum may remain free of charge for public visit until it receives appropriate development. The available website must be redesigned to be more attractive with updated contents for stronger presence in search engines. It should be noted that today digital media allows visitors explore a museums in a "placeless" space. Visitors will be, as noted by (Cameron (2003): cited in Grincheva, 2013: 2), "as a spatial wanderer, traversing information and freely selecting trajectories and viewpoints". The website of the museum should be redesigned to encourage visitors to explore more by freely clicking, browsing pages and jumping to any sections of the museum website, whereas other digital media channels may be provided for accessibility of digital artifacts and places.

Museum distribution strategies can also include application of various digital platforms, for example, social media platform like Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and

many others more, that can call for public attention and engagement or participation (i.e., by tweets or Youtube uploads) (Langa, 2014: 329). These can engage visitors not only before their arrival to the site but also at the site. This will be more productive if at the museum each exhibit or kiosk is embedded with QR code that connects visitors and allows them use the profiles of the museum, as well as digital links to other related websites, for instance, public library or museums association. Using social media platform allows the museum reach new audiences and connect with visitors in a more meaningful way (Angus, 2012; Cameron, 2003; Fletcher and Lee, 2012; Osterman et al, 2012: cited in Langa, 2014: 486).

For promotion mix, these are the recommendations: 1) designs of walking routes that link between Saisuddha Nobhadol Museum and other nearby attractions which share a common historical background; 2) organizing familiarization trips and special events, festivals, especially those related to traditional Thai arts, crafts, food and drinks; 3) providing choices of tangible goods such as souvenirs that have a linkage with the museum contents, for brighter memories.

Travelling in urban environment is a vigorous activity that creates a diversity of experiences. It allows visitors walk along streets, observe urban living and appreciate heritage sites. What enhances visitors' quality of experience encompass an impressive interpretation, appropriate designs of walking trails within attractions, especially architectural tourist attractions such as museums and hand-made product factories (Phaithayawat et al., 2012). Provision of tourist facilities, shopping zones and occasional events create festive atmosphere in such places, which is one of the prevailing factors to a sense of place.

Museums are accounted as educational institutions in Thailand, some of which also operate as official tourist attractions. They need to generate revenue on their own. Carrying the cost of maintenance for valuable collections of art and cultural heritage items, human resource can be considered the museums' economic burden. Thus, how can museums survive and grow with sustainability both in terms of socio-cultural and economic dimension? Globalizing tourism market may be the answer, in the ways that it has shaped the global economy and people's preferences in several aspects, including the way they consume recreation and leisure. Culture becomes a commodity for the representatives of other cultures. And thus, museum heritage economy can benefit from this phenomenon.

Limitations and future studies. The major limitation of this research concerns the small sample size due to time constraints. Future research may concern the capabilities of Saisuddha Nobhadol Museum to be developed as a tourist attraction similar to the nearby palace museums, for instance, Vimanmek Palace, Parus Gawan Palace and Arts of the Kingdom Museum (Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall), and the development of a touring route between the related museums in the Old Bangkok. Additionally, the second phase of the same research may be conducted after an art and cultural tourism development plan to be implemented to Saisuddha Nobhadol Museum, in order to explore visitors' experience and satisfaction with the changes.

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