

ปัจจัยด้านคุณภาพของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการกลับมาเยือนซ้ำ  
ของนักท่องเที่ยวในจังหวัดภูเก็ต

FACTORS OF DESTINATION QUALITY INFLUENCING TOURISTS' DESTINATION  
LOYALTY IN VISITING PHUKET

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บทคัดย่อ

คุณภาพของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวหรือจุดหมายปลายทางเป็นองค์ประกอบสำคัญในการรับรู้ของนักท่องเที่ยวที่มีต่อแหล่งท่องเที่ยวที่ต่าง ๆ รวมทั้งยังอาจมีผลต่อการกลับมาเยือนซ้ำของนักท่องเที่ยว อย่างไรก็ตาม องค์ความรู้ในการเข้าใจการรับรู้ของนักท่องเที่ยวต่างประเทศที่มีต่อคุณภาพของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวและการกลับมาเยือนซ้ำในเมืองท่องเที่ยวหลักของประเทศยังไม่ค่อยมีการศึกษามากนักในประเทศไทย การเข้าใจถึงอิทธิพลของปัจจัยดังกล่าวจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อผู้บริหารด้านการท่องเที่ยวในพื้นที่เพื่อปรับปรุงคุณภาพของสินค้าและบริการ รวมทั้งพัฒนากลยุทธ์การท่องเที่ยวที่เหมาะสมเพื่อดึงดูดนักท่องเที่ยวให้กลับมาท่องเที่ยวซ้ำ ดังนั้น การวิจัยในครั้งนี้จึงมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อค้นหาปัจจัยด้านคุณภาพของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการกลับมาเยือนซ้ำของนักท่องเที่ยวในจังหวัดภูเก็ต โดยเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลจากนักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติจำนวน 438 คน โดยใช้การเลือกตัวอย่างแบบตามสะดวก และวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยการวิเคราะห์การถดถอยพหุคูณ (multiple regression analysis) ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ปัจจัยคุณภาพของแหล่งท่องเที่ยวในด้านสิ่งดึงดูดใจทางชายทะเลและความปลอดภัย มีอิทธิพลต่อการกลับมาเยือนซ้ำของนักท่องเที่ยวในจังหวัดภูเก็ตอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ งานวิจัยในครั้งนี้จึงได้ให้ข้อเสนอแนะในประเด็นดังกล่าวเพื่อส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยวของจังหวัดภูเก็ต

คำสำคัญ : คุณภาพของแหล่งท่องเที่ยว/จุดหมายปลายทาง ความภักดีต่อจุดหมายปลายทาง ภูเก็ต

ABSTRACT

Destination quality is an important element of tourists' perception towards the destination, and it may affect tourists' decision to revisit the destination. However, the knowledge to understand international tourists' perception on destination quality and their loyalty is still limited in Thailand. Understanding the impact of destination quality on tourists' re-visitation will benefit destination agencies in improving the quality of products and services and developing appropriate tourism strategy to attract the repeat visitors. This study, therefore, has an objective to examine the factors of destination quality influencing the destination loyalty in Phuket. Data were collected from 438 international tourists visiting Phuket through a convenience sampling method, and were analyzed by the multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that destination quality factors in relation to beach attraction and tourist safety were found to influence tourists' destination loyalty to Phuket. Recommendations are given to manage those factors to promote Phuket's tourism.

Keywords : Destination Quality, Destination Loyalty, Phuket

INTRODUCTION

Currently, tourism has become a popular global leisure activity due to high revenues generating to the country's economy. For Thailand, the tourism industry is one of the largest and important sectors for the nation's economy due to the significant impacts to employment, business growth and revenue circulating throughout the

country. Although the tourism industry in Thailand has been growing during the past decades, the market competition within the region is likely to be intensified and more competitive within the region. Today, all ASEAN countries are intensively competing each other to promote their tourism activities with the aim to increase the number of

in-bound tourists. Each country has allocated large amount of budgets to promote and develop marketing campaigns to attract more tourists to the destination.

In order to sustain country's competitiveness, it is essential for Thai tourism marketers and authorities to develop effective marketing strategies to attract more international tourists to Thailand. One of the most effective marketing strategies which have been widely used in most businesses (including tourism industry) is building customer loyalty to increase repeat customers (Oppermann, 2000; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Today, customer loyalty has been implemented as one of the powerful marketing tool in the competitive market for both tourism and non-tourism industries. In the tourism context, the concept of customer loyalty may be referred as "destination loyalty". In particular, tourism can be perceived as a product (or destination) which can be resold (revisited) and recommended to other people (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). The issue of destination loyalty (or post-purchase behavior/behavioral intention) has a contribution to generating revenues to the tourism industry. The more the number of tourist revisit the destination, the greater the revenue the businesses can earn. In order to examine the concept of destination loyalty, it is important to explore what makes loyal tourists (repeat visitors). According to the literature, there are several past research examining the important variables associated with destination loyalty such as tourist satisfaction (Chi & Qu, 2008), travel motivation (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), perceived valued (Kim, Holland, & Kim, 2013), and travel experience (Kim & Brown, 2012). However, little effort has investigated the relationship between destination quality and destination loyalty. This study, therefore, has the objective to examine the factors of destination quality influencing destination loyalty in Phuket. In particular, it aims to find out which factors of destination quality are the important variables affecting tourists' revisit to Phuket. Phuket is selected as an area of investigation because it is a world well-known destination with high potentiality to promote destination loyalty. The city has attracted people of all ages from all over the world for decades. According to Tourism Authorities of Thailand (2015), Phuket was ranked the 2<sup>nd</sup> place for the top tourist destinations in Thailand with the overall of 8,395,921 international tourist arrivals, and revenues more than 200,000 million Baht. In addition, Phuket is positioning itself as a world class destination,

therefore more research is needed to provide a better understanding on the quality of tourism resources in Phuket. The results of the study will provide the local authorities and destination managers with the in-depth information (feedback) from visitors' perception on Phuket's tourism features so as to improve the quality of products and services as well as to attract more repeat visitors to Phuket.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Destination Quality

According to the literature, a destination may be defined as the location of a group of attractions, products & services, and tourist facilities (Kim & Brown, 2012). The combination of these features constitutes the tourism products at the destination level (Zabkar, Brencic, & Dmitrovic, 2010). With this regard, the perceived destination quality may refer to tourists' quality of experience, feelings, or overall evaluation of a destination (Cong, 2016; Rajaratnam, Nair, Sharif, & Munikrishnan, 2015). The perceived destination quality may be assessed in terms of a service experience based on the quality of infrastructure, hotels, restaurants, bars, friendliness of local people, entertainment, activities, historical/cultural attractions, safety as well as prices of goods and services (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Beerli & Martin, 2004). It is generally argued that high service quality and satisfaction may lead to positive word-of-mouth, referral, recommendation and repeat visit, which ultimately affect the financial performance of the businesses in the industry (Zabkar et al., 2010). In tourism industry, besides satisfaction, it is believed that the destination offering high quality in products and services as well as tourist attractions may affect tourists' overall holiday experience and their decision to revisit the destination (Cong, 2016; Zabkar, Brencic, & Dmitrovic, 2010). Repeat visitors may help support financial performance of the tourism businesses and boost the local economy of the destination. Unfortunately, researchers have not yet to thoroughly investigated such issue (destination quality) in major tourist destinations in Thailand.

In order to assess destination quality, scholars argue that the assessment of destination quality should mirror or reflect the specific attributes that characterize the destination (Rajaratnam et al., 2015; Zabkar et al., 2010). The literature suggests that assessing destination quality may be measured through a bundle of destination components (e.g. accommodation,

food, entertainment, facilities, etc.) rather than using a SERVQUAL (an instrument evaluating service quality). This is because the SERVQUAL is used to measure the service quality (product attributes) offered by a specific provider such as hotels, restaurants, and tour operators. And it is based on an evaluation of five service dimensions (reliability, assurance, empathy, responsiveness, and tangibles) which are not really applicable to the destination attributes/features such as visitor attractions, cultural experience, and local hospitality (Rajaratnam et al., 2015; Zabkar et al., 2010). Therefore, this study measured destination quality in terms of tourists' overall experience, feeling or perception on the destination components as suggested by prior research (Cong, 2016; Rajaratnam et al., 2015; Zabkar et al., 2010).

### **Destination Loyalty**

Destination loyalty refers to tourists' intention to revisit the same destination, and their intention to recommend the destination to their friends/relatives (Toyama & Yamada, 2012). It is also defined as the whole feeling and attitudes that encourage travelers to revisit a particular destination (Hsu, Killion, Brown, Gross, & Huang, 2008). The concept of destination loyalty has been widely examined among tourism scholars to develop effective ways to attract more tourists to their destinations (Kim & Brown, 2012; Toyama & Yamada, 2012; Mechinda et al., 2009; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Destination loyalty is regarded an important indicator used to develop competitive advantages of the destination and effective marketing strategy (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). In general, destination loyalty may be measured through tourist's intention to revisit the same destination, and their intention to recommend the destination to others (Toyama & Yamada, 2012). Of these two measures, repeat visitation is considered as a very strong indicator of future behavior (Mechinda et al., 2009). A review of past studies indicates that there are several prior studies investigating the relationship between destination loyalty and other variables (e.g. tourist satisfaction, travel experience), few scholars have attempted to examine an important variable like destination quality in an association with destination loyalty. In particular, there is a lack of empirical studies examining the influence of destination quality on destination loyalty in major tourist destinations in Thailand. Since destination loyalty is the important variable that may affect destination loyalty, understanding their

relationship will assist the local authorities to further develop the quality or standard of local products and services in order to meet tourists' expectation and promote tourists' revisit to Phuket.

### **METHODOLOGY**

According to Tourism Authorities of Thailand (2015), there were approximately 7 – 9 million international tourist arrivals to Phuket each year. To meet research objective, the samples in this study were independent tourists (age 20 years and above) who were visiting Phuket for holiday and leisure purposes. Due to infinite population characteristics, a convenience sampling was employed to collect the data. With more than 1 million populations, samples of more than 400 is claimed to be appropriate (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2006). To increase more reliability on data analysis, this study distributed 450 questionnaires to international tourists in Phuket. Finally, a total of 438 complete questionnaires were returned and usable for final data analysis. Data were collected by a closed-ended and self-administered questionnaire at major tourist attractions in Phuket (i.e. city area and famous beaches) during June 2016. During the surveys, the respondents were asked if they would be interested to participate in the survey. Once they agreed, questionnaires were collected on site.

The questionnaire for measuring destination quality was modified from a concept of "six A's" (i.e. attractions, access, amenities, available packages, activities, and ancillary services) developed by Buhalis (2000) as well as a review of related studies (Cong, 2016; Rajaratnam et al., 2015; Zabkar et al., 2010). All items of destination quality were adapted to be suitable for Phuket's destination features. Sampled questions were for instance, "How do you perceive cleanliness of beaches in Phuket?" or "How do you perceive friendliness of local people in Phuket?" Respondents were asked to rate their perception on a 5-point Likert scale (5=very good to 1=very poor). With regard to destination loyalty, most prior studies have measured destination loyalty on two items: (1) the intention to revisit the destination in the future and (2) the likelihood to recommend the destination to other people (Chi & Qu, 2008; Kim & Brown, 2012; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Following the literature, this study asked the respondents to rate their intention to revisit Bangkok in the near future (1-3 years), and their likelihood to recommend Bangkok to their relatives/friends by using a 5-

point Likert scale (1=least likely and 5=most likely).

A reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) was performed test destination quality items with a result of 0.83, exceeding the minimum standard (0.80) (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2006). The validity test (face validity) was also undertaken to check the content quality of the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics (percentage, mean, S.D.) were used to describe respondents' profile, mean score of destination quality and destination loyalty while inferential statistics (multiple regression analysis) were used to analyze the influence of destination quality (independent variable) on destination loyalty (dependent variable). All statistical tests were performed at the .05 level of significance

## FINDINGS

**Table 1** Profile of Respondents

| Characteristics (100%) | Descriptions                       | Number (n=438)  | Percent      |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <b>Gender</b>          | Male                               | 235             | 54.0%        |
|                        | Female                             | 203             | 46.0%        |
| <b>Age</b>             | 20 - 30 years                      | 78              | 18.0%        |
|                        | 31 - 45 years                      | 172             | 39.0%        |
|                        | 46 - 59 years                      | 125             | 29.0%        |
|                        | 60 years or older                  | 63              | 14.0%        |
| <b>Marital status</b>  | Married                            | 223             | 51.0%        |
|                        | Single                             | 185             | 43.0%        |
|                        | Divorced/<br>Separated/<br>Widowed | 30              | 6.0%         |
|                        | <b>Education</b>                   | Bachelor degree | 254          |
|                        | Master degree or higher            | 109             | 25.0%        |
|                        | High school or lower               | 75              | 17.0%        |
| <b>Occupation</b>      | Company employee                   | 145             | 31.0%        |
|                        | Government officer                 | 79              | 18.0%        |
|                        | Independent/self-employed          | 62              | 14.0%        |
|                        | Business owner                     | 44              | 10.0%        |
|                        | College student                    | 33              | 8.0%         |
|                        | Unemployment                       | 25              | 7.0%         |
|                        | Housewife<br>Retired               | 23<br>21        | 6.0%<br>5.0% |

**Table 1** (continued)

| Characteristics (100%)           | Descriptions                 | Number (n=438) | Percent |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|---------|
| <b>Monthly Income</b>            | Others                       | 6              | 1.0%    |
|                                  | US\$ 1,000 or lower          | 51             | 11.0%   |
|                                  | US\$ 1,001 – 2,500           | 120            | 27.0%   |
|                                  | US\$ 2,501 – 3,500           | 169            | 40.0%   |
|                                  | US\$ 3,501 or higher         | 98             | 22.0%   |
| <b>Number of visit to Phuket</b> | First time                   | 289            | 66.0%   |
|                                  | 2-3 times                    | 118            | 27.0%   |
|                                  | 4 times and more             | 31             | 7.0%    |
| <b>Regional base</b>             | Asian tourists               | 234            | 54.0%   |
|                                  | European/Australian tourists | 204            | 46.0%   |

According to Table 1, most of the respondents (54%) were males and 46% were females. Most of them were in the age group of 31 – 45 years old (39%). More than half of them were married (51%), and the majority (58%) had education at the college level (bachelor degree). The respondents came from different occupations, for example, 31% were company employees, 18% were government officers, 14% were independent/self-employed, and 10% were business owner. Approximately 40% of the respondents had monthly income in the range of US\$ 2,501 – 3,500 while 27% had income in the range of US\$ 1,001 – 2,500. Among 438 respondents, 66% were first time visitors, while 27% visited Phuket 2-3 times, and 7% returned to Phuket 4 times and more. Given 51% Asian tourists, they came from different regions of Asia such as East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia. Meanwhile, 46% European tourists, these samples included Western and Eastern Europeans as well as Australian and New Zealand tourists.

**Table 2** Mean Score of Destination Quality Items in Phuket

| Destination Quality Items in Phuket | Mean | S.D. |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|
| 1. Beauty/scenery of beaches        | 4.34 | 0.85 |
| 2. Friendliness of local people     | 4.31 | 0.72 |
| 3. Helpfulness of serviced staff    | 4.29 | 0.89 |
| 4. Cleanliness of beaches           | 4.28 | 0.79 |

**Table 2** (continued)

| Destination Quality Items in Phuket      | Mean | S.D. |
|--|------|------|
| 5. Hotel services                        | 4.26 | 0.72 |
| 6. Food hygiene                          | 4.24 | 0.91 |
| 7. Restaurant services                   | 4.22 | 0.89 |
| 8. Shopping facilities                   | 4.16 | 0.64 |
| 9. Tour/travel agent services            | 4.14 | 0.81 |
| 10. Cultural attractions                 | 4.12 | 0.85 |
| 11. Tourist information                  | 4.10 | 0.70 |
| 12. Nightlife and entertainment          | 4.09 | 0.78 |
| 13. Tourist safety                       | 3.85 | 0.64 |
| 14. Price of goods and services          | 3.82 | 0.99 |
| 15. Convenience of traveling within city | 3.80 | 0.87 |
| 16. Honesty of vendors/merchants         | 3.78 | 0.75 |
| 17. Police availability                  | 3.66 | 0.76 |
| 18. Cleanliness of city                  | 3.60 | 0.88 |
| 19. Quality of road                      | 3.53 | 0.72 |
| 21. Safety of transportation             | 3.51 | 0.88 |
| 20. Service of transportation            | 3.47 | 0.74 |
| 22. Price of transportation              | 3.40 | 0.81 |
| Mean                                     | 3.95 |      |

Table 2 shows the mean score ranking of tourists' perception on destination quality items in

Phuket. The top three most favorable quality items were 1) beauty/scenery of beaches (mean=4.34), 2) friendliness of local people (mean=4.31), and 3) helpfulness of serviced staff (mean=4.28). While the least two favorable quality items in Phuket (mean score below 3.50) were 1) service of transportation (mean=3.49) and 2) price of transportation (mean=3.40).

**Table 3** Mean Score of Destination Loyalty Items to Phuket

| Destination loyalty items to Phuket                             | Mean | S.D. |
|---|------|------|
| 1. Likelihood to return to Phuket                               | 4.12 | 0.88 |
| 2. Likelihood to recommend Phuket to friends, family, relatives | 4.23 | 0.82 |
| Mean  | 4.16 |      |

Table 3 shows mean score of respondents' opinions on Phuket's loyalty. Based on the finding, the respondents rated their likelihood to return to Phuket with an average score of 4.12 while the likelihood to recommend Phuket to their friends, families, and relative was rated scored at 4.23.

**Table 4** Factor Analysis of Destination Quality Items in Phuket

| Factor dimensions (Cronbach's alpha)                  | Factor loading | Eigenvalue | Variance explained | Factor Mean |
|---|----------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|
| <b>Factor 1: Beach attraction</b> (alpha = 0.76)      |                | 8.39       | 34.95              | 4.22        |
| Beauty/scenery of beaches                             | 0.78           |            |                    |             |
| Cleanliness of beaches                                | 0.62           |            |                    |             |
| <b>Factor 2: People &amp; services</b> (alpha = 0.82) |                | 2.17       | 9.05               | 4.16        |
| Friendliness of local people                          | 0.89           |            |                    |             |
| Helpfulness of serviced staff                         | 0.85           |            |                    |             |
| Honesty of local vendors                              | 0.77           |            |                    |             |
| Hotel services  | 0.72           |            |                    |             |
| Restaurant services                                   | 0.68           |            |                    |             |
| Services of transportation                            | 0.63           |            |                    |             |
| <b>Factor 3: Tourist facilities</b> (alpha = 0.81)    |                | 1.66       | 6.93               | 4.14        |
| Shopping facilities                                   | 0.84           |            |                    |             |
| Tour services   | 0.80           |            |                    |             |
| Tourist information                                   | 0.77           |            |                    |             |
| Prices of goods and services                          | 0.65           |            |                    |             |
| Price of transportation                               | 0.62           |            |                    |             |
| Food hygiene  | 0.61           |            |                    |             |

**Table 4** (continued)

| Factor dimensions (Cronbach's alpha)                          | Factor loading | Eigenvalue | Variance explained | Factor Mean |
|---|----------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|
| <b>Factor 4: Culture &amp; entertainment</b><br>(alpha =0.74) |                | 1.38       | 5.75               | 4.01        |
| Cultural attractions  | 0.72           |            |                    |             |
| Nightlife and entertainment                                   | 0.70           |            |                    |             |
| <b>Factor 5: Tourist safety</b> (alpha =0.72)                 |                |            |                    |             |
| Tourist safety  | 0.66           |            |                    |             |
| Police availability   | 0.63           |            |                    |             |
| <b>Factor 6: Infrastructure facilities</b><br>(alpha =0.86)   |                | 1.02       | 4.27               | 3.51        |
| <b>Quality of road</b>  | 0.87           |            |                    |             |
| Safety of transportation                                      | 0.85           |            |                    |             |
| Convenience of traveling within city                          | 0.72           |            |                    |             |
| Cleanliness of Phuket city                                    | 0.61           |            |                    |             |
| <b>Total variance explained</b>                               |                | 65.45%     |                    |             |

According to Table 4, a factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to group destination quality items. Six destination quality factors were derived from the factor analysis of 22 items. They were labeled as 1) beach attraction 2) people & services 3) tourist facilities 4) culture & entertainment 5) tourist safety, and 6) infrastructure facilities. Among them, beach attraction was the most favorable destination quality factor with a mean score of 4.22, followed by people & services (mean=4.16), and tourist facilities (mean=4.14) meanwhile the factor of infrastructure facilities was ranked the lowest with a mean score of 3.51. In this study, all destination quality factors had eigenvalues greater than 1.0, and the items in each dimension had a factor loading greater than 0.6; well above minimum criteria of factor analysis. In addition, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to test the internal consistency of items within each factor. The test showed that the alpha coefficients for the six factors ranged from 0.72 to 0.86; higher than the minimum reliability value of 0.6 (Hair et al., 2006). Thus, all the six destination quality factors were retained for the final structure for regression analysis.

**Table 5** Regression Analysis of Destination Quality Factors on Destination Loyalty

| Destination quality factors | Beta | t-value | Sig.  | Multicollinearity (VIF value) |
|-----------------------------|------|---------|-------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Beach attraction         | 0.37 | 2.36    | 0.01* | 1.55                          |

**Table 5** (continued)

| Destination quality factors  | Beta | t-value | Sig.  | Multicollinearity (VIF value) |
|------------------------------|------|---------|-------|-------------------------------|
| 2. People and services       | 0.21 | 1.42    | 0.15  | 1.47                          |
| 3. Tourist facilities        | 0.17 | 0.19    | 0.84  | 2.48                          |
| 4. Culture and entertainment | 0.22 | 1.81    | 0.07  | 2.58                          |
| 5. Tourist safety            | 0.31 | 2.08    | 0.03* | 2.33                          |
| 6. Infrastructure facilities | 0.15 | 0.49    | 0.62  | 1.89                          |

$R^2 = 0.228$

Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.207$

Table 5 shows the finding of regression analysis and its coefficients (beta) indicating the relationships between independent variables (destination loyalty factors) and dependent variables (destination loyalty). The finding is expressed in terms of beta coefficient, which is a standardized regression coefficient that allows for a direct comparison between coefficients as to their relative explanatory power of the dependent variable (Hair et al., 2006). The finding indicates that 1) beach attraction and 2) tourist safety had the influence on destination loyalty ( $p < 0.05$ ), and their relationships were positive. Among the two coefficient values, beach attraction was a more powerful variable (coefficient=0.37) than tourist safety (coefficient=0.31) in explaining tourist

loyalty. This may suggest that beach attraction is the most important factor influencing tourist loyalty to Phuket when compared to tourist safety. This may imply that the respondents who positively perceive the quality of beach attraction and tourist safety are more likely to return to Phuket. However, the destination quality factors like people & services, culture & entertainment, infrastructure facilities was not found to influence tourists' destination loyalty in this study. This suggests that these factors are not significant explanatory variables in destination loyalty of the current study. In addition, Table 5 shows the VIF values ranging from 1.47 to 2.58 (less than max value of 10) (Hair et al., 2006). This indicates that the regression model used in this study is acceptable to determine the effect of independent variables on the dependent variables.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study had the objective to examine the factors of destination quality influencing destination loyalty in Phuket. The findings of the study contribute to gaining a better understanding of the determinants of Phuket's loyalty. According to the results, destination quality factors related to beach attraction and tourist safety were found to have the significant influence on destination loyalty in a positive direction. The result is similar to Kim & Brown (2012) indicating that the natural components of a nature-based destination will play an important role in satisfying tourists in visiting the destination as well as may influence tourists' revisit. In particular, in the study of Polnyotee and Thadaniti (2014) reported that tourist attraction in Phuket (i.e. beaches, natural scenery) was the most important factor attracting tourists to the destination while other factors such as facilities and services were not the influential ones. This may justify in that Phuket is a world tourist destination and well known for the beauty of beaches and 3-S tourism (sea, sand, sun). It is not a surprising finding revealing that the quality of beaches in Phuket is the most important factor (highest coefficient value) affecting tourists' loyalty. This finding may provide an important implication for related parties to manage tourism in Phuket. Yet, another interesting finding indicated that tourist safety was another important factor affecting tourists' loyalty to Phuket. This finding has reconfirmed Phuket's tourism as well as Thai tourism industry that tourist safety has become the essential component for international tourists in visiting Thailand. This finding corresponds to several prior studies both Thai and

international contexts (Batra, 2008; Rittichainuwat, 2013) indicating that tourist safety is the top concern among international tourists when visiting overseas destinations, particularly Thailand. This may be because, in recent years, the image of Thailand has been negatively affected by several unrests such as bombs in Bangkok, terrorism in the southern Thailand, and several tourist crimes in Thailand. Based on these situations, it may be possible that international tourists may place tourist safety as a priority concern if they wish to return to Phuket (as well as Thailand).

Based on the above findings, the government and local authorities seem to be the key players in managing these attributes (beach attraction and tourist safety) in order to enhance international tourists' revisit to Phuket. They may work together to develop/improve these attributes through appropriate strategies or plans. In relation to beach management (i.e. scenery, cleanliness), protection policy, conservation plan, and legal action should be seriously taken into consideration. In particular, the sustainable management approach (concept) should be emphasized and undertaken by the government and business sectors. There should be also a regular monitor from city administrators/tourism officials to visit the beach areas in Phuket throughout the year to control the development and quality of the beach sites. Local authorities should pay more attention to the cleanliness of beach areas by preparing sufficient staff and garbage bins throughout the areas. Also, the city administrators/tourism officials may launch the campaign such as "Keep Phuket Clean" like other countries. This campaign has been undertaken in several tourism destinations such as Bali, Indonesia (Nurhayati, 2011) and Penang, Malaysia (Lee, 2015). With regard to tourist safety, there are three important issues to be addressed to improve the quality of tourist safety in Phuket. The first issue should be about the provision of the sufficient budget for managing tourist safety in Phuket. Since tourism has generated huge revenues for Phuket's tourism, the central government should allocate appropriate budgets for local police department and related safety/security administration. The second issue should be related to the human resources for local police and safety/security staff. In case of a sufficient budget, there should be more numbers of local police, safety/security staff or volunteers recruited to be in charge of tourist safety in Phuket. The local authorities and tourism polices should closely work together by providing more

channels/information for emergency contacts (at airport, hotels, restaurants, and other public areas) and having officials regularly visit the tourism sites throughout the city. Police volunteers or safety guards may be recruited from locals and foreign residents. The third issue will be about the cooperative work between government and business sectors to build the awareness and campaigns among local people (vendors, merchants, serviced staff) to be the good hosts in welcoming and assisting foreign tourists in Phuket. The campaigns should be focused on different approaches to make tourists feel safe while visiting Phuket. These may be undertaken through various approaches, for example, media, travel documents, Internet, and social events.

As for the research limitations, this study used a convenience sampling method and the results obtained may not be generalized to the overall international tourists to Phuket. Future research may explore and conduct comparative studies between major segments to increase the generalizability of the findings. In addition, there may be some other factors affecting destination loyalty such as tourist experience, destination image, and travel motivation, it is advisable for future studies to investigate these factors to gain a better understanding on the determinants of destination loyalty in major tourist destinations in Thailand.

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