

Antecedents of Visitors' Loyalty towards the Amusement Parks in Bangkok

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Abstract

Having a good quality of life is the ultimate desire of every human being, especially having an opportunity to relax in a tourist attraction. An amusement park is an alternative way through which ones can experience changing life that is different from their routine-work life. The amusement park industry has thus emerged to cater for visitors of all genders, ages, and nationalities. In today's business competition, amusement park entrepreneurs have to adjust their strategies for the smooth business operations by building greater loyalty among visitors. The objectives of this research were to: 1) study levels of loyalty and variables affecting visitors visiting amusement parks in Bangkok; 2) examine influences of the variables affecting the loyalty of visitors of the amusement parks in Bangkok; and 3) develop a model for the variables affecting the loyalty of the visitors of the amusement parks in Bangkok. This research employed a mixed research methodology combining quantitative and qualitative methods. For the quantitative research part, the research sample consisted of 360 visitors of the amusement parks in Bangkok. The sample size was determined based on the criterion of 20 times the observed variables. They were selected via stratified sampling. Data were collected with the use of a questionnaire and analyzed with a structural equation model. As for the qualitative research component, in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 key informants consisting of executives of the amusement parks who were purposively selected. The findings showed that: 1) all the variables affecting the loyalty of the visitors of the amusement parks in Bangkok were rated at a moderate level; 2) the variables including trust, confidence, good image, and revisiting had a positive influence on, and could predict the loyalty of the visitors by 84 percent; and 3) the model for the variables affecting the loyalty of the visitors of the amusement parks in Bangkok, developed by the researcher, was called the L. (L referring to Loyalty) Amusement park Model which is a model for the development of trust, confidence, good image, and revisiting. This model can be used as a guideline to promote loyalty among domestic and international visitors, giving the amusement park business in Bangkok competitive power. In addition, the qualitative research results also found that for the theme park tourism in Bangkok, the government should support the budget for tourism development during the post-COVID-19 situation so that the operators and visitors will be safe and secure. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports should support the amusement operators in Bangkok to improve service quality, prices, promotions, rides and activities, and identities of the rides and locations. In addition, it should provide the opportunities to enhance service potential of the amusement park operators in Bangkok as well as develop the amusement park business in Bangkok in a sustainable way in order to support the development of the tourism economy of Thailand.

Keywords: Visitor's loyalty, tourism, amusement parks Bangkok, service quality, promotion, player identification.

1. Introduction

Having a good quality of life is the ultimate desire of every human being, especially having an opportunity to relax in a tourist attraction. An amusement park is an alternative way through

which one can experience changing life that is different from their routine-work life. The amusement park industry has thus emerged to cater to visitors of all genders, ages, and nationalities (Morris, 2019). An amusement park is a park that features numerous attractions,

such as rides as well as games, and other events for entertainment purposes (Bappy, 2019). In Bangkok, Thailand, this industry is growing significantly and providing various opportunities to the people for entertainment. This industry attracting the tourists from various parts of the country as well as globally. Therefore, it has significant contribution to the tourism industry of Thailand. Although, Thailand has well established tourism industry, however, amusement park industry is also playing an important role and contribution to the Thai tourism industry (Talan, 2020; Tan et al., 2020; Tolić, 2020; Vergara, 2020; Zhuo & Salleh, 2020).

Tourists are the backbone of amusement park industry; therefore, tourists' loyalty (Stylidis et al., 2020) is important to promote in relation to the amusement park. In tourism industry the tourists always have major importance because it is directly linked with the performance of tourism industry. A loyal tourist continuously visits to a specific place and causes to increase the performance of tourism activities. In Thailand, tourism industry is one of the top industries worldwide. Tourism industry of Thailand is growing rapidly (LAPAROJKIT & SUTTIPUN, 2021) because there are several opportunities in Thailand. In this tourism industry, there are several opportunities in Bangkok Thailand which needed to be promote with the help of various strategies. Amusement Park is one of the most important tourism destinations in Bangkok in which tourist loyalty is needed. It is needed to promote tourism activities in relation to the amusement park and increase the tourist loyalty. As without tourist loyalty it is not possible to promote amusement park performance. The issues related to tourism industry must be addressed and managed with the help of appropriate strategies. Although, this industry is growing rapidly, however, there are several issues related to the tourist loyalty. The management of these issues can lead to the higher tourism performance in Bangkok, Thailand.

Different authors conducted research studies on tourism industry of Bangkok Thailand (Denis & Maria, 2018; Mansouri, 2014). However, all the areas as well as all the industries in this area are not covered by the previous studies. Along with different areas of tourism in Bangkok, amusement park industry is also one of the areas

which is not clearly documented by previous studies. In various parts of the world this industry is considered by several previous studies, however, various studies in Bangkok on tourism have ignored this important area. Therefore, it is really important to discuss amusement park industry because it has central importance in tourism industry which has vital contribution to the industry. Especially, amusement park industry discussed in literature, but the tourist loyalty is not much discussed by previous studies in relation to this industry (Jun, 2015). In this direction, this study considered tourist loyalty in amusement park industry of Thailand. This study proposed various factors which can contribute to the tourist loyalty. According to this study, service quality is one of the major elements which is needed to promote tourist loyalty. Furthermore, along with the service quality, price of various products and services has importance which may have effect on tourists' loyalty. Additionally, the promotion strategies for tourism also can play a most important role along with rides and various other activities. Furthermore, players identity and place have significant importance to develop loyalty among the visitors. Finally, the current study has following objectives;

1. To study levels of loyalty and variables affecting visitors visiting amusement parks in Bangkok.
2. To examine influence of the variables affecting the loyalty of visitors of the amusement parks in Bangkok.
3. To develop a model for the variables affecting the loyalty of the visitors of the amusement parks in Bangkok.

The first objective states the level of visitor's loyalty in relation to the amusement parks. It is very rare that any study considered the level of loyalty among the visitors of amusement parks. Determination of the identification of loyalty level is important because the low level may be managed by developing various strategies. Furthermore, this study contributed by examining the factors effecting tourist loyalty. By considering these factors, the problem of low visitor loyalty can be improved through implementation of these factors. Therefore, this study is important to enhance amusement parks tourist loyalty in Bangkok Thailand (Yasemin, 2020; Yavuz, 2020; Zarepour, 2020).

2. Literature Review

The framework of the study is based on the independent variables and dependent variable. Dependent variable is tourist loyalty. The independent variable include; service quality,

price, promotion, rides and activities, player identification and place. The relationship between service quality, price, promotion, rides and activities, player identification, place and tourist loyalty is given in Figure 1 as framework of the study.

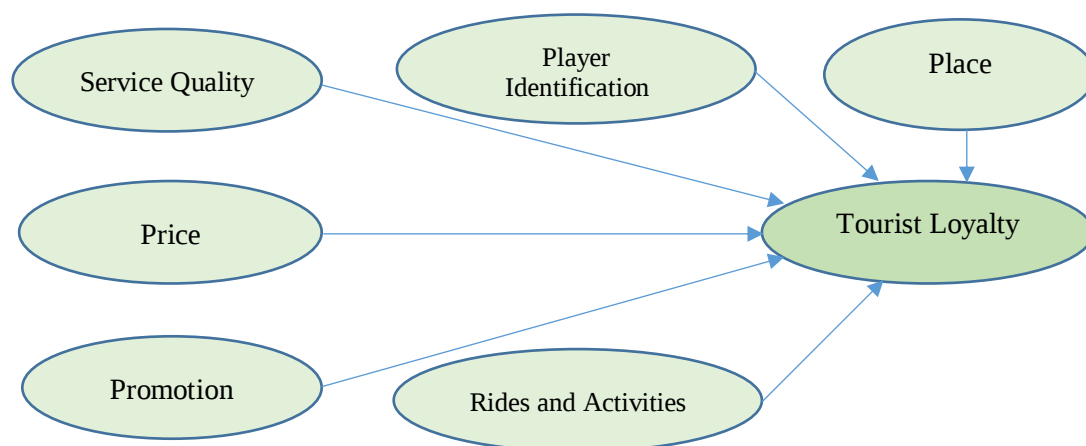


Figure 1. Framework of the study showing the relationship between service quality, price, promotion, rides and activities, player identification, place and tourist loyalty

Service quality is a measure of how an organization delivers its services compared to the expectations of its customers. It is the most important part of any product or service related to any industry. The success of any service as well as product is based on service quality (Ojogiwa, 2021; Sudarmanto & Meliala, 2020; Tiasanty & Sitio, 2019; Ugwuoke et al., 2022). The price of the service as well as product must be consistent with the quality of the product. The charges paid by the tourist to avail any opportunity must justify the quality of the service. Higher level of quality in services always lead to the satisfaction among the tourists. Different companies provide different services to the tourists which must have a significant level of quality according to the charges of service. On the other hand, the lack of quality in services make satisfy the tourists. The satisfaction level among the tourists can decrease the loyalty among the tourists with the specific place, service or product. Therefore, it is more important to promote tourist loyalty with the help of quality services. It is reported by previous studies that the quality of services is one of the key elements of tourist loyalty. Literature shows that the tourist loyalty can be

promoted with the help of higher service quality (Mohamad et al., 2019; Thawornwiriyaatrakula & Meepromb, 2020).

Furthermore, price of the services paid by the tourists also has a relationship with loyalty. The companies offering different services to the tourists related to the residence as well as food services must have reasonable price. The price of the product and services must be consistent with the quality as well as comfort provided to the people. The higher price of different services cannot enhance the tourist loyalty. Most of the tourists always remain price conscious to the services. Generally, it is based on the capability of tourist to pay for services. Those tourists which have low capability to pay a higher price, generally, remain not loyal with the tourist. It is also reported by the earlier studies that there is a significant influence of price on tourist loyalty (Campo & Yagüe, 2007).

Moreover, the promotion of various tourism activities has influence on tourism promotion. The promotional activities carried out by the tourist companies can influence tourist loyalty. Several companies use various marketing strategies to promote different services and

products related to the tourism (Islam & Aswajit, 2019). These marketing activities has major influence on tourist loyalty. In tourism industry, it is based on various tourism opportunities related to seasons. Therefore, the seasonal activities promotion can have influence on tourist loyalty. It is reported by earlier studies that promotion has significant effect on tourist loyalty (Pondrinal et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, rides and tourist activities in the specific area can also influence the level of loyalty. The better level of rides and activities in different amusement parks can help to enhance tourists' level of satisfaction. The quality of these activities and the level of comfort and enjoyment to the tourist can increase the level of loyalty among them. Therefore, rides and activities have influence on tourist loyalty along with the various other factors. It is also observed from the literature that various games conducted in amusement parks also has influence on tourists. Although there are a number of people at the tourism places, however, various games require different players. The player identification for any game can influence the level of loyalty among them. Therefore, player identification has significant effect on tourist loyalty. Additionally, literature also prove that place also has influence on tourists (Nasir et al., 2020). The specific place available for the tourists to do various entertainment activities influences the tourist's loyalty. The provision of better place to the tourists can have positive effect on the level of attraction as well as loyalty. Therefore, based on above discussion, this study proposed following hypotheses;

Hypothesis 1. Service quality has positive effect on tourist loyalty.

Hypothesis 2. Price has positive effect on tourist loyalty.

Hypothesis 3. Promotion has positive effect on tourist loyalty.

Hypothesis 4. Rides and activities have positive effect on tourist loyalty.

Hypothesis 5. Player identity has positive effect on tourist loyalty.

Hypothesis 6. Place has positive effect on tourist loyalty.

3. Methodology

Mixed method approach is based on the combination of quantitative and qualitative research approach (Shi et al., 2020). The use of both quantitative and qualitative research approach is most important and add the contribution to the study. There are limited number of studies which examined the relationship by considering mixed method approach by combining quantitative and qualitative research approach. Therefore, by considering less percentage of mixed method in tourism industry, the current study considered mixed method approach (Ncube & Koloba, 2020; Suresha Kharvi, 2020; van der Westhuizen & Ntshingila, 2020; Zubairu, 2021).

Data were collected with the use of a questionnaire and analyzed with a statistical tool. For data collection, a questionnaire was designed by the study. Questionnaire's development is carried out by using the scale items from previous studies. The questionnaires were divided in to various sections including the profile of respondents and scale items related to key study variables; tourist loyalty, service quality, price, promotion, rides and activities, player identification and place. Tourist loyalty is measured by considering repetition, image, confidence and trust. Service quality is measured by using convenience and speed of service. Price is measured by using tourist group and player group. Promotion is measured by using member, general and seasonal. Rides and activities are measured by using player type and activity type. Player identity is measured through novelty and safety. Place is measured by using beauty and cleanliness (Krysiński & Szczepański, 2020; Layachi, 2021; Silvius & Schipper, 2020; Wallenius et al., 2020; Yulong & Jing, 2020).

This study distributed 800 questionnaires among the visitors in amusement park Bangkok, Thailand. There are several sampling techniques available for data collection. However, this study used stratified sampling technique which is most suitable to collect data from respondents. Therefore, while using stratified sampling technique, this study distributed 800 questionnaires among the visitors related to the amusement park Bangkok. However, all the respondents have not responded to the survey. Few respondents responded but not completed the survey. Therefore, this study has not

included incomplete questionnaires. Finally, this study selected 360 questionnaires in data collection. The current rate of response is suitable to proceed further for data analysis. Furthermore, for qualitative research, in-depth interviews were conducted consisting of executives of the amusement parks who were purposively selected. Finally, this study carried

out data screening in which the missing value was observed. Furthermore, outlier in the data is also possible which was fixed by using data screening. Finally, the data statistics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Statistical test of empirical variables (n=360)

Variable	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	%CV	SK	KU	χ^2	P-value
Conv	3.23	.59	18.27	.015	-.032	.001	.999
Spee	3.28	.66	20.12	-.054	-.060	.007	.997
Trav	3.18	.65	20.44	-.019	-.058	.004	.998
Play	3.26	.67	20.55	-.054	-.072	.008	.996
Memb	2.89	.82	28.37	-.015	-.156	.024	.988
Gene	3.56	.76	21.35	-.142	-.230	.073	.964
Seas	3.34	.70	20.96	-.032	-.033	.002	.999
Typl	3.45	.84	24.35	-.219	-.492	.290	.865
Tyac	3.15	.80	25.40	-.050	-.057	.006	.997
New	3.21	.79	24.61	-.522	-.910	1.100	.577
Safe	3.16	.86	27.22	-.401	-.752	.725	.696
Beau	3.16	.82	25.95	-.342	-.705	.614	.736
Clea	3.28	.80	24.39	-.220	-.426	.230	.891
Tell	2.96	.91	30.74	-.241	-.500	.308	.857
Repe	3.53	.80	22.66	-.419	-.855	.907	.635
Imag	3.36	.81	24.11	-.257	-.490	.306	.858
Conf	3.45	.86	24.93	-.246	-.456	.269	.874
Trus	3.26	.88	26.99	-.293	-.608	.456	.796

4. Data Analysis and Results

In the data analysis process, it is important to select appropriate data analysis technique. Although, there are several data analysis techniques available to analyze the data, however, it is important to select the most appropriate data analysis technique because all sort of data cannot be process with all data analysis techniques. The current study is based on the relationship of variables in which primary data is used. In quantitative research, data is

collected through questionnaire, therefore, the suitable technique to analyze primary data is important to select. Finally, this study considered structural equation modelling for data analysis in the study. Structural equation modelling is a suitable as well as most recommended techniques to analyze the data based on first hand data (Hair et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2019). In this process, while applying structural equation modelling, this study considered factor loading of all the items. It is important to observe the factor loading factor

loading less than 0.5 may affect the results. Therefore, in this process, all the scale items having factor loading above 0.5 was determined. Table 2 shows the factor loading which exhibit that all the factors have loading above 0.5 with is acceptable level. In addition, this study also considered Cronbach Alpha as well as composite friability. After examining composite reliability and Cronbach alpha, it is observed that values are above 0.7 which is the indication that data is reliable to proceed further. Additionally, the validity is also examined with

the help of convergent validity as well as discriminant validity. Average variance extracted (AVE) above 0.5 confirmed that all the items have achieved convergent validity. Discriminant validity is considered with the help of AVE square root (Afthanorhan, 2013) which is also confirmed in the current study. Finally, it is found that reliability as well as validity is appropriate to proceed further to examine the relationship between variables.

Table 2 Factor Loadings. (n = 360)

Variable	Factor Loading (λ)	Error (θ)	t	R ²
Service Quality (Serv)				
Convenience (Conv)	.66	.57	12.95	.43
Speed (Spee)	.74	.45	14.27	.55
$\rho_c = .66$ $\rho_v = .51$				
Price (Pric)				
Tourists group (Trav)	.80	.36	16.05	.64
Player group (Play)	.65	.58	12.65	.42
$\rho_c = .69$ $\rho_v = .53$				
Promotion (Prom)				
Member (Memb)	.64	.59	12.40	.41
General (Gene)	.64	.59	12.63	.41
Seasonal (Seas)	.62	.62	12.18	.38
$\rho_c = .67$ $\rho_v = .52$				
Rides and activities (Acti)				
Player type (Typl)	.74	.45	13.48	.55
Activity type (Tyac)	.67	.55	12.20	.45
$\rho_c = .67$ $\rho_v = .52$				
Player identity (Iden)				
Novelty (New)	.89	.21	20.42	.79
Safety (Safe)	.85	.28	19.41	.72
$\rho_c = .86$ $\rho_v = .75$				
Place (Plac)				

Beautiful (Beau)	.86	.25	19.79	.75
Cleanliness (Clea)	.86	.27	19.23	.73
$\rho_c = .85$ $\rho_v = .73$				
Tourist loyalty (Loyal)				
Tell (Tell)	.72	.48	15.42	.52
Repetition (Repe)	.78	.39	17.40	.61
Image (Imag)	.78	.39	17.14	.61
Confidence (Conf)	.71	.49	15.13	.51
Trust (Trus)	.80	.36	17.79	.64
$\rho_c = .87$, $\rho_v = .57$				

In the next step of structural equation modeling (Chairatana, 2021; Hair et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2019), this study examined the relationship between variables. In this process, the effect of service quality is examined in relation to the tourist loyalty. The effect of price, promotion, ride and activities, player identity and place are examined in relation to the tourist loyalty. All the results are reported in Table 3. In this process of hypothesis testing, it is found that service quality has significant effect on tourist loyalty. Additionally, price also has a significant effect on Tourist loyalty. It is found that promotion,

ride and activities also have significant effect on tourist loyalty. It is also found that identity and place have significant effect on tourist loyalty. Therefore, this study found that all the hypotheses are supported. Finally, it is found that the r-squared value of tourist loyalty has achieved a satisfactory level. All the variables are expected to bring significant level of change in tourist loyalty. The process of structural equation modeling is given in Figure 2.

Table 3 Parameter estimation result of direct effect coefficient, indirect effect, and total effect from adjusting model (n=360)

Independent Variable	Effect	Dependent Variable $R^2 = .84$
		Tourist loyalty (Loyal)
Service Quality (Serv)	DE	.38*(4.04)
	IE	-
	TE	.38*(4.04)
Price (Pric)	DE	.37*(4.48)
	IE	-
	TE	.37*(4.48)
Promotion (Prom)	DE	.38*(4.38)
	IE	-
	TE	.38*(4.38)

Rides and activities (Acti)	DE	.32*(3.20)
	IE	-
	TE	.32*(3.20)
Player identity (Iden)	DE	.49*(3.37)
	IE	-
	TE	.49*(3.37)
Place (Plac)	DE	.44*(3.00)
	IE	-
	TE	.44*(3.00)

$\chi^2 = 177.39$ df = 107 p-value = .00002, $\chi^2 / df = 1.65$, RMSEA = .043, RMR = .020,

SRMR = .033, CFI = .99, GFI = .95, AGFI = .92, CN = 273.71

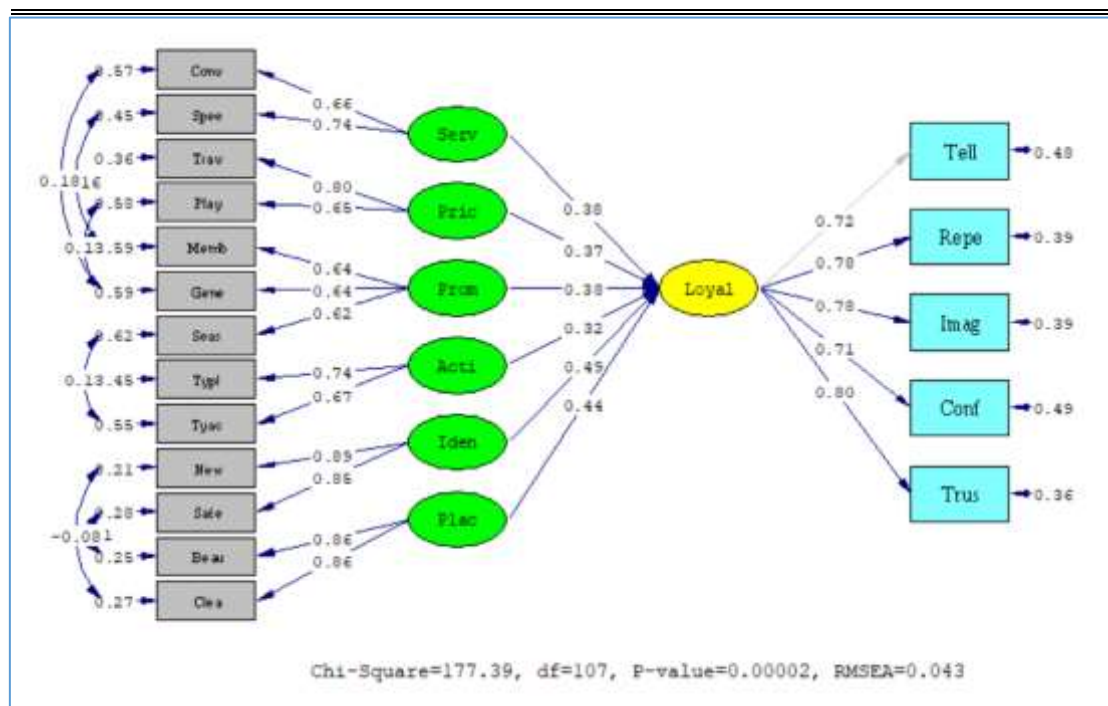


Figure 2. Structural Equation Modeling

5. Discussion

This study examined the relationship between service quality, price, promotion, rides and activities, player identification, place and tourist loyalty in amusement parks, Bangkok, Thailand. To examine this relationship, a mixed research methodology combining quantitative and qualitative methods is employed. Data collection is made through questionnaire and in-depth interviews. To examine the effect of service quality, price, promotion, rides and

activities, player identification and place on tourist loyalty, six hypotheses are proposed.

Hypothesis 1 indicated the relationship between service quality and tourist liability. Results of data analysis shows that service quality has positive effect on tourist liability. It indicates that increase in service quality among amusement parks can increase the tourist loyalty. Consequently, it is recommended to the management of amusement parks to promote service quality which is possible with the help of

providing quality services with efficient charges. Hypothesis 2 shows the relationship between price and loyalty. There is a significant relationship between price and loyalty. It has major importance to decrease or increase the tourist loyalty. It is also found in hypothesis 3 that promotion also has positive effect on loyalty. Different services as well as products offered to the tourists has significant effect on their satisfaction level. The better promotion of services and products due to the higher level of satisfaction ultimately increases the level of satisfaction which can increase the tourist loyalty. Nevertheless, hypothesis 4 shows the relationship of different activities in amusement parks and tourists' loyalty. Along with the other hypotheses, this hypothesis is also supported and shows that different activities in these areas can have positive role to enhance tourist loyalty. The better quality of different activities is offered to the visitors ultimately increase the loyalty among the visitors. The promotion of activities leads the tourists to visit again the same place. Additionally, the hypothesis 5 indicated the effect of player identity on tourist loyalty. Generally, it increases the tourist's loyalty. Therefore, player identity is also the most important element among the amusement parks. Otherwise, it is also observed in hypothesis 6 that the place also has positive role to promote tourist loyalty. Various features at a given place enjoyed by the tourists always have positive role to promote tourist loyalty. The results of this study are consistent with the previous studies. Previous studies also shows that service quality as positive effect on tourist loyalty (Kim et al., 2013; Thawornwiriyaatrakula & Meepromb, 2020). Additionally, it is also given in literature that various other elements such as price or motion as well as place has significant positive role to promote tourists' loyalty. Therefore, it is recommended to the management to promote service quality. Additionally, it is also recommended that promotion of various activities, services and products can lead to the tourist's loyalty. Hence, the management as well as practitioners should promote various activities, services and products to promote loyalty among the tourist.

6. Conclusion

Findings of the study highlighted that all the variables affecting the loyalty of the visitors of

the amusement parks in Bangkok has significant importance in the tourism industry and amusement parks tourism. The factors including service quality, price, promotion, rides and activities, player identification and place has a positive influence on tourists and could predict the loyalty of the visitors strongly. The model for the variables affecting the loyalty of the visitors of the amusement parks in Bangkok, developed by the current study is called the L (L referring to loyalty). Amusement Park model is a model for the development of trust, confidence, good image, and revisiting. This model can be used as a guideline to promote loyalty among domestic and international visitors, giving the amusement park business in Bangkok competitive power. In addition, the qualitative research results also found that for theme park tourism in Bangkok, the government should support the budget for tourism development during the post-COVID-19 situation so that the operators, entrepreneurs and visitors will be safe and secure to do business activities. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports should support the amusement operators and entrepreneurs in Bangkok to improve service quality, prices, promotions, rides and activities, and identities of the rides and locations. In addition, it should provide the opportunities to enhance the service potential of the amusement park operators in Bangkok as well as develop the amusement park business in Bangkok in a sustainable way in order to support the development of the tourism economy of Thailand.

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