

The Development of Golf Tourism in Chiang Mai

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Abstract

This research was mixed research, quantitative and qualitative research. The objectives of the research were as follows: 1. To study the marketing management of golf tourism in Chiang Mai. 2. To study the marketing factors affecting golf tourism decision making in Chiang Mai. 3. To present the marketing development guidelines for golf tourism in Chiang Mai. The research model was mixed method research. The tools used to collect data were interview forms, questionnaires, and triangular data reviews. Statistical data analysis included frequency, mean, percentage, and standard deviation. The results showed that: 1. Marketing mix factors had a high impact on service decision making. In terms of processes affecting decision-making first, followed by distribution, personnel and products. 2. Chiang Mai had continuously developed golf tourism marketing. The results of the SWOT market environment analysis revealed that the strengths and threats weight scores were higher than opportunities and problems. Development guidelines should focus on preventative strategies by using strengths as a guideline for marketing development through the use of 7 marketing mixes. In this way, identity, identity, and new experiences should be created. Moreover, golf courses had been built that are of standard, challenging, good atmosphere, including service personnel, and SHA Plus standards. Importantly, there should be communication activities to customers and employees, creating a 360-degree video narrative of the golf courses via online channels, reasonable prices for activities, giving discounts during special times, multiple payment channels to reduce cash and staff training in service knowledge and skills.

Keywords: golf tourism, marketing development

I. INTRODUCTION

Golf tourism is likely to expand. In the past, about 700,000 golf tourists traveled to Thailand per year. Thailand has about 300 golf courses across the country and earns about 3.3 billion baht from golf tourists Penroong Yaisamsaen, [8] The golf market in Thailand has grown steadily over the past four years and is highly popular with foreign tourists. Especially in Phuket, 6 golf courses can generate income into the province about 500-600 million baht per year (Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Sport [4].

Chiang Mai is one of the provinces with great tourism potential. Each year, there are many tourists traveling and it has been ranked as an ideal city for tourism by foreign media as detailed below. (1) In 2018, readers of "Condé Nast Traveler" voted this province as one of the top 20 small towns for the best travel Thairath online [5] (2) In 2019, "Big 7 Travel", a tourism website ranked the prefecture as "The friendliest cities in the world 2019" in 11th place PPTV Online [2]. (3) In 2020, Holidu, a vacation rental site, ranked this province as "The Best Cities for a Workation 2021" in the 10th place Pornwalee

Zhuangputsa [9]. In terms of golf tourism in Chiang Mai, there are more than 10 standard golf courses. In 2017, the province was awarded "IAGTO" which was voted as the Golf Course of 2017 Award as Asia & Australasia Golf Destination of the Year Thairath Online [5]. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism industry is severely affected, including golf tourism. Therefore, it is necessary to accelerate the development of tourism to support the return of tourists after the COVID-19 outbreak in order to build their confidence and satisfaction.

If golf tourism in Chiang Mai can be developed into a sporting attraction with uniqueness, standard, good service, confidence and satisfaction, it will be able to attract tourists around the world, leading to more revenue for the tourism industry. Importantly, there is a study of marketing factors affecting service decision making, golf tourism market management, marketing environment analysis, and marketing development guidelines for golf tourism analysis in Chiang Mai Province. In this regard, it increases the potential of tourist attractions, making tourists impressed with the service, re-using the service and word-of-mouth. These add value to the tourism industry and continue to benefit the overall economy of Chiang Mai.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research were 1) to study the marketing management of golf tourism in Chiang Mai, 2) to study the marketing management of golf tourism in Chiang Mai, and 3) to present the marketing development guidelines for golf tourism in Chiang Mai.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RELATED THEORIES

Research on the marketing development of golf tourism in Chiang Mai was conducted by collecting documents, concepts, theories, and related literature used as research guidelines as detailed below.

Concept of marketing mix theory in service business.

Kotler [3] 's 7P's (Service Mix) marketing mix concept: product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence. The key point is to optimize the marketing mix strategy.

Marketing environment analysis and strategy analysis using TOWS matrix

Market environment analysis is a SWOT analysis to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the internal environment and the opportunities and threats of the external environment. It is then used to formulate a strategy using TOWS matrix as a tool used in conjunction with SWOT analysis. Marketing strategies can be defined as follows. 1) Aggressive strategy (SO strategy) when strengths and opportunities are found. 2) Preventive strategy (ST strategy) when strengths and obstacles are found. 3) Remedial strategy (WO strategy) when weaknesses and opportunities are found. 4) Reactive strategy (WT strategy) when weaknesses and threats are found. Chanin Chunhapuntharuk [1]

IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The research was a qualitative and quantitative research on the marketing development of golf tourism in Chiang Mai Province. The researcher defined the conceptual framework as follows.

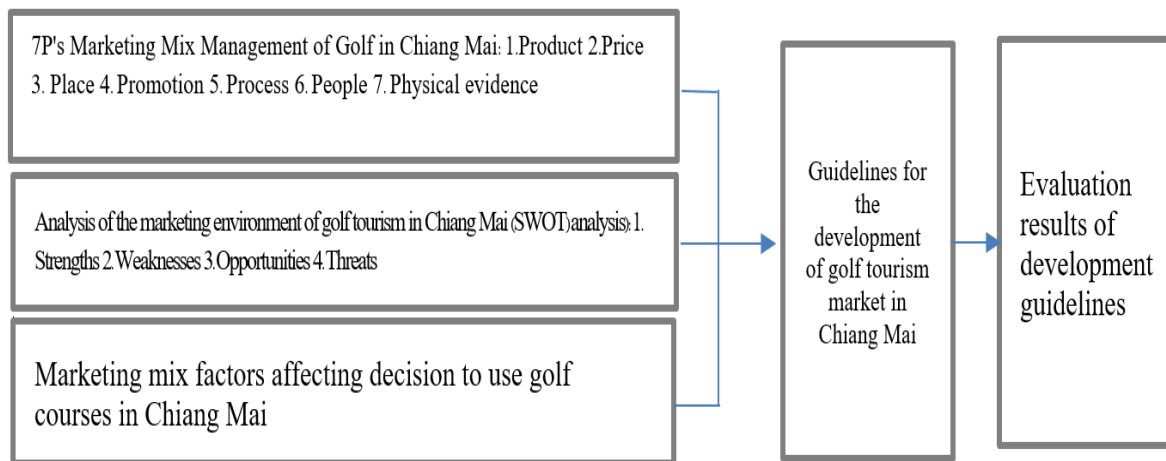


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

V. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was mixed (quantitative and qualitative research) and triangulation. The research area was Chiang Mai Province. The research process was divided into 3 steps as follows:

Step 1: Study the marketing mix management of golf tourism in Chiang Mai

The sample consisted of 5 golf course managers in Chiang Mai and 1 golf tourism-related person using purposive sampling. An unstructured in-depth interview was used on aspects of past marketing arrangements and developments in terms of products, prices, place, promotion, people, processes, and physical evidence including strengths, weaknesses, problems and opportunities of Golf tourism in Chiang Mai Province

For data collection by in-depth interviews from the sample group, the researcher requested permission to record audio during the interview. The conclusions were then summarized in the form of a descriptive lecture to illustrate the data obtained from the qualitative research while analyzing and verifying its validity by means of theoretical comparisons with the results. In terms of marketing mix and market environment, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and issues and documented analysis of current affairs were used for SWOT analysis. Subsequently, the factors analysis

summary (IFAS Table) was summarized and compared the TOWS matrix theoretical strategies of golf tourism in Chiang Mai.

Step 2: Study the factors affecting the decision to use the golf course service of tourists.

The sample group was tourists who come to use the golf courses in Chiang Mai. The sample selection was carried out using stratified sampling that was specific to the tourists who came to use the golf courses in the area of Mueang Chiang Mai District and the adjacent area of Mueang Chiang Mai District. Out of 6 golf courses of 64 people each, a total of 364 people were sampled. The questionnaire was used as a tool to survey opinions on service usage behavior and marketing mix factors affecting golf tourism decisions in Chiang Mai. The questionnaire was divided into two parts:

Part 1 - General information about the golf tourism characteristics and behavior of the respondents

Part 2 - Respondents' opinion data on marketing factors influencing golf tourism service decision-making in terms of product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence

Content validity were performed by presentation to 3 experts and the Index of Item Objective Congruence was determined. It was then adjusted according to the opinions of experts and tested to determine the reliability of

the research instrument using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The questionnaire had a confidence level of 0.851. To analyze the data, the researcher used computer data analysis using social science software package, statistics, frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, t-test and F-test (One way ANOVA).

Step 3: Propose guidelines for the development of the golf tourism market in Chiang Mai.

This step was documentary research from summary results, interviews, marketing mix management, SWOT analysis, study of marketing factors affecting decision to use the service. In addition, guidelines for marketing development of golf tourism in terms of product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence were presented.

Part 4: Assess the feasibility and practicality of golf tourism marketing development guidelines. The sample consisted of 5 golf course managers, 5 golf staff and 5 golf tourism-related professionals. This step was a triangulation, using questionnaires as a tool for assessing the suitability and feasibility of implementing a golf tourism marketing plan. The questionnaire was divided into 2 parts:

Part 1 - General information on the status of the respondents

Part 2 - Information about the marketing development approach using the 7-marketing mix: product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence

Content validity were performed by presentation to 3 experts and the Index of Item Objective Congruence was determined to determine the reliability of the research instrument. The Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) for each key factor was between 0.60 -1.00, consistent with the criteria set by Rovinelli & Hambleton [11]. To analyze the data, the researcher used computer data analysis using social science software package, statistics, frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, t-test and F-test (One way ANOVA).

VI. RESULTS

1. In the study of marketing factors affecting golf tourism, most of the 333 respondents (86.7 percent) used golf courses in Chiang Mai about 5 times or more, 212 people who played golf to maintain health and fitness (29.3 percent), and 255 people who received information about the golf course from close friends (45.5 percent). Most of the 194 users (32.6 percent) wanted the availability and completeness of the golf course.

Table 1 Marketing mix factors affecting decision to use golf tourism services

Marketing mix	\bar{X}	S.D.	Level
Product	3.74	0.473	high
price	3.49	0.532	moderate
Place	3.89	0.734	high
Promotion	3.41	0.784	moderate
Process	4.05	0.626	high
People	3.80	0.529	high
Physical evidence	3.62	0.512	high
Total average	3.69	0.422	high

The results showed that the marketing mix in the picture had a high effect on the decision to

use the service, but the price and promotion had a moderate effect on the decision.

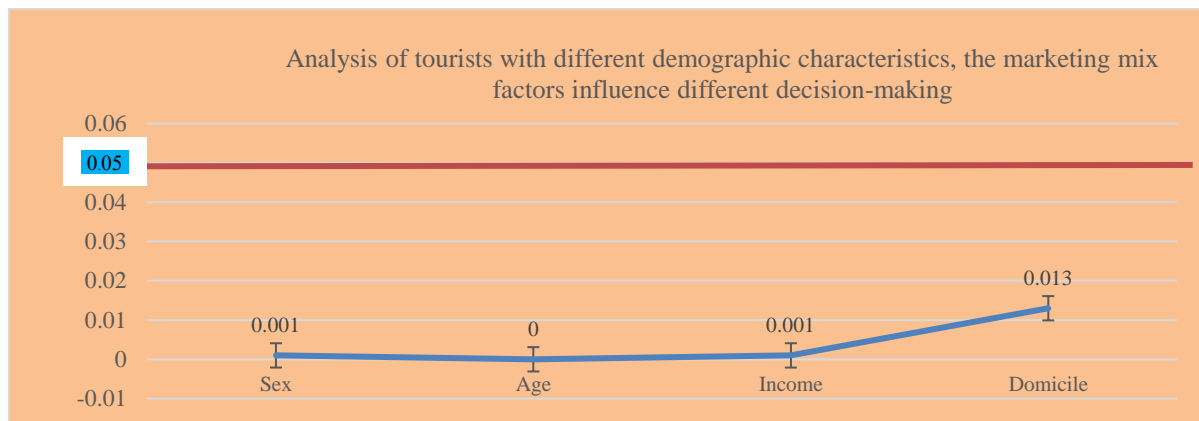


Figure 2 Tourists with different demographic characteristics make different decisions

The demographic characteristics of tourists such as gender, age, income, domicile (continent of residence) differed in marketing mix factors affecting decision-making at the significance level of 0.05.

2. Management of golf tourism market in Chiang Mai

Chiang Mai had continuously managed marketing and golf tourism development to promote golf tourism. The information based on the marketing mix issues could be summarized as follows:

Product - The golf course management team had developed quality golf course conditions while creating a distinctive feature of the golf course by modernizing the clubhouse, course, and restaurant structure at all times. Moreover, various golf-related activities had been designed, such as "Kid's Academy" youth activities and membership-based golf tournaments in the form of Night Golf, and golf teaching activities for seniors. These activities were in collaboration with the Tourism Authority of Thailand and were held every year.

Price - Pricing was tailored to the class and size of the golf course based on the customer segment properties and seasonal pricing. Pricing was determined through competitive conditions along with cost management, cost control, and cost.

Place - More channels had been added to allow customers to contact the golf course for services. In this regard, customers could reserve in advance via phone, LINE, Facebook, website, or contact themselves directly at the golf course. Indirect distribution was carried out through agents where commissions were paid to agents at various levels based on the number of clients.

Promotion - Advertising and public relations had been provided through the website, Facebook, LINE, magazines, leaflets, local newspapers, mass media groups, and through agents. Promotion was carried out by means of discounting for group tours, paying commissions for agents, discounts for customers during the festival, special privileges for media groups, and joining activities with the Tourism Authority of Thailand in both domestic and international trade fairs.

People - There was a continuous training of personnel on service techniques by internal speakers and invited external experts to give their knowledge. Moreover, it also provided education in English and other foreign languages and provides welfare and care for employees like family in order to build morale and strength at work.

Process - There was a systematic service process management and the division of duties of employees clearly for the speed of service. The booking process could be carried out through

the website, Facebook, and phone. The web booking system was a convenient and easily accessible channel and allocated resources available for customer service.

Physical evidence - The overall lawn landscaping was beautiful. Grass species were selected to suit the golf course conditions, along with the improvement of sand dunes and sand

pits in various areas to be in perfect condition all the time. Calendars were in place for overseeing landscaping and avoiding the use of chemicals on golf courses. In this regard, staff with knowledge and skills in landscaping and plants had been arranged to take care of the golf course.

Part 3. SWOT Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Table 2 Results of analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of sports tourism in Chiang Mai

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Golf courses in Chiang Mai are standard, with some golf courses having a long history and designed by famous people. 2. Chiang Mai golf courses are diverse and offer beautiful natural scenery. 3. The golf course is located near the city and easy to travel. 4. Chiang Mai has a wide variety of tourist attractions. 5. Employees are good-natured. 6. Tourists can travel to Chiang Mai in a variety of ways, such as by plane, rail, and car. 7. Golf courses in Chiang Mai have a lower cost to play a round of golf than European countries and cheaper than other tourist cities such as Phuket, Bangkok, etc.	1. There are rarely organized tournaments, resulting in less awareness of golf course news. 2. The form of public transportation to access the place is not diverse. 3. Employees lack skills, golf technical terminology, and English. 4. There are few direct airlines from the target country, for example, there are no airlines from Japan. 5. Chiang Mai borders with Burma, so there are smuggled workers, making them vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19.
Opportunities	Threats
1. The government pays attention to the golf tourist market in the tourism strategy. 2. Golf tourism tends to be more popular with both Thai and foreign tourists. 3. Foreign tourists who come to play golf in Thailand tend to increase. 4. The Tourism Authority of Thailand has promoted golf tourism by exhibiting both domestic and international booths and disseminating information. 5. The government has promoted golf tourism marketing through the Tourism Authority of Thailand website and agencies both domestically and internationally.	1. There is an epidemic of the Covid-19 virus. 2. Tourists are not confident in their safety from the spread of the COVID-19 virus. 3. There is a lack of economic liquidity. 4. There are shutdowns of countries of different countries. 5. There is a discrepancy in cooperation among stakeholders related to golf tourism. 6. There are cheaper competitors and newer courses such as golf courses in Vietnam, Indonesia as well as competitors in the country like Kanchanaburi.

The SWOT analysis and factors analysis summary (IFAS) and strategy-based determination using TOWS matrix revealed that strengths and problems were considered significant. Therefore, planning required a preventive strategy by utilizing strengths or strengths as a guideline for development and mitigating potential risks.

4. Marketing Development Guidelines for Golf Tourism in Chiang Mai

4.1 Marketing development guidelines for golf tourism in Chiang Mai

According to the analysis of marketing mix factors affecting the decision to use the service and golf tourism market management, the data from the SWOT analysis were analyzed as a guideline for marketing development of golf tourism in Chiang Mai Province in terms of product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence:

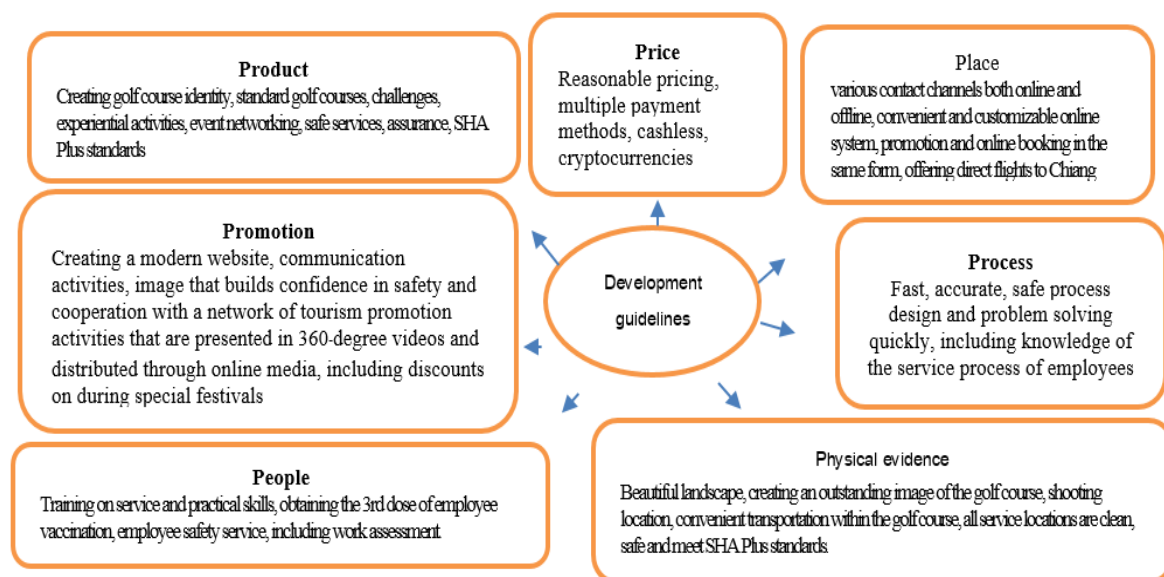


Figure 3 Guidelines for the development of golf tourism marketing in Chiang Mai

4.2 Analysis of suitability and feasibility of implementing a golf tourism marketing plan

Analysis of the suitability and feasibility of implementing a golf tourism marketing plan in Chiang Mai from golf course managers,

employees, and experts, it was found that the overall assessment results were appropriate and feasible to implement at a high level. Assessment results in each aspect could be presented as follows:

Table 3 Analysis of the suitability and feasibility of implementing the golf tourism marketing plan into practice

Marketing mix	\bar{X}	S.D.	Level
Product	4.472	0.419	high
price	4.322	0.284	high
Place	4.600	0.346	high
Promotion	4.600	0.346	highest

Marketing mix	\bar{X}	S.D.	Level
Process	4.447	0.410	high
People	4.561	0.402	highest
Physical evidence	4.833	0.308	highest
Total average	4.485	0.302	high

In Table 3, the majority of respondents had a high opinion of the overall marketing plan with a mean of 4.485. Considering each aspect, the respondents weighted the physical evidence first with an average of 4.833, followed by promotion with an average of 4.600 and process and price with an average of 4.561 and 4.600, respectively. Employees differed significantly

from experts (Sig. =0.045) at the 0.05 level. The point of dissent was the use of cryptocurrencies to pay for services. Management and employees thought that it was appropriate and practical at a low level. Instead, experts agreed that cryptocurrencies were practical at moderate levels, as shown in the chart.

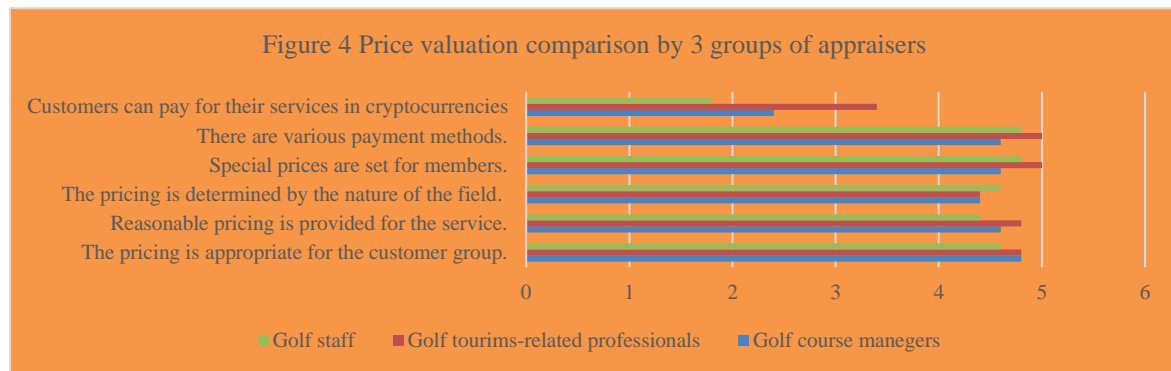


Figure 4 Price valuation comparison by appraisers

VII. DISCUSSIONS

In a research study on the marketing development of golf tourism in Chiang Mai, the following results could be discussed.

1. Marketing factors affecting decision making

Market factors influenced the overall decision to use golf courses at a high level with an overall average of 3.69. In this regard, respondents had different demographic characteristics and different levels of market factors that influence decision-making. This was consistent with the research of Worawee Nakpanom [12] on the marketing mix affecting decision to choose golf courses in Chonburi Province, it was found that the marketing mix had a high effect on the overall golf course

selection. When compared by age and income, their priorities for the marketing mix were significantly different at the 0.05 level. When considering each aspect, it was found that in terms of price and promotion, tourists thought it had a moderate effect on their decision making since golf was a very expensive sport, so players could afford it. Therefore, in terms of price, the suitability of the price and the activities offered and the quality of the golf course should be taken into account. If the golf course had enough standards and quality activities, the price could be high according to the quality. In terms of promotion, if tourists were satisfied with the quality of the golf course, staff, and service processes, tourists would come back to use the service again and

trust word-of-mouth from their acquaintances. The sale may only apply during special seasons. Creating a website to present up-to-date information could arouse interest in tourists as the majority of those who used the service would revisit their former golf courses and be impressed.

2. Marketing management of golf tourism in Chiang Mai

In the past, entrepreneurs and government sectors had continually collaborated to develop the marketing of golf course business in Chiang Mai in order to promote Chiang Mai's sport tourism, making more tourists decide to come and use it. Consistent with Yuttana Thamcharoen [13], developing a marketing mix incentive that meets consumer demand had a greater effect on positive behaviors, interests, needs, and service decisions. Such marketing developments were constantly evolving because the information obtained from the interviews with the golf club management group showed the continuous development of the market to promote tourism. It was important to consider changes in consumer behavior as well as the impact of other uncontrollable marketing environments such as competitors, economic conditions, natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic.

A SWOT analysis for golf tourism in Chiang Mai found that golf tourism in Chiang Mai had more strengths and threats than others. According to the TowsMatrix theory, preventive strategies, minimizing risky activities, and focusing on tourism development strengths should be used. As the concept of Preedee Nukulomprattana [10], Preventive Strategies (ST Strategies) was the use of all internal strengths to overcome threats or obstacles. In this regard, it was considered to take advantage of existing and strengths to enhance the value of a product or service and differentiated the experience for tourists.

3. Guidelines for the development of golf marketing in Chiang Mai

According to the results of the tourism development assessment of golf in Chiang Mai, conducted by interviews with management, which explored behavior and decision-making factors of tourists, the SWOT analysis presented seven areas of market development: products, prices, place, promotion, people, processes, and physical evidence. As the seven areas of marketing mix were important aspects in the development of service businesses according to Kotler Philip's Theory of Marketing Mix Management [3], it was found that the evaluation of such marketing development guidelines was appropriate at a high level. In terms of physical evidence, it was considered the most appropriate, such as the identity of the golf course, safety, confidence of tourists, followed by people, where people were essential to welcoming and impressing tourists, and promotion in the sense that assessors thought of it as an activity that created awareness, disseminated information and stimulated the interest and purchasing decisions of tourists. The key point was to create an identity by means of standardizing golf courses, challenges, and new experiences along with the development of employees in terms of knowledge of the job and service, rapid processes, and problem solving. Moreover, the service model and service processes of safe golf courses were also presented and tourists were assured under the SHA Plus standard. Consistent with Pearce's Theory of Tourism Demand [7], Maslow's theory was used as a framework for the study of tourist demands of tourists. Tourists would have a growing demand for experience and would like to visit tourist attractions for leisure, including the need for safety, social, reputation, and self-improvement. Therefore, tourism services, in addition to standard tourist attractions, beautiful, good service, and safety, the service process was also important to build confidence for tourists as well. As the golf course manager said, the grass

in the golf course must not use chemicals that were harmful to the health of the users.

There was information communication in all activities for employees and customers to understand the same for employees to understand and be able to provide services to customers correctly. In this way, it would impress tourists, and created value in services and activities. More importantly, getting better-than-expected service from employees would make customers feel that they were worth the money. Consistent with the research results of Papasorn Rodyoo [6] on service innovation of golf course operators from a case study of Nikanti Golf Club, Muang District, Nakhon Pathom Province, it was found that service skills and corporate image were used as competitive strategies. Having a good image

was an advantage in bringing service business to success. Service staff were at the forefront of hospitality to ensure customer satisfaction.

According to the valuation of the price plan, the use of cryptocurrencies as administrative expenses, management and employees thought that it was appropriate and practical at a low level. Instead, experts agreed that cryptocurrencies were practical at moderate levels. This was because cryptocurrencies may be new, leaving management and employees insecure about the volatility of the currency.

VIII. NEW KNOWLEDGE

According to this research, important body of knowledge was discovered which could be summarized in a diagram as follows:

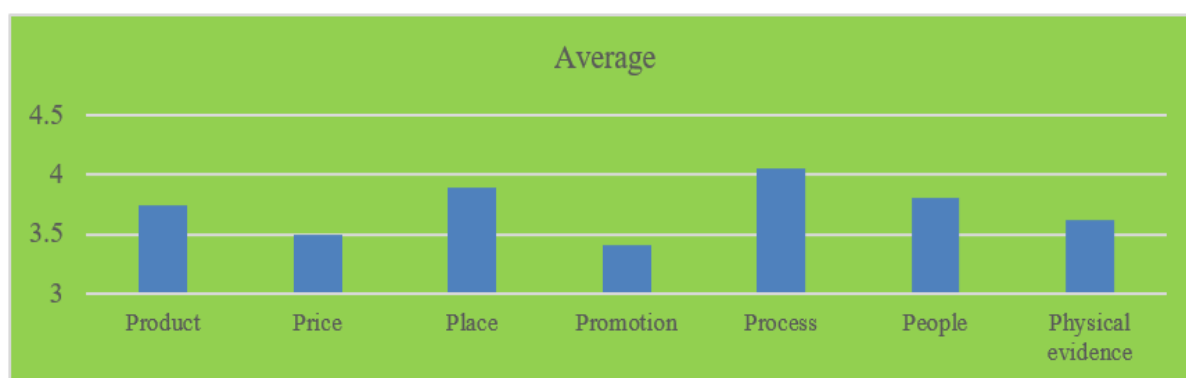


Figure 5 New knowledge from research

The results of the analysis of marketing mix factors affecting the decision to use golf courses in Chiang Mai, it was found that the overall effect of decision-making was at a high level. Processes influenced decision-making first, followed by place, people, product, and physical evidence. Prices and promotions had a moderate effect on decision-making. Since golf was a very expensive sport, the customers who used the service were the ones who could afford

it if the price was reasonable. Discount strategies and unknown reviewers could have a moderate influence on their decision as customers took into account the quality of the golf course, service processes, service personnel, multiple contact channels, and the atmosphere of the stadium. Users would experience these things firsthand while using the service, therefore it was an important way to develop golf tourism marketing in Chiang Mai.



Figure 6 New knowledge from research

The results of the SWOT analysis and weighting and scoring showed that Chiang Mai's golf tourism was more weighted on strengths and threats. The golf tourism

development guideline used a preventive strategy by utilizing the strengths of golf tourism in Chiang Mai as a development approach to reduce the risks of threats.

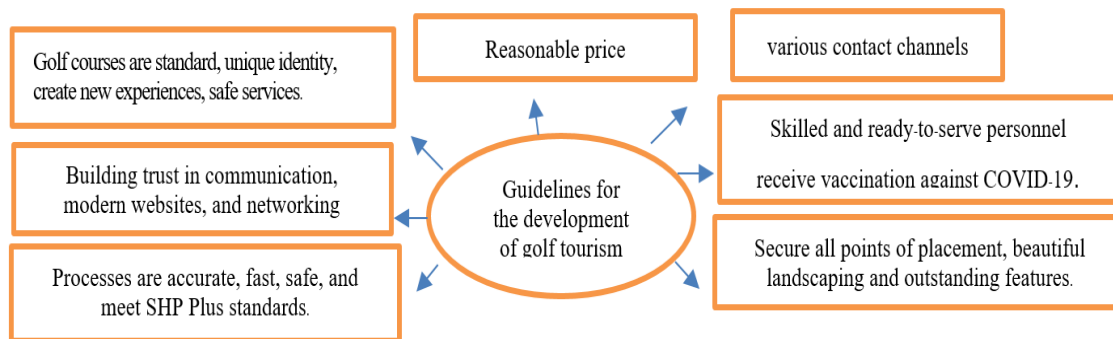


Figure 7 New knowledge from research

The results of the research were summarized as guidelines for the development of golf tourism marketing in Chiang Mai by using the strengths as a development guideline, since Chiang Mai was a tourist city with a variety of interesting attractions, it was important to develop a development approach by adopting the uniqueness of Chiang Mai and focusing on safe services that meet SHA Plus standards. At this time, people still had concerns about the spread of the Covid-19 virus, standard golf course, beautiful landscape, and safety that meets SHA Plus standards would build confidence for customers. In addition, there should be a variety of contact channels, reasonable prices, fast and accurate service processes, skilled personnel in both work and service. Importantly, the golf course must provide employees with complete vaccination against COVID-19.

IX. CONCLUSION

The results of the research concluded that the marketing mix factors affected the decision to use the golf course services. In the past, Chiang Mai Province had continuously developed and managed the marketing mix. The results of the SWOT analysis of golf tourism in Chiang Mai revealed that strengths and threats were highly weighted, therefore preventive strategies should be used as a guideline for marketing development. This could be done by using strengths as a marketing management approach and reducing potential risks. The results of the market development approach assessment showed that it had a high level of applicability and feasibility to implement it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Recommendation for applying into practices

1. Analysis of marketing factors affecting the decision to use the golf course at a high level, it was found that the top 5 sub-points that users focus on were golf course atmosphere and other factors such as standards, challenges, green conditions, courteous and friendly staff, various booking systems such as booking through by phone and internet. These factors were very important to the golf course's service. Golf course business could be used as a way to develop more effective marketing.
2. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat Analysis of golf tourism in Chiang Mai, it was found that Chiang Mai had a high strength, potential, and readiness. It weighed strengths and threats rather than opportunities and weaknesses. As operators used SWOT analysis, it is found that preventative strategies should be implemented through adopting strengths as guidelines for development and mitigating potential risks.

B. Recommendation for further research

This study focused on the development of golf tourism marketing in Chiang Mai. Thus, the further research should explore other types of sport tourism such as rock climbing, Thai boxing, and mini-marathons.

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