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# EFFECT OF DIFFERENTIATION AND SATISFACTION ON TOURIST PROMOTION OF HISTORICAL TOURISM: ROLE OF USING AR TECHNOLOGY

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Keywords: Differentiation, Satisfaction, Tourist loyalty, AR technology, Tourism promotion.

# ABSTRACT

The current study examined the relationship between differentiation, satisfaction, tourist loyalty, AR technology and tourism promotion in relation to the historical tourism. The objective of this study is to examine the role of differentiation and satisfaction in tourism promotion. Additionally, the moderating role of AR technology was examined. Population of the current study was the employees of tourism management companies in Thailand. By using a survey questionnaire, 300 questionnaires were distributed among the employees of tourism management companies in Thailand. Results of the study found that differentiation has positive effect on tourism promotion. Differentiation also has positive effect on tourism loyalty. Satisfaction has positive effect on tourism promotion. Additionally, satisfaction also has positive effect on tourist loyalty. Moreover, tourist loyalty and AR technology has positive effect on tourism promotion.

# INTRODUCTION

Tourism promotion is the major concern of tourism industry. As tourism industry is most important industry worldwide. Particularly, it is most important in various countries having tourism opportunities. According to the literature, tourism promotion is one of the priority areas among the nations (Fahim & Maher, 2016; Huang, Chen, & Ting, 2017; Nel & Binns, 2002; Tatiyanantakul, 2017). Because this industry has major benefits to the society as well as at national level. This industry has significant effect on the economic development of any country as this industry providing revenue and employment opportunities for the people.

Tourism is also increasing in Thailand which is one of the countries having high potential for tourism. That is the reason Thai tourism industry is one of the famous industries worldwide and having major potential for tourists. This industry is continuously growing in the tourism market which has major effects on the economic development of Thailand as this industry generate revenue which is helpful to promote economic development. In tourism activities, historical tourism is also famous in whole world (GuerreroVargas & Castro, 2017; Zhu, Liu, Wei, Li, & Wang, 2017). In Thailand, historical tourism is also most famous which has important contribution to the tourism industry.

The performance of this industry can be further increased with the help of various strategies. As tourism promotion is the important part of industry, therefore, tourism promotion should be promoted. According to the current study, tourism can be promoted through differentiation and satisfaction. Various differentiation and customer satisfaction strategies can increase the tourism. As customer satisfaction is always important in tourism (Yeh, Chen, & Chen, 2019). Both the differentiation and customer satisfaction strategies have the ability to increase tourist loyalty which has positive role in tourism promotion. In addition to this, technology is also playing an important role in tourism (Navío-Marco, Ruiz-Gómez, & Sevilla-Sevilla, 2018). Therefore, according to this study, AR technology also has importance contribution to the tourism promotion. Finally, the objective of this study is to examine the role of differentiation and satisfaction in tourism promotion.

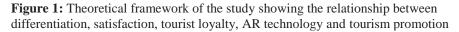
#### LITERATURE REVIEW

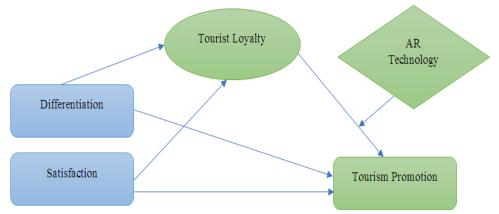
Tourism promotion means activities as well as expenditures intended to increase tourism, together with but not limited to advertising, publicizing, or otherwise distributing information for the objective of attracting as well as welcoming tourists; developing strategies to expand tourism; operating tourism promotion agencies; and funding to support tourism. The trend of tourism is increasing among the countries with the increase in population. With the increase in tourism, the effect of tourism is increasing among the countries as it has various benefits to the nations as well as people. To get maximum benefits from the tourism activities, the role of business promotion is most important. The tourism promotion is major area for the nations to increase the tourism activities and get the maximum benefits. The increase in tourism promotion has major importance for the business activities of tourism. According to the literature, in the current decade, countries are majorly focusing to promote tourism activities as tourism activities are recognized as one of the major tool of economic development among nations as it has major role in economy of all nations, especially, it has major role among the countries where tourism opportunities are available such as Thailand. Tourism promotion is already highlighted as an important part of tourism industry (Fahim & Maher, 2016; Huang et al., 2017).

Therefore, tourism promotion is the priority area for the nations which has the ability to foster business performance. In this direction, various tourism companies play an important role to promote tourism and companies use different activities to increase the level of promotion. Generally, companies use various marketing activities for the promotion. Marketing activities has major role among the companies to enhance business activities of tourism companies by increasing the tourism. The promotional activities

include advertisement activities which adopt by the companies to enhance the process of tourism promotion. Therefore, in marketing activities companies prefer various advertisement strategies. As there is important relationship between tourism and marketing activities which has the ability to promote tourism (Mohammed, Rashid, & Tahir, 2017; SUGANDINI, EFFENDI, ISTANTO, ARUNDATI, & RAHMAWATI, 2019). Along with this, companies use various advertisement strategies by using the social media. Social media marketing is very common among the companies; therefore, it is also very common in various tourism management companies. In this direction, promotion is one of the important parts of tourism activities which can be handled with the help of various marketing activities. Companies use number of channels to enhance the tourism promotion activities. Major element of tourism promotion is to increase the willingness of people to visit the tourism places by providing them various services. As the willingness of people for tourism has the ability to promote tourism. Thailand is also promoting the tourism activities which is most important in tourism industry (Awichanirost & Phumchusri, 2020; Moghavvemi et al., 2017).

There are different factors which has major influence on tourism promotion. The companies want to enhance tourism promotion should promote various factors which has influence on promotional activities of tourism. Generally, differentiation is most important in tourism activities. Differentiation activities in tourism has the ability to promote tourism activities. Along with the differentiation, satisfaction also has major role in business performance. In tourism activities, satisfaction has the ability to enhance tourism promotion. As given in the previous studies that satisfaction and tourism has major relationship (Cheng, Chen, Yen, & Teng, 2017). Both the differentiation and satisfaction increase the tourist loyalty which ultimately influence the tourism promotion. Furthermore, tourist loyalty is important factor which promote tourism promotion with the help of satisfaction and differentiation. In addition to this, AR technology has vital influence on tourism promotional activities. The relationship between differentiation, satisfaction, tourist loyalty, AR technology and tourism promotion are given in Figure 1.





Differentiation is the action or process of differentiating or distinguishing between two or more things or people. *Tourism*-firm *differentiation* is the efforts of *tourism* firms to differentiate themselves from others through innovations as well as renovations. There must be something different to attract the tourists from other countries. The same opportunities of tourism in various countries do not attract the tourists, however, differentiation among the nature of tourism opportunities has major role in tourist attraction. It is most important for tourism industry to attract the customers because the tourists are the customers, therefore, tourist attraction has major importance to get success and to increase tourism industry performance. Hence, customer attraction is vital for any business success (Agolla, Makara, & Monametsi, 2018; Ahmadi, Ali, & Rezaei, 2019; Jabbari, Kashef, & Keshkar, 2020). Literature shows that differentiation among various tourism opportunities has vital importance for the promotion of tourism industry. For instance, there are several beaches in the world, however, attractive beaches are those which has something unique. The beaches having different opportunities than other beaches are more attractive for the people and these beaches has regular visit to the tourist. Therefore, differentiation has major importance for tourism activities promotion. Differentiation means something new in tourism opportunities to attract the people from number of other countries. Particularly, the developing country like Thailand, the tourism activities are major to get success in business activities. Therefore, in Thailand, the importance of tourism activities for the people which has vital importance. It is important because tourism activities in Thailand has vital influence as this industry has major importance among other industries (Tseng, Lin, Lin, Wu, & Sriphon, 2019; Watanabe & Patitad, 2020).

Along with the differentiation importance in tourism promotion, the role of satisfaction also has most important role in the performance of tourism. It has the vital importance to promote business activities by promoting the tourism activities in Thailand. Satisfaction is not only important in tourism industry, but it is also most important in all business industries. It is the vital part of any business success. Therefore, increase in the satisfaction increases the tourism promotion or business performance which ultimately has positive role in industry performance. In this study, satisfaction is denoted as customer satisfaction. In tourism industry, tourists are the customers which belong to the home country or various other countries (Cheng et al., 2017; Lee, Park, Park, Lee, & Kwon, 2005; Zheng et al., 2017). Customer satisfaction is well-defined as a measurement that regulates how happy customers are with an organization product, services, as well as capabilities. Customer satisfaction information, with surveys and ratings, can assist a company determine how to best advance or changes its products and services. Several key studies in the literature noted that customer satisfaction in tourism industry has the vital importance on the performance, therefore, the role of customer satisfaction in the tourism industry cannot be neglected. Hence, to improve the tourism promotion, the role of customer satisfaction is important.

Literature proposed that the significance of tourism cannot be neglected as it has proved to be the most vital element to increase the tourism promotion and tourism promotion has the ability to increase the business success. Several studies in the field of business industries proved that satisfaction of customer is the powerful element which can increased the trust of the customers on company services as well as products which has the potential to enhance the business performance (Agus, Krishnan, & Kadir, 2000; Chavez, Yu, Feng, & Wiengarten, 2016; Ryu, Lee, & Gon Kim, 2012). A satisfied customer uses the services of the company again and again. In the same direction, a satisfied tourist avails the tourism opportunities again and again. Therefore, customer satisfaction in tourism industry has positive effect on tourism promotion. Therefore, this study proposed that satisfaction of customer has the ability to influence the number of tourists visit to the Thailand. Definitely it increases the number of tourist and increase in number of tourists increases the tourism promotion. Hence, to enhance the tourism industry performance, the role of tourist satisfaction cannot be neglected.

Another major element in the tourism industry is the loyalty. Among business practices, loyalty is the most key element which has influence on the business activities. Loyalty, in general use, is a dedication and faithfulness to an institute, cause, philosophy, country, group, or person. Philosophers disagree on what can be an object of loyalty, as some argue that loyalty is strictly relational as well as only another human being can be the object of loyalty. The current study is only dealing with the loyalty among business organizations. The current study is not taking loyalty as one of the parts of individual

loyalty or loyalty with country. This study is only dealing with loyalty in terms of business companies. Therefore, the current study is dealing with the customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is a degree of a customer's likeliness to do business dealing again with a company or with the brand. It is the consequence of customer satisfaction, positive customer experiences in relation to the product or service, and the general value of the goods or services a customer receives from a business. All loyalty customer purchases the company products again and again which has the ability to promote business. Promotion of business has direct positive role in business promotion. A loyalty customer does not change the company and only stick with the one company to get services. Therefore, customer loyalty has major importance in business companies (Ibrahim et al., 2020; Rather, Tehseen, Itoo, & Parrey, 2019; Zakaria, Ahmad, Omar, & Alhady, 2018). This study examining the role of tourist loyalty to the tourism opportunities. Tourism industry is majorly based on the services which require quality level of customer satisfaction. Loyalty has positive role in business promotion. Current study also examined the relationship between customer loyalty and business promotion. It is clear from the literature that loyalty is the major element which has positive effect on tourism promotion. It is important because tourism promotion require to enhance the tourism industry (Voyer, Barclay, McIlgorm, & Mazur, 2017).

The aforementioned discussion shows that differentiation has important role in tourism promotion. Generally, it has positive effect on tourism activities which has the ability to increase the level of promotion. Furthermore, the above explanation shows that customer satisfaction also playing major role for business activities. Both the differentiation and customer satisfaction have importance for business industry. The current study introduced these elements of differentiation and customer satisfaction for tourism promotion. The current study addressed the AR technology also has vital influence on business activities. Technology is a major role in business performance. Previous studies also show that how business work through technology. Technology has vital influence on the business activities (Hino, Milan, Cunha, & Meirelles, 2018).

In previous studies, there are various factors are available in relation to success, among all, the role of technology is most important. AR technology is now increasing among business activities which has the potential to enhance the business promotion or business performance. Technology is the sum of various techniques, skills, methods, as well as procedures used in the production of goods along with the services or in the achievement of various objectives, such as scientific investigation. Use of technology increasing day by day which has the ability to increase the business promotion. As several previous studies highlighted that technology has vital role in business (Cooper & Sommer, 2018; Ghani et al., 2003). Among various developing countries such as Thailand, tourism promotion is important. Hence, technology in tourism is most important which cannot be neglected. Therefore, use of latest technology has main effect on business, thus, in the tourism industry (Hansen, Rogers, Fyall, Spyriadis, & Brander-Brown, 2019) the role of technology is most important. Therefore, following hypotheses are proposed;

- H1. Differentiation has positive effect on tourism promotion.
- H2. Differentiation has positive effect on tourist loyalty.
- H3. Satisfaction has positive effect on tourism promotion.
- H4. Satisfaction has positive effect on tourist loyalty.
- H5. AR technology has positive effect on tourism promotion.
- H6. Tourist loyalty has positive effect on tourism promotion.

H7. AR technology moderates the relationship between tourist loyalty and tourism promotion.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Nature of this study is in line with the quantitative research approach. As this study examined the relationship between variables. This relationship is based on the primary data which is collected from the respondents working in tourism management companies. The tourism promotion was examined in relation to the historical tourism. Historical tourism denotes to a kind of tourism, where the tour or tour group emphases on the history; history of some place, people, thing, or events. They go, see, study, discuss and experience places where historical things are present. Population of the current study was the employees of tourism management companies in Thailand. By using a survey questionnaire, 300 questionnaires were distributed among the employees of tourism management companies in Thailand. Therefore, the current study used cross-sectional research design for the current study (Lou et al., 2010; Mirzad, Cramm, & Nieboer, 2019). Finally, collected data were analyzed by using Partial Least Square (PLS). 209 valid responses were used in this study for data analysis.

#### FINDINGS

Data analysis of this study is performed by using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The SEM was applied by using Partial Least Square (PLS), a most reliable statistical tool to examine the relationship between variables (F. Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & G. Kuppelwieser, 2014; J. F. Hair, 2010; J. F. Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013; J. F. Hair, Sarstedt, Pieper, & Ringle, 2012). However, before to apply SEM through PLS, the data screening was performed as shown in Table 1. Data screening was performed to remove the errors in the data. Finally, after data screening, all the errors were removed from the data.

	No.	Missing	Mean	Median	Min	Max	SD	Kurtosis	Skewness
DIFF1	1	0	3.604	3	1	7	1.925	-0.82	0.352
DIFF2	2	0	3.492	3	1	7	1.762	-0.483	1.43
DIFF3	3	0	3.556	4	1	7	1.932	-1.957	0.214
DIFF4	4	0	3.182	3	1	7	1.544	0.228	0.79
DIFF5	5	0	3.053	3	1	7	1.473	-0.282	1.464
SAT1	6	0	3.251	3	1	7	1.405	0.34	0.687
SAT2	7	0	3.123	3	1	7	1.517	-0.012	0.643
SAT3	8	0	3.144	3	1	7	1.557	1.001	0.675
SAT4	9	0	3.262	3	1	7	1.466	-0.327	1.543
SAT5	10	0	3.193	3	1	7	1.424	0.041	0.597
SAT6	11	0	3.107	3	1	7	1.372	-0.279	0.57
SAT7	12	0	3.209	3	1	7	1.33	0.314	0.67
TL1	13	0	3.203	3	1	7	1.463	-0.187	1.706
TL2	14	0	3.246	3	1	7	1.471	-0.013	0.655
TL3	15	0	3.219	3	1	7	1.737	-0.514	0.554
TL4	16	0	3.182	3	1	7	2.055	-0.991	0.476
TL5	17	0	3.203	3	1	7	1.91	-0.924	0.426
ART1	18	0	2.909	2	1	7	2.186	-0.638	0.901
ART2	19	0	2.711	2	1	7	2.172	-0.468	0.994
ART3	20	0	2.947	2	1	7	2.126	-0.632	0.854
ART4	21	0	2.856	2	1	7	2.093	-0.479	0.927
ART5	22	0	2.888	2	1	7	2.359	-0.87	0.894
ART6	23	0	2.738	2	1	7	2.056	-0.176	1.076
TP1	24	0	2.872	2	1	7	1.953	-0.326	0.907
TP2	25	0	2.77	2	1	7	1.934	-0.09	1
TP3	26	0	2.786	2	1	7	2.129	-0.433	0.98
TP4	27	0	2.813	2	1	7	2.03	-0.332	0.965
TP5	28	0	2.973	2	1	7	2.276	-0.837	0.834
TP6	29	0	2.834	2	1	7	2.305	-0.756	0.909

**Table 1:** Data Statistics

Measurement model is given in Figure 2 to examine the factor loadings. Factor loadings are given in Table 2 and found that all the variables; differentiation, satisfaction, tourist loyalty, AR technology and tourism promotion have factor loadings above 0.7 which is minimum level of threshold in the current study.

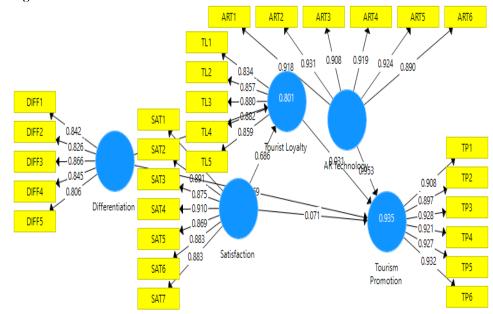


Figure 2. Measurement Model

Furthermore, this study is also required to examine the reliability and validity. Reliability was examined by using composite reliability (CR). It is given in Table 3 that; differentiation, satisfaction, tourist loyalty, AR technology and tourism promotion, CR is above 0.7. Furthermore, average variance extracted (AVE) is also examined in this study which must be above 0.7 (J. Hair, Hollingsworth, Randolph, & Chong, 2017). It is found that all the variables have AVE above 0.5.

	AR			Tourism	Tourist
	Technology	Differentiation	Satisfaction	Promotion	Loyalty
ART1	0.918				
ART2	0.931				
ART3	0.908				
ART4	0.919				
ART5	0.924				
ART6	0.89				
DIFF1		0.842			
DIFF2		0.826			
DIFF3		0.866			
DIFF4		0.845			
DIFF5		0.806			
SAT1			0.878		
SAT2			0.891		
SAT3			0.875		

 Table 2: Factor Loadings

SAT4		0.91		
SAT5		0.869		
SAT6		0.883		
SAT7		0.883		
TL1			0.834	
TL2			0.857	
TL3			0.88	
TL4			0.882	
TL5			0.859	
TP1				0.908
TP2				0.897
TP3				0.928
TP4				0.921
TP5				0.927
TP6				0.932

**Table 3:** Reliability and Convergent Validity

	Alpha	rho_A	CR	(AVE)
AR Technology	0.961	0.961	0.969	0.837
Differentiation	0.895	0.901	0.921	0.701
Satisfaction	0.953	0.954	0.962	0.782
Tourism Promotion	0.963	0.963	0.97	0.844
Tourist Loyalty	0.914	0.918	0.936	0.744

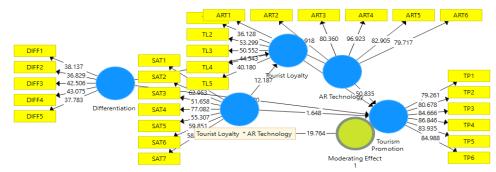
# Table 4: Cross-Loadings

	AR			Tourism	Tourist
	Technology	Differentiation	Satisfaction	Promotion	Loyalty
ART1	0.918	0.367	0.33	0.903	0.383
ART2	0.931	0.395	0.38	0.894	0.434
ART3	0.908	0.371	0.376	0.876	0.415
ART4	0.919	0.386	0.385	0.861	0.442
ART5	0.924	0.409	0.377	0.904	0.423
ART6	0.89	0.332	0.287	0.86	0.324
DIFF1	0.325	0.842	0.517	0.298	0.567
DIFF2	0.389	0.826	0.514	0.361	0.558
DIFF3	0.36	0.866	0.574	0.358	0.594
DIFF4	0.329	0.885	0.869	0.335	0.807
DIFF5	0.328	0.806	0.811	0.34	0.749
SAT1	0.312	0.704	0.878	0.348	0.821
SAT2	0.321	0.695	0.891	0.338	0.772
SAT3	0.383	0.722	0.875	0.39	0.777
SAT4	0.318	0.681	0.91	0.342	0.806
SAT5	0.361	0.715	0.869	0.386	0.76
SAT6	0.386	0.729	0.883	0.403	0.765
SAT7	0.326	0.757	0.883	0.348	0.762
TL1	0.359	0.742	0.881	0.891	0.834
TL2	0.363	0.769	0.87	0.875	0.857
TL3	0.358	0.67	0.71	0.891	0.88
TL4	0.454	0.629	0.66	0.897	0.882

TL5	0.372	0.599	0.636	0.888	0.859
TP1	0.88	0.346	0.355	0.508	0.910
TP2	0.88	0.358	0.357	0.697	0.901
TP3	0.878	0.388	0.405	0.728	0.904
TP4	0.883	0.352	0.346	0.721	0.896
TP5	0.897	0.401	0.43	0.727	0.899
TP6	0.902	0.387	0.381	0.732	0.822

Moreover, in the next step of PLS-SEM, Figure 3 shows the relationship between variables. In this section, the direct and indirect effect was examined. PLS structural model was applied in this study which is recommended (Hameed, Nisar, & Wu, 2020; Henseler et al., 2014). The direct effect of differentiation was examined on tourism promotion. The direct effect of differential was also examined on the tourist loyalty. Furthermore, the direct effect of satisfaction was examined on tourism promotion and tourist loyalty. It is found that differentiation has positive effect on tourism promotion and tourist loyalty. Furthermore, satisfaction has positive effect on tourism promotion and tourist loyalty. Additionally, the direct effect of AR technology and tourist loyalty was examined on tourism promotion. Moderation effect is also examined in this study. AR technology as a moderator which was examined between tourist loyalty and tourism promotion. Moderator is a variable which may strengthen or weaken the relationship (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Yang, Isa, Ramayah, & Blanes, 2019). In this study the moderating effect of AR technology found significant and positive which shows that AR technology strengthen the positive relationship between tourist loyalty and tourism promotion.

#### Figure 3. Structural Model



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Table	5:	Results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
AR Technology -> Tourism					
Promotion	0.952	0.954	0.019	50.835	0
Differentiation -> Tourism Promotion	0.069	0.071	0.032	2.17	0.015
Differentiation -> Tourist					
Loyalty	0.244	0.245	0.061	4.003	0
Moderating Effect 1 -> Tourism Promotion	0.002	0.001	0.028	0.078	0.469
Satisfaction -> Tourism					
Promotion	0.071	0.073	0.043	1.648	0.05
Satisfaction -> Tourist					
Loyalty	0.686	0.685	0.056	12.187	0
Tourist Loyalty -> Tourism Promotion	0.031	0.029	0.04	0.768	0.222
TIOHIOHOH	0.051	0.029	0.04	0.708	0.222

# CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to examine the role of differentiation and satisfaction in tourism promotion. The current study examined the relationship between differentiation, satisfaction, tourist loyalty, AR technology and tourism promotion in relation to the historical tourism. Furthermore, the moderating role of AR technology was examined. This study used a survey questionnaire and data were collected from the employees of tourism management companies in Thailand. It is found that differentiation and satisfaction have major role in tourism promotion. Results of the study found that differentiation has positive effect on tourism promotion. It shows that increase in differentiation increase the tourism promotion. Differentiation also has positive effect on tourism loyalty. Increase in differentiation increases the tourist loyalty. Furthermore, satisfaction has positive effect on tourism promotion. Thus, increase in satisfaction increases the tourism promotion. Additionally, satisfaction also has positive effect on tourist loyalty which shows that it increases the tourist loyalty. Furthermore, tourist loyalty and AR technology has positive effect on tourism promotion. AR technology strengthen the positive relationship between tourist loyalty and tourism promotion. The current study is most important for the literature because the relationship examined in this study has vital contribution. The moderating role of AR technology is first time examined in tourism industry of Thailand. Furthermore, this study provided various suggestions to the tourism management companies. It shows that; to promote historical tourism, differentiation and satisfaction is most crucial.

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