GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM COMPONENTS TO PROMOTE PHUKET AS A DESTINATION FOR FOREIGN GAY TOURISTS

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Abstract:

This research aims to study tourism components in Phuket to accommodate foreign gay tourists in Thailand and to study tourism components in Phuket to accommodate foreign gay tourists in Thailand. The methodology includes a qualitative research method using analytical reviews, field observations and in-depth interviews and a qualitative research method using content analysis. The study found that the guidelines for the development of tourism components to promote Phuket as a tourist destination for foreign gay tourists include 1) establish a tourism attraction

development plan for foreign gay tourists, 2) promoting tourism activities favored by foreign gay tourists; namely swimming, festivals and events during Songkran Festival, 3) promoting and creating standards for service charges of local transport systems and building a connection of transport systems and tourism routes, 4) creating a gay-friendly booking application and putting up rainbow flags, and 5) providing access to information through websites for foreign gay tourists the details of which should include 1) flights, 2) accommodations, 3) accommodations for foreign gay tourists, 4) car rental, 5) tourist attractions, 6) experiences, and 7) applications.

1. Introduction:

Currently, the trend of global tourism is expanding rapidly with a significant increase in the number of international tourists around the world. The World Tourism Organization (World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2017) has forecast tourism trends that by 2030, there will be 1,800 million international tourists. For Thailand, the 2020 tourism strategy focuses on making Thailand a world-class-quality tourist destination with the hope to generate sustainable income to the community and making Thailand the world's leading quality tourist destination with equilibrium based on Thainess in order to promote social and economic development, as well as income distribution to people in all sectors in a sustainable manner. The goal is to make Thailand a quality, safe, balanced and sustainable tourism destination. In terms of revenue from tourism, more than three firth of the income comes from foreign tourists. At the same time, tourists have more diverse interests. Although tourists have the same number of holidays, they have more destinations to visit. Therefore, the tourism market has been expanded for specific groups such as women, the elderly, health groups and gay tourists (ThaweesakWanicharoen, 2020).

Gay tourists has become a popular consumer group for businesses because they have high purchasing power. The main factor of traveling for gay tourists is to relax and escape the hustle and bustle of daily life. Activities that receive great interest include outdoor sports such as trekking, water sports and nightlife. Other important factors are discovering and learning about natural history, culture, and trying local food. Thailand is seen as a gay-friendly destination. In addition, the highlights of Thailand include the sea, beautiful beaches, friendly people and relaxing atmosphere. Although the friendliness of Thai people is a highlight, it is not sufficient for tourists to decide to visit Thailand. Being a gay-friendly destination is an important factor in choosing a gay tourist destination, but it is not the most important factor. Other factors such as the prominence of attractions or the price are also important (ThomornSukpricha, 2018; ChayaninWangsai, 2018; and ChananYodhong, 2018).

Phuket is a tourist destination in the south of Thailand. The main tourist resources are scenery, sandy beaches and clear blue water with complete tourist facilities. It is also the largest island of Thailand surrounded by emerald green water and white sandy beaches. Phuket is good for relaxing, and it is also conducive to fun activities in the sea and the seaside. It can be seen that the prominence of attractions is one of the key factors in becoming a gay tourist destination. Therefore, it is necessary to study the potential of Phuket tourist attractions to facilitate foreign gay tourists and to propose guidelines for the development of Phuket tourist destinations to accommodate foreign gay tourists.

2. Objectives:

2.1 To study tourism components in Phuket to facilitate foreign gay tourists in Thailand.
2.2 To propose guidelines for the development of tourism components to promote Phuket as a destination for foreign gay tourists.

3. Literature Review:

3.1 Tourism Components:

Tourism resources or travel destinations are considered as a tourism product or service. Attractions and tourism products need to consist of 5 main elements. According to the study of components of tourism resources, it can be concluded based on the 5A concept of Dickman (1996), Collier and Harraway (1997), Buhalis (2000), J. Pelasol (2009), PayomThammabut (2006), BusabaSithikarn and SiriwattanaJaima (2009) and BoonlertjitJittangwattana (2012) as follows:

1. Attraction - An attraction is a very important component because it is what motivates tourists to visit. An attraction can be a beautiful, unique and famous. In general, there are attractive spots in famous attractions.

2. Transportation and convenience in traveling to tourist attractions or accessibility - Tourist attractions may have interesting spots. However, if tourists cannot travel to that place, those attractions may be useless. Therefore, the transportation and the convenience in traveling to tourist attractions is important.

3. Amenities - It refers to providing the tourists with basic amenities such as basic utilities, water, electricity, telephones, toilets and amenities required by tourists such as restaurants, hospitals, banks, post offices, emergency services, etc.

4. Accommodation - Attractions should have a sufficient number of accommodations, along with a variety of prices and services that are suitable. Accommodations should not be far from tourist attractions.

5. Activities - Activities should be organized at an attraction for tourists to do during their stay and visit. Activities should be diverse and meet the tourists' needs.

3.2 Gay Tourism Concept:

The LGBT group includes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender or is often referred to collectively as "LGBT" (UNDP, USAID, 2014). It can be further described as follows:

1) Lesbian is a woman who loves women emotionally, sexually or physically. It includes lesbians and tom boys.

2) Gay is a man who love men emotionally, sexually or physically.

3) Bisexual is a person who can love both men and women emotionally, sexually or physically.

4) Transgender is a person who feels satisfied with their gender or gender identity that is opposite to their biological sex. It includes transgender men, transgender women, and etc.

Domestic and international tourism is important in terms of financial interests because the LGBT group is considered a high-income group. According to several research reports, it is found that the LGBT group frequently travels, and their needs, beliefs or preferences are different from those of other groups. Therefore, specific behaviors must be studied in order to analyze the appropriate marketing strategies (WitthayaSangarun. (2018).The proportion of the global LGBT population is 450 million with estimated spending of $3.7 trillion, and the cost of traveling to other countries is estimated at US $73.5 million. Thailand has the fourth largest LGBT population in Asia which is 4 million, and it has the fourth most estimated cost of travel worth $17 billion. In addition, the share of income from LGBT tourists in Thailand is ranked the second which is worth US $4.6 million.

There is also interesting information about gay tourist' behaviors which consist of some distinctive features of homosexual men and women (Tebje, 2006).

1) Homosexual travelers do not travel in a large group but often travel as a same-sex couple or individually.

2) Homosexual travelers travel more frequently than heterosexual travelers.

3) Homosexual people tend to earn higher on average.

4) Homosexual people are loyal to brands, support gay-friendly businesses and respond to advertisements that understand their preferences.

5) Popular travel destinations for homosexual people are gay-friendly places with a lively same-sex culture and community.

6) Homosexual couples prefer gay-friendly accommodations.

7) Most travel programs for Homosexual people are responsive to the fun culture for people aged around 18 to 30. The popularity of places among homosexual people came from informants in the research study who are young and do not have purchasing power like those who are older.

8) The key group of homosexual people who most frequently buy travel products are aged 55 and over and those aged 35 to 54.

The main factor in traveling for gay tourists is to relax and escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. It is a factor similar to that of the other group of tourists previously studied. The most interesting activities are outdoor sports or soft adventure activities such as hiking, water sports and nightlife tourism. It also includes discovering and learning about natural history, culture, trying local food and meeting with people at the destinations (discover & connect), which is linked to their desire to improve themselves (self-development). Thailand is seen as a gay-friendly destination, with Israeli tourists being the most positive of Thailand. The highlights of Thailand include the beautiful sea and beaches, friendly people and relaxing atmosphere. Meanwhile, Italian and Spanish tourists view Thailand as a cheap, crowded, dirty tourist destination. Although Thai friendliness is a highlight, it is still not enough for tourists to decide to visit Thailand. Being a gay-friendly destination is an important factor in choosing a gay tourist destination, but it is not the most important factor. Other factors such as the prominence of attractions or the price are also important (ThomornSukpricha, 2018; ChayaninWangsai, 2018; and ChananYodhong, 2018). Thailand offer a lot of things beyond expectations and standards which meets the needs of this group of luxurious travelers. It means giving them an experience, emotion, expectation that are beyond the ordinary, standards, requests and expectations while creating something special and unforgettable which will result in a word of mouth and reassurance. The research company, LGBT Capital has revealed that there are 500 million LGBT people worldwide, and they travel more frequently than other groups because they like to seek a satisfied lifestyle. Currently, this group of tourists travel 3-4 times a year and spend 30-40% more than the average tourists. What is important is that they seek being "comfortable", that is, the happiness of being themselves without feeling "careful" when going to different places.

4. Methodology:

Qualitative Research is employed in this research study which includes analytical review of secondary data, tourism components, tourist destinations, observations and in-depth interviews. Data are compiled and analyzed, and then a focus group discussion is held. Data are

collected qualitatively and analysed with Content Analysis. Details are as shown in Research Methodology.

5. Result:

5.1 To study tourism components of Phuket to facilitate foreign gay tourist in Thailand:

1) Attraction:

Phuket is the country's largest island with the area of approximately 543 square kilometers. The island is surrounded by emerald green water and has smooth white sandy beaches which are good for relaxing. Phuket is also conducive to fun activities in the sea and the seaside with the prominence of the seashore and the island clusters due to the subdued coastal landscape. The lower part of the province is submerged in the water; only the high-rise peaks above the sea surface are a group of islands to visit. The big island of Phuket is located on the west coast with a bay that is indented and covered with fine sand, and it consists of Patong Beach, Kata Beach, Karon Beach, etc. The eastern side consists of mostly mangrove and muddy beaches. The southern part of Phuket has beautiful coral reefs. According to the interview with the government and private agencies whohave provided information on the tourist attractions of Phuket, the attractions can be divided into 6 types as follows:

1. Eco-tourist attractions include (1) Patong Beach, (2) Kata Beach, (3) Karon Beach, (4) Rawai Beach, (5) Racha Island, (6) Maiton Island, (7) Khai Island, (8) Coconut Island, (9) Rang Yai Island and (10) Bang Rong Community.

2. Cultural tourist attractions include (1) Phuket Thai Hua Museum, (2) Chalong Temple, (3) SuwanKhiri Wong Temple, (4) Phra Nang Sang Temple, (5) Ban Phraya Wichitsongkram, (6) Ban Khoen community, (7) Bang community Rong, (8) Ban Klok Community, (9) Baan Khlok Community, (10) Baan Kamala Community, (11) Kathu Community, (12) Phuket Old Town Community, (13) Thai Mai Community and (14) Ban Bo Rae Community.

3. Historical tourist attractions include (1) Chaitharam Temple (Chalong Temple), (2) WatMuangKomaraphat, (3) WatPhra Thong and (4) WatPhra Nang Sang.

4. Recreational attractions include (1) Phuket Fantasea, (2) Phuket Simon Cabaret, (3) Phuket Zoo, (4) Siam Niramit, (5) Bangla Boxing Stadium, (6) Elephant Jungle Sanctuary Phuket, (7) Tiger Kingdom Phuket and (8) Bangla Walking Street.

5. Sea and beach attractions include Patong Beach, Kata Beach, Karon Beach, Rawai Beach, Rawai Island, Racha Island, Maiton Island, Khai Island, Coconut Island and Rang Yai Island.

6. Tourist attractions in urban communities include the Sino-Portuguese buildings in Old Phuket Town.

2) Activities:

Phuket is a world famous tourist city with tourism activities both natural, historical, cultural and adventurous such as diving, snorkeling, scuba diving and driving to see the sunset at Promthep Cape. Phuket is divided into 8 tourism areas as follows. (1) Patong beach area supports a full range of entertainment and recreation activities. (2) The western beach area supports entertainment and recreation activities which includes Kathu District and Muang District. (3) The western part of the north of the island in Thalang District includes quiet and private beaches

such as Hat SaiKaew Beach, Mai Khao Beach, Nai Yang Beach, Nai Thon Beach, Layan Beach and Bang Tao Beach. (4) Eco-tourism areas include the KhaoPhraThaeo Wildlife Conservation Development and Promotion Station, Ton Sai Waterfall Forest Park, Sirinat National Park Phuket and Bay Mangrove Forest. (5) The tourist area in Phuket town includes the Old Town Area. (6) Historical and cultural tourism areas Thalang District include WatPhra Nang Sang, WatPhra Thong and Heroines Monument where Thalang National Museum and Chalong Temple are located nearby in Muang Phuket District. (7) Viewpoints include PhromThep Cape, Kata - Karon Beach Viewpoint, Khao Rang, Cape Panwa and KhaoKhad. (8) The port area that links the surrounding islands includes Por Bay, Bang Rong Bay, Sapa Bay, Phuket Bay, Makham Bay and Chalong Bay that take tourists to Koh Yao Yai, Koh Yao Noi, the islands in PhangNga Bay National Park, Surin Islands, Similan Islands, KohLanta, Phi Phi Islands, Hong Islands and Poda Islands. According to the interview with government and private agencies that provided information about tourism activities, the tourism activities are categorized into 6 categories: (1) ecotourism, (2) cultural tourism, (3) historical tourism, (4) recreational tourism, (5) tourism and (6) urban tourism and major festival activities, as well as activities promoting tourism among foreign gay tourists.

3) Accessibility:

In terms of access to Phuket by foreign tourists, it was found that in 2018, the number of foreign tourists in Phuket reached 9,921,154, 5,891,408 of which traveled by plane, 833,481 of which traveled by bus, 2,183,000 of which traveled by personal vehicle, and 1,013,265 of which traveled by other means (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2020). It was also found that the transportation is highly available, but getting to certain tourist attractions is still quite difficult. Tourists can use public buses which are Airport Bus, Airport Bus Express, Phuket Smart Bus or public van. The survey found that most tourists rent vehicles to get around such as a car or a motorbike because it allowed them to travel to the tourist attractions more easily. According to the interview with government agencies and private sectors, the transportation can be divided into 2 parts: traveling into the city and traveling to the tourist attractions with details as follows.

3.1 Traveling into the city:

Traveling by plane can be done via Phuket International Airport which accommodates 20 flights/hour and more than 15 million passengers. In 2018, there were 116,487 domestic and international flights, an average of 317 flights per day, with 18,261,156 passengers in and out, and the number is likely to increase. The domestic flights are operated by Bangkok Airways, Nok Air, Orient Thai, Thai Air Asia, Thai Airways, Thai Lion Air and Thai Smile. The international flights are operated by (1) Air China for China routes, (2) Air Asia for Malaysia routes, (3) Asiana Airlines for South Korea routes, (4) Cebu Pacific Airlines for Philippines routes, (5) China Eastern Airlines for routes across China, (6) Cathay Dragon for Hong Kong routes, (7) Eastar Jet for South Korea routes, (8) Edelweiss Air for Swiss routes, (9) Emirates Airlines for United Arab Emirates routes, (10) Etihad Airways for Abu Dhabi routes, (11) Jetstar Airways for Australia routes, (12) Jetstar Asia Airways for Singapore routes, (13) Qatar Airways for Qatar routes, (14) S7 Airlines for Russia routes, (15) Thai AirAsia for Hong Kong; Malaysia; Singapore and China routes and (16) Thai Airways for Hong Kong, Sweden, Germany, Denmark and South Korea routes. According to the questionnaires distributed to

foreign gay tourists, 5.5 percent of them traveled with premium airlines and 3.8 percent traveled with low cost airlines.

Traveling by private car or private vehicle can be done via Highway 35 (Rama 2 Road or Thon Buri - Pak Tho Road) through SamutSakhon, SamutSongkhram and Pak Tho District. Turn left onto Highway 4 (Petchkasem) through Phetchaburi and Prachuap Khiri Khan until Chumphon, and then take Highway 41 through Lang Suan District, Tha Chang District and turn right onto Highway 401 until reaching Highway 4 at Takuapa District. Then, turn left at the through Thai Mueang District, Ban KhokKloi and cross Sarasin Bridge to Phuket using Highway 35 (Rama 2 Road or Thon Buri - Pak Tho Road). Travel through SamutSakhon, SamutSongkhram and Pak Tho District, and then turn left onto Highway 4 (Petchkasem) through Phetchaburi, PrachuapKhiri Khan, Ranong and PhangNga to Phuket. The total distance is approximately 862 kilometers.

For traveling by bus or tour bus from Bangkok to Phuket, there are 4 popular bus companies with details as follows: (1) 999 Bus Company buses with the travel time of 12 hours operating 7 rounds per day starting the first bus service at 6:45 am to 8:30 pm with the fare of 528 baht, (2) Bus Express Company buses with the travel time of 13-14 hours operating 7 rounds per day starting the first bus service at 6:40 am to 8:30 pm with the fare of 528 baht, (3) Phuket Tourism Company buses with the travel time of 13-14 hours operating 8 rounds per day starting the first bus service at 06:30 am to 7:30 pm with fare for economy class of 650 baht and VIP class of 1,011 baht and (4) Central Tour Bus Company buses with the travel time of 13-14 hours operating 3 rounds per day starting the first bus service at 4:30 p.m. to 7:50 p.m. with fare for economy class of 528 baht and VIP class of 616-822 baht.

3.2 Traveling to the tourist attractions:

There are different ways of accessing or traveling to Phuket's tourist attractions. According to the interview with relevant government and private sectors that provided travel information on tourist attractions in Phuket, most tourists used public service vehicles, but there is no fixed standard in terms of fare because the fare tourists is based on the destination. The transport system details are as follows. (1) The service fee for Airport Bus from Phuket Airport to town and Patong beach is 30-100 baht, and the service starts from 08:15-20:15 and it takes 1 hour 20 minutes. The service fee to the Patong Beach is 50-120 baht, and the service starts from 08:00-20:00 and it takes 1 hour and 55 minutes. (2) Service rates for traveling by Songthaew (mini bus) vary according to distance and negotiation. (3) Service rates for motorcycle taxi are based on the route. (4) Taxi service rates are based on distance. (5) TukTuk service rates are based on negotiation. (6) Car and motorbike rental rates are based on the provider. (7) Service rates for traveling by boat are based on negotiations with ports. There are both shipping and tourism ports with a total of 38 ports in Phuket. (8) Getting a taxi service from the application (Grab) has not been legalized. In conclusion, traveling to tourist attractions in Phuket is not very convenient. Most tourists prefer to use car and motorbike rental services to save on travel expenses and get to tourist attractions.

4) Accommodation:

Phuket has the second largest hotel business expansion in Thailand with an investment of 48,150 million baht (Thai Commercial Bank, 2019). There are a variety of Phuket accommodation services that accommodated up to 9,921,154 foreign tourists in 2018. It was found that the majority of tourists, 4,610,553 people, stayed at hotels, 4,238,505 stayed at resorts,

555,778 stayed at guest houses and 516,318 stayed at accommodations without fees. The tourists stayed for 3-4 days on average in a room for 2 people. In 2018, according to the statistics of the total number of accommodation, there were a total of 1,801 accommodations consisting of 84,707 rooms and divided into (1) 702 hotels with a total of 42,855 rooms, (2) 712 resorts and others with a total of 34,870 room and (3) 387 guest houses with a total of 6,982 rooms, Foreign tourists paid 2,348.79 baht per person per day (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2019). There are 33 hotels and resorts that meet tourism accommodation standards according to the Thai Hotel Association in 2019-2021. According to the interview with public and private agencies that provided information on accommodation services for tourists. the types of accommodation can be divided:

4.1 The hotels and resorts that are popular among foreign gay tourists are 3-star hotels and resorts, which is 44%. The famous 3-star hotels and resorts in Phuket are (1) Holiday Inn Express Phuket Patong Beach Central, (2) Amala Grand Bleu Resort, (3) Best Western Patong Beach, (4) Tiger Inn, (5) Raya BuriPatong and (6) Bangtao Village Resort. Secondly, it is 4-5 star hotels and resorts such as (1) Centara Grand Beach Resort Phuket, (2) Hyatt Regency Sea Phuket Resort, (3) The Slate, (4) Metadee Resort and Villas Phuket, (5) JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa, (6) Phuket Panwa Beach Front Resort, (7) Diamond Cliff Resort and Spa, (8) Mandarava Resort and Spa Karon Beach Phuket, (9) Le Méridien Phuket Beach Resort, (10) La Flora Resort, (11) DoubleTree by Hilton Phuket Banthai Resort, (12) The Charm Resort Phuket, (13) Phuket Graceland Resort & Spa, (14)) The Royal Paradise Hotel & Spa, (15) The Marina Phuket, (16) Nolotel Phuket Kamala Beach, (17) DeevanaPatong Resort & Spa and (18) Cape Sienna Gourmet Hotel and Villa.

4.2 Service apartments and condominiums are for stay longer stays 4 nights. There is housekeeping service similar to hotels and cooking utensils provided. Examples are (1) 6th Avenue Surin Beach, (2) Ozone Condotel Kata Beach, (3) Siray House, (4) S5 Residence and Cafe and (5) Arun Seaview Apartment.

4.3 Guest houses are similar to hotels. There are room and breakfast services with affordable prices and limited amenities. Examples are (1) Phuket 346 Guest House, (2) Baan Sutra Guesthouse, (3) 2ROOMS Boutigue, (4) The Duck, (5) Go Inn Phuket old Tows, (6) Green Leaf Hostel and (7) Sino Town Gallery Guesthouse.

5) Amenities:

According to the interview with public and private agencies that provided information about the facilities for foreign gay tourists, it can be divided into 3 types with details as follows.

5.1 Restaurants and bars in Phuket are various. Tourists can find them conveniently in every tourist attraction, especially seafood and local food. At present, there are restaurants in Phuket participating in the gay friendly restaurant program to impress tourists in terms of hospitality and safety, such as RED ONION (THAI), CLUB ONE SEVEN PHUKET (INTERNATIONAL), TAMACHART (THAI / CHINESE), BANGPAE SEAFOOD (SEAFOOD), MOR MUDONG ESTAURANT (SEAFOOD), KRACHANG FLOATING. RESTAURANT (THAI), THE BACKSAGE (THAI), TRISARA SUNDAY BRUNCH, LE BISTRO (THAI), etc. (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2018)

5.2 Entertainment venues in Phuket are scattered among the major tourist spots, especially the nightlife in Patong Beach. At present, there are entertainment venues participating the gay friendly entertainment program to create the impression and provide enjoyment which

can be divided into 3 categories: (1) discos such as KISS CLUB, BOAT BAR; (2) SUNDOWNERS IN PARADISE bar, AQUARIUS GUEST HOUSE, MY WAY GO - GO BAR, PHUKET SIMON CABARET; and (3) saunas, massages, spas such as AQUARIUS SAUNA, BLUE DOLPHIN, OASIS ROYAL THAI SPA, OASIS SKY BREEZE SPA, OASIS SECRET GARDEN. SPA (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2018).

5.3 In terms of access to tourist resources for tourists traveling to Phuket, according to the interview with public and private agencies, there are the following resources for foreign gay tourists. (1) Internet channels include Traveloka, Expedia, Agoda, booking, Tripadvisor, hotelscobbined, Hotels.com, Trip.com and wego. The channels especially for gay tourists include booking, Expedia, Hotellook, Tripadvisor, Hotels.com, Agoda, Air Asis ago, all of which help them find information on both accommodation and travel. (2) Phuket tourist service centers are scattered at different tourist attractions, and there are agencies in charge including Tourism Authority of Thailand, Phuket Office Phuket Municipality and tourist police that take care of the safety of tourists. (3) Guide documents and brochures for tourists are distributed among major tourist destinations including hotels, accommodations and restaurant. However, all tourist guides are for general tourists. There are no specific documents, guides or brochures for gay tourists.

5.2 Objective 2: To propose guidelines for the development of tourism components to promote Phuket as a destination for foreign gay tourists

According to the study of tourism components, it can be analyzed and summarized as a guideline for the development of Phuket tourist destinations to accommodate foreign gay tourists. The study found that Phuket is a tourist destination in the south of Thailand. The main tourist resources are scenery, sandy beaches and clear blue water. With complete tourist facilities, Phuket is the largest island of Thailand (Karen Hastings and Casey Hynes, 2018) and the best destination city in the world. Phuket received achievement awards showing that it is the world's tourist destination as follows. 1) In 2019, GDCI: Indulgences is part of the Master Card global destination index that ranks the most visited cities. One year ago, Phuket was ranked as the 12th of the world (Diana Munoz Robino, 2019). 2) In 2018, US News & World Report, a business publication media, recognized Phuket as the second best beach city in the world and admired Thai island resorts as a "little paradise". It also recommended the viewpoints of 3 beaches in Phuket: Kata Noi, Kata and Karon (Karen Hastings and Casey Hynes, 2018). 3) In 2015, UNESCO named Phuket as the "Pearl of Andaman", which is the largest island in Thailand globally well-known in terms of beautiful beaches. Phuket was also included in UNESCO's list of creative cities for delicious food, beaches, diving, water sports and marine activities. This has put Phuket as one of 47 cities out of 33 countries in the UNESCO Creative City Network. There are seven creative fields including handicraft and folk arts, design, film, gastronomy, literature, art, media and music (KosolTaengutai, 2015).

1) External Environment Analysis or PESTLE Analysis is a tool used to analyze the overview of the local environment and identify the potential and threats of Phuket in becoming a tourist destination for foreign gay tourists. The guidelines can be summarized in the table as follows.

PESTLE Analysis	Analysis
1) P - Polities	- The guidelines for promoting tourism for foreign gay tourists are included in the government's tourism promotion program. - The tourism marketing policy "Go Thai, Be Free" campaign is to target foreign gay tourists market. - Organize the first general meeting with the private and international sectors under the event name LGBT + Travel Symposium. - Participation in the Word Pride Festival New York City 2019 of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, New York office to present the image of Thailand to LGBTQ people and emphasize that Thailand is a friendly destination city. - Present the campaign "we believe that" at the pride event in the United States which was launched by Tourism Authority of Thailand, Toronto office. - Promote all-year-round destinations, especially during the off-season through the presentation of interesting tourism products such as carnival, art, shopping and promote shopping to encourage travel outside the important festival season.
2) E - Economic	- The global economic downturn has resulted in a slowdown in travel. - The exchange rate affects travel.
3) S – Social and Culture	- Social equality movement including gender diversity which is the key to reducing inequality, discrimination and all kinds of injustices. These are the global trends that many departments ranging from international organizations to local governments collaborate. - Promote tourism that links to ASEAN countries, especially the CLMV neighbors to coordinate tourism marketing efforts and attract tourists from European countries including America to visit Thailand. - Travel Wire Asia website headquartered in Canada said that Thailand is a very friendly country towards LGBT tourists, and there is a systematic promotion of tourism for this target

	group. Thailand has given a nickname as the LGBT capital of Asia.
4) T - Technological	- Launched Go Thai Be Free website and a video for LGBTQ travelers in 2019 to showcase a new look at tourism in Thailand that welcomes LGBTQ tourists. - Added gay tourist booking options to the booking websites. - Tourism Authority of Thailand must make a market analysis plan and develop products to market to target groups, as well as advertising planning and creating media relations about gay tourists. - Launch the applications that contains information on gay-friendly elements for foreign gay tourists, such as knowledge of the location of the gay community, gay bars, gay-friendly nightclubs and restaurants, local gay gatherings, etc.
5) L - Legal	- Amend the law and legalize same-sex marriage like Taiwan, Hong Kong and Vietnam. - Design services or a new policy on services to be "LGBT inclusive". - Making concrete changes to the law to support LGBTQ people. - Offer a way to understand about gender, gender diversity and discrimination for old-generation executives and entrepreneurs who still have an attitude for foreign gay tourists.
6) E - Ecological	- Put up a rainbow or gay-friendly flag. - Implement a waste and sewage management policy to meet the behavior of foreign gay tourists. - Promote communication of service personnel to understand the sensitive issues of foreign gay tourists in order to create outstanding impression and added value. - Accommodation businesses must have gay-friendly qualifications. List gay-friendly accommodations under "Gay-Friendly Accommodations Directory". - Produce advertisements in gay and lesbian travel guide books, maps, directories and websites with a network of tour operators for foreign gay tourists.

	- Thais are friendly and accepting of LGBT tourists and always promote tourism businesses related to LGBT people in a systematical manner.

2) Guidelines for the development of Phuket tourist destinations for foreign gay tourists

Tourism Components	Development Guidelines
1) Attraction	- Establish an organization that promotes tourism for LGBTQ tourists. - Develop a tourism attraction development plan specifically for foreign gay tourists, and it may be included in the Phuket Tourism Town Development Plan. - Organize a plan to promote recreational tourism based on different activities suitable for foreign gay tourists. - Make a promotion plan for waste and sewage management in tourist spots in terms of the management of agencies related to tourist attractions and communities, as well as suggesting all tourists to be aware of the cleanliness of the attractions.
2) Activities	- The policies and plans to promote Phuket's activity potential should focus on tourism activities favored by foreign gay tourists, namely swimming, festivals and events taking place after Songkran. - Promote tourism activities of Phuket. Gay tourists are interested in 1) relaxing on the beach, 2) watching a Phuket FantaSea show and 3) yacht cruises. - Organize events, festivals and events that are interested by foreign gay tourists which include Phuket Pride taking place in April, and add them on the province's annual tourism calendar.

3) Accessibility	- Make a plan to develop personnel to provide services in terms of access to tourist attractions with a focus on convenience and safety of tourists. - Prepare a travel itinerary within the tourist attractions that cater to gay tourists. Tourists prefer to travel by a rented motorbike. - Create a gay-friendly application for car rental services . - Promote and establish tariff standards for local transport systems and linkage of transport systems and tourism routes. - Make a development plan for safe and friendly access to Phuket attractions.
4) Accommodation	- Provide training and educate staff on communication and hospitality specifically for foreign gay tourists in order to reduce sensitivity issues. Provide language skills training or educate staff on foreign gay tourists' behaviors. - Create a gay-friendly application for booking accommodations. - Put up a rainbow or gay-friendly flag in hotels.
5) Amenities	- Create a gay-friendly application for booking restaurants, entertainment venues - Develop basic facilities to cater to foreign gay tourists. - Increase channels to access online tourism resources of government agencies. - Promote tourism through Instagram which is a channel that foreign gay tourists favor. - Provide online resources on government facilities that target the foreign gay tourist market. Information presented on the website should consist of the following details: 1) flights, 2) accommodation, 3) accommodation for gay tourists, 4) car rental, 5) attractions, 6) experience and 7) applications. - Prepare a travel guide for foreign gay tourists. - Increase public relations channels to reach foreign gay tourists so that they know that Phuket is an ideal destination for foreign gay tourists and want to visit once in a lifetime. - Create a Phuket tourism website and a video for LGBTQ

	tourists.

6. Suggestions for utilization:

6.1 Government agencies and all related sectors should formulate policies, strategies and action plans to make Phuket gay-friendly. Local government agencies should support budget, and education agencies should organize training programs for staff to have knowledge and understanding about foreign gay tourists. In addition, they should organize a good host program to welcome tourists and promote tourism publicity, as well as developing a communication plan to raise awareness about being a friendly destination for foreign gay tourists.

6.2 Private organizations should establish a center that gathers basic tourism information systems based on all tourism elements in order to provide information to various agencies. They should also create an tourism application for foreign gay tourists.

6.3 Entrepreneurs in the tourism industry should apply the research results in organizing tourism activities for foreign gay tourists and developing tourism programs and tourism activities linked to other types of tourism in order to provide new experiences for tourists.

6.4 Tourism scholars should apply the results of this study to further study and compare foreign gay tourists in other tourist cities such as Bangkok, Pattaya, Chiang Mai, Koh Samui and Krabi. They should also conduct research on cooperation of public and private sectors to promote tourism policy of foreign gay tourists.

7. Acknowledgement:

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