

Abstract

Head of Project Assistant Professor Siwarit Pongsakornrungrungsilp, Ph.D.
Email psiwarit@wu.ac.th
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The study aimed to explore and analyze tourists' behavior in Krabi province, impacts of the changes in market structure and tourist behavior, including the needs of human capital development within tourism industry, Krabi province. Furthermore, this study also aimed to develop policy suggestions about tourism management toward the changes of market structure and tourist behavior. The populations of this study were 1) tourists, both Thais and Foreigners who were travelling to Krabi province. The convenience sampling was employed to collect data from 400 tourists: 119 Thais and 281 Foreigners. Thai, Chinese, Russian and English questionnaires were used in this study; 2) tourism businesses in Krabi province were sampled by convenience sampling and 150 businesses were collected. Moreover, qualitative methods were also used to collect data through focus group, interviews, and participated observation. Cluster analysis was employed to classify tourist behavior according to tourists' nationality.

The results found that tourists can be clustered into 5 groups: Chinese and Russian, Thai, Scandinavian, European, and Asian. Regarding to impacts from the changes in market structure and tourist behavior, the results show that there is no much change in market structure and tourist behavior because a majority of tourists in Krabi province are Scandinavian and European tourists who increasingly travel to Krabi with high rate. However, by exploring the needs of human capital development, the results show that lack of labor is urgent and important issue for hotel businesses in Krabi province.

This study demonstrates policy suggestions toward the management of changes in market structure and tourist behavior by focusing on the strategic positioning toward high quality tourism destination with world class reputation. Moreover, training course structures for human capital development are developed. This course can be classified into job levels, job positions, including training programs for local government staffs, and also training for the trainers.