Abstract

Myanmar tourism industry is getting more and more popular and the number of international tourists visiting to Myanmar is increasing since the new civilian government has changed internal political and economic reforms within the country and international sanctions have been cased. Tourism industry should be provided more attention for its increasing demand and popularity. This research studied the perceptions of international tourists towards tourism products in and around Yangon.

Total number of tourist arrivals to Myanmar was 816369 in 2011 and total income from tourism sector of Myanmar was 319 million us dollars in 2011. For the research, the sample size of 385 respondents was used at 5% tolerable level of error by applying simple random sampling method. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze demographics and purpose of travel as well as to measure the perceptions towards tourism products in and around Yangon. Inferential statistics in the forms of independent t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to test hypotheses. The major points of data collection were popular tourist places such as Shwedagon Pagoda, Botahtaung Pagoda, Bogyoke Market, some popular restaurants and hotels in Yangon. The timeframe of data collection was in October 2012.

The overall perception towards each tourism product was analyzed by means score. The means scores for all tourism products studied reflect the neutral perception of international tourists towards them since the scores are 3.29 for attractions, 2.77 for accommodation, 2.91 for transportation, 3.23 for travels agents and tour operators, 3.26 for restaurants, 2.9 for entertainment and 3.29 for gifts and souvenirs.
In accordance with the results from hypotheses testing, there is no difference in perception of international tourists in the following aspects: attractions when distinguished by age levels, gender, education levels and purpose of travel; accommodation when distinguished by age levels and gender; transportation when distinguished by nationality, age levels, gender and purpose of travel; travels agents and tour operators when distinguished by age levels, gender, education levels and purpose of travel; restaurants when distinguished by age levels, gender, education levels and purpose of travel; entertainment when distinguished by nationality, gender, education levels and purpose of travel; gifts and souvenirs when distinguished by gender, education levels and purpose of travel.

On the other hand, there are differences in the perceptions of international tourists in the following aspects: attractions when distinguished by nationality; accommodation when distinguished by nationality, education levels and purpose of travel; transportation when distinguished by education levels; travel agents and tour operators when distinguished by nationality; restaurants when distinguished by nationality; entertainment when distinguished by age levels; gifts and souvenirs when distinguished by nationality and age levels. It is obvious that differences in nationalities have significant influences over five dependent variables except entertainment and transportation. Surprisingly, difference in gender has no effect on perception of international tourists towards any products of study.