Abstract

The objectives of the study are mainly to identify the Thai youth visitors' behaviors and attitudes with cultural heritage attractions in Thailand and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of cultural heritage attributes based on youth visitors' views. This study comprised 367 respondents who were of Thai nationality and were between 15 and 25 years old. Ayutthaya Historical Park was chosen as the data collection site. Intercept survey and in-depth personal interview were used to collect the data. Statistical analysis software program was applied to identify the results of the study. Apart from descriptive analysis chi-square, one-way ANOVA, and the sample t-test were used to identify the relationships and differences between the independent and dependent variables. Also, Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) was used to identify the strength and weakness attributes while content analysis was employed with in-depth interview method.

Through this research, the positive views towards heritage destination could be one of the key behaviors and attitudes of young visitors highlighted in the study. This contributes to the enrichment of the tourist literature indicating that Thai youths are culturally-friendly visitors to the heritage destinations. With respect to the purposes of their visits, to observe the cultural heritage and relax are not the only reasons but also to participate in the cultural activities and events as well as to learn about the civilization of the people in the past. The current research identifies that the use of internet and social media to plan the trip revealed special characteristics of youths that differed from other groups of visitors. When focusing on the number of travel party, young age people mostly travel in a small group of people with less than 5 people and could be considered as 'Free Individual Tourist (FIT)'.

The finding that gives insights to the tourist literature in terms of attitudes is that every cultural heritage attribute perceived important levels and high performance by youths. Hence, their positive views, thoughts, and perception could convey to the people who are
around them and their children; therefore, this could be considered as long term sustainable marketing.

With respect to the strength and weakness attributes, the study found that the beauty of the historical building and landscape, the preservation of site authenticity, and the maintenance of interior and exterior of historical buildings were the strengths of the attraction sites. While the opportunities to the visitors to learn about the local and history of the attraction sites and attributes related to tourism amenities such as parking space, the amount of restaurant, and the number of toilets available at the attraction site must be included in a cultural developing plan.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayutthaya Historical Park, Cultural heritage, Thai youth, Tourists' attitudes, Tourists' behaviors