ABSTRACT

This research focuses on studying tourists' evaluations of Koh Samui and its surrounding islands as a tourist destination. The demographic elements consist of nationality, age, gender, education level, motivation behind traveling. Tourists evaluated the destination in terms of transportation, accommodation, tourist facilities, restaurants and food, main tourist attractions, tourist activities and sustainable development. A total of 367,385 tourists visited Koh Samui and its surrounding islands in 2010. Based on this data, a sample of 384 was used for this study which explained the no-random convenient sampling method. Descriptive statistics was used analyze the demographic profiles of tourists. Inferential statistics in the forms of T-test and ANOVA were used to test hypothesis.

The findings yielded the following means: main tourist attraction (3.8737), tourist activities (3.7161), accommodation (3.7026), transportation (3.6910), tourist facilities (3.6328), restaurants and food (3.6224), sustainable development (3.4019), which all fall in the 3.5-4.4 range, indicating that transportation, accommodation, restaurants and food, main tourist attractions, tourist activities, sustainable development are considered to be good.

Hypothesis testing findings show that there is no difference in the tourists' evaluations of Koh Samui and its surrounding islands as a destination in terms of transportation when classified by age and gender; accommodation when classified by age, gender, education level, and income level; tourist facilities when classified by nationality, age, education level, income level, and motivation behind traveling; restaurants and food
when classified by nationality, and education level; main tourist attractions when classified by age, gender, education level, and motivation behind traveling; tourist activities when classified by gender, education level, and income level, and motivation behind traveling; and sustainable tourism development when classified by age and gender.

The results also indicate that there are differences among tourists in their evaluations of Koh Samui and its surrounding islands as a tourist destination regarding transportation when classified by nationality, education level, and motivation behind traveling; accommodation when classified by nationality, and motivation behind traveling; tourist facilities when classified by gender; restaurants and food when classified by age, gender, income level, motivation behind traveling; main tourist attractions when classified by nationality and income level; tourist activities when classified by nationality and age; and sustainable tourism development when classified by nationality, education level, income level, and motivation behind traveling.