

Abstract

Title: Consumer attitude towards corporate social responsibility in tourism industry: Case study of foreign tourist in Chiang Mai

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This study aims to investigate tourist attitudes towards corporate social responsibility in Chiang Mai tourism industry. 123 tourists, who are not Thai and have visited the study area at least 3 days, participated in this study. The convenience sampling technique of non-probability was adopted in the selection process.

Results indicate that the majority of respondents were Westerner (88%), female (56.9%), aged between 18 -24 years (30%), singles (63.4%), working as private company employee (30.9%), with yearly income around 20,001 – 30,000 US\$ (32.5%) which is equivalent of 644,000 – 966,000 Baht, and having postgraduate degree (52%).

The study also raises two issues worth reflecting upon. First, there are no doubt that the idea of CSR has spread so quickly among multinational corporations and others stakeholders, including consumer or tourist in the tourism industry context. From tourist perspective, it certainly showed that tourism sector tour guide ($\bar{x}=1.76$), travel agents ($\bar{x}=1.76$) and local government ($\bar{x}=1.76$) should be the key players who should participate and conduct CSR. Tourism sectors should perform as socially responsible as possible to the local community. Finally, tourist perceived themselves as responsible tourists by traveling independently (36.78%), being regularly concern with social issues (29%) and have signed petition related to social issues (16.06%), respectively. The findings support the contention that environmental issues will be

more prevalent to the tourists than others issues like sociocultural and economic issues in relation to their attitude toward CSR as well.

Moreover, the results show that respondents strongly agree with the idea that tourism provides many economic benefits, but the tourists are ambivalent about its costs. It was found that tourists tend to recognize economic benefit clearly and are less interested or concerned with social costs. Modernization and urbanization would be the reason for that because it hard to see all the sociocultural costs caused by tourism development or urbanization. Finally, it was found that the tourist's attitude toward CSR and tourism are not related to their background.

This study recommends that since there is no simple assessment of how good or bad some actions are. The researcher would have to deal with both qualitative and quantitative assessments, when the researcher evaluates the social impacts of tourism activities. Triple Bottom Line (TBL) would be a good indicator of social performance and in try to determine whether some particular dimensions outweighs other dimensions. By committing tourism management to the principle of Triple Bottom Line, the tourism sectors are making more concrete commitment to CSR and sustainability. It is therefore, recommended that tourism sectors should ensure that their business behave in an ethical way.