

Title A Study of Thai Traditional Medicine for Health Tourism: Thai Traditional Massage, Herbal Steam and Compress in San Pa Tong District, Chiang Mai

Authors Miss Suvitcha Sritan and Mr. Preeda Chaiya

Affiliation Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Mahasarakham University

Research Year The Fiscal Year 2020

ABSTRACT

The mixed methods study aimed to examine Thai traditional medical wisdom to promote health tourism in Chiang Mai. Qualitative data was collected from documents and five Thai traditional and local doctors (or folk healers) and five local scholars selected from five potential villages of San Pa Tong District, totaling ten people in semi-structured interviews and focused group discussions by using a purposive technique and a content analysis for the data. Quantitative data was derived from 400 responses of Thai tourists visiting the research site, and Multiple Regression Analysis was used for the data. The qualitative findings revealed that there are four important factors on the Thai traditional medicine wisdom: traditional massage, herbal compress, herbal steam and herbal medicine, of San Pa Tong district that have the potential to promote health tourism. The traditional massage has the potential to satisfy most tourists, followed by herbal compress, and herbal steam, thereby indicating a co-motivating factor in health promotion, Thai identity, and health tourism services that will affect tourists' satisfaction in the development of sustainable health tourism. The quantitative data has uncovered three main perceived health tourism factors - technical quality, functional quality, and affective trust - that are related to the travel decision-making motives for health tourism. Technical quality was found to be the most powerful factor affecting the travel motives, followed by functional quality, while affective trust was not found to have an effect on the travel motives statistically significant at .05 level. The mixed data implications and recommendations with limited information both in literature and practice are also discussed.

Keywords: Thai Traditional Medicine; Thai massage; Health tourism; Chiang Mai