A Guideline of Development for tourism cluster for Small–sized Thai Travel agents and tour operators Enterprises in Pattaya City, Chonburi Province, Thailand

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Abstract

The research aimed at studying the small–sized Thai travel agents and tour operators enterprises' cognitive with knowledge and understanding toward cluster development as determinants and analyzing the competitiveness of the operators in order to determine guidelines in developing tourism clusters of small operators in Pattaya city, Chonburi province, Thailand. Mixed methodology was conducted in this study. 69 samples out of 116 operators or managerial decision makers of these enterprises were randomly selected. Questionnaire and interview form were used as a tool to gather information. Descriptive statistics and content analysis were used to analyze data.

The research findings showed that business owners who were mainly female, aged between 31-40 years old, holding a bachelor degree, the sole-proprietors and have been operated during 5 to 10 years. Most of them have never participated in any business clusters. However, most operators agreed with the idea of networking as a tourism business cluster. They owned the high degree of knowledge and understood on tourism cluster development and competitiveness and capability of business enterprises in cluster development. Business operators also identified the opportunity factors include demand conditions, and related and supporting industries, whereas obstacle factors are uncontrollable situations. And context of firm strategy structure and rivalry, and, government and regulations could be both opportunities and obstacles for executing their businesses. Accordingly, it clearly showed that the enterprises are in the group of high knowledge and understanding about tourism cluster development and in the middle level of competitiveness.

The guidelines of development for tourism clusters of the enterprises were identified in terms of knowledge and understanding levels of tourism business clusters together with business environment scanning. It can be potentially developed to become a tourism cluster within at the beginning phase which leads to a direction of developing a cluster which is the cooperation between Pattaya Thai travel agents and tour operators enterprises with supported by governmental units and educational institutes to develop sustainable tourism cluster.

Recommendations for the future research required to study such the major factors and conditions as the determinants of a commitment to promote participation in the certain cluster to solve problems at the right direction, trust building and development of systematic administration and management.