

## **MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS TO ATTRACT THAI LEISURE TOURISTS TO VISIT MUSEUMS IN TOKYO**

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### **Abstract**

Museums, for financial sustainability, can make use of the marketing mix of “product,” “promotion,” “place,” and “price” to attract visitors. This study looked at ways museums in Tokyo can use the mix to attract Thai tourists, whose number has boomed recently with the exemption of visa requirements. The author used a mixed quantitative and qualitative research methodology to collect data at Bangkok’s Suvarnabhumi Airport from Thais leaving for Tokyo for leisure. The findings corroborated that although the majority of Thai tourists considered the collections and exhibitions of museums in Tokyo important, they emphasised on the benefits of museums that help in reducing uncertainties, connecting, building relationships, and enjoying their time with friends.

**Keywords:** Museums, Tokyo, Marketing mix, Thai tourists

## Introduction

“Marketing is no longer an option (for museums): it’s a survival tool rather than a dirty word,” claimed Rentschler (2011, p.12). Museums, facing burgeoning expenditures and expenses, reduced government funding (Kolb, 2000), and competition from other leisure activities must find ways to generate revenue to remain sustainable. The Type Museum in London closed in May 2006 because of an unsustainable deficit (Heywood, 2006).

Marketing explores, creates, and delivers value to design and promote appropriate products and services to satisfy the needs of a target market for a profit (Kotler, 2015). The marketing mix is a bundle of controllable elements that constitute an organisation’s marketing programmes to help the organisation structure its approach to customers (Smith, 2003; Payne, 1993). Museum scholars, such as Runyard and French (1999), and museum practitioners, such as Paal Mork (in ICOM, 2004), suggested that museums should focus on the marketing mix of “product,” “place,” “promotion,” and “price.”

Williams (2009) and Hooper-Greenhill (1994) stated that museums offer an individual experience to visitors. The “product” of museums in its tangible and intangible forms, such as exhibits, architecture, the attitude of staff, orientation, and facilities, fosters the experience (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994). “Place” is the distribution of the “product” of museums (Runyard & French, 1999). “Promotion” is the activities to inform people about the “product” (Cox, Radbourne, & Tidwell 1998). “Price” is what museums charge

visitors for the “product (Runyard & French, 1999).”

The first museum in Japan was established in 1872 by the Meiji state (Aso, 2014). The intention for its establishment was to discipline people, cultivate in them “imperial public” loyalty, and spur industrialisation (Aso, 2014). By mid-1930s, the museum system of Japan further expanded to include institutions in the colonial states of Japan, such as Taiwan, Korea, Sakhalin, and Manchuria (Aso, 2014). During the American occupation between 1945 and 1952, the “imperial public” image of the system started fading. The system was then put under the administration of the Ministry of Education.

In 2005, Japan had 5,614 museums of which 129 were established by the state, 68 by independent institutions, 4,023 by local governments, 603 by general incorporated associations or foundations, and 791 by private entities and others (Japanese Association of Museums, 2008). These museums are legally classified into registered museums, museum-equivalent facilities, and museum-like facilities (Japanese Association of Museums, 2008). Registered museums collect, preserve, and nurture materials to contribute to education, research, and recreations (Japanese Association of Museums, 2008). Museum-equivalent facilities engage in works that are similar to the works of registered museums (Japanese Association of Museums, 2008). Museum-like facilities engage in work similar to those of museums; however, they do not receive registration or designation (Japanese Association of Museums, 2008). Of these museums, 309

are in Tokyo, 73 are registered museums, 38 are museum-equivalent facilities, and 198 are museum-like facilities (International Affairs of the National Museum of Nature and Science, personal communication, 16 December 2014). These museums are also categorised into Art and Photography, History and Science, Zoos and Aquariums, Transportation and Commerce and Anime and others (Japan Guide, n.d.). A number of them such as the Tokyo National Museum, National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, National Science Museum and Ueno Zoo are located close to one another at Ueno Park, Tokyo.

However, museum administrators in Japan, who face a time of budget cutting (Maerkle, 2010) and economic hardship since the bursting of the financial bubble in 1991, must find ways to increase the number of visitors for financial sustainability.

The number of Thai tourists visiting Japan has been increasing. The Japanese government exempted Thai tourists from the visa requirement as of 1st July 2013. The number of Thai tourists who visited Japan increased from 330,000 to nearly 600,000 the year following the exemption (Japan National Tourism Organization, 2014). Tokyo is a popular city among Thai tourists. Eight of the 17 daily flights of Thai Airways from Bangkok to Japan fly to Tokyo. In the first half of 2015, Tokyo remained to be the most favorite overseas destination for Thai tourists (Fredrickson, 2015). The elimination of the visa requirement and the popularity of Tokyo among Thai people provide a good opportunity for these museums in Tokyo to attract Thai tourists to visit their museums. In what

ways could museums in Tokyo best make use of their marketing mix to attract Thai tourists?

However, “everywhere, the core value of consumerism—choice—is apparent (Levett et al., in Gabriel & Lang, 2008, p.324).” Museums must compete with competitors, such as cinemas, sporting events, and shopping malls, for the attention of customers (Kolb, 2000; McLean, 1997). Accordingly, to attract tourists whose time of stay is short and compete with other tourist attractions in Tokyo, museum administrators should know the motivations of Thai tourists for visiting museums in Tokyo.

Museums and tourism support each other. On the one hand, museums are an integral part of the tourism chain (Liew and Loh, 2011). On the other hand, museums need the industry to provide them with a stable source of visitors (Kotler & Kotler, 1998). However, the attitudes of people towards museums vary. Some associate museums with intimidation, whereas some, with elitism. Some never step into a museum, whereas some like visiting a museum with friends or families (Kotler & Kotler, 1998).

The research project that Marilyn Hood (1983) incorporated with the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio illustrates the leisure attributes of “feeling comfortable and at ease,” “having an opportunity to learn,” “being with people, or social interaction,” “having a challenge of new experience,” “doing something worthwhile,” and “participating actively” that frequent, occasional, and non-frequent museum visitors have found and not found in museums. Frequent participants are defined as those who visit museums at least thrice per year. Occasional participants are those who

visit museums with families and friends during special occasions once or twice per year.

The project findings confirm that frequent museum visitors find all the six attributes among which the attributes of “having an opportunity to learn,” “having a challenge of new experiences,” and “doing something worthwhile” are considered important and highly available in museums (Hood, 1983). Occasional participants find the attributes of active participation, entertainment, and social interaction in museums. However, non-museum visitors could not find the attributes of “being with people or social interaction” and “feeling comfortable and at ease,” which they considered important in museums (Hood, 1983).

Therefore, prior to designing their marketing mix to attract Thai tourists, museum administrators in Tokyo have to know whether museums possess those leisure attributes that Thai tourists consider important.

The objectives of this paper are:

- a. To know whether museums possess those leisure attributes that Thai tourists consider important to attract those who visit Tokyo for a short time to visit museums.
- b. To give guidelines to museum administrators in Tokyo for ways they could best make use of their marketing mix to attract Thai tourists to visit their museums.

To the best of the author’s knowledge, this paper is the first study that investigates ways museums in Tokyo can

design their marketing mix to attract Thai tourists.

## Literature review

### Marketing mix in the museum context

Museums are a complex organisation. They are a non-profit organisation, a cultural organisation, and a service provider (Cox, Radbourne, and Tidwell, 1998). They exhibit objects and offer sensory experiences, research, and scholarship to visitors (Kotler and Kotler, 1998). Moreover, museums use cultural and natural heritages to increase the knowledge of visitors in amount and quality (Šola, 1997). Museums Australia, a national organisation for museums in Australia, claimed that museums help people understand the world, interpret the past, and explore the future (Birtley, 2002). Museums are also recreational facilities. Consequentially, some of them are administered by local parks and a recreation or leisure department (Runyard and French, 1999); for example, museums in Hong Kong are under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

Museums with these various identities must use marketing to confirm their mission and identity (Lewis, in McLean, 1997) and strengthen their marketing mix to enhance their competitiveness (Runyard and French, 1999; McLean, 1997).

### Marketing mix of “product”

Exhibits are the prime product of museums (Kotler and Kotler, 1998;

McLean 1997). MORI, a research company, found that 49 percent of respondents in the UK are motivated to visit a museum to see a particular exhibition or an event of interest (Slater, 2011), whether a blockbuster exhibition or related to the daily living or activities of people. The *Cezanne Exhibition* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art attracted 550,000 visitors (Kotler and Kotler, 1998). *The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army Exhibition* of the British Museum attracted 850,000 visitors (British Museum, n.d.). *Kylie: The Exhibition*, which featured the changing images of Kylie Minogue, attracted many visitors who have never been to the Victoria and Albert Museum (Victoria and Albert Museum, n.d.).

Apart from visiting museums for exhibitions or events of interests, some visitors are interested in visiting museums, which provide scientific or hands-on experiences (Kotler and Kotler, 1998). The Citi des Sciences et de l'Industrie in Paris attracted nearly 5 million visitors in 2010 (Walhimer, 2012). The Children's Museum of Indianapolis is among the top 20 most visited museums in North America (Children's Museum, 2014). Most exhibits of the Children's Museum are interactive to allow visitors to participate actively.

Visitors are attracted to the architecture of museums. The glass pyramid of the Louvre in Paris, the audacious configuration of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, and the Greco-Roman marble columns of the Metropolitan Museum of Art are recognisable symbols of these museums. These buildings have become international icons, logos for their cities,

and a statement in and of themselves (Van den Bosch, 2011; Kotler and Kotler, 1998). Apart from the exterior of a museum, sophisticated interiors can also enhance the experience of visitors (Sweet, 2011). Currently, museums upgrade their amenities and facilities, such as exterior and interior designs, signages, lightings, escalators, handrails, and hand knobs, to enhance the visiting experience. For example, in the expansion project of the Peabody Essex Museum, Massachusetts features a 7,000-square-foot visual interactive learning centre with installed Acoustiguides (Denison, 2003).

McPherson claimed that retailing inside museums also helps attract visitors (in Lockstone, 2011). Some museums use restaurants or coffee shops to attract visitors. The *ACE Café* campaign of the Victoria and Albert Museum advertises the museum as attached to "an ace café" (Sweet, 2011). The National Museum Bangkok once rented out a space to the Haagen-Dazs restaurant. Tourists tend to buy souvenirs inside museum gift shops to extend their visiting memory to a tangible form (Lockstone, 2011). Some museums associate their exhibitions with the business sector to attract visitors. The American Museum of Natural History once associated its exhibition *Endangered! Exploring a World at Risk!* with the FAO Schwarz, a toy company that released a series of plush toys that feature the displays of the exhibition (Dubin, 1999).

## Marketing mix of "place"

The extent to which the location of a museum influences visitations is debatable. Davis and et al. claimed that

the location of a museum is an influential factor (in McLean, 1997). McLean (1997) verified that the location factor, such as convenience and accessibility, is a key determinant. A study of the influence of the location factor on children in Europe and the USA affirmed that those in Flanders and Germany pay inconsiderable attention to transportation; however, those in the USA concern themselves in the ease of public transport (Netherlands Museum Association, 2011).

Some museums, instead of asking people to visit their museums, bring their exhibits to people. This practice is considered a good way to raise popularity (Kotler and Kotler, 1998; Amenta, 2010). For example, the Louvre in Paris displays a fraction of its artifacts in a subway station (Blattberg and Broderick, 1991). Some museums set up gift shops inside retail centres, shopping malls, or airports to increase exposure. For example, the Metropolitan Museum of Art of the USA has a few gift shops in Bangkok, Thailand.

Moreover, museums increasingly use the Internet to reach people. Websites or virtual exhibitions offer new ways for museums to access new audiences, whereas online activities can help build an audience and encourage them to visit museums physically (Bartak, 2011).

### **Marketing mix of “price”**

Some museums believe that price can regulate attendance level; thus, they charge less for children, students, and seniors (Kotler and Kotler, 1998). Kolb (2000) claimed that people would be willing to pay as long as museums can

offer something unique or interesting. However, Walshe verified that price is not a primary reason for people not to visit museums (in Kotler and Kotler, 1998). MORI in 1999 confirmed that price was not a major factor that influences attendance at museums (in Runyard and French, 1999).

### **Marketing mix of “promotion”**

People do not visit museums because of their lack of awareness of museums (McLean, 1997). The promotion mix of advertising, public relations, sales incentives, personal selling, and social media can help museums build awareness. The AIDA model also suggests that promotion can help create consumption interest, stimulate consumption desire, and facilitate the purchasing action of customers.

Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel (2013) illustrated that these five variables of the promotion mix achieve these objectives differently. The variable of advertising gains the attention of people and creates their consumption interest. However, advertising fails to put their purchase intention into action. The variable of sales promotion, apart from gaining the attention of people and creating consumer interests, facilitates their purchasing action. Social media effectively facilitates the purchasing action of people. However, they concluded that personal selling best facilitates the purchasing action of people.

## **Research methodology**



This paper used primary and secondary data. The author used a mixed exploratory qualitative and quantitative research methodology to collect the primary data. The quantitative research methodology collected data, such as relative occurrence and frequency within a sampled population. The qualitative research collected data that could provide non-quantifiable insights, behavior, motivations, and attitudes (Creswell and Plano, 2011). The use of this mixed methodology enabled the cross-validation of the collected data to generate highly valid and reliable outcomes (Decrop, 1999). The secondary data were collected from literature, journals, newspapers, and websites that were about museums and the marketing mix in the context of museums.

The author wrote to the Airport Authority of Thailand and gained permission to collect data inside the airport before carrying out the data collection. The author used a stratified research methodology to select Thais who were queuing up for checking-in their flights to Tokyo at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport and whose purpose for visiting Tokyo was for leisure.

Regarding the quantitative data, the author could not determine the number of Thais who visited Tokyo alone between July 2013 and June 2014; thus, the sample size was based on the number of those who visited Japan during that year (i.e. 582,478) (Japan National Tourism Organization, 2014). A sample size of 400 respondents was considered appropriate based on the Yamane's formula with a precision level of  $\pm 5\%$  and a confidence level of 95%.

The questionnaire for the quantitative data was divided into four sections:

- a. The general demographic data of the respondents,
- b. The respondents' frequency of visiting museums in general and familiarity with museums in Tokyo,
- c. The respondents' choice of a leisure attribute that was influential to their selection of leisure activities and their opinion of the availability of these attributes in museums. These leisure attributes were based on the research project that Marilyn Hood incorporated with the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio in 1983. The respondents had to choose one out of the six attributes, and
- d. The marketing mix of "product," "place," "price," and "promotion" that museum administrators in Tokyo should use to influence their visiting intention. The responses were based on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 "very unlikely" to 5 "very likely."

For the qualitative research, the author used a semi-structured questionnaire to interview forty Thais queuing-up to check-in flights to Tokyo for leisure at the Suvarnabhumi Airport. Walker (1985) considered the data collected from the 40 interviewees valid. The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

- a. The general demographic data of the interviewees,
- b. Their habits and motivations for visiting museums in general, and
- c. Their comments on the marketing mix of "product," "place," "price," and "promotion" that museum administrators of Tokyo should use to influence their visiting intention.

Questions on marketing mix were based on recommendations of scholars and

researchers mentioned in the preceding sections. Regarding the marketing mix of 'product', questions focused on tangible and intangible ones, such as exhibits, architecture, facilities, attitude of staff and orientation. As Hooper-Greenhill (1994) suggested, product should include tangible and intangible forms. Kotler and Kotler (1998), Van den Bosch (2011) and McPherson (in Lockstone, 2011), elaborated the roles of exhibitions, architecture and retailing of museums in influencing the visiting interests of people. The influence of the marketing mix of 'place' and 'price' on museum visitations remains unknown. Hence, the questions tended to investigate the influence on tourists' visiting intention from different perspectives. The marketing mix of 'promotion' help museums build awareness owing to scholars, such as McLean (1997), who illustrated the promotion mix of advertising, public relations, sales incentives, personal selling and social media. Thus, questions explored the extent to which these variables influence the visiting interests of respondents.

The primary data were collected on the 20th, 24th, and 28th of November 2015. The author used the SPSS computer programme to analyse the quantitative data and synthesise descriptive statistics with data from the qualitative research.

## Findings

Of the 420 questionnaires that were distributed, 398 were filled in properly.

### Demographic data

Approximately 50.75% were female and 49.25% were male; 40% were 31–40 years old, 31.8% were 41–50 years old, and 12.8% were 21–30 years old. Approximately 80.4% had a bachelor's degree, 14.3% had a post-graduate degree, 2.8% had a vocational or technical degree, and 2.8% had a high school degree. Approximately, 37% were employees, 30.2% were business owners, 14.8% were students, 12% were civil servants, 5% were self-employed, and 1% were retired.

Of the 40 interviewees, 23 were female, and 17 were male. 14 were 31–40 years old, 13 were 21–30, six were 51–60, five were 41–50, and two were 61 and above. 34 of them had an undergraduate degree, four had a master degree, and two had a vocational school degree.

Frequency of visiting museums and familiarity with museums in Tokyo

Approximately 70% of the respondents visited museums once or twice annually, and 13.8% visited museums thrice a year. Nearly 96% have familiarity with museums in Tokyo. The most popular one was the Tokyo National Museum, followed by the Samurai Museum and the Ghibli Museum. The majority of the respondents had heard of museums in Tokyo, but 87% had not visited any of them.

### Leisure attributes of museums

Table 1 exhibits the findings regarding the leisure attributes that influence the respondents' choice of leisure activities.



**Table 1** Leisure attributes that the respondents considered important in influencing their choice of leisure activities.

| Which one of the following leisure attributes will influence your choice of leisure activities?<br>Please choose one. |                          |            |
|---|--------------------------|------------|
|   | Number of<br>Respondents | Percentage |
| Feeling comfortable and at ease   | 124                      | 31.2       |
| Doing something worthwhile  | 82                       | 20.6       |
| Having an opportunity to learn  | 65                       | 16.3       |
| Being with people or social interaction   | 58                       | 14.5       |
| Having the challenge of new experiences   | 46                       | 11.5       |
| Participating actively  | 23                       | 5.8        |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>398</b>               | <b>100</b> |

Table 2 lists the leisure attributes that the respondents found available in museums.

**Table 2** Leisure attributes that the respondents found available in museums

| Which one of the following attributes do you find in museums? |                          |             |
|---|--------------------------|-------------|
|   | Number of<br>Respondents | Percentage  |
| Feeling comfortable and at ease                               | 124                      | 31.15       |
| Doing something worthwhile                                    | 69                       | 17.3        |
| Having an opportunity to learn                                | 65                       | 16.3        |
| Being with people or social interaction                       | 50                       | 12.6        |
| Having the challenge of new experiences                       | 33                       | 8.3         |
| Participating actively  | 13                       | 3.25        |
| No  | 44                       | 11.1        |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>398</b>               | <b>100%</b> |

The two findings confirmed that the respondents found a number of influential attributes that they considered available in museums. The most obvious one was the attribute of “feeling comfortable and ease.” The qualitative interviews showed that more than 60% of interviewees considered that museum visits were for relaxation and pleasure. “After days and days of hard work, I like

going to visit museums to relax, release stress and restore my peaceful mindset,” said Interviewee number four. “A museum is place for me to tour around with pleasure. Museums should have a good layout and their exhibits have to be in good order. I can tour around the museum to follow the flow of the exhibitions with ease without worrying losing my way and mixing up the

sequence of the exhibitions,” said Interviewee number five.

The quantitative percentages of the responses to the attributes of “doing something worthwhile” and “having an opportunity to learn” were quite similar. The qualitative interviews helped elaborate the implications of these attributes. Interviewee number seven said, “I always make the best use of my leisure time visiting museums where I can learn a lot of things so as to widen my knowledge and horizon.” Interview number 24 said, “Inside museums, I can learn according to my own pace and capacity. It is all up to me. I learn a lot of things through museum exhibitions.”

Concerning the leisure attribute of “being with people or social interaction,” which was the fourth most popular attribute, some of the answers of the interviewees could give us an idea of the way museums could strengthen relationships. Interviewee number two said, “A

museum is a good place for parents to bring their kids to visit. There are many activities for families to do and play and topics to discuss. During weekdays, hardly could I find time to talk to my kids. Therefore, whenever we have a common free time, I’ll bring my kids to visit a museum so as to spend some precious time together.” Interviewee number 26 said, “When I was young, I went to museums with my classmates. Now, I always go to museums with my friends. The exhibitions of museums provide us many topics to discuss and argue with each other.”

## **Marketing mix of museums**

### **Marketing mix of “product”**

Table 3 presents the responses of the respondents to the marketing mix of “product”.

**Table 3** Responses of the respondents on the marketing mix of “product” that would influence their visiting intention to museums in Tokyo

| Product<br>I will visit a museum in<br>Tokyo if   |                |                |               |              |             | $\bar{X}$ | S.D.  |
|---|----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|-------|
|   | 5              | 4              | 3             | 2            | 1           |           |       |
| The museum has friendly and helpful staff.  | 102<br>(25.6%) | 275<br>(69.1%) | 10<br>(2.5%)  | 11<br>(2.8%) | –           | 4.18      | 0.600 |
| The museum uses interactive and multimedia interpretation that makes museum visits enjoyable.     | 96<br>(24.1%)  | 281<br>(70.6%) | 10<br>(2.5%)  | 11<br>(2.8%) | –           | 4.16      | 0.592 |
| The museum has good retail facilities, such as nice souvenir and coffee shops.                    | 104<br>(26.1%) | 267<br>(67.1%) | 10<br>(2.5%)  | 17<br>(4.3%) | –           | 4.15      | 0.658 |
| The museum introduces blockbuster temporary exhibitions.  | 110<br>(27.6%) | 256<br>(64.3%) | 10<br>(2.5%)  | 22<br>(5.6%) | –           | 4.14      | 0.708 |
| The museum offers special programmes, such as lectures, performances, or events.                  | 86<br>(21.6%)  | 280<br>(70.3%) | 21<br>(5.3%)  | 11<br>(2.8%) | –           | 4.11      | 0.606 |
| The museum has impressive architecture, such as their buildings and interior or exterior designs. | 106<br>(26.6%) | 245<br>(61.6%) | 10<br>(2.5%)  | 37<br>(9.3%) | –           | 4.06      | 0.812 |
| The museum has a well-known or some well-known exhibits.  | 38<br>(9.5%)   | 275<br>(69.1%) | 60<br>(15.1%) | 23<br>(5.8%) | 2<br>(0.5%) | 3.81      | 0.698 |

The quantitative findings corroborated that the tangible and intangible products of museums in Tokyo were significant to respondents. However, the product of a museum with a well-known or some well-known exhibits was the least influential. The intangible product of “friendly and helpful staff” was the most influential product to attract them to visit museums in Tokyo.

The qualitative data could further elaborate the implications of these

products in the mindset of the respondents. Regarding the product of friendly and helpful staff, interviewee number four said, “I do not speak any Japanese. A museum (in Tokyo) must have English speaking staff who are friendly, and can give me information and answer my questions about the museums and exhibitions.” Moreover, interviewee number 10 suggested that museums in Tokyo should use English interpretations and English-speaking

staff to introduce and answer questions about the exhibits and the museum. However, interviewee number 22 was not concerned about the language barrier between Thais and Japanese. The interviewee said that a museum in Tokyo could use a clear layout to help Thai visitors tour around and understand the exhibitions of the museum. This interviewee said, “English is not the mother tongue of Japanese. I do not speak any Japanese. Hence, I know I could not communicate well with museum staffs. However, as long as a museum (in Tokyo) has a good and clear layout to let me tour around easily and link various zones of exhibitions together, it is still fine with me.”

About the product of interpretation, interviewee number 40 stated that the availability of advanced and fancy technologies in Japan could help interpret the exhibits of museums in a more interested way. Regarding exhibitions, interviewee number four was interested in exhibitions that were related to events of Tokyo. The interviewee said, “Museums (in Tokyo) should have exhibitions to let me know

current and future events of Tokyo. I am very interested in knowing details and the preparation of the Olympics 2020 in Tokyo.”

Over 50% of the interviewees said that museums in Tokyo should have decent architecture and souvenir shops for photo taking and socialising. Interviewee number 26 said, “There are plenty nice buildings in Tokyo. Museums (in Tokyo) should also have nice architecture for me to take photos.” Interviewee number 30 said, “I would like to take a rest and talk with friends inside a nicely designed museum coffee shop comfortably. However, many museum coffee shops (in Tokyo) are not nicely designed. They should learn from museum coffee shops in Singapore. The coffee shops there are always nicely designed. I always uses my mobile phone to take and share photos of myself, my friends and the food and drink inside the shops with my friends or family.”

### **Marketing mix of “promotion”**

Table 4 exhibits the responses of the respondents to the marketing mix of “promotion”.

**Table 4** Responses of the respondents on the marketing mix of “promotion” that would influence their visiting intention to museums in Tokyo.

| Promotion<br>I will visit a museum in<br>Tokyo if   |                     |                |                   |                   |             | $\bar{X}$ | S.D.  |
|---|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------|-------|
|   | 5                   | 4              | 3                 | 2                 | 1           |           |       |
| The museum has outreach programmes, such as temporary exhibitions and supplementary programmes, such as lectures, performances, or social events, or has an outlet in Thailand. | 104<br>(26.1%)<br>) | 272<br>(68.3%) | 10<br>(2.5%)<br>) | 11<br>(2.8%)<br>) | 1<br>(0.3%) | 4.17      | 0.623 |
| The museum has its ticket office in Thailand.   | 80<br>(20.1%)<br>)  | 296<br>(74.3%) | 10<br>(2.5%)<br>) | 11<br>(2.8%)<br>) | 1<br>(0.3%) | 4.11      | 0.588 |
| The museum is recommended by tourism associations or tour operators or guide books.   | 77<br>(19.3)        | 300<br>(75.4)  | 10<br>(2.5)       | 11<br>(2.8)       | –           | 4.11      | 0.562 |
| The museum is recommended by social media.  | 72<br>(18.1%)<br>)  | 302<br>(75.9%) | 14<br>(3.5%)<br>) | 10<br>(2.5%)<br>) | –           | 4.10      | 0.554 |
| The museum advertises itself on media, such as magazines, newspapers, televisions, and radios.  | 84<br>(21.1%)<br>)  | 280<br>(70.3%) | 22<br>(5.5%)<br>) | 11<br>(2.8%)<br>) | 1<br>(0.3%) | 4.09      | 0.624 |
| The museum offers coupons, discounts, gifts, or premiums.   | 77<br>(19.3%)<br>)  | 291<br>(73.1%) | 18<br>(4.5%)<br>) | 11<br>(2.8%)<br>) | 1<br>(0.3%) | 4.09      | 0.603 |
| The museum presents itself online, such as having its own website or social media.  | 83<br>(20.8%)<br>)  | 277<br>(69.6%) | 26<br>(6.5%)<br>) | 11<br>(2.8%)<br>) | 1<br>(0.3%) | 4.08      | 0.632 |

The findings illustrated respondents suggested that museums should use various promotions. A majority of the respondents favoured museums in Tokyo that organise outreach programmes and activities and have outlets or ticket offices in Bangkok. The qualitative interview could further explain these favours. Interviewee number 15 said, “Museums (in Tokyo), having outlets in Bangkok is a gateway for Thai people to know them museums better. As we know that many Thais are interested in visiting

Tokyo. Hence, an excellent presentation (of these museums) can attract more Thais to visit them.” Interviewee number seven said, “Without any doubt, museums having a ticket office or organising activities (in Bangkok) will draw attention of Thais and create their interest in visiting the museums. People can have more information about these museums and their latest exhibitions.”

The respondents were interested in museums in Tokyo who promote themselves using tour companies,

guidebooks, and social media. The remarks of a few interviewees could help explain their reasons. Interviewee number 30 explained, “I have heard of names of several museums in Tokyo. However, I do not know details of these museums. Tour agents can present uniqueness of these museums, and approach people in a professional way.” Interviewee number three said, “Tour agents are experts. Their recommendations are trustworthy.” Interviewee number 36 stated, “Museums should use guidebooks to

inform people details and exhibitions of the museums. There are good pictures and descriptions (of the museums and exhibitions).” Interviewee number five said, “Social media is a good source of information. Social media can provide me information about exhibitions, travel issues and expenses in Tokyo.”

### Marketing mix of “price”

Table 5 presents the responses of the respondents to the marketing mix of “price”.

**Table 5** Responses of the respondents on the marketing mix of “price” that would influence their visiting intention to museums in Tokyo.

| Price  |               |                |              |               |                | $\bar{X}$ | S.D.  |
|--|---------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|-----------|-------|
| I will visit a museum in Tokyo if  | 5             | 4              | 3            | 2             | 1              |           |       |
| I have to pay an entrance fee.   | 27<br>(6.8%)  | 46<br>(11.6%)  | 30<br>(7.5%) | 94<br>(23.6%) | 201<br>(50.5%) | 2.00      | 1.286 |
| I have to pay an entrance fee if the museum showcases a masterpiece, a well-known exhibit, and a blockbuster exhibition. | 91<br>(22.9%) | 280<br>(70.3%) | 13<br>(3.3%) | 14<br>(3.5%)  | –              | 4.13      | 0.621 |
| The entrance to the museum is free of charge.  | 94<br>(23.6%) | 274<br>(68.8%) | 15<br>(3.8%) | 14<br>(3.5%)  | 1<br>(0.3%)    | 4.08      | 0.649 |

The findings affirmed that the entrance fees by museums in Tokyo influenced visiting intention given that visitors preferred museums that do not charge fees. However, the findings verified that they were willing to pay the fees if the exhibits were well-known and famous.

Some interviewees elaborated their opinion of the entrance fees charged by museums. Interviewee number 33 stated, “It is ideal for museums (in Tokyo) not to

charge any entrance fee. However, compared to the knowledge and benefits that I can get from visiting museums, it is alright to pay.” Interviewee number 38 mentioned that paying entrance fees was fine as long as the exhibits and exhibitions of museums in Tokyo were impressive. Interviewee number 23 said, “There are a lot of fascinating artifacts in the National Museum of Tokyo. It is worth for money to pay the entrance fee



that is not expensive at all. If other museums in Tokyo carry interesting artifacts or organising impressive exhibitions, I am willing to pay.”

### Marketing mix of “place”

Table 6 exhibits the responses of the respondents to the marketing mix of “place”.

**Table 6** Responses of the respondents on the marketing mix of “place” that influences their visiting intention to museums in Tokyo.

| Place   |                |                |               |               |                | $\bar{X}$ | S.D.  |
|---|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-----------|-------|
| I will visit a museum in Tokyo if   | 5              | 4              | 3             | 2             | 1              |           |       |
| The museum is close to the city centre.   | 104<br>(26.1%) | 267<br>(67.1%) | 11<br>(2.8%)  | 14<br>(3.5%)  | 2<br>(0.5%)    | 4.15      | 0.672 |
| The museum is outside the city centre.  | 47<br>(11.8%)  | 151<br>(37.9%) | 47<br>(11.8%) | 47<br>(11.8%) | 106<br>(26.7%) | 2.96      | 1.429 |
| The museum has transportation arrangement even though it is not close to the city centre. | 103<br>(25.9%) | 253<br>(63.6%) | 30<br>(7.5%)  | 12<br>(3.0%)  | –              | 4.12      | 0.662 |
| The museum is easy to reach even though it is not close to the city centre.               | 84<br>(21.1%)  | 280<br>(70.3%) | 22<br>(5.5%)  | 11<br>(2.8%)  | 1<br>(0.3%)    | 4.09      | 0.624 |

The findings showed a high percentage of respondents were concerned about the distance of museums to the city centre. However, the findings validated that they were interested in visiting museums that have transportation arrangement and were accessible. The qualitative interviews illustrated that some interviewees were not concerned about the traveling time required to reach the museums, which were located far from the city centre. Interviewee number 2 stated, “I do not speak Japanese, and I am not familiar with a remote area. Therefore, the museum has to be convenient to reach.” Interviewee number 24 said, “It is good for a museum is located in Tokyo’s city centre.

However, if the museum is located far away and local people know about it, it is fine with me. They can show me the way so that I won’t lose my way.” Interviewee number 37 mentioned, “The transportation system in Tokyo is very well developed. Distance is not a problem as long as there are maps which provide clear directions.”

## Discussion

The findings corroborate that Thai tourists are potential museum visitors. They have a habit of visiting museums once or twice annually. Thai tourists are occasional participants according to

Marilyn Hood's categorisation of museum visitors. The findings further confirm that the majority of them are familiar with the names of some museums in Tokyo. These two findings tell museum administrators in Tokyo that thinking of a way to make museums known is not necessary. Instead, they could focus on arranging a marketing mix to fit the cultural context and satisfy the needs of Thai tourists to attract them to visit their museums. Moreover, the findings verify that Thai tourists consider the collections and exhibitions of museums in Tokyo as important but considerably emphasise on museum services. The majority of these tourists appreciate that museums in Tokyo could provide services to minimise uncertainties and let them connect, build relationships, and enjoy their time with friends. They consider a museum visiting experience in Tokyo comparable with a shopping experience.

Kotler and Kotler (1998) listed five main museum offerings: physical settings, objects, collections and exhibitions, interpretive materials, as well as programmes and services. Collections and exhibitions are the core offerings of museums. The findings of the present study confirm that Thai tourists consider the offering of the collections and exhibitions of museums in Tokyo important. Moreover, the majority of Thai tourists are willing to pay museum entrance fees if masterpieces, well-known exhibits, and blockbuster exhibitions are showcased. The qualitative data elucidate that some tourists are interested in exhibitions that can give them considerable up-to-date information about the local events of Tokyo, such as the Olympic Games 2020.

However, the findings confirm that Thai tourists are more concerned with the offering of services of museums in Tokyo than the offering of collections and exhibitions. Services, according to Kotler and Kotler (1998), include reception, orientation, food service, and shopping.

Thai tourists mainly appreciate that museums in Tokyo offer services that help ease their uncertainties to make their visit comfortable and easy. The findings affirm that Thai tourists have many uncertainties. They are concerned about getting lost, feeling bad in a place where they are not familiar with, and not being able to communicate with the locals verbally. Leisure travel is considered a high-risk activity because of the high involvement, social visibility, limited experiences, high cost, and choice complexity (Mitchell, Davies, Moutinho, and Vassos, 1999). Accordingly, travellers tend to adopt various risk reduction strategies to reduce the uncertainties (Mitchell et al., 1999). Mitchell and Goldrick (2006) summarised various studies of consumer risk-reduction strategies and ranked the tactics of asking family and friends, buying a well-known brand, and receiving information from TV commercials and printed materials the four most common strategies adopted by consumers. However, Lo, Cheung, and Law (2011) corroborated that the two main risk reduction strategies taken by the leisure tourists in Hong Kong are specific. Hong Kong tourists tend to purchase travel insurance and bring extra cash. The findings of the present study confirm that the risk reduction concept of Thai tourists is also specific. Thai tourists adopt information-related risk, such as reducing strategy of seeking and

sourcing for information to reduce their uncertainties. However, they emphasise that museums in Tokyo should help tourists reduce uncertainties, have friendly staff to answer questions, offer a good layout and signages for clear orientations, and arrange transportation, for examples.

Thai tourists said that museums in Tokyo should have nice architecture, souvenir shops, and coffee shops. However, the findings elucidate that many Thai tourists consider that these features and facilities are tools for social connection and relationship building. Lockstone (2011) confirmed that the main motivation of tourists for buying souvenirs inside museum gift shops is to extend their visiting experience and memory to a tangible form. The findings affirm that Thai tourists consider retail shops with coffee shops as not places for buying things or enjoying food but as places to relax and socialise mainly. Moreover, Thai tourists are interested in using museum architecture and shops as a background for photo taking and sharing. Kindberg, Spasojevic, and Fleck (2005, in Ames and Naaman, 2007) verified two reasons for camera phone image: social versus personal and affective versus functional. Social and affective photos are those taken for tagging and sharing with friends and family members. Kindberg et al. (2005, in Ames and Naaman, 2007) validated that these photos are commonly used for enriching or documenting mutual experiences or sharing experiences with friends and family.

The concept of museum visits and shopping of the majority of Thai tourists is fairly blurred. Tauber (1972) uncovered two main motives for

shopping: personal and social. Tauber (1972) confirmed that some people shop for recreation and elaborated that some people consider shopping a medium for socialising, interacting with others with similar interests, and being with peer and reference groups for self-expression. Westbrook and Black (1985) affirmed that one motivation of people for shopping is affiliation and added that shoppers take shopping as an opportunity for socialising.

Using the categorisation of Falk (2011), who grouped the motivations of museum visitors for visiting museums into explorers, facilitators, professionals/hobbyists, experience seekers, rechargers, respectful pilgrims, and affinity seekers to categorise Thai tourists, Thai tourists are explorers or facilitators and rechargers. Explorers are interested in fulfilling their intellectual curiosity; facilitators are socially motivated and rechargers see the museum as a refuge from the work-a-day world.

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) stated that museums serve triple purposes of education, study and enjoyment (ICOM, n.d.). Although the majority of Thai tourists consider these three important, it seems that they put the enjoyment role of museums in front of their education and study role. However, learning is best achieved in circumstances of enjoyment (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994). It is through a playful experience that “creativity is nourished, personal growth sustained...Playfulness enlarges problem-solving capacities and spurs the imaginative thinking,” said Dolo Brooking, a museum educator (in Roberts, 1997, p. 40). Also, “by definition, there can be no learning if

there's been no interaction (Hein, 1998, p.136)." These help explain the majority of Thai tourists appreciate museums in Tokyo to use interactive and multimedia to make their visit enjoyable so as to help facilitate their learning inside museums. Also the majority of Thai tourists suggest museums in Tokyo should set up outlets or ticket offices in Thailand so that they could interact with the museums. These outlets or offices, in a long run, can help bind museums in Tokyo with Thai tourists. "A relationship is composed of a series of interactive episodes between dyadic parties over time" (Buttle and Maklan, 2015, p.24).

## Conclusion

The findings of this research can guide museum administrators in Tokyo on ways to manage their marketing mix. To the majority of Thai tourists, the main proposition of museums in Tokyo is to education. However, museum administrators of museums in Tokyo, in order to attract the tourists to visit their museums and compete with competitors have to think of ways to minimise the uncertainties of Thai tourists and to make their visits to a socialable and an edutaining one.

Regarding the marketing mix of "product," the administrators could train their staff to give proper assistance, offer good orientations, and organise guided tours to Thai tourists to make them feel comfortable and at ease inside their museums. However, some Thais speak neither the Japanese nor the English language; thus, museum administrators should consider hiring staff who speak the Thai language or train staff to speak Thai. Apart from telling Thai tourists

about their masterpieces or organising blockbuster exhibitions, museum administrators should consider using interactive interpretation, beautifying the interior and exterior architect and retail facilities of their museums.

With the marketing mix of "place," administrators must provide Thais with explicit information on the easiest and most convenient ways to access their museums, such as making maps available in hotels, organising public transportation stations, or providing convenience shops in Tokyo. These efforts should be available in Thailand as well. Museums far from the city centre must arrange transportation to make museums accessible for Thai tourists.

About the marketing mix of "promotion," administrators can organise outreach programmes and ticket offices or outlets in Thailand to give Thais opportunities to interact with museums. Also, administrators can consider approaching tour agents and guidebooks apart from using advertisements to promote their museums. Owing to advertisement is considered hypothetical in nature (Hoch and Ha in Blythe, 1997), and guidebooks and tour companies are considered neutral sources of information (Crotts, 2002), administrators have to use them to counter-balance each other.

The paper has suggested ways museum administrators in Tokyo could do to their marketing mix to attract Thai tourists. However, the paper is not free from weaknesses. The research has four main weaknesses.

Lost in translation

First, the questionnaires were translated from English into Thai. Second, the

qualitative responses were translated from Thai to English. Some data and responses may have been translated inaccurately.

### **Respondents are of high education level**

The majority (90.7%) of the respondents had an undergraduate or post-graduate education. Accordingly, the findings tend to present the opinions of those with a high education background. Responses from those with a low education level remain unclear.

Leisure attributes of other leisure activities

The research does not investigate the concept of Thai tourists of the availability of leisure attributes of other leisure activities in Tokyo. How the attributes of museums compare with those of other leisure activities in Tokyo is unknown. Thai tourists choose to visit attractions whose leisure attributes can well fit their needs.

### **Findings might be generic**

Given that the majority of the respondents and interviewees have never

ever visited museums in Tokyo, their responses were generic.

This research can be extended by seeking the views of a considerable number of Thais with undergraduate education and comparing leisure attributes between museums and other activities in Tokyo. In addition, given that 87% of the respondents have never visited any museums in Tokyo, the author can look at the reasons for not visiting these museums. The author can further investigate the similarities and differences in the motivation of Thai tourists for visiting these museums generationally.

“Marketing is not merely a commercial function of the museum. On the contrary, the commercial aspect should exist only to ensure that the goal of the museum is achieved (McLean, 1997, p.45).” Marketing in the museum context confirms “the mission of a museum or gallery and is then responsible for the efficient identification, anticipation and satisfaction of its users” (Lewis, 1991, in McLean, 1997, p.47). If museums are to satisfy these needs without considering their basic mission that is to education, museums will then commercialise themselves.

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