



การประชุมวิชาการและนำเสนอผลงานวิจัยระดับชาติและนานาชาติ ครั้งที่ 10
"Global Goals, Local Actions: Looking Back and Moving Forward"

A study of bilingual websites as a marketing communication tool in tourism industry:

The case study of cafes in Phitsanulok, Thailand

**การศึกษาเว็บไซต์สองภาษาในฐานะเครื่องมือการสื่อสารทางการตลาดในอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยว:
กรณีศึกษาจากร้านกาแฟใน จังหวัดพิษณุโลก ประเทศไทย**

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Abstract

Website is currently one of the most effective tools to advertise and communicate to the customers beyond geographical area as well as to expand businesses. Bilingual websites become necessity for businesses to utilize it as a marketing channel, e.g. to increase the sales. The purpose of this research was to explore the impacts of bilingual websites as a marketing communication tool in tourism industry. It is a qualitative study where an in-depth interview and observation were used in this research with 12 café owners who are currently using bilingual websites and are operating in the downtown of Phitsanulok province. The result revealed that bilingual website is an effective marketing communication tool to boost café businesses. The entrepreneur has to be aware and realize the prime benefits of using bilingual website as it is one of the crucial elements of successful business presence, resulting in having more customers, generating more trust, and income.

Keywords : bilingual websites, marketing tool, tourism industry

บทคัดย่อ

ในยุคปัจจุบันเว็บไซต์ถูกใช้งานในฐานะที่เป็นเครื่องมือสำหรับการโฆษณาและติดต่อสื่อสารกับผู้บริโภคที่ครอบคลุมมากกว่าพื้นที่ทางภูมิศาสตร์ อีกทั้งยังสามารถใช้ในการขยายขนาดธุรกิจ โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งเว็บไซต์สองภาษา ที่กลายเป็นเครื่องมือที่สำคัญในการเพิ่มช่องทางทางการตลาด การวิจัยเรื่องนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ในการศึกษาผล จากการใช้เว็บไซต์สองภาษาในฐานะที่เป็นเครื่องมือในการสื่อสารทางการตลาดในอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยว โดยใช้วิธีการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกและโดยการสังเกตจากเจ้าของร้านกาแฟจำนวนสิบสองร้านในจังหวัดพิษณุโลกที่มีการใช้เว็บไซต์สองภาษาจากผลการศึกษาพบว่าการใช้เว็บไซต์สองภาษาเป็นเครื่องมือสื่อสารทางการตลาดที่สำคัญในการช่วยเร่งการเติบโตของธุรกิจ ฉะนั้นผู้ประกอบการจะต้องตระหนักถึงความสำคัญของการใช้เครื่องมือดังกล่าวเนื่องจากจะส่งผลถึงการมีอยู่ของธุรกิจ จำนวนลูกค้า การสร้างความเชื่อมั่นให้กับลูกค้าและเพิ่มยอดขาย ให้กับธุรกิจ

คำสำคัญ: เว็บไซต์สองภาษา, เครื่องมือทางการตลาด, อุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยว



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Introduction

Phitsanulok is known as 'the city of two rivers,' which is located in the lower-northern region of Thailand and has a plethora of historical, natural and cultural attractions. Both local and foreign tourists come to Phitsanulok for leisure and travel. According to National Statistical Office of Thailand (2015), a number of international visitors has dramatically increased from 155,000 in 2009 to nearly 200,000 visitors in 2015 and ,from 271 million baht in 2009 to 695 million baht in 2015. According to (Westcott, 2012 ,(tourism industry includes wide array of business ranging from hotels, theme parks, airlines, casinos to food service operations and restaurants Particular to .registered restaurants and cafes as one of tourism industry, Sirikeratikul)2017 (stated that they have dramatically grown as the continuing growth of the country's tourism industry and the changes of consumer's behaviors. The restaurant business in Phitsanulok brings significant revenues to the province . Hotel and lodging is on the first rank of foreign tourist's spending, followed by food and drink as the second rank, representing 21 percent of foreign tourist's spending (Thaiwebsites, 2017).

Researchers focus on café business, which is regarded as a prime component of restaurant business sector and is operated throughout the city. Café business in this paper is are referred to as the place where the major traffic is coffee-based customers,; specifically to freshly brewed coffee business, it is likely to remain a strong business in the country, particularly to premium coffee shops as they have grown and expanded in almost every province in Thailand as well as in Phitsanulok (Udomkit and Mathews, 2015). Due to the fact that coffee consumption is expected to rise every year (Tran, Barraji, Bi and Jack, 2016), it is interesting to study how entrepreneurs survive in a highly competitive environment.

Technology and online media have been continually evolved and it has played a significant role in modern lifestyles and today's business. Ted Saarikko, Ulrika H. Westergren and Tomas Blomquist (Saarikko et.al.,2017) refer website as the Internet of Things (IoT) that has been used widely. The website is one of the most powerful online marketing media used to promote conventional business (Rodriguez and Stamatii, 2018). Vida Davidavičienė, davidaviciene Jolanta Sabaitytė, Sigitas Davidavičius, and Michail Potapov (Davidavičiene, 2014) said that having websites are the primary channel of online marketing communication found in famous coffee houses such as Starbucks and, Café-Amazon. Numerous research shows that website invention creates brand awareness, and the use of the website is an integral tool for business success as it can send messages to the targeted consumers.

Douglas and Craig (Douglas and Craig, 1997) explained that consumer behavior has changed due to the experiences acquired from past purchases. With the IoT, customer can browse and find information online before going to physical location (Chincholkar and



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Sonwaney, 2017) changed. Therefore, the development of this research paper is on the basis of the continued change in these four consumer behavior aspects: an era of digital channel Internet of Things (IoT) as powerful online advertising media , importance of having website as a vital online marketing device, significant growth in international tourists and restaurant business with the focus on café sector. In addition, having the website is related to self-image congruity as customers can visualize about their stores, products and , services.

Therefore, the researchers are highly interested in examining how bilingual websites affect the business success. Results can be strategically applied to café business operators in the high foreign tourist areas. Research findings can also be applied to other business sectors and can be expanded for further research and studies.

Purpose/Objective

This study was conducted to explore the impacts of using bilingual websites as a marketing communication tool.

Research Scope

1. The sample used in the research was 12 café businesses operated in Phitsanulok from 20 café, provided that these 20 cafés have bilingual websites.
2. Research duration is 4 months from August 2018- November 2018

Literature review

According to Grewal et.al. (2017), website impacts business growth by enhancing customers base as it provides information on where to buy products or services that may best meet their needs. On the same token, this also enables the entrepreneur for a better understanding on customers' preferences when they surf on the website (Grewal et.al., 2017). The website should be designed to be a user-friendly website e.g. effective navigation, well-planned and formatted information, mobile compatibility (Bilgihan and Bujisic, 2015). Luna et. al, (2003) further suggested that it should not only provide crucial business information, particular to contact information and directions to the business place, but also offering content or a full website in multiple languages is also beneficial to customers. This is also supported by Translatorthoughts (2017) that offering multiple languages will expand products to a new market easier.

In this technological era, Internet and website are used as an online tool to interact and communicate between entrepreneurs and customers (Davidaviciene et.al., 2014). Salehi et.al (2012) insisted that offering a competitive website is of essence to attract more customers. Thus, it can be seen that website, particularly bilingual website, is one of the



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most effective marketing tool to enhance business in this technological advanced era by providing information about product, price, place of business and promotion. Prior to the decision-making process of consumers, they will consider if such products or services has a value and meets their needs. The entrepreneur has to first understand the marketing mix in order to understand consumer on what they need and to take products or services in a more structured way. This is most commonly executed through the 4 P's of marketing, which are product, price, place and promotion (Jerome 1995) and was introduced by McCarthy in 1900s (Yudelso 1999).

Methodology

This research is a qualitative research which used an in-depth interview to study the impact of bilingual websites as a marketing communication tool for café business. In-depth interview and observation were used as methods to conduct this quantitative research together with purposive sampling method to gather data from 12 cafés located in Phitsanulok, where they have bilingual websites in Thai and English. In this research, structured interview was employed as a research instrument, and analyzed by identifying, coding and categorizing patterns found in the data collected.

Findings/Results

Out of 138 cafés in Phitsanulok, there are only 20 cafés (14.50%) where they made their website available in bilingual. Although, there is a small number of cafés using bilingual website, it is interesting that these cafés obtained benefit from it. Most of the cafés that were interviewed has been operated for at least 2 years (41.67%), and more than 5 years (41.67%). From the in-depth interviews, it had been found that all participants found that setting the reasonable price is the most important factor affecting the revenue of their business followed by the amount of customer and advertising strategies. They asserted that bilingual websites had helped them to attract not only local customers, but also foreign customers and to obtain more revenue from these foreign customers.

Bilingual website has played an important role as a means to enhance the reputation of café as the website is accessible anywhere at anytime. Since English is one of the language that has been used worldwide, offering website in English has helped café business to be known widely and helped the customers to have a better understanding of the products offered in the café, the price of products, promotion and the location of the café. Not only that the website can be used to advertise the café business, it is also a tool for the feedbacks to be heard directly by the owner of the café' through the comments and rating



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e.g. the quality and the ingredients of the product, the appropriateness of price and the need of customers etc.

Conclusion and Discussion

Not only traditional 4 P's marketing mix that the entrepreneur can use to produce a desired response from its target market, offering bilingual website is also one of an essential component as it is a marketing communication tool that provides an important link between entrepreneurs and customers. The above findings show that bilingual websites can enhance the ability of entrepreneurs to produce the product to satisfy the needs of customer and to set the price that is suitable for the product offered by using the comments or feedbacks that were left on the website. In addition, it boosts brand recognition and sales by ways of advertising, offering sales promotion and etc. The website is a tool that bridge the gap between entrepreneurs and customers to be able to communicate which each other beyond geographical limitation. The message from the website can reach the customer easier and faster.

In conclusion, it can be said that bilingual website is a tool that enables the entrepreneur to put the product, at the right time, and at the right place and price by receiving instant response from the customers. However, the entrepreneurs have to ensure that they have a suitable strategy to response the customer effectively via the website.

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