

Effects of Language Usage in Tourist Destination Explanations: Case of Audio Guide Tour

Angvarrah Lieungnapar

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand

E-mail address: angvarrah.li@ssru.ac.th

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Abstract:

Purpose: This paper is planned to examine the relationship between tourist guide communication skills such as language ability, body language and personal appearance and tourist satisfaction. One of the basic aims of research is to outlook that how destination image mediates tourist satisfaction in the heritage tourism audio guide in Thailand. **Design/methodology/approach:** This study is advanced by adopting quantitative survey consisting of a self-administrative questionnaire. For research model verification structural equation model on AMOS is used to analyses data collected from a sample of 454 to investigate the link between communication skills and tourist's satisfaction. **Findings:** The SEM's statistical results revealed the positive relationship between language ability, body language, personal appearance and tourist satisfaction. Effective communication skills increase destination image that also rise tourist satisfaction. So mediating variable of destination image is also significantly related to tourist's level of satisfaction. **Implications:** This paper contribute in tourism and communication literature by studying the role of communication skills in tourism. Moreover, by linking communication skills with destination image and its impact on tourist's satisfaction it enhances tourist spot and heritage destinations staff understanding towards importance of communication skills in satisfying tourists. Manager of tourism destination can provide training to improve communication skills of their employees.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is not as simple in modern days as it was in the old days; tourism has manifold aspects to revolutionize it (Bianchi & Selwyn, 2017). Language constitutes a legacy to society and the effective usage of language in communication in the field of tourism is very important. In the past tourism was not as much easy and convenient as it is nowadays (Bernstein & Woosnam, 2019). Today the concept of tourism has completely changed. Now it is easy to go in the past and with complete and whole information and historical importance throughout (Higgins & Ikeda, 2019). Tourism is the

field where tourists from all over the world are linked with each other through the means of communication. According to Manca (2018), tourist agencies and companies play a very great role in making the tour of the tourist memorable, effective with entertainment, and knowledge about specific historical places with a sense of satisfaction. However, it has examined that during 2015-2018, the no of tourists from different countries travels in Thailand.

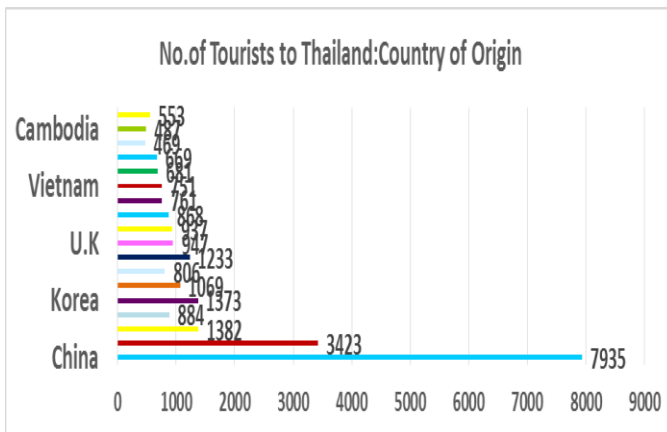


FIGURE I:
No of Tourists

Because of the huge significance of transmission abilities in proving distinctive products and services, which, in turn, could mainly affect visitors satisfaction degree and also generates a significant image for tourism sectors and institutions (Koodsela, Dong, & Sukpatch, 2019). a study recently by Yodsuwan, Pianluprasidh, and Butcher (2018), reported that language ability directly affects the behavior of tourist and this indicates that much of work has done regarding visitor satisfaction. None of the past efforts has illustrated the effects of language usage in visitor destination explanations to improve the overall satisfaction level of visitors. Thus, the given effort is new and justifiable because it aims to shed light on the role of language ability and personal appearance in enhancing the exclusive process of satisfaction of visitors, The below table contains the most important factors that affect the satisfaction level of visitors

TABLE I:
Satisfaction level of visitors;

Tourist/Visitor	Service in the destination	Destination environment
Socio-demographic factors.	Sensory attributes like flavor and texture.	Marketing communication such as guidebook and internet.
Exposure effect	Service	Service

and experience.	availability.	encounters such as expected service quality.
Physiological factors like thirst and hunger.	Price, value, and quality.	Gastronomic identity and image.
Food-related personality traits.	Methods of service deliverance.	Contextual impacts such as time and place.

Based on the above-presented justification, one of the main objectives of the present research is to empirically investigate the overall effects of language ability (LA) factors in affecting the satisfaction degree of tourists. The second objective of the research is to analyze the impact of body language (BL) in affecting the extent of tourist satisfaction, and the third purpose of the paper is to evaluate the influence of personal appearance (PA) on the satisfaction level of visitors. The final intention of the thesis is to analyze the mediating role of destination image in affecting the existing interrelation of the study such as interdependence between LA, BL, PA, and TS level.

Like any research, this paper has profound significance and scope to theory as well as practice, theoretically, the present study contributes to the current body of data and information on these factors by identifying the underlying process through evaluating the effect of destination image in the associations of LA, PA, and BL on TS. Practically, the results of this paper prove to be beneficial for academic scholars and tourism policymakers. This research is framed as follows, chapter second literature review on LA, PA and tourist satisfaction and then indicate the study hypothesis, chapter three gives the study methodology part and the chapter four gives data analysts and outcomes and finally chapter five gives study outcomes and conclusions with limitations and future suggestions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *Theory of Tourist Satisfaction*

According to this theory for any tourist satisfaction, the most significant factor is effective services in terms of destination explanations and safety (Suhartanto, 2018), this is major because any intention of unsafe and bad service derives tourists away. A small incident in terms of bad service too can cause adverse service publicity, according to San Martín, Herrero, and García de los Salmones (2019), visitors come to unwind, to relax and to enjoy facilities: primarily any suggestion of the fact that a destination maybe with lack of facilities, will negate the objective of the tourist satisfaction (Gülsün, Yıldız & Yılmaz, 2017; Albayrak, 2018). Thus according to this theory factors like language ability of destination persons, hotels, and resorts who lack facilities about language and personal appurtenance directly affect the exclusive process of TS and behavior (Martin, Saayman, & du Plessis, 2019). Furthermore, the most necessary factor for visitor satisfaction is what tourist wants services at the destination and which language facilities a visitor receives from the destination.

2.2. *The Relationship between Language Ability and Tourist Satisfaction*

Compelling language skills and abilities are significant in the tourism industry regardless of some individuals and destination employees not being guests facing (Jackson, 2019). Few tourism institutions spend a considerable amount of capital on training their individuals to interact with the tourists and visitors. Significant language abilities are a learned art and not a natural ability so one must consider training to improve staff language abilities that further positively influence the satisfaction level of visitors (Kuo, Cheng, Chang, & Chuang, 2018). According to Qiu and Qi (2020), excellent language abilities of staff enhance visitor satisfaction as it conveys that the particular tourism sector listening to tourists, valuing their feedback, and transforming clear messages (Ni, Pandit, Laksmi, Budiarta, & Sudini, 2018). Apart from language communication,

the individuals and staff of destination places also should know how to write emails in different languages, and excellent language skills and abilities will improve the satisfaction level of tourists which will further prove beneficial for the destination. Therefore, destination staff and individuals must have excellent knowledge and language skills about to attend visitors according to their language, race, and culture (El-Adly, 2019). Thus based on the above literature, the following hypothesis is suggested;

H1: Workers' language ability directly and significantly affects the satisfaction level of tourists.

2.3. *The Interrelation between Body Language and Visitor Satisfaction Level*

Tourism has become diverse and multidimensional purposes as it enables tourists to visit the world according to his perceptions and fulfill his dreams with the services required to satisfy him (Miličević, Mihalič, & Sever, 2017; Ban & Oyabu, 2019). There is a great interrelation between the body language of the tourism company's agents or service providers and the visitor's satisfaction in destination image through an audio explanation. The audio guide creates a scene for the tourist to understand the value and the worth of the place and also the importance of visiting. In this regard, the study indicates that there must be a confident body language in expressing the ideas as it satisfies the tourist and they can get proper information and entertainment through this visit so, there are very significance and value in making a tourist satisfied (Hall, O'Mahony, & Gayler, 2017; Ban, Kimura & Oyabu, 2017). Consequently, the paper proposes the following hypothesis;

H2: Workers' body language directly and positively influences the satisfaction degree of visitors.

2.4. The Correspondence between Personal Appearance and Tourist Satisfaction

According to Ashton (2018), personal appearance is an often-disregarded section of language and communication abilities that have a direct impact on the satisfaction of the listener. PA is extremely significant in communication with visitors because first impressions are typically made in the first few seconds of attending tourists, and PA is an important part of that. According to another study by Baker and Kim (2018), the tourism industry is one of the important industries where the PA of workers and employees does matter for improving the level of TS. In the tourism sector, the polished and significant appearance of employees is vital to success towards TS, because everything about the destination will be analyzed through appearance and reviews before a tourist even decides to travel to the destination (Suhartanto, 2018). Therefore, to improve the satisfaction level of visitors it is necessary for the employees of destination place that they must look professional and presentable mainly because they are an integral part of the visitor satisfaction process. Therefore, the PA of employees is significant because it develops a professional, mutually respectful, and trustful environment and enhances communication which further impacts the satisfaction degree of visitors positively. Thus, the above discussion leads to the development of below hypothesis;

H3: Employee personal appearance directly and significantly influences the satisfaction degree of tourists.

2.5. The Mediating role of Destination Image in the Association between Language Ability and Tourist Satisfaction

Many variables are considered significant in the development of the touristic image of the place or destinations, between these, variables are the properties of the place and the promotional instruments and different tools (Park, Hsieh, & Lee, 2017). One of the most significant properties of destinations is their position, situation, and channel.

Different destinations typically contain several dimensions of places and points. The major point of the destination reflects the tradition and norms of the host region and country. Furthermore, other points and places, which provide international standards to satisfy the needs of the visitors mainly, range between Latin, Asian, and European. Elahi, Moradi, and Saffari (2020) in a study recommended a significant model that evaluates the impact of the core types of service quality on the destination image, and the satisfaction of visitors, the findings of this research indicated that material conditions and its connection to service have a direct influence on the satisfaction of the visitor and also affect the image of the destination. So, the study hypothesized that;

H4: Destination image significantly mediates the association between language ability and the level of TS.

2.6. The Mediating Influence of Destination Image on the Connection between Body Language and Tourist Satisfaction Level

Destination image (DI) has a very effective impact and mediating role as it urges and determines a tourist to visit a particular place with the particular tourist organization or company, in this regard a positive behavior (Albaity & Melhem, 2017; Dahri, Hameed, Nawaz, Sami, & Bux Shah, 2019). Tourist satisfaction reaches its peak when he meets what he has decided to see and what he visits. The destination image is the program set by tourist companies to entertain the tourist. According to Park et al. (2017) a tourist guide using all modern equipment as mobile application, language, and destination information confidently, he satisfies the tourists with the excellent skill of expressing his information and creates satisfaction. Destination Images are the source of attraction for the tourists to visit those places particularly. Thus, the audio guide helps the tourist to enjoy those places with a complete sense of satisfaction (Parrey, Hakim, & Rather, 2019). DI is the route that attracts tourists to visit these places with proper guidelines and

enjoyment. Hence, based on the above discussion the study recommends the following hypothesis;

H5: Destination image favorably mediates the association between body language and tourist satisfaction.

2.7. The Mediating Impact of Destination Image on the Relationship between Personal Appearance and Tourist Satisfaction

The DI creates attraction and a complete guideline set by the tourist company to attract more and more visitors, with all the facilities needed to fulfill the requirement of tourist satisfaction (Akroush, Jraisat, Kurdieh, AL-Faouri, & Qatu, 2016). To convey these facilities with the best possible use of technology, media, services every aspect must satisfying the tourist creates a source of satisfaction (Kim, Park, & Kim, 2016). The tourist guide's appearance plays a key role in this regard and he plays the role of an ambassador of his company and complete guidance to the tourists. Thus to say, DI plays a mediating role in creating a strong relationship between personal appearance and tourist satisfaction (Suhartanto, 2018). DI has a very strong impact as it allows tourists to fulfill their dreams and ideas and in this regard satisfaction in expectation and reality has great value and importance.

H6: Destination image directly mediates the relationship between personal appearance and satisfaction level of visitors

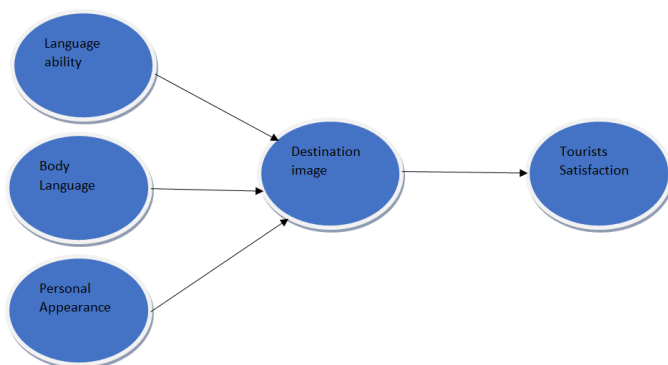


Figure II:
Model

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Population and Sampling

The population of this study comprised of the tourists and staff at cultural and heritage destinations in Thailand different cities. Purposive sampling was used to develop sample, 454 respondents who have visited heritage and cultural spots such as museum and temples in three different cities: Bangkok, Phuket and Chiang Mai were enrolled in sample. A questionnaire in form of paper were distributed in these spots by a team of surveyors, questionnaire was designed in a manner that maximum took 5 to 10 minutes of tourists. Before assimilating questionnaire, it was reviewed 3 tourism experts and hotel managers and was pre-tested on 10 tourists to maximize the practicability of questionnaires in context of tourist's perception. Total 600 responses were collected after data scanning only 454 were reserved for main data analysis.

3.2. Questionnaire Development

Centered on previous literature and practical evidence, a self-reporting structured questionnaire was developed, which contained previously confirmed items drawn from different scales regarding Communication skills (language ability, body language, personal appearance) tourist satisfaction and image destination. Responses were categorized in Five scales from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

This paper inspected communication skills by three scopes language ability, body language and personal appearance. First independent variable "language ability" (LA) was measured by five items containing "Language ability of staff helps to build trust between staff and customer" as a sample item from (Battour, Ismail, Battor, & Awais, 2017). The same scale was utilized to estimate second independent variable which is body language (BL) by adopting five items like "Body language skills

(smile, eye contact and gestures) show willing to provide the service”. The third independent variable “personal appearance” (PA) was quantified by three items such as “The personal appearance of staff affects confidence of staff during service”. The respondents put out their views on Five-point Likert type scale. With composite reliability 0.963, 0.959 and 0.933 respectively for each construct which indicates that tour guides have good communication skills.

The meditating variable that is “destination image” (DI) is evaluated by five items that are taken out from Prayag and Ryan (2012) to get the idea about the image of potential destination for tourism. The items were used as it is and one sample item is “This place has variety and quality of accommodations”, which was graded on 5 scales and found to be reliable with composite reliability of 0.915.

The dependent variable “tourist satisfaction” (SAT) was assessed by Vriens (2006) scale that provided three items that measured tourist satisfaction in context of audio guide tour for exploration. One of them is “Overall, compared to your expectations,

were your experiences while visiting the museum” the respondents documented their satisfaction level from 1= much worse to 5= much better. Composite reliability for tourist satisfaction was 0.898.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This paper Including of a purposive sample 454 respondents was administrated to test proposed model in Thailand’s tourism sector. The data analysis summarizes the respondents profile that showed males were dominate, out of 454 tourists 251 were male and 203 were female. Among which majority of informants like 144 ages are less than 25 years, 194 are 25 to 35 years old, 99 comes from age group of 35 years to 45 years and only 17 tourists are more than 45 years old. In terms of experience, 43.4% respondents (than 2 and less than 5 years’ experience). 30.6 % have been travelling (5 to 8 years) this show that majority is experienced.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimu m	Maximu m	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
TourSat	454	1.00	5.00	3.1806	1.04887	-.146	.115
DestImag	454	1.00	5.00	3.3405	1.01547	-.336	.115
languaAbil	454	1.00	5.00	3.4899	1.17721	-.515	.115
BodyLang	454	1.00	5.28	3.4004	1.15510	-.484	.115
PersonApp	454	1.00	5.00	3.5411	1.16381	-.552	.115
Valid (listwise)	N 454						

Table 2 serve as a summary of the characteristics which prepared by Descriptive Statistics estimations through descriptive analysis. Here N is four hundred and fifty-four (454) which designate the no of observations. The variables are found to be free from outlier and significant differences as Minimum value and maximum value are 1 and 5. The data generated means for different five constructs such as, tourist satisfaction, destination image, language

ability, body language and personal appearance as 3.1806, 3.3405, ,3.4899, 3.4004 and 3.5411 independently for each variable. To test the normality of data distribution skewness test is exhibited, here the values fall in range of -1+1 satisfying the criteria of normal distribution.

TABLE III:
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.923
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	10293.879
	df	231
	Sig.	0

BL4	.875
BL5	.881
PA1	.828
PA2	.854
PA3	.880
PA4	.867

The KMO and Bartlett's Test are represented in Table no 2. Rendering to criteria of sample size adequacy the yielded values have to be higher for ensuring sample suitability. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy turned out to be 0.923 above 0.7 and close to 1 which acclaims that sample size is appropriate for this study sue to higher measure of adequacy. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity total the construction of constructs. Chi-square= 10293.879 having 231 degree of freedom. These values Significance level is lower than of 0.05, attests that sample is suitable for factor analysis.

Table 3 consists of Factor loadings for items calculated by Confirmatory factor analysis and outlined in 5 columns for 5 components. Rotated Component Matrix fundamentally stipulates items accuracy and validity. All the item's factor loading is greater than 0.7 it meets the criteria of consistency and validity.

The results are clear depiction of valid factor loading as each item endures a factor loading that is not below 0.7 for evidence tourist satisfaction factor loading is up to .789 - .879, Destination image .761-.824, language ability .841 - .898, body language .849 - .881 and personal awareness .828- .867 which supports variables correlation.

TABLE IV:
Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
TS1					.789
TS2					.879
TS3					.833
DI1			.761		
DI2			.755		
DI3			.798		
DI4			.856		
DI5			.824		
LA1		.841			
LA2		.842			
LA3		.852			
LA4		.883			
LA5		.898			
BL1	.849				
BL2	.868				
BL3	.861				

TABLE V:

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

	CR	AV	MS	BL	TS	DI	LA	PA
		E	V					
B	0.9	0.8	0.3	0.9				
L	59	25	15	08				
T	0.8	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.8			
S	98	45	18	31	63			
D	0.9	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.8		
I	15	85	18	35	64	28		
L	0.9	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.9	
A	63	38	15	61	41	49	16	
P	0.9	0.7	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.8
A	33	77	62	72	14	12	26	82

Table 4 assimilate Convergent and Discriminant Validity to measure the relation of constructs either they are related or not. Convergent validity is obtained by CFA and devices for valuation are composite reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Statistically it is noticed that language ability is decidedly related due to its

composite reliability 0.963 and likewise, got extreme AVE 0.838 which confirms internal consistency. On other side, tourist satisfaction devices minimum composite 0.898 among potential variables. The values for composite reliability and Average Variance Extracted are above 0.5 and 0.7 so convergent validity is proven. The same table also reveal discriminate validity by placing fluctuating values in diagonal position and the higher AVE from MVE also an indicator of Discriminant Validity.

TABLE VI:
Model Fit Indices

CFA Indicators	CMIN/D F	GFI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA
Threshold Value	≤ 3	≥ 0.8	≥ 0.9	≥ 0.9	≤ 0.08
Observed Value	2.037	0.88	0.96	0.96	0.057
Adjusted Value	7	0	0	0	

Model fitness is evaluated by conformatry factor analysis by computing goodness of fit index (GFI) and root mean square error of approximation, (RMSEA) incremental fit measures including normed fit index (NFI), adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI) and comparative fit index (CFI) the table no

6 shows that all observed values 2.037, 0.887, 0.960, 0.960 and 0.057 are in line with standarized values so model is fit for data to validate hyopthesis (Hameed, Basheer, Iqbal, Anwar, & Ahmad, 2018; Hassan, Hameed, Basheer, & Ali, 2020; Ul-Hameed, Mohammad, & Shahar, 2018).

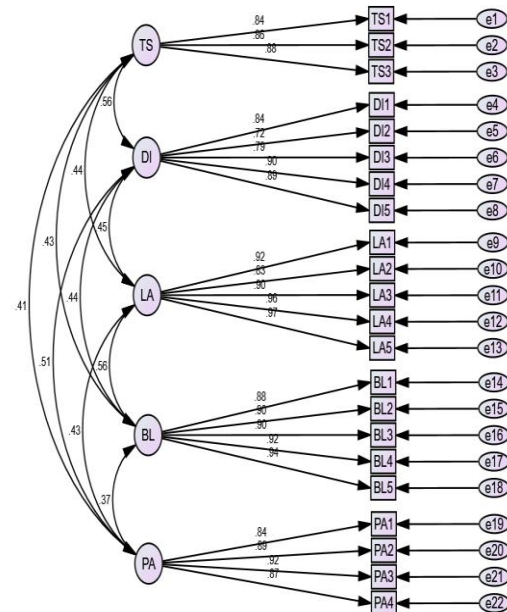


FIGURE III:
CFA

TABLE VII:
Structural Equation Modeling

Total effect	PersonApp	BodyLang	languaAbil	DestImag
DestImag	.331**	.154**	.222**	.000
TourSat	.222**	.224**	.249**	.356**
Direct effect	PersonApp	BodyLang	languaAbil	DestImag
DestImag	.331**	.154**	.222**	.000
TourSat	.104*	.169**	.170**	.356**
Indirect Effect	PersonApp	BodyLang	languaAbil	DestImag
DestImag	.000	.000	.000	.000

g				
TourSat	.118**	.055**	.079**	.000

Structural Equation Model is performed to demonstrate either hypothesized relationship are significant and acceptable or not. It is noticed that enhancing personal appearance by single unit direct rise in destination image by 33.1%, and tourist satisfaction by 10.4 %, with one unit change in body language 15.4% accumulation in destination image and 16.9% growth for tourist satisfaction, alongside this if language ability is intensified by 1 unit it will lead a positive change of 22.2% in destination image and 13.5% in tourist satisfaction, So it is confirmed that these hypothesis have direct and positive impression on tourist satisfaction. On other hand, destination image endorsed significant mediating impact on tourist satisfaction because unitary addition origin increase on tourist's satisfaction by 11.8%, 5.0%, 7.9% respectively so these results lead to acceptance of indirect hypothesis.

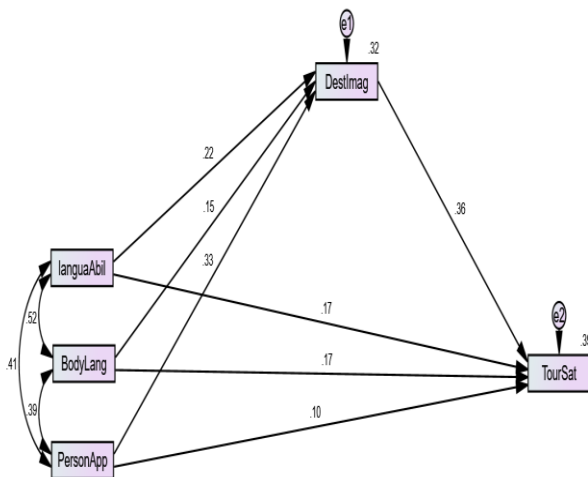


FIGURE IV:
SEM

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study has shed light on the importance of communication skills and language in tourism sector and offers usable and current information on tourist behavior in audio guide tour in Thai heritage tourism. The relationship among three

communication skills (language ability, body language and personal appearance), destination image and tourist satisfaction are confirmed by generating hypotheses and testing them via Structural equation model. First of all, this study confirmed a direct and significant impact of language ability on the satisfaction level of tourists (H1). Simply employee's language ability and skills to understand, speak and write in different language helps to satisfy tourists. It enables staff to communicate effectively with tourists to understand their requirements which enhance tourist satisfaction which is also claimed by (Langvinienė & Daunoravičiūtė, 2015). Further, the relationship between body language and tourist satisfaction is also significant (H2). Results revealed that positive body language such as smile, tone and gestures has great impression on tourist behavior and they are more satisfied when body language of tour guides or staff is appropriate (Hall et al., 2017). The study emphasized that staff personal appearance is also directly related to tourist satisfaction (H3) as employee appearance has significant impact on satisfaction, Neat and clean uniform of employee portray a good appearance and ensure terrorist about the cleanliness and discipline which enhance tourist satisfaction as supported by (Sandaruwani & Gnanapala, 2016). The mediating effect of destination image was also hypothesized (H4) to see how its intermediates tour guides communication skills and tourist satisfaction in Thailand tourism. The language ability of tourism staff which enable them to communicate fluently and easily in foreign language with visitors that depicts a good image of destination which in turn increase tourist satisfaction. The mediating relationship between destination image, body language and tourist satisfaction (H5) is approved due to significance. The professional body language forms a positive image of a destination which also impact tourist satisfaction. The personal appearance is the most important factor for developing destination image.

The findings showed that destination image meditates personal appearance and tourist satisfaction (H6). The presentation of staff basically presents the destination, tidy uniforms and presentable personality of employee indicates hygiene and safety of particular destination, which form tourist satisfaction (Alananzeh, 2017).

Given the above, the outcomes of the study's final results disclosed the key influence of communication skills on destination image and tourist satisfaction. The results showed that all the three communication elements (personal appearance, language ability and body language) are crucial to develop positive destination image for safeguarding tourist satisfaction. This paper will add up valuable data and findings in previous researches and literature. It present new theoretical assumption to examine the connection between communication skills and tourism in broader context. The importance of communication skill is raised in this paper that forces tourism destination management to focus on developing communication skills of their employees, it advises managers to provide training to their staff on learning languages to endure language proficiency. It will give cultural awareness to staff regarding body language and how they can present themselves in a good and appealing way. This paper is also confined to some limitations likewise other studies, which can be eliminated by future researchers. The main limitation is the sample size, we used a purposive sample so it is not generalizable to other contexts, it involved only visitors which have provided limited information so it will be suitable in future to get data from diverse objects such as managers and tour guides. This survey was a paper based questionnaire which was not too manageable so online questionnaires can be utilized in future.

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