

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **Rationale for the Study**

Nowadays people in the city of Bangkok are facing many serious problems such as economic recession, pollution, crime, and working pressure. They need some places for relaxation and reducing stress. One way that can help people decrease stress is to let them relax and enjoy nature at the natural places like public zoos. People will be relaxing and feeling fresher when they are surrounded with animals.

In the heart of Bangkok, there is only one zoo that most people know and used to visit, Dusit Zoo. In the period of King Rama V, Dusit Zoo was one part of Dusit Royal Garden. King Rama V established the Royal Private Garden and introduced a herd of Axis deer from Java and other wild animals into Dusit Royal Garden. In the period of King Rama VIII, The Prime Minister (P. Piboonsongkram) received the Royal offer of Dusit Royal Garden to let the Bangkok Metropolitan take over the Dusit Royal Garden. King Rama VIII offered Dusit Royal Garden to be the Public Zoo and the Public Garden. The Bangkok Metropolitan established the Zoo named “Dusit Zoo” on March 18, 1938. After that, the zoo was turned over to the Zoological Park Organization in February 1954.

Dusit Zoo (Khao Din) is a very popular place for a family with children or even for young couples and all ages. Most Thai people know that Dusit Zoo has lush green surrounds and many flowering shrubs and trees with large ponds complete with foot-paddle boats, play - grounds for the kids, and shady picnic areas.

The area of Dusit Zoo is approximately 47.2 acres, broken down into 35.2 acres of land and 12 acres of water. There are more than 2,000 animals, Thai and exotic, that can be divided as 288 mammals, 1018 birds and 292 reptiles. Dusit Zoo comprises of different 22 sections as shown in the table below:

**Table 1 Sections of Dusit Zoo**

1. The Zoological Park Organization (Head Office)	12. Reptile House
2. Animal Hospital	13. Security Unit
3. Car park	14. Water Sport Landing / Mini Train
4. Nocturnal House	15. Dusit Zoo Restaurant
5. Zoo Museum / Education Center	16. Conservation Building 2
6. Conservation Building 1	17. Dusit Zoo Office / Public Relations
7. Children's Zoo	18. Play Land
8. Bird Island	19. Activity Ground
9. Souvenir Shop	20. Zoo Commissary
10. Hawks Exhibit	21. Food Center
11. Animal Presentations	22. WW II Air-raid Shelter

The average rate of visitors per day is around 1,200 – 2,000 on weekdays and 3,500 – 10,000 on weekends and public holiday (Statistics from the planning department, Dusit Zoo, May 2008 – July 2008). The average rate of visitors during the past seventeen years has fluctuated around 2,000,000 to 2,800,000 that are quite high and satisfactory. (Statistics from the planning department, Dusit Zoo, from 1982 to 1998) The zoo opens daily from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. The admission fee is 50 baht for adult, 10 baht for child, and 10 baht for student.

### **Statement of Problem**

Since 1939 until now, Dusit Zoo has been operating for seventy years. There are lots of developments that have continually occurred since 1954. The zoo's committees have tried to improve Dusit Zoo in every part such as public toilets, ticket rooms, orchid houses, and play land. In the part of supplying animals, they provide more various species of animals from both inside and outside the country, such as, white elephants, barking deer, hippopotamuses, giraffes, and various species of monkeys and birds etc.

In 1999, Dusit Zoo got the budget around 85 million baht from government in order to improve the animals' habitats. The zoo built the new habitats that were nearly alike each animal's natural home. Moreover, the zoo divided the space into many different sections according to the animals' species like reptile house, nocturnal house, monkey section, or pheasant and peacock section. Dusit zoo also made the area surrounded with greenness by planting more flowering trees and decorative plants and made the surrounded pavement much cleaner. The highlight sections of Dusit Zoo are Bird Island, nocturnal house, reptile house, children zoo, animal presentations, rare animals section, and exotic animals section.

However, according to the table below, it is obvious that the number of visitors from 2005 to 2008 has been continually down regardless of all improvements Dusit Zoo has had.

**Table 2 The number of visitors from 2005 to 2008**

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number of visitors	2,166,755	2,046,367	1,915,770	1,746,670

Thus, in this research, the researcher wanted to find out the real reasons that cause the decrease of visitors by looking at the satisfaction such as with facilities, environment, and animals and their habitats of Dusit Zoo. This may yield significant information to respond to the question why there have been a decreasing number of people who frequent the Dusit Zoo, in order to resolve problems and make an improvement. Besides, according to the researcher, there is only one research study conducted about the zoo. Thus, it will be useful for both Zoological Park Organization and people who are interested in this field and want to conduct further research.

### **Purpose of the Study**

According to the topic of this research is related about factors influencing and the level of satisfaction that questionnaire surveying focus on tourists who visit Dusit Zoo. The research's objectives are as follows:

1. To describes characteristics of people visiting the zoo and the level of satisfaction of the service at Dusit Zoo
2. To study the environment and guide the development of Dusit Zoo through more effective results of the evaluation its success in serving the tourists.

### **Scope of the Study**

The subjects of this study comprised tourists visiting Dusit Zoo. This research drew the general details of Dusit Zoo and background of place that inspired the researcher to write the objectives of the research.

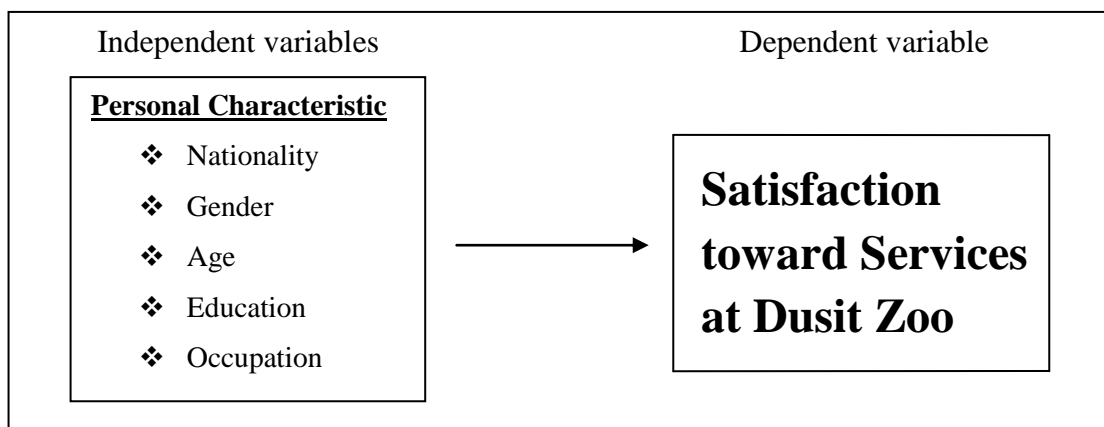
The subjects of this research were limited to visitors who were more than 15 years old and visited Dusit Zoo during the survey period. The sample was selected by stratified random sampling (Stratified Random Sampling) and the activity sub-units sampling (Sampling Units). The research utilized 400 sets of questionnaire and recommendations summarized to improve problems.

The instrument for the survey was the self-administered pre-coded questionnaire, that is, the participants were asked to answer the questionnaire by themselves. The questionnaire consisted of both close-ended and open-ended questions.

To ensure ease to the study and specific scope, the researcher created the conceptual framework to demonstrate the relationship between input and output.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this research is illustrated and described as follows:



**Figure 1 Conceptual Framework**

### **Basic Assumption**

The personal characteristics of each visitor are related to level of satisfaction with the tourism Dusit Zoo. The subsequent assumptions are as follows:

1. Gender of visitors is related to expectations and satisfaction of tourists Dusit Zoo.
2. Age of visitors is related to expectation and satisfaction from Dusit Zoo.
3. The level of visitors' education is related to expectations and satisfaction from Dusit Zoo.
4. Visitors' occupation is related to expectations and satisfaction from Dusit Zoo.
5. Visitor's income is related to expectation and satisfaction from Dusit Zoo.
6. The number of times visitor use the service and satisfaction from Dusit Zoo.

Dusit Zoo is a very popular place for a family with children or even for young couples and all ages. Most Thai people know that Dusit Zoo has lush green surrounding, many flowering shrubs and trees, with large ponds complete with foot-paddle boats, play - grounds for the kids, and shady picnic areas. The visitors' satisfaction toward the facilities inside Dusit Zoo is important. The overall satisfaction of visitors toward Dusit Zoo should be satisfactory level.

## **Limitations**

Due to time limitations this research was not focused on all the aspects regarding visitors. As a result, the sample size was too small for business research, which made validity and generalize ability limited.

Furthermore, there are also limitations in using questionnaires, which may have affected the interpretation of these results. These are considered below;

1. The information gained from questionnaire can sometimes be unreliable (incorrectly filled in, missing answers etc) or untruthful (sometimes respondents tried to give answers that showed them in a better light). These sorts of errors or omissions could have a great impact on the results. In an attempt to reduce these risks the researcher had to design the questionnaire as simple as possible.

2. Waiting for questionnaire to be filled in can be very time consuming. Therefore the questionnaire was published early in the study, and a deadline implemented, allowing time to complete the rest of the study.

## **Human Ethics**

The nature of the study, including the objectives were explained clearly to participants in written and verbal forms. The researcher enclosed the cover letter with questionnaire in order to inform the participants about the researcher's details and the purpose of conducting this research. The questionnaire used in this research has already been done as pre-test and adjusted so as to conform to the objectives. The participants were allowed an opportunity to ask question concerning the study, and their questions were explained to their satisfaction. Once they volunteer to answer the questionnaire, the questionnaire was filled out. After completion of the questionnaire, it was handed in to researcher who was there to answer any questions that the participants might have during the answering procedure.

The participants were ensured that all the answers they contributed to this research would be kept confidential and used for the purposes of research only. In case, they found some inappropriate questions and did not want to answer them, they can feel free to do so.

The researcher did not delete any answers of the subjects arbitrarily. Every answer was used as important details for conducting the research's outcome that later

would be offered to concerned authorities of Dusit Zoo in order to be used as a base-line information to improve the quality and the services of the zoo.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research yielded significant information to respond to the question why there have been a decreasing number of people who frequent Dusit Zoo. By knowing the visitors' opinions about the problems or the weak points of Dusit zoo they can provide some useful suggestions. The results will be beneficial to Dusit Zoo in order to be used as base-line information to improve the quality and the services of the zoo that will in turn benefit Dusit Zoo as well as the visitors to the zoo. Besides, it can be beneficial to other people who are interested in conducting further research in this field.

Moreover, it also has some benefits to the management team, business owners and shareholders such as the following:

**1. a Management Team** will be responsible in understanding the needs and expectations of the tourists in order to give them satisfactions on all the products and services in the Zoo. In addition the management team should provide excellent services to serve the tourists by improving the level of standards of the business.

**2. Business Owners and Shareholders** will make the decision to renovate the old facilities such as cages, wheel carts for horses, sidewalk and bridge, etc. In addition, they will modernize facilities and develop the services based on the tourist expectations.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Zoo** - is a site where wild animals are housed for exhibition. It is a park where live wild animals from different parts of the world are kept in cages or enclosures for people to see. Those animals are also bred in order to be studied by scientists and students.

**Visitor** - refers to people who are more than 15 years old and visit Dusit Zoo during the survey's period.

**Tourist** - is a person who is traveling or visiting a place for pleasure. Referring to Tourism Authority of Thailand (2009) it was focused on the statistical

term of the number of tourists. It can be visitors who are interested for sightseeing and watching the animals, relaxation, or for studying.

**Factor influencing the tourist** - refers to the influential factor of tourist consisting of external and internal factors and including perceptions, motivators that affect the process of decision- making.

**Tourist Attraction** - is a place that provides a lot of businesses and services to serve the needs and make visitors' satisfied (Palmer and McCole, 2000). It includes a place that provides full facilities, services, activities, and arrangement of the trips and transfers (Pearce and Lee, 2005).

**Tourist Motivation** - is a means of attracting tourists to visit the place (Leiper, 2004). There are a lot of theories such as Maslow's theory, Mackay's theory, and Crompton's theory related to the way that destinations are promoted, through magazine, newspaper, and television (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). Moreover, special activities are also introduced such as adventure activity, and these are the reasons to help tourist make the decision to choose one attraction over another.

**Tourist Satisfaction** - is an act of fulfilling tourist expectations. It also includes the satisfaction and demand for better services. These combined with push and pull factors to satisfy the tourists and achieve excellent experiences for perfect destinations (Yoon and Uysal, 2005).

**Satisfaction toward the Animals' Conditions and their Habitats** - are people's feelings with the physical situation of animals and the conditions of their habitats.

**Satisfaction toward the Facilities** - is people's feelings with the conveniences that Dusit Zoo provides to its visitors such as toilets, car parking, public telephones, food center etc.

**Satisfaction toward the Environment** - is the people's feelings with the surrounding area inside Dusit Zoo such as greenness, shadiness, the decoration of the gardens, the variety of flowers and trees, etc.



### Timeline

Week	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12
Activities						
Finalizing Topic	*					
Design Questionnaire		*				
Research Proposal			*			
Conduct Survey				*		
Analysis of Result					*	
Preparation of Research & Submit						*

Figure 2 Timeline