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# A Study of Tourists' Environmental Perceptions of the Functional Design of Popular Resorts in Chiang Rai Province

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## ABSTRACT

Environmental perception involves the visitors' past socioeconomic and cultural experiences which direct their cognitive process vis-à-vis the physical settings of the built environment. This research used resorts in the Chiangrai province as a case study to examine the perceptual process of foreign and local visitors to ultimately derive a set of design guidelines for resort improvement. An exploratory survey on the Muang and Maesai Districts was conducted to sort out the taxonomy of medium-size resorts and to generate a sampling frame for extensive survey in the later state. An extensive in-depth interview was conducted with owners and designers of the resorts vis-à-vis their physical features. Finally, a questionnaire survey on environmental perception was conducted with 100 local and 100 foreign visitors. Pictorial stimuli, which are images with controlled camera angles and temporal variables while using graphics software were utilized to solicit answers for specific perception on important functional areas.

*Keywords:* Functional design, Environment, Perception environment; tourist; resort

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## 1. Introduction

According to Chiang Rai province is famous for tourism. In the winter of every year is a lot of visitors, both local and foreign visitors (Statistics resort province of Chiang Rai in 2011) Since 1998 the resorts built serving visitor's travel is increased up to 10% in both resorts at the Muang and Mae Sai district ,Most

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of the resort design is applied. Vernacular house style to be a part of design offers a unique part of the design. The visitors were impressed and perceived functional area and environment of the resort.

This is a major factor in selecting resort for residence, therefore, to promote architectural design that response functional area and has vernacular identity as well as to develop the tourism in Chiang Rai. The purpose of the research;

- To study and explore the functional area of the resort. In Chiang Rai province.
- To examine environmental poppulation of the resort toward the visitors.
- To compared the environmental perception of resorts. Between local and foreign visitors.
- To suggest the design guidelines for resort improvement

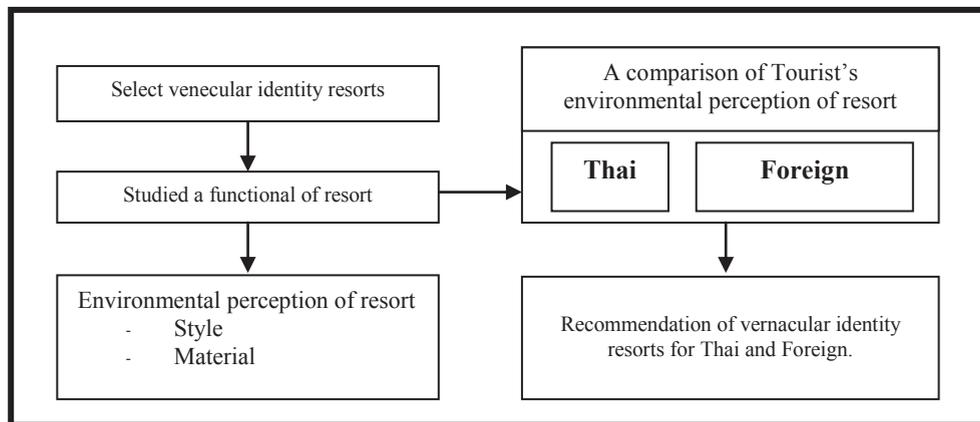


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework

## 2. Theoretical background

This research bases its theoretical foundation on the mainstream Gestalt visualization and perception, aesthetic perception, principle of packaging design, gender differences, and cosmetic packaging design principles. The Gestalt visualization and perceptual theory explains an integration of design elements, which collectively forms complete imagery.

The theory also clarifies the visualization process of human eyes which gather information in accordance with the enclosure, similarity, and proximity property of space and composition. Not only is the whole of design property perceived simultaneously, the aesthetic aspects of design perception is also recognized. In line with the Gestalt theory, the human nature of perception, cognition, and recognition processes are also part of the visual perception procedure, subjectively or objectively. In this light, taxonomy of identity such as class, positioning, and gender can be explained by means of presumption as such, and can be applied to the domain of graphical or advertisement design as well.

Elements in packaging design, on the other hand, comprise dots, line, plane, shape, and color. The specific process for designing should conform to the principles of design, which comprises the doctrines of compositional arrangements such as harmony, proportion, balance, rhythm and repetition, unity emphasis, and contrast. Derived from the aforementioned theoretical foundation, the research thus proceeds to its procedural steps by means of theoretical framework formation.

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