Key Knowledge Generation

Thailand Tourism Images and Behaviors of Thai people in Bangkok and Metropolitan

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THAILAND TOURISM IMAGES AND BEHAVIORS OF THAI PEOPLE IN BANGKOK AND METROPOLITAN

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Abstract. The objectives of this research are 1) to study exposure to Thailand tourism information, 2) to study Thailand tourism information seeking, 3) to study Thailand tourism information needs, 4) to study Thailand tourism images and 5) to study Thailand tourism behaviors of Thai people. The samples of survey research are 400 Thai people who reside in Bangkok and metropolitan. Data were collected by using questionnaires. Research data and hypotheses testing were analyzed by computer program and using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics for summarizing and hypotheses testing. Research results found that 1) There were significant differences in Thailand tourism information exposure between age, education and tourism behaviors. 2) There were significant differences in Thailand tourism information seeking between age, education, and tourism behaviors. 3) There were significant differences in Thailand tourism information needs between age and tourism behaviors. 4) There were significant differences in Thailand tourism images between tourism behaviors. 5) There were significant differences in Thailand tourism behaviors between gender, age, education and income, Thailand information tourism exposure, Thailand tourism information seeking, Thailand tourism information needs and Thailand tourism images. 6) There was significant relation between Thailand tourism information exposure, Thailand tourism Information seeking, Thailand tourism Information needs, Thailand tourism images and Thailand tourism behaviors.

INTRODUCTION

Bangkok is the second-ranked of top 20 Global Destination Cities in 2015 with 18.24 million as London is the world's top-ranked destination city with 18.82 million international visitors expected in 2015. They are followed by Paris, Dubai, Istanbul, New York, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Seoul and Hong Kong in the world's top ten (Wong & Choong, 2016). In 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2012, Bangkok was the top one of the world's top tourist destination cities also (Zoom, 2016). Travel & tourism is the major income and the most economic activity in Thailand. It generated the revenue circulation about 1.7 trillion baht per year or 14.20% of GDP. It comprises of 1.2 trillion baht from International tourists and about 0.5 trillion baht came from Thai tourists (Center for Economics and Business Forecasting, 2016).

Tourism in Thailand offers a lot of jobs in hospitality and tourism industry. It generated directly 2.6 million careers in hotel and restaurant and 3.1 indirect jobs in tourism & travel agency. Except export and domestic consumption, tourism is one of the most important economic factors in Thailand (Center for Economics and Business Forecasting, 2016).

In 2015, about 29.88 million foreign tourists visited Thailand. Income generated from foreign tourists up to 1.44 trillion baht or increase of 23.53% which is the highest record. It increased more than 2.7 hundred billion baht when compared with 2014 (Center for Economics and Business Forecasting, 2016).

Meanwhile, the number of Thai people travelling around Thailand is about 138.8 million people and they generated 7.9 hundred billion baht. And it reached 2.23 trillion Baht in tourism income in 2015, over the expectation of 30 billion Baht. During 2015, even though the number of Thai people travelling domestic is under targets but found that Thai people travelled and visited various places (Thansettakij Multimedia, 2016).

All of the above show that Thai people seem not liking to travel in Thailand. Therefore, we should study the domestic travel behaviors of Thai people.

Most previous research on Thailand tourism behavior and images were studied with foreigner tourists such as study of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) by hired Eureka Counseling. The survey on Thailand tourism image among 3,940 foreign tourists, found that tourists' view of safety was the most important. Nightlife tour, tourism crisis management, and the 74-hour tourism hotline service were related at medium level. Tourists did not see advertisement with positive image of Thailand when they arrived. Most of tourists perceived that Thailand is a great value-for-money destination. Beaches and great value-for-money shopping are biggest impression attractions (Fernquest, 2012). Besides, the studies on Thailand tourism images were limited to Thai tourists. Mostly the

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study was limited to specific local tour sites. For example, tourists' image and loyalty towards the old market at Samchuk, Supanburi province (Klaisang, 2011), Destination images of Tone Nga Chang wildlife sanctuary, Hatyai Songkhla (Ajadjuy, 2015). Another was studied about tourism image and perception of marketing public relations affecting revisiting Chanthaburi province (Sonda, 2016). Some were limited studies about image of tourism authority of Thailand. (Mheethong & Jumpolsatian, n. d.).

There was no study on Thailand tourism images and behaviors of Thai people in general. Therefore, this research is interested in studying the domestic travel behaviors of Thai people in terms of the Thailand's tourism news perceived channel, Thailand's tourism information seeking, Thailand's tourism information needs and Thailand's tourism image.

Research Objectives
This research has objectives as follows:
- To study Thailand's tourism information exposure of Thai people in Bangkok and metropolitan
- To study Thailand's tourism information seeking of Thai people in Bangkok and metropolitan
- To study the Thailand's tourism information needs of

Thai people in Bangkok and metropolitan
- To study Thailand's Tourism images of Thai people in Bangkok and metropolitan
- To study Thailand's tourism behaviors of Thai people in Bangkok and metropolitan.

LITERATURE REVIEW
The Selective Exposure
The selective process theory is a concept to explain the media usage choices of individuals. The model explains that person has four steps in the selective process theory as selective exposure, attention, perception and retention. The theory explains that individual chooses to receive messages and media according to their current beliefs, values and ideas and not receive messages and media that are opposite to their beliefs, values and ideas. Besides these, people interpret the message in their own way and tend to avoid messages that do not consist of their beliefs (Sampsell, 2016; Whitaker, Ramsey & Smith, 2012).

Information Seeking
Wilson's nested model in 1981 shows that individual information behavior is composed of information seeking behavior and information search behavior (Wilson, 1999).

FIGURE 1
Wilson's Nested Model
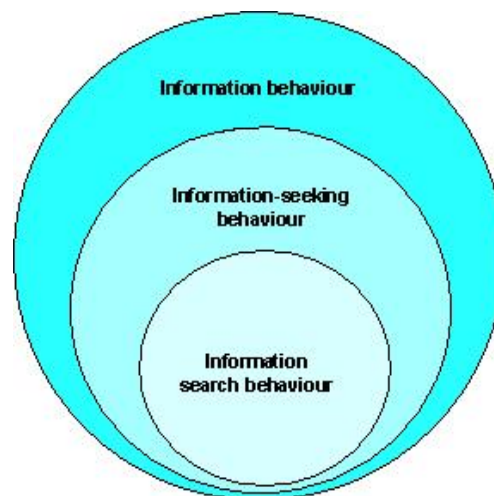
Source: Wilson, (1999)

In 1996, Wilson's revised model of information seeking shows the relationship between communication and information behavior in general with information seeking and information searching in information retrieval systems. These models address issues at various levels of information behavior (Wilson, 1999). The model showed that context of information is activating mechanism though intervening variables and will be activating mechanism to individual information seeking behavior. The information seeking behavior of person may be passive attention, passive search, active search and ongoing search.

FIGURE 2
Wilson's Model of Information Seeking in 1996
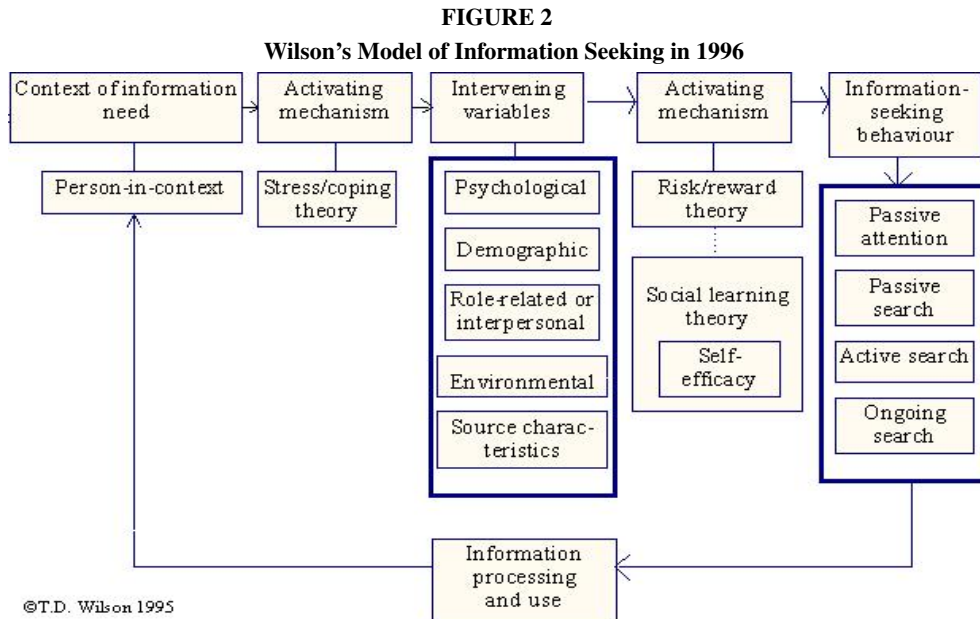
Source: Wilson, (1999)

Information Needs

Information needs are cognitive state of an individual's need state that triggers the search behavior characteristic of information seeking in a given context. Information seeking theories often refer to the concept of information needs, a presumed cognitive state wherein an individual's need state stimulates the search behavior characteristics of information seeking in a given context (Wilson, 2016). Taylor (1968) proposed the process of asking questions which proposed four types of information needs as follows:

- The actual, but unexpressed, need for information (the visceral need)
- The conscious, within-brain description of the need (the conscious need)
- The formal statement of the question (the formalized need)
- The question as presented to the information system (the compromised need).

Organizational Images

Organizational Image is an idea for studying and understanding the impressions individuals have of organization. Image is the picture in mind an audience has of an organization or something through the accumulation of all received messages (Ind, 1990). Corporate image or reputation describes the activities products, or services which are perceived by people (References for Business, 2016).

The reasons of the importance of corporate image or reputation are an efficient marketing and promotional tool, create credibility and integrity, and establish trust, confidence, loyalty and client relationships including promoting buying products and services (Bilieu, 2016; Luekveerawattana, 2016).

The corporate image is different from corporate identity. The concept of Corporate Image is the company's attention to the way in which individual perceives in the market. The concept of Corporate Identity should draw the company's attention to the way it perceives itself (Bouchet, n. d.).

Organizational images in marketing have been called as corporate images. Corporate image applies equally to corporations, businesses, government entities, and non-profit organizations. This research will apply organizational images or corporate images to study Thailand tourism images as perceived by Thais.

Tourist Behaviors

Pearce (2016) presented a mind map for tourist behavior which shows the key factors that affect choice of travel. The key factors are tourists and images of destination. Tourist factor is composed of culture, demographics, social networks, personality, values, experience and attitudes. The images of destination factor is composed of activities and attractions, Setting, Facilities, services, hosts, and other tourist management activities. The research will use this concept to study the images of Thailand destinations as perceived by Thais.

FIGURE 3
Wilson's Model of Information Seeking in 1996
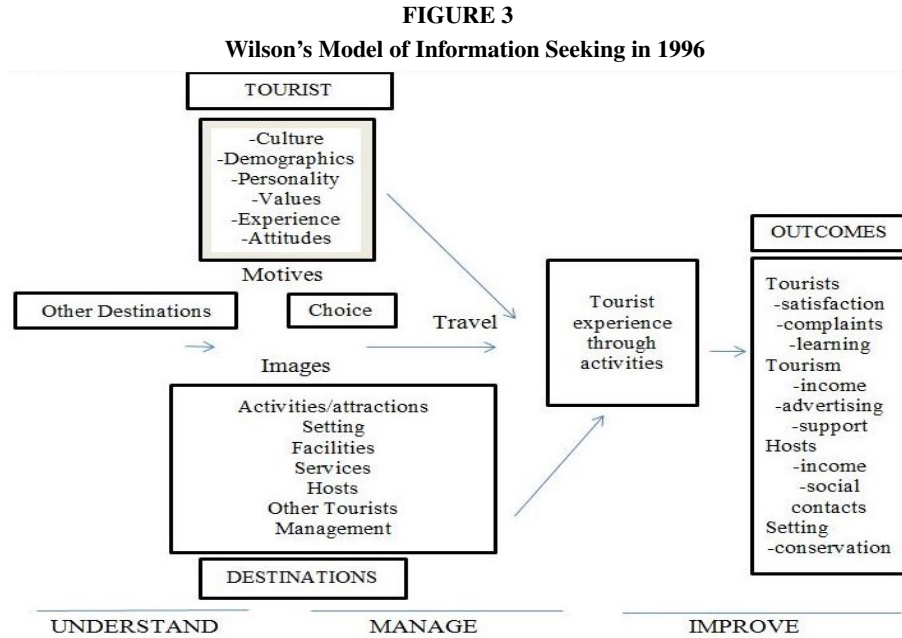
Source: Pearce, (2016)

As the literature reviews, this research sets conceptual framework as in below figure.

Conceptual Framework

This research has the conceptual framework as figure 4.

FIGURE 4
Conceptual Framework
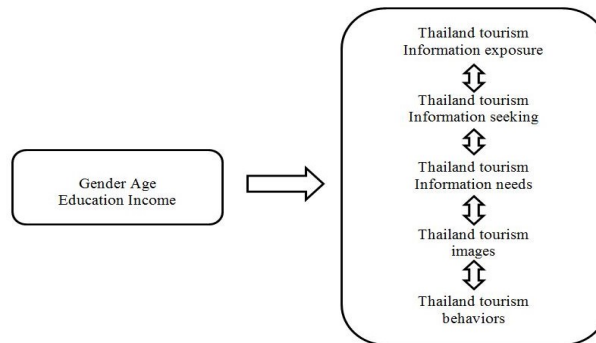
METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

The research population was Thai resident in Bangkok and metropolitan.

The sample of research was 400 Thai people who reside in Bangkok and metropolitan. The sample was selected by the convenience sampling method.

Research Instruments and Reliability

Data were collected by using questionnaires which were composed of five parts as follows: The research instrument reliability was tested by using Cronbach's alpha formula. Alpha coefficient ranges in value from 0 to 1.

- Demographic background
- Thailand tourism information exposure channel for which Cronbach's alpha reliability value was 0.869
- Thailand tourism information seeking for which Cronbach's alpha reliability value was 0.872
- Thailand tourism information needs for which Cronbach's alpha reliability value was 0.901
- Thailand tourism images for which Cronbach's alpha reliability value was 0.928
- Thailand tourism behaviors for which Cronbach's alpha value was 0.90

Statistics and Hypotheses Testing

Research data were analyzed by computer program. The background and basic data were analyzed by descriptive statistics and hypotheses testing was analyzed by inference statistics such as t-test, one way ANOVA and Pearson's product moment correlation.

RESULTS

Thailand Tourism Information Exposure

Mostly Thai people expose or receive Thailand tourism information at high level from tourist business website, social media such as Line, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Television and personal media like celebrity, friends and cousins.

Thailand Tourism Information Seeking

Mostly Thais sought Thailand tourism information at high level from the same channel as shown by results of Thailand tourism information exposure.

Thailand Tourism Information Needs

Most of Thai people need Thailand tourism information at high level and in variety of contents but mostly in highest about promotion of hotel, information of tour sources, the convenience of hotel location and security of tour site.

Thailand Tourism Images

Mostly Thai people have good images of Thailand tourism. They have the best images of national benefits, hosting, hotel, security, convenience, cost and souvenir.

Thailand Tourism Behaviors

Research results found that Thais have domestic travel about 4-6 times per year. They have expense 5,001-10,000 baht per time. Thais seldom travel 3-4 days with company of 3-5 persons. They like to travel with their family and friends on weekends, long weekends and semester break periods. Thais like to rest in hotels and resorts when travel. Most Thais like to travel to beaches, natural settings, waterfalls and islands.

Research Hypotheses Testing

Research hypotheses testing found as following:

Hypothesis 1) there were significant differences in Thailand tourism information exposure between age, education, and tourism behaviors.

Hypothesis 2) there were significant differences in Thailand tourism information seeking between age, education, and tourism behaviors.

Hypothesis 3) there were significant differences in needs of Thailand tourism information between age and tourism behaviors.

Hypothesis 4) there were significant differences in Thailand tourism images between tourism behaviors.

Hypothesis 5) there were significant differences in Thailand tourism behaviors between gender, age, education and income, Thailand information tourism exposure, Thailand information tourism seeking, Thailand tourism information needs and Thailand tourism images.

TABLE 1
Conclusion of Research Hypotheses 1-5 Testing

| | Thailand Tourism Information | | | Thailand Tourism | |
	Exposure	Seeking	Needs	Images	Behaviors
Gender	✗ $t_{(398)}$=. 318, $p.$ =763	✗ $t_{(396)}$=.055, $p.$=.814	✗ $t_{(395)}$=.259, $p.$=.796	✗ $t_{(394)}$=.742, p=.459	✓ $t_{(393)}$= 2. 171, p=.031
Age	✓ $F_{(4,395)}$=4.8608, $p.$=001	✓ $F_{(4,393)}$=4.047, p=.003	✓ $F_{(4,392)}$=3.243, p=.012	✗ $F_{(4,391)}$=1.1500, p=.332	✓ $F_{(4,390)}$=3.603, p=.007
Education	✓ $F_{(2,395)}$=4.542, p=.001	✓ $F_{(2,393)}$=3.704, p=.025	✗ $F_{(2,392)}$=2.096, p=.124	✗ $F_{(2,391)}$=2.163, $p.$116	✓ $F_{(2,390)}$=4.777, $p.$009
Income	✗ $F_{(3,396)}$=2.107, $p.$=.099	✗ $F_{(3,394)}$=.894, p=.444	✗ $F_{(3,393)}$=1.902, $p.$=.129	✗ $F_{(3,392)}$=2.285, p=.079	✓ $F_{(3,391)}$=10.840, p=.000
Exposure					✓ $F_{(2,392)}$=3.871, p=.022
Seeking					✓ $F_{(2,391)}$=6.056, p=.003
Needs					✓ $F_{(2,390)}$=8.063, $p.$=000
Images					✓ $F_{(2,390)}$=6.043, $p.$=003

Note. ✓ Significant differences ✗ No significant differences

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Hypothesis 6) there was significant relation between Thailand tourism information exposure, Thailand tourism Information seeking, and Thailand tourism Information needs, Thailand tourism images and Thailand tourism behaviors. As shown in table 2.

TABLE 2
Correlation Analysis

| | Thailand Tourism Information | | | Thailand Tourism | |
	Exposure	Seeking	Needs	Images	Behaviors
exposure	-				
Seeking	.662**	-			
Needs	.157**	.227**	-		
Images	.180**	.218**	.496**	-	
behaviors	.113*	.111*	.190**	.124*	-

Note. $* p<.05 ** p<.01$

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Research results found that gender, age, education and income have significant effect on tourism behaviors. The highest groups of Thais who like to travel domestic are male, age 31-35 years, bachelor's degree and income 30,001- 40,000 baht per month. The Tourism Authority of Thailand should set that groups are the major target group for domestic tourism. Besides, research found that age level is major variable that affects all dependent variables which were Thailand tourism information exposure, Thailand tourism information seeking, Thailand tourism information needs and Thailand tourism behavior except for Thailand tourism images. So The Tourism Authority of Thailand and tourist business should focus communication campaign on Thais who have ages from 31-35 years, bachelor's degree and the other group that has high touring behaviors. The research also found that there was significant relationship between Thailand tourism exposure, Thailand tourism Information seeking, Thailand tourism information needs, Thailand tourism images and Thailand tourism behaviors.

The research results confirmed the ideas of Jonkingthong (2014) that Thai tourists have corporate image, goods, services and tourism destinations images as areas that influence on tourists' attitude, behaviors, motivation and selection of destination. Positive image will affect the sustainability of a tourism destination. This study results are similar to confirm the previous research of Sonda (2016) who found that perception of marketing public relations, tourism image on budget and tourist attraction affected on Thai tourists' revisiting.

Also it is similar to the results of Klaisang (2011) which found that the tourists' opinion toward images of old market at Samchuk, Supanburi province were correlated to tourist loyalty on visiting. The tourists' behaviors toward the value of purchasing goods and service are positively related to loyalty of tourists.

Besides, these research results are consistent with Mheethong & Jumpolsatian (n. d.) that exposure of information from internet was related to both TAT organizational image and social responsibility perceived. There was significant relationship between images perceived and supported by TAT activities and tourism. So the evidences of this research results and previous results confirm that communication tourism information promotes images and reputation has an effect on tourism behaviors and revisiting or loyalty. These results should apply to launch domestic Thailand tourism communication campaign to Thais by focusing on promoting tourism information through more channels, especially through social media, variety of domestic tourism messages and contents and to promote domestic Thailand tourism images and impression to Thai people based on the research results. Besides, the research results found that Thailand tourism images about the benefits to country, hosting, hotel, security, convenience, souvenir and cost have significant relation to tourism behaviors that were confirmed by Pearce's mind map for tourist behavior (Pearce, 2016; Kunnu, 2016). The Tourism Authority of Thailand and tourism business should concentrate on creating reputation and impression of all Thailand tourism aspects for promoting positive image of Thailand tourism. These will be the important ways to increase the percentages of domestic Thailand tourist.

In conclusion, research results found that Thais have differences in domestic Tourism behaviors, have differences in Thailand tourism information exposure, Thailand tourism information seeking, Thailand tourism information needs, and Thailand tourism images.

The results showed that information and communication are the important effects and impacts on domestic tourism behaviors of Thai people. Thailand government and Thailand tourist business should commit and devote to communication campaign in all

types such as public relations, advertising, and persuasion in order to promote domestic tourism.

FUTURE STUDIES

Further studies should be focused on opinion of Thai people about satisfaction and dissatisfaction in Thailand tourism communication campaign, marketing promotion, problem of domestic Thailand tourism and suggestions for Thailand tourism development. Beside these, the future research should study the causes and effects of domestic Thailand tourism of Thai people by using structural equation models.

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