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# FACTORS INFLUENCING ASIAN TOURISTS' DECISION IN SELECTING BANGKOK AS THEIR TRAVEL DESTINATION

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to study the general characteristics and behavior of Asian tourists who decided to travel in Bangkok and to study the factors influencing Asian tourists' decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination. The sample group used in this research was male – female Asian tourists who travelled in Thailand. In 2017, there were 1,243,720 tourists traveling in Thailand (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2560) which was classified by East Asian region, including China, Japan, Taiwan, North Korea, and South Korea by using the Taro Yamane table and a confidence level was set up at 95% with a standard deviation set not more than 5%. The 400 sampling was collected by using a questionnaire (Questionnaire) as a tool in this study.

The results of the analysis of factors influencing Asian tourists' decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination found that the overall opinion level is in a very high level, in tourist attractions, followed by the pricing of accommodation then social and political aspects respectively.

From The hypothesis test 1, the researcher found that age and tourists travelling behavior has significantly related to each other, categorized by reasons in travelling and people who have influence on decisions at level 0.05. Tourists' income and travelling behavior was significantly related to each other, categorized by reasons in travelling, travel expenses and the frequency of travelling at level 0.05. Tourist's occupation and travelling behavior was significantly related to tourist gender, categorized by reasons in travelling and travelling information awareness from any sources of media at level 0.05.

From the hypothesis test 2, the researcher found that different age was significantly influence tourists' decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination differently, categorized by pricing, accommodation at level 0.05. Tourist's different occupations were significantly influence on tourists' decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination differently, categorized by pricing at level 0.05. Furthermore, tourist's educational level was statistical significantly influence on tourists' decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination differently at level 0.05, classified by tourist attractions, pricing and accommodation respectively.

**Keywords:** decision making, tourism, Asian tourists

## INTRODUCTION

### Research Background

Tourism is an industry that plays an important role in the economic development of many countries around the world. The governments of each country therefore place importance on enhancing their competitiveness in order to compete in the global tourism market. Especially the countries in Asia and ASEAN have established marketing strategies in order to increase the number of tourists from all over the world to visit their country. In determining the development strategy of various countries has therefore integrated tourism activities as part of economic development, which if any country has a clear national development strategy based on a strong economy, good infrastructure, natural resources, and a potential skilled tourism personnel as well, will be an important factor to help in pushing that country to have a competitive advantages, moreover can develop their tourism to grow steadily. World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has predicted that in 2018, the global GDP of travel and tourism grew 4.7 percent, which was higher than previous year at 3.3 percent. From the decreased in an oil price, that promoting good results to tourism and investment and causing tourism to grow by 6.3 percent compared to 2016 which was growing by 4.7 percent (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2016, Page 2)

Thailand has promoted the tourism industry in order to develop the country to be popularity among tourists. Therefore, tourism is an important strategy for the government to generate huge amounts of money into the country's financial system as it is an opportunity to generate revenue to rural communities and increase local employment (Adisorn Saksoong, 2011, page 1) stimulate traditions activities which caused the development in

tourism as well as various utilities improvement, resulting in the development of quality of life, well-being of people in that community and to promote the nation's reputation to be known in the world which will be beneficial to economic activities, society and politics. Many countries use tourism as a tool to help in developing the country widely. Thailand has determined the objectives and guidelines for tourism development in the strategy of increasing competency and competitiveness advantage that to develop tourism to increase employment and generate income to the community, emphasizing local participation in developing new potential adventure tourism destination. In accordance with local potential including the way of life, natural environment, art, culture and traditional norms as well as promoting Thai tourism and cooperation with neighboring countries (Dang Kao Saen, 1999, Page 2)

Bangkok, one of the most important capital cities in Asian region, and is the most populous city in Thailand. It is also a world-famous landmark with famous tourist attractions like the Emerald Buddha Temple, which is a beautiful place including the Grand Palace that reflects the Thai arts and culture. In addition, Bangkok is also a shopping destination with various activities and there are many different places to choose as a holiday destination. Based on the annual travel and leisure travel ranking, the most popular travel magazines in the United States, has ranked Bangkok as the No.1 city to visit in the world in 2012, which was ranked as the No.1 city to visit in Asia for four consecutive years and received the No.1 Tourism City Award in Asia, which created pride for Thai people throughout the country. Decision making is the process of choosing what should lead to target as set by choosing from many alternatives, and those who choose to think that it is the best choice. (Siripen Yiamjanya, 2012, Page 48)

Therefore, the researcher recognized the importance of studying the "Factors influencing Asian tourists' decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination" in order to gather information on Bangkok travel choices from the sample group which will be used as a guideline in planning, determine and develop various strategies to attract tourists in ASEAN community to visit Bangkok in the future

### **Research Objectives**

This research aims to:

1. Study the general characteristics of Asian tourists who decide to travel in Bangkok
2. Study the behavior of Asian tourists who decide to travel in Bangkok
3. Study the factors influencing Asian tourists' decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Related research**

**Karuna Boonmaruean (2014)** has studied the factors affecting foreign tourists who travelling in Thailand, and found out that the average income per head of tourists was the most important factor for Chinese tourists. Based on the assumption, the researcher found that the number of tourists will increase by 1,250 people, if the income of tourists' increased by 1 USD, the exchange rate has the greatest impact on tourists, especially Korean and Japanese tourists. The number of Korean tourists has increased by 18,485 people, while the number of Japanese tourists has increased by 8,432 people, when the exchange rate increased by 1 won and 1 yen respectively. The travel expenses factor has the most significance to German tourists. When the additional cost of US \$ 1 increased the number of tourists has increased to 7,628 people. In addition, the study of the impact from various events, the researcher found that the Asian economic crisis has a positive impact on the number of tourists with the most advantageous is the exchange rate of Thailand due to the baht depreciation caused an increasing on the number of Japanese tourists in Thailand of 383,663 people, the number of German tourists travelling to Thailand has increased by 275,996 persons and the number of UK tourists travelling to Thailand has increased by 115,579 people. In contrary, the negative effect will happen to most Asian tourists, especially to tourists from Malaysia, Korea, Taiwan and Singapore respectively. The impact of the Persian Gulf War also has a negative impact on the number of Malaysian tourists which has been decreased to 251,086 people

**Prapaporn Phanomphrai and team (2016)** has studied the attitude of foreign tourists towards the hospitality of Chiang Rai people. The objectives are as follows: 1) To study the attitude of foreign tourists towards the hospitality of Chiang Rai people and 2) To study guidelines in order to develop hospitality of Chiang Rai Province in order to meet the needs of foreign tourists by using quantitative research and qualitative method that collects opinions from foreign tourists as questionnaires of 400 sets and by using an in-depth

interview with foreign tourists and guide of 60 persons in total. As well as set up the meeting with government agencies, the private sectors and the public to raise their opinions.

The research results are as follows: Most foreign tourists are male, aged between 25-34 years, travelling from the United States, with Bachelor's degree, their occupation is a private company employee, single status with an annual income between 10,000-30,000US\$. The purpose of travelling is for leisure. Tourism information derived the most, was from the internet. Foreign tourists have an attitude towards hospitality of Chiang Rai people in terms of friendliness, safety, ease of travel, tour services / guides, information services, infrastructure / utilities, accommodation, facilities in the city, inbound – out bound service and food / restaurant at a good level.

From in-depth interviews with foreign tourists and guides as well as various meeting to brainstorm ideas in order to develop tourist's hospitality service in Chiang Rai towards excellency, the researcher found that the friendliness aspect of service providers, they must have professional ethics, without exploiting fraud, fraud scam. They must have a sense of treating tourists as their relatives. For the safety aspect, they should add patrols and security personnel in tourist areas, airports, as well as tourist accommodation areas, increase travel convenience, and should prepare roadside maps, travel signs or directions sign in English and other foreign languages. Foreign language communication training for tour services and guides should be provided as well as their knowledge in many tourist attractions that they could be able to explain and suggest tourists to travel properly. For information services aspect, they should promote more on tourism news and providing information service via internet and print media respectively. For the infrastructure and utilities aspect, they should take care of maintenance, improvement of roads, phone booth, public toilets to be ready to use, clean and safe as well. For the accommodations aspect, staffs, which provide accommodation services, should be able to use foreign language to communicate with foreign tourists as well, and not taking advantage by setting the price level to be in line with the service quality. For facilitating the entry-exit of the city aspect, they should focus on fast, convenient and safe service systems. For food and restaurants aspect, they should improve food to be hygienic, arrange the atmosphere and environment to be clean and attractiveness.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research on "Factors influencing Asian tourists' decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination", the researcher has determined methods of research as following

### **Research Methodology**

This research is a quantitative research (Quantitative Research); the researcher used survey research method and collecting the data from sample groups, use only one-time measurement by using a questionnaire as a tool to collect data. The researcher prepared questions that cover the study including data collection from various documents and utilized for further analysis accordingly.

Population and sample group

#### **Population used in this research consists of**

Asian tourists who travelled to Thailand, male-female, with a total of 1,243,720 tourists in 2017 (Thailand Tourism and Sports Ministry, 2017), classified as East Asian Region, which were tourists from China, Japan, Taiwan, North Korea, South Korea respectively.

#### **Samples used in research include**

Asian tourists travelling in Thailand, male-female, by using the Taro Yamane table and a confidence level was set up at 95% with a standard deviation set not more than 5%. The 400 samplings were collected by using a questionnaire (Questionnaire) as a tool in this study.

#### **Sampling**

The researcher used convenience sampling method (Convenience Sampling), by collecting the information from tourists' sample group. Data was collected in the commercial business area, hotels and various tourist attractions as those areas is where there the sampling did a lot of different activities.

The study area in this research is Bangkok.

#### **Research tools**

The tool used to collect data in this research is a questionnaire. The characteristic of the questionnaires is a closed ended question, in which researcher set the selected answer for the respondents and the open-

ended questions that allows the respondents to freely express their opinions by dividing the questionnaire content into 4 parts as follows:

Part 1: The questionnaire is about general tourist information such as gender, age, country, occupation, average income per year and level of education, total 6 questions and using the nominal scale to measure the data.

Part 2: This part is a question about the travelling behavior of Asian tourists, including travel purposes, news acknowledgment, buying a travel package, reason for purchasing, cost and duration of stay, total of 7 questions and using the nominal scale measurement method accordingly

Part 3: This part of a questionnaire is about the factors influencing Asian tourists' decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination. This part was divided into 9 aspects, including tourist attractions aspect, pricing aspect, accommodation aspect, location aspect, safety aspect, transportation aspect, social aspect and political aspect, 23 questions in total. The researcher used the rating scale questionnaires (Rating Scale Question), which is the level of interval scale measurement. (Interval Scale)

Part 4: This part of a questionnaire is about the suggestions on services aspect and to express the respondent's requirement 1 question in total. This part, the researcher uses an open-ended question (Open Ended Question) which allows the respondents to freely express their opinions.

#### **Data collection**

Data source (Source of Data), This study will gather relevant information including primary data (Primary Data) and secondary data (Secondary Data). Details are as follows.

1. Primary data: data were collected from questionnaires by interviewing Asian tourists who travelling into Thailand. In collecting the data during December 2017 to March 2018, the researcher delivered questionnaires to 400 samplings by using convenient sampling method. Data was collected in the commercial business area, hotels, and various tourist attractions as those areas are where the sampling did a lot of different activities.

2 Secondary data: By studying information from various documents related to education such as economic articles or articles from newspapers, internet, textbooks, study materials including domestic research papers and international research paper as well as related thesis respectively.

#### **Data analysis**

When compiling all the information, the research team has checked the integrity and the accuracy of the questionnaire, and then coded the questionnaire according to statistical research methods. After that, processing the questionnaires by using the computer software package, then bring the results to create a statistical analysis table for further explanations.

#### **The statistics used in this research are**

1. Descriptive statistical analysis (Descriptive Analytical Statistics), these statistics were used to describe attributes of the data (Nisarath Silapadejcha, 1999, page 142).

2. Inferential analysis statistics (Inferential Analysis Statistics) these statistics were used to analyze the characteristics of the independent variables that affect the dependent variables, by using data from the sample group and analytical methods (Nisarath Silapadejcha, 1999, page 144).

## **RESEARCH RESULT**

In this study of "Factors influencing Asian tourists' decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination" The researcher presented the results of the analysis as follows.

Part 1 General information of tourists

Part 2 Information about tourist travelling behavior

Part 3 Information about factors influencing decision in selecting travelling destination

#### **Assessment result**

1. Different genders, have no influenced on the decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination.
2. Different ages, have statistically significant influenced on the decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination differently which categorized by pricing aspects and accommodation aspects, at level of 0.05
3. Different incomes have no influenced on the decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination.
4. Different occupations have statistically significant influenced on the decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination, categorized by pricing aspects, at level 0.05.

5. Different education levelshave statistically significant influenced on the decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination differently, categorized by pricing aspects, travel destination aspects, accommodation aspects, at level 0.05.

**Table1**

The researcher found that different gender has no influence in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination.

<b>Factors influencing decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination</b>	<b>t-test</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
1. Travel Destination Aspect	1.407	0.240
2. Pricing Aspect	0.275	0.844
3. Accommodation Aspect	0.672	0.570
4. Safety & Security Aspect	1.578	0.194
5. Transportation Aspect	2.244	0.442
6. Social & Political Aspect	0.684	0.222

\* Statistical significance at the level of 0.05

From Table 1: The researcher found that different gender has no influence in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination.

**Table 2**

The researcher found that different ages have statistically significant influence on the decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination differently.

<b>Factors influencing decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination</b>	<b>f-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
1. Travel Destination Aspect	1.009	0.389
2. Pricing Aspect	0.232	0.000*
3. Accommodation Aspect	0.746	0.000*
4. Safety & Security Aspect	0.392	0.648
5. Transportation Aspect	0.776	0.150
6. Social & Political Aspect	0.056	0.983

\* Statistical significance at the level of 0.05

From Table 2: The researcher found that different ages have statistically significant influence on the decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination differently. categorized by pricing aspects and accommodation aspects, at level of 0.05

**Table 3**

The researcher found that, from the different incomes aspects, it has no influenced on the decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination.

<b>Factors influencing decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination</b>	<b>f-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
1. Travel Destination Aspect	0.017	0.997
2. Pricing Aspect	0.146	0.933
3. Accommodation Aspect	0.558	0.378
4. Safety & Security Aspect	0.613	0.882
5. Transportation Aspect	0.069	0.625
6. Social & Political Aspect	0.997	0.559

\* Statistical significance at the level of .05

From Table3: The researcher found that, from thedifferent incomes aspects, it has no influenced on the decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination.

**Table 4**

The researcher found that, from the different occupations' aspects, there were statistically significant influenced on the decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination, categorized by pricing aspects, at level 0.05.

Factors influencing decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination	t-test	Sig.
1. Travel Destination Aspect	1.600	0.117
2. Pricing Aspect	1.792	0.030*
3. Accommodation Aspect	1.678	0.455
4. Safety & Security Aspect	0.578	0.536
5. Transportation Aspect	0.694	0.770
6. Social & Political Aspect	1.231	0.086

\* Statistical significance at the level of .05

From Table 4: The researcher found that, from the different occupations' aspects, there were statistically significant influenced on the decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination, categorized by pricing aspects, at level 0.05.

**Table 5**

The researcher found that, from the level of education, it has significant influence in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination differently, categorized by attractions, pricing and accommodation aspects at level 0.05

Factors influencing decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination	t-test	Sig.
1. Travel Destination Aspects	1.326	0.027*
2. Pricing Aspects	1.763	0.001*
3. Accommodation Aspects	0.813	0.017*
4. Safety & Security Aspects	0.369	0.504
5. Transportation Aspects	0.380	0.635
6. Social & Political Aspects	1.480	0.450

\* Statistical significance at the level of .05

From Table 5: The researcher found that, from the level of education, it has significant influence in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination differently, categorized by attractions, pricing and accommodation aspects at level 0.05

## **RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Research Conclusions**

This study, the researcher has set the framework of the results into 3 parts as follows:

Part 1: The analysis results of tourists' personal characteristics, the researcher found that most tourists were male at 52.1%, aged between 31 - 40 years, which representing 40.0 percent. Most of them is Chinese tourists which accounted for 53.8 percent and being an employee in a private company which accounted for 40.6 percent. Their average annual income was between 10,000- 30,000 US \$ which representing 36.6 percent. Their highest educational degree level is resulting in Bachelor degree level which accounted for 45.6 percent.

Part 2: The analysis results of the tourists' travelling behavior, the researcher found that the reason that most of the tourists decided in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination was because word of mouth from their friend which accounted for 30.4 percent. Followed by, the news acknowledgement about Thailand tourism from various media such as internet, website which accounted for 40.8 percent. Next, was from individual influencing the decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination, were friends which accounted for 36.1 percent. Tourists bought the tour package from tour companies/tour agencies, accounted for 56.6 percent. Travelling duration each time was in between 8-14 days, which equivalent to 30.4 percent and each trip cost about 1,000 - 3,000 US \$, representing 67.4 percent. Lastly, the frequency of travelling in Bangkok at the first time was accounted to 40.6 percent

Part 3: The analysis results of factors influencing Asian tourists' decision in selecting Bangkok as their travel destination. The overall opinion level was at the highest level with an average of 3.93. The highest level was on the tourist attractions aspects with an average of 4.37, followed by safety aspects, at high level with an

average value of 4.13. The pricing aspect was at high level of 3.93. The residential area was at high of 3.75. Social and political aspect, are also at high level with an average of 3.72. The least opinion level was on Transportation aspect with an average of 3.71

## **Research Recommendations**

### **1. Tourist attractions aspect**

In developing tourism aspects, there should be guidelines and measures of rehabilitating all major tourist attractions in all cities. By planning and linking each group area in terms of transportation network, distance and development as well as improvement system planning as the same standard

### **2. Pricing aspect**

In order to meet the tourists' requirement, there should be the standard of pricing level that could satisfied tourists and be willing to pay for any travel services. For the pricing aspects, of products and services, there should be any consideration of the value for money and expectation that consumers want to receive from that products and services

### **3. Accommodation aspect**

Entrepreneurs or related agencies should create a unique identity that is different from competitors, including accommodation, staffing and building customer loyalty. Therefore, when customers impressed with the service they will return and come back next time.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

1. This research has only studied sample groups of Asian tourists then in order to utilize with tourism business in Thailand, then there should be further study to cover other tourists

2. From the study, the researcher found a new important issue that needs to be studied in the future is "Tourism satisfaction of Asian tourists group" to utilize the results of the study for further improvement on the operational of Thailand tourism strategies appropriately, in response to the needs of foreign tourists accordingly.

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