Aspects of Image Decision Process : Elite Chinese Tourists' Thailand Revisitation

มิติกระบวนการตัดสินใจภาพลักษณ์ : นักท่องเที่ยวจีนชั้นสูงเยือนประเทศไทยซ้ำ

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Abstract

The research aimed to investigate the relationship between Thailand tourism image presentation and revisit under decision making. The main objectives are to study (1) the level of Thailand tourism image presentation and decision making process revisiting Thailand and (2) model of Thailand tourism for Chinese elite tourists' decision process revisitation.

The research tool was questionnaire collected from elite Chinese tourists of 423 samples whom visited decision to Thailand. The data analysis comprises of SPSS version 16.0 and AMOS version 6.0 for statistical values of frequency, percentage, average, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis and structural equation model analysis (SEM).

The research found that the sampling group viewed that Thailand tourism image presentation was suited at high level ($\overline{x}$=3.76) classified as for society, learning, experience, excitement and adventure, reputation and attraction. On the token, Thailand tourism image was perceived at medium level identified as pricing, environment leisure and relaxation respectively. The sampling elite Chinese decision process for Thailand visitation was at high level ($\overline{x}$=3.77) beginning with perception on post evaluation, needs and desire, information search, alternative selection and destination selection decision respectively. The development model of decision process for elite Chinese tourists' decision to revisit Thailand was consistent with the empirical data ($\mathcal{X}^2$/df = 1.264, GFI = 0.974, RMR = 0.022, RMSEA = 0.047) and can be predictable at good and acceptable level at 91.3 percentage passing the measurement standard of above 40 percentage.

The causal relationship found that factors of the background information among elite Chinese class tourists' such as family income, number of trips, travel mode, communication media, number of media exposition and image presentation of Thailand tourism has directly causal related toward Thailand revisitation decision at 0.05 statistical significance.

บทคัดย่อ

       การวิจัยมีจุดประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการนำเสนอภาพลักษณ์ของประเทศไทย และการเดินทางกลับมาท่องเที่ยวประเทศไทยซ้ำในการตัดสินใจ โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ (1) ระดับ การนำเสนอภาพลักษณ์และการตัดสินใจเดินทางท่องเที่ยวไทยซ้ำ (2) รูปแบบกระบวนการตัดสินใจของ นักท่องเที่ยวจีนชั้นสูงต่อการท่องเที่ยวไทยซ้ำ

       เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยคือ แบบสอบถามที่รวบรวมจากนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีนชั้นสูงจำนวน 423 ตัวอย่าง ซึ่งได้ตัดสินใจเดินทางท่องเที่ยวไทยซ้ำ การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลประกอบด้วยการใช้ซอฟต์แวร์ ทางคณิตศาสตร์ SPSS รุ่นที่ 16.0 และ AMOS รุ่นที่ 6.0 เพื่อประเมินความถี่ ค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย และค่า ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน ค่าความโด่ง ค่าความเบ้ และการวิเคราะห์สมการโครงสร้าง (SEM)

       ผลการวิจัยสรุปได้ว่า กลุ่มตัวอย่างเห็นว่าการนำเสนอภาพลักษณ์การท่องเที่ยวไทยมีความ เหมาะสมระดับมาก ($\overline{x}$ = 3.76) โดยมีความเหมาะสมมากในด้านสังคม การเรียนรู้ ประสบการณ์ ความ น่าตื่นเต้นและการผจญภัย ชื่อเสียง และสิ่งดึงดูดใจ ซึ่งกลุ่มตัวอย่างจะมีการตัดสินใจเดินทางมาเที่ยว ประเทศไทยจัดอยู่ในระดับมาก ($\overline{x}$ = 3.77) โดยมีการตัดสินใจระดับมากตั้งแต่ขั้นการประเมินภายหลัง การเดินทาง การรับรู้ความต้องการ การแสวงหาข้อมูล การประเมินทางเลือก และการตัดสินใจเดินทาง ตามลำดับ

       รูปแบบการนำเสนอภาพลักษณ์การท่องเที่ยวไทยเพื่อจูงใจให้นักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีนตัดสินใจเดินทาง มาเที่ยวประเทศไทยที่พัฒนาขึ้นมีความกลมกลืนกับข้อมูลเชิงประจักษ์ ($\mathcal{X}^2$/df = 1.264, GFI = 0.974, RMR = 0.022, RMSEA = 0.047) ตลอดจนรูปแบบที่พัฒนาขึ้นมีความสามารถในการพยากรณ์ได้ระดับดี และเป็นที่ยอมรับ คิดเป็นร้อยละ 91.3 ผ่านเกณฑ์ร้อยละ 40 ขึ้นไป

       ลักษณะความสัมพันธ์เชิงสาเหตุพบว่า ข้อมูลทั่วไปของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีนได้แก่ รายได้ จำนวนครั้ง ที่เดินทางมาท่องเที่ยว ลักษณะการเดินทางมาท่องเที่ยว รูปแบบการติดต่อสื่อสาร จำนวนสื่อการท่องเที่ยวที่ เปิดรับ และการนำเสนอภาพลักษณ์การท่องเที่ยวไทยต่างมีความสัมพันธ์เชิงสาเหตุต่อการตัดสินใจเดินทาง มาเที่ยวประเทศไทยที่ระดับนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ 0.05

คำสำคัญ : ภาพลักษณ์นักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีนชั้นสูง การท่องเที่ยวไทย กระบวนการตัดสินใจ รูปแบบ การนำเสนอ

Introduction

The Thai economy is still slow down both in investment and consumer purchasing power. Meanwhile in the tourism industry section of the economy is on the highly competition especially in the Asean. UNWTO Reports (2014, 2015) that Northern Europe tourism will increase 6 percent. WTTC identified the global tourism in 2016 will rise 3.3 percent. This recognition carries on tourism of Thailand to drive tourism sector to stable expansion. This brings to establish a quality tourists by increasing revenue target for the year 2016 at 2.3 trillion baht. (Tourism Office, 2016) On the opposite each nation has intended to gain Chinese tourists revenues competitively. Therefore, the main strategic penetrated tourists care with participate involvement among local Thai people with smile, take care of environmental resources, impression, new exciting places, new product, offerings attractions for revisitation. (Pengmark, 2016, p.6)

The President of People Republic of China made a statement in June, 2015 that Chinese tourists have travelled around the world about 71 million baht each international trip. In 2020 there is approximately increased up to 500 million Chinese tourists. (SM Journal, 2015, p.9-10, 40-53) The Chinese president speech has made the world tourism is on verged of keen competition. While WTTC and Thailand's Central bank forecasts the economy will grow at the rate at has 3.3 from 3.5-4.5 percent.

Ittersum (2001) on the research of the role of region of origin in consumer decision making and choice concluded the impacts of communication and attitudes toward destination. While Fodness & Murray (1998, p.108-119) confirmed on information search both internal and external sources for own satisfaction but Newman (1977, p.79-94) affirmed on factors of risk, experience, social classes, influencers and perception.

Considering the Chinese tourists for 2016 of the first quarter has increased 32% averaging (Tourism Office, 2016). Mostly, the Chinese tourists prefer to travel alone, young with 21-40 years of age, upper level social status and above classified as elite. If Thailand tourism policy need qualified good quality tourists, high quality potential and good number of Chinese tourists as stated in Thailand tourism one the main objectives 2.3 Trillion baht. Thailand tourism can be a strong market against ASEAN market and the world tourism market competitively. As forementioned, therefore this research aimed to study the current tourists market situation in Thailand that what factors impacting needs to be adapted for elite revisit. How and where to create of tourists product and service values including marketing program and activity based on impressive tourism for elite Chinese tourist groups.

Objectives of the Study

1) to study the level of Thailand image tourism presentation and decision process to revisit Thailand.

2) to study the causal model of Thailand image tourism presentation and elite Chinese tourists' decision making to revisit Thailand.

Literature Review

Huh (2002) identified experience factor has connected with motivational revisit. Furthermore, characteristics has causal related to revisit became of attractive experiences (Chou, 2013, p.35-56). But the research work of Nunkoo & Gursoy (2012, p.243-268) found that female has more perceived compared with male including tourists attitudes. While Kuo (2011, p.32-37) confirmed fundamental factors such as pricey, natural, environment and culture have common attraction for revisit. Interestingly, the series movies on destination have impacted on social interaction (Chiu & Zeug, 2016, p.667-671). Thailand has been famous in night life entertainment, shopping and friendly Thai people (Future Brand, 2009). Noticeably, Thailand tourism images can be classified as (1) experience (2) attraction (3) price and environment (4) rest and relaxation (5) excitement & adventure (6) learning (7) social (8) famous (Soonthornsima, 2008) Meanwhile, Zhang, Ou & Tang (2004, p.267-273) concluded that demographic variables as sex, age, income, marital status and other counted for tourism decision making. Therefore, based on the prior empirical findings, the model is proposed as below. The present outlook of Chinese tourists' Thailand tourism visitation for the first quarter of 2016 indicated that there was 2,629,473. Increasing from the year before (45.37, 22.77, 29.10%) monthly percent. (Department of Tourism, 2016). This indicates that there is high demand for Chinese tourists to visit Thailand. Therefore, the Chinese tourists group is segmented as one of the most revenue earnings in hospitality industry.

However, the Chinese travel market is the target market among other tourist market but now is facing low quality touring that create bad or undesirable image perceptions of low tour fares and kickback pay and optional tour added. (Thairath online, 2016)

Travel Behavior Theories

Theories which support travel behavior and decision making to explain travel behavior and models to forecast travel demand, occasionally separate models are developed for different market segments. In case of perception, a strong basis theories of behavior in psychology is mandated. The theory of planned behavior postulates external factors of the control of the traveler and affect intentions and behavior. (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2008, p.67-96). While theory of interpersonal behavior is the immediate antecedent of behavior

as social factors and self concept or belief including habits mediate the relationship of intention on behavior. (Triandis, 1980, p.196-259). Theory of reasoned action has been applied in behavior analysis suggesting a role for attitudes, beliefs and perceptions in the travel behavior choices. (Garling, Gillholm & Garling, 1998, p.129-146). Theory of repeated behavior is explained how habit informs repeat behavior and decision making including mode choice. (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2000 ; Gardner, 2009, p.68-76)
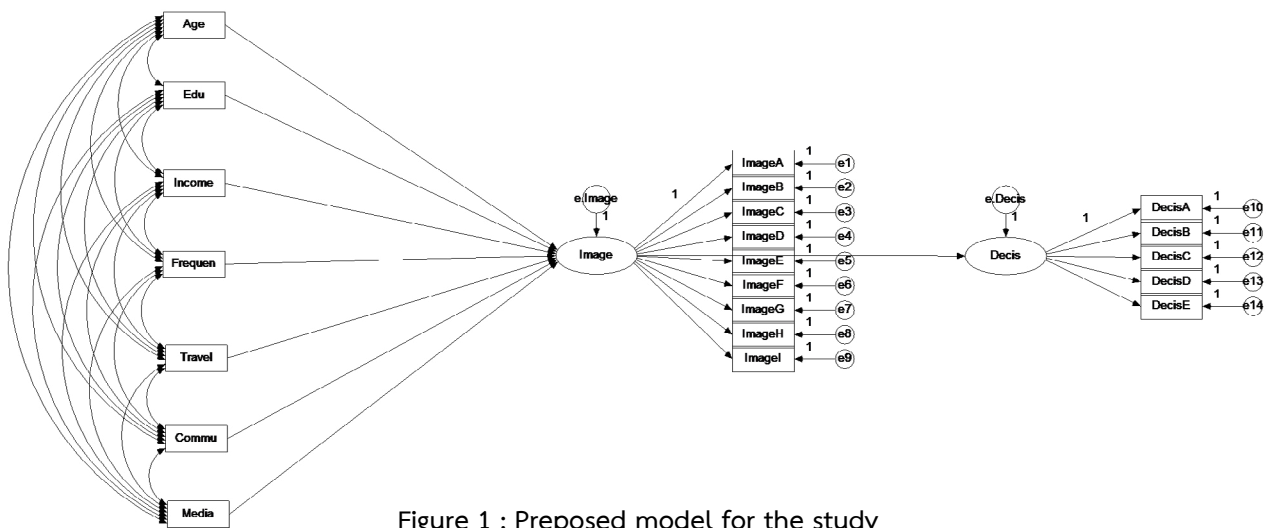

Figure 1 : Preposed model for the study

Hypotheses

H1 : The background information of elite Chinese tourist has causal related to destination travel to visit Thailand.

H2 : The Thailand image presentation has causal related to elite Chinese tourists' decision making to revisit Thailand.

Benefit of Research

Thailand tourism industry both public and private sectors can mutually developing planning and support Thailand image presentation for attraction foreign tourists especially elite Chinese tourists. The research study should emphasize factors of attractiveness, pricing, environment, vacation and relaxation, excitement and adventure, learning, social connect and reputation. The emphasis orientation for loyalty is upmost and also reflecting the Thailand tourism for sustainable growth.

Research Methodology

There is a descriptive research and development attains to self administered questionnaire using check list of general information of Chinese elite tourists visiting Thailand, using Likert rating scale to evaluate factors of Thailand tourism image presentation and their decision making process.

Population and Sampling

The population of the elite Chinese tourist on Thailand tour in February 2016 is 958,204 (Tourism office, 2016) then the sampling size is Calculated by Thomson (1992) is equal to 384 Chinese tourists.

$$n = \frac{1}{(e2/(Z2(CV)2)+(1/N)}$$; e = 0.05, Z = 1.96, CV = 0.50, N = 958,204

n = 384.01 ≈ 384

The case of sampling selection using multi-stage sampling. (Cochran, 2007)

1) Probability sampling by stratified random classified by popular touring place ranking of 2015. (Travel M Thai, 2016)

2) Non-probability sampling by quota technique of 40 tourists or 10% in proportion of each top ranking place.

Table 1 Population and sampling used in popular touring place

Top 10 ranking	Quota (%)	Sample (person)
1. Wat Phrasirattanasatsadaram (Bangkok province)	10	40
2. Phuket (Phuket province)	10	40
3. Doi Inthanon (Chiang Mai province)	10	40
4. Samui Island (Suratthani province)	10	40
5. Wat Phrasisanphet (Ayutthaya province)	10	40
6. Pattaya (Chonburi province)	10	40
7. Wat Rongkhun (Chiang Rai province)	10	40
8. Phi Phi Islands (Krabi province)	10	40
9. Amphawa (Samut Songkhram province)	10	40
10. The Bridge of the River Kwai (Kanchanaburi Province)	10	40
Total	100	400

Source : Travel M Thai (2016)

3) Probability sampling by using Chinese or English questionnaire, if preferable interview.

Evaluation of Research Tool

The content validity of structured questionnaire is analyzed and synthesized by 5 experts for Item Objective Congruence Index (0.60-1.00) The pretest based on 40 samples of elite Chinese tourists is undertaken while visiting Thailand for alpha coefficient equals to 0.9507 image and 0.8950 for decision. (Cronbach, 2003)

Analysis

The results of study of frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean and standard deviation were evaluated for factors' identification. The overall results of image presentation and decision process are evaluated by arithmetic mean and standard deviation.

The results of elite Chinese tourists' background information profile in the model showed that then was male (59.3%) ; mostly 31-40 years of age (50.8%) ; married (50.1%) with bachelor degree (63.1%) office work (80.4%) and upper middle income per month (42%) while upper-lower (92%) and upper-upper income per month (8%).

The background information on elite Chinese tourist travel trip to Thailand pointed directly to the specific detailed motivational process for Thailand revisitation can be explained in percentage as follows : 1-2 number of trips (60.8%) ; Bangkok and outskirt provinces visit (78.3%) ; travel to historical sites (60%) ; in search for life tastes reason for travel to Thailand (42.3%) ; modes of transportation is tour agency (90.8%) ; hotel accommodation for this trip (72.3%) ; 6-10 days of visit time (50.6%) ; online or new communication (71.6%) ; internet is technology used in trip decision (50.1%) ; relatives and friends are influencers (76.1%).

Images' presentation that are top three most attractive for upper-lower and upper-upper classes among Chinese tourists are social interaction ($\overline{x}$ = 4.15) ; tourism learning ($\overline{x}$ = 4.09) ; and finally on the top list of most important ranking of image presentation for Thailand tourism is experience ($\overline{x}$ = 4.05).
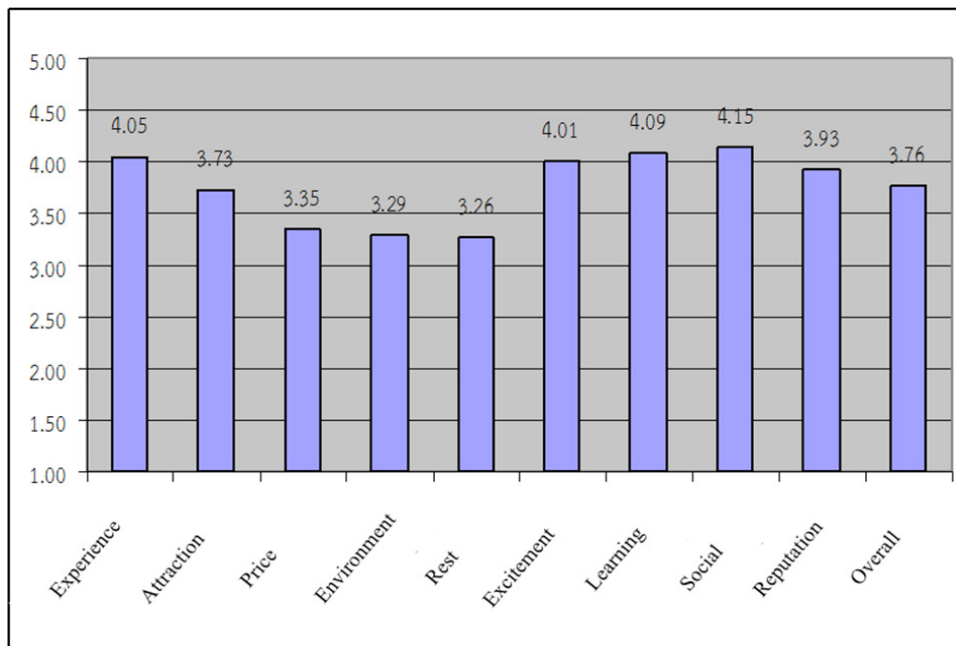
Figure : 2 Arithmetic Means of Each Image Presentation of Thailand Tourism

Considering for levels of decision making process showed that the ranking listed from the most importance to the least importance of decision to revisit Thailand ($\overline{x}$ = 3.82) ; alternatives ($\overline{x}$ = 3.81) ; information search ($\overline{x}$ = 3.80) ; post evaluation ($\overline{x}$ = 3.78) and need recognition ($\overline{x}$ = 3.66) respectively.
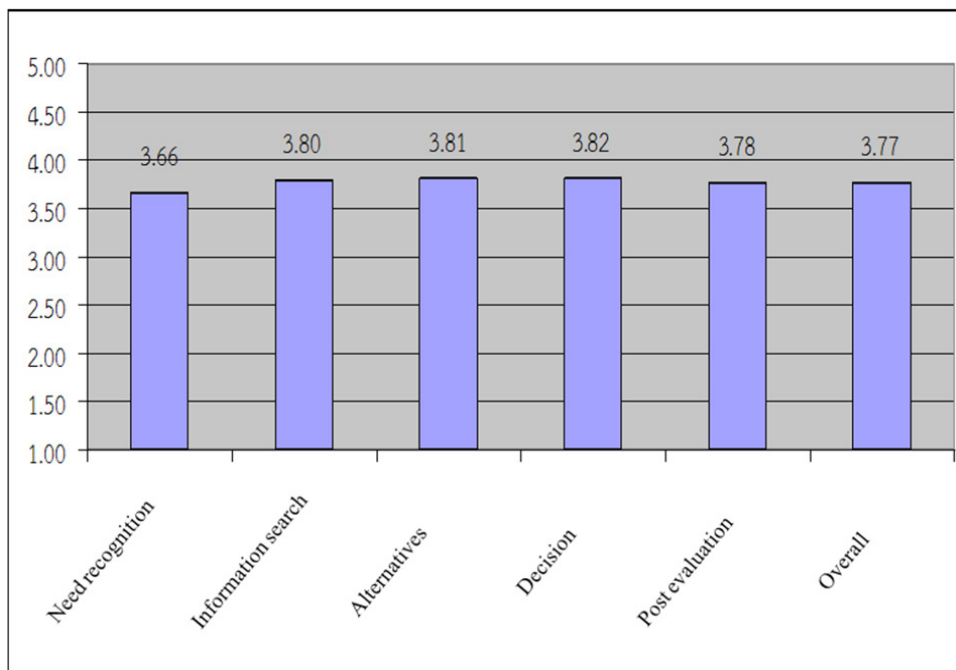

Figure : 3 Arithmetic Means of Image Decision making

Evidently that background information of elite Chinese tourist has skewness values of 0.508-0.704 and kurtosis values of 0.605-1.454 while image presentation has skewness values of 0.146-0.661 and kurtosis values of 0.391-1.328. Finally, decision making to revisit Thailand has skewness values of 0.298-0.712 and kurtosis values of 0.615-1.343 (Viratchai, 2008)

To test of variables relationship, the analysis of background information of elite Chinese tourists, 7 variables are in between 0.462-0.724 and image presentation of 9 variables are in between 0.415-0.747 and decision making to revisit Thailand are in between 0.559-0.711 of 5 variables. All variables are 0.05 statistical significance.

Evidently that all 22 variables are acceptable and will not have multicollinearity. (Prasitrathasin, 2008)

The analysis of image present for Thailand tourism elite Chinese tourists for revisit Thailand by structural equation model through evaluation of overall model fit measure and component fit measure.

The measurement model indices reveal that the proposed model is fit and parsimony (Table 2)

Table 2 : Fit Indices for the measurement Model of the relationship between Thailand Tourism Imaged Presentation and Chinese elite tourists' decision process revisitation

Fit Index	This study	Recommended values	Source
Df	161		
χ^2	203.565		
χ^2/df	1.264	≤ 3.00	Carmines & McIver, 1981
GFI	0.974	≥ 0.90	Joreskog & Sordom 1993
AGFI	0.919	≥ 0.80	Joreskog & Sordom 1993
CFI	0.978	≥ 0.90	Joreskog & Sordom 1993
TLI	0.971	≤ 0.08	Joreskog & Sordom 1993
RMR	0.022	≥ 0.90	Joreskog & Sordom 1993
RMSEA	0.047	≥ 0.90	Joreskog & Sordom 1993

Thus, all variables can be measured in the proposed model. The results can be viewed in figure 4
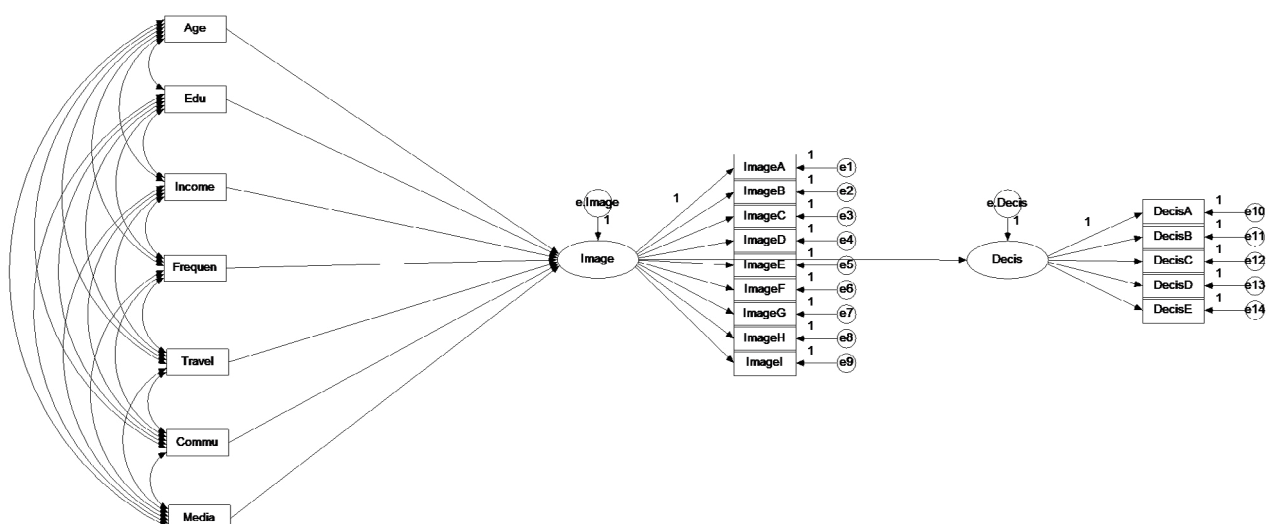
$\mathcal{X}^2$ = 203.565, df = 161, GFI = 0.974, RMR = 0.022, RMSEA = 0.047

*p<0.05

Figure 4 : The Model Analysis

Table 3 : Test of Variables Relationship used in Research I

Variable	Age	Edu	Income	Frequen	Travel	Commu		Media	
	(Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient) (r)								
Age	1.000								
Edu	0.638*	1.000							
Income	0.563*	0.672*	1.000						
Frequen	0.724*	0.683*	0.532*	1.000					
Travel	0.630*	0.574*	0.524*	0.677*	1.000				
Commu	0.573*	0.615*	0.553*	0.566*	0.639*	1.000			
Media	0.554*	0.517*	0.462*	0.559*	0.557*	0.480*		1.000	
Image									
Variable	ImageA	ImageB	ImageC	ImageD	ImageE	ImageF	ImageG	ImageH	ImageI
	(Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient) (r)								
ImageA	1.000								
ImageB	0.730*	1.000							
ImageC	0.573*	0.546*	1.000						
ImageD	0.616*	0.651*	0.577*	1.000					
ImageE	0.633*	0.581*	0.515*	0.747*	1.000				
ImageF	0.585*	0.654*	0.479*	0.683*	0.716*	1.000			
ImageG	0.556*	0.584*	0.493*	0.640*	0.656*	0.670*	1.000		
ImageH	0.600*	0.616*	0.415*	0.603*	0.579*	0.630*	0.659*	1.000	
ImageI	0.539*	0.580*	0.541*	0.605*	0.591*	0.615*	0.609*	0.673*	1.000

Image A, education ; Image B, attraction ; Image C, pricing; Image D, environment ; Image E, leisure and relaxation ; Image F, excitement and adventure ; Image G, learning ; Image H, social interaction ; Image I, reputation.

Table 4 : Test of Variables Relationship used in Research II

Decis					
Variable	DecisA	DecisB	DecisC	DecisD	DecisE
(Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient) (r)					
DecisA	1.000				
DecisB	0.711*	1.000			
DecisC	0.568*	0.584*	1.000		
DecisD	0.559*	0.623*	0.659*	1.000	
DecisE	0.674*	0.656*	0.609*	0.566*	1.000

*$P<0.05$
Decis A, problem recognition ; Decis B, information search ; Decis C, alternative evaluation ; Decis D, decision ; Decis E, post evaluation.

The structural equation modeling is being used in this research to test the proposed model. The fitness model is calculated by an excellent model's ratio of chi-square value to degree of freedom (/df) (1.264) which should not be larger than 3. (Carmines & McIver, 1981) The RMR should be smaller than 0.08 (0.022) and RMSEA should be smaller than 0.05 (0.047) and GFI (0.974), AGFI (0.919), TLI (0.971) and CFI (0.978), should be larger than 0.9 (Joreskog & Sordom, 1993). Therefore all figures show goodness of fit of this model.

The result of hypothesis that background information of elite Chinese tourists' profile is causal related to Thailand revisit decision except age and education factors which are not included. On the other hand, the image presentation of Thailand tourism has directly causal related (Path Coefficient = 0.955) $p<0.05$.

To apply the image presentation research results, it may be illustrated in terms of strategic practices as

Weights of Image presentation of Thailand tourism

= 0.055 Age

+ 0.100 Education

+ 0.203 Income

+ 0.195 Trip Frequency

+ 0.201 Trip Types

+ 0.203 Communication mode

+ 0.211 Media Exposure

Applied for implication as square co-efficient = 0.870 (87%) workable predict.

Applied for implication as square coefficient in case of revisitation = 0.955 image

presentation of Thailand tourism with square coefficient = 0.913 (91%) workable predict.

Conclusion

This research examines the image presentation of Thailand tourism for elite Chinese tourists' decision process revisitation. By using 9 mediator variables, this study confirms social interaction (touring places, clean lodging and suitable facilities) including learning (knowledgeable life experiences) prove influenced factors affect information search depend on risks (Newman, 1977, p.79-94) and experiences (good relationship with local people and cohesiveness) influences directly elite Chinese tourists' visitation (Ittersum, 2001) as communication and attitudes toward destination country have impact on choice and decision. We argue that age and education level are not the cause of the insignificant direct or indirect effect of Chinese upper class profile's marketing tactics on revisitation. It supports prior studies of Newman (1977 p.79-94), Fodness & Murray, (1998, p.108-119) as internal and external search involving travelers' experience and behavior.

This study reaffirms the importance of destination decision process motivationally on information search-evaluation-decision platform (Van Raaij & Francken, 1984, p.101-112 ; Moutinho, 1987, p.5-44 ; Correia, 2002, p.21-29). We generated 5 process which Chinese tourists go through (1) post decision evaluation (2) problem recognition (3) information search (4) evaluation (5) decision. When analyzing social interaction, the involving party could use the marketing activity program planning for new avenues and no risk taking. Believing that the most effective and competitive marketing strategy for Chinese upper class group is through Thai-Chinese relationship as the best sustainable way forward national loyalty between two strategic partners in economic, social and commercial integration.

Implication and Future Directions

This research has studied a comprehensive and proposed a recommended model that provides manager and policy makers with an important set of recommendation. For future research, possible marketing tactics especially alternate attractiveness of on line context for marketing communication, Chinese attitude and behavior between Thai-Chinese national loyalties.

The results of tourists' personal information profile indicated that the source of information at the location living with impact on information search for evaluation and decision making.

Acknowledgements

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