



Tourism media perception affecting people's travel behaviour and planning

Ekgnarong Vorasiha
College of Innovation and Management
Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand
Email: ekgnarong.vo@ssru.ac.th

Abstract

This study on the tourism media perception affecting people's travel behavior and planning is a survey research in which the data was collected from peoples' opinions towards a Thailand tourism video. The tourism media perception reflected the moderate mean value of 3.46 and when considering each item, it was found that, the captioned media perception in a form of word-of-mouth communications such as sharing of experiences and comments on tourism via Facebook reflected the highest average value of 3.83 followed with the media perception via comments and tourism service or product information from the opinion leaders which reflected its high average value of 3.69. Whereas the media perception on tourism hot news such as health tourism reflected the lowest average value of 3.25, respectively. The travel behavior and planning shows an average value of 3.41 or at agreement level. When considering each item, it was found that the average values of each item, ranking in order, were as follows: planning to travel on the next long weekend was equivalent to 3.66 or at agree level and planning to travel on the next weekend was equivalent to 3.61 or at agreement level, and planning to travel with family for the next trip was at 3.55 or at agreement level. Whereas planning to travel under the estimated affordable expenditure was the lowest item at 3.29 or at an undecided level.

Keywords: Media perception, tourism, travel behavior, planning, Thailand.

Introduction

Many years ago, most of Thai people always taught children: "Don't waste time on tourism too much; otherwise, you will be a wasted person." The image of "tourism" at that time when there was inconvenient transportation, meant going into a nearby gambling den, adults' travelling along with a caravan during summer to go to pay respect to the Buddha's footprint or make an offering at any temple far away from home or sailing to present robes or other needs to monks at a temple located along the river upcountry. However, such an idea of tourism was not called tourism of paying respect to the Buddha's footprint or temple tourism since this seemed to be in some conflict with the Buddhist notions and sentiments that a temple was a sacred spiritual place not a place for tourism. Consequently, tourism in Thai people's point of view was so far arisen under the following 3 conditions:

1. It is a temporary trip from home to another place.
2. It is a voluntary trip (<https://tourismatbuu.wordpress.com>).
3. It is a trip for any purpose of not working or earning.

"Tourism" nowadays, is a picture of a group of foreign tourists with their cameras visiting temples, palaces, archaeological sites or wearing swimsuits and taking a sunbathe on a beach while plenty of them are trekking in a forest. We may only see what they spend for accommodation, food, visiting fees, souvenir or gifts without realizing what they spend is in fact important foreign currency filtering through into Thailand. In the meantime, we hardly recognize Thai tourists taking their domestic trips even though the number of them has increasingly grown every year since traveling has been deemed to be a relaxation event from stress together with acquiring cultural and traditional knowledge and tourists can see spectacular scenery and also forge relationships with local people as well. As a result of more convenient transportation, tourism then becomes popular causing various expansion of new



businesses to respond to tourism needs both directly and indirectly concerned ones i.e. businesses related to transportation, accommodation and restaurant, touring, trading, souvenir, etc. which provide services directly to tourists. For indirectly concerned ones, they are construction of building, accommodation and restaurant, agriculture production to supply their products to accommodation and restaurant businesses including local handicraft production for souvenir shops, etc. These businesses therefore create new careers and income distribution to local people and contribute the economic and social growth of the country.

The tourism promotion was clearly established in 1936 when the Ministry of Economic Affairs had proposed a Siam tourism industry renovation project to the cabinet with the plan and objectives of 3 elements: 1. Tourist Promotion Advertisement, 2. Tourist Hospitality, and 3. Tourist Attraction and Accommodation Renovation (<http://thai.tourismthailand.org/>).

For advertising, it is a means of communication of information and news through various media tools to motivate and influence the target consumers to behave in line with the purpose of media content for purchase of products and services as well as convincing them to perform according to the promotional ideas and the expenses of launching the media tools that are paid by either advertisers or sponsors (Prance,2019). Advertising is an action with the purpose to attract the target group of audiences to consume the advertised products. The advertising writers thereby try to consider what is definite best stimulus when considering all concerned elements i.e. advertising purpose and policy, target group of audiences' characteristics, product characteristics and media tools to be used for advertising so as to find out the stimulus concerned with products, consumers and other concerned ones (Somporn Mantasutara, 2016).

Presently, advertising persons have not only used a stimulus in a form of product image itself but also bring the symbols widely considered as a goodness to be in a form of branded content to add identity and meaning to the products i.e. patriotism – Nokkaew Soap, Chuan Puay Pee Pae Kor Cough Syrup – devoted son or Vine Cooler Club – feminism in which only some parts of words, symbols, cultural goodness are used to be in harmony with each product. This then becomes not only product selling, but also 'goodness' selling instead (Kasian Tejapira, 2015).

This method of advertising is a removal of meaning or original identity of the products and in replacement adding new identity to make message receivers forget the original one and stimulating consumers to decide to buy the products. However, creating new identity to the products can be made for only some products having only few impacts against their overall images. For Thailand tourism having both unique and selling points in itself, this method may cause some confusion among tourists and also impact Thailand tourism concept, meaning the perception on media presented in various forms of contents and in different directions or emphasized as 'Thainess'. This also includes tourism behavior and planning which may distort tourists and their attitudes towards local tourism which has changed from years past. Then, Thai conservation was emphasized. Realizing the aforementioned problems, the researcher thereby was interested in examining and analyzing the tourism advertising model, symbols and attitudes of consumers towards media tools used for advertising contents including internet advertising which is a new one, when compared with others, and full of a large number of audiences regardless of gender, generation, age, education. In addition, since the internet advertising presently remains a no content validity measurement, consumers may possibly become victims of false marketing if there is no awareness of this type of hidden agenda.



Objective of this research

1. To examine the tourist perception on tourism media affecting their travel behavior and planning.

Methodology

The population used for this study comprised some 33,654 people living in Salaya, Klong Yong and Mahasawad Subdistricts of Phutthamonthon District, Nakhon Pathom Province (Thailand Information Center, 2016). The sample size was determined at a significance level of 0.5 (or 2 σ Confidence Interval) with the error size (e) = $\pm 5\%$ of a total of the captioned population. This study was a quantitative survey research of one-short case study of the general population. The calculation for the sampling group was made to obtain acceptable and appropriate representatives, totalling 420 respondents whereas the proportional stratified random sampling was applied for data collection from documents, books, academic peer - reviewed articles and other relevant research studies for consideration of how to develop the attractive tourism advertising to affect tourists' consumption behavior.

Table 1. Average and Standard Deviation of Tourism Media Perception

Media Perception	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
1) Perception in a form of word-of-mouth communications i.e. sharing of experiences, comments on tourism via Facebook.	3.83	1.04	High
2) Perception via comments and tourism service or product information from the opinion leaders.	3.69	1.06	High
3) Perception on tourism media upon comparison of strength and weakness of each tourism service or product.	3.59	1.05	High
4) Perception on tourism media upon elements around media context i.e. website reliability on news report.	3.55	0.98	High
5) Perception on tourism media for health and body rehabilitation i.e. sunbathe, mineral hot springs spa, spa, Thai massage, clay mask, etc.	3.49	1.03	High
6) Perception on tourism media for recreation, entertainment, refreshment for relaxation.	3.49	0.94	High
7) Perception on tourism media for participation or watching sport activities.	3.40	1.06	High
8) Perception on tourism media for mental, religious and cultural reasons.	3.32	.99	Moderate
9) Perception on tourism media for new experience of visiting new popular or well-known destinations.	3.40	1.03	High
10) Perception on tourism media of promotions or discounts i.e. accommodation, restaurant, attraction, etc.	3.38	.95	Moderate
11) Perception on tourism media of tourism comments and reviews.	3.28	1.04	Moderate
12) Perception on tourism media of travel tips or suggestions.	3.33	0.97	Moderate
13) Perception on tourism media of tour programs for attractive and new destinations.	3.35	1.05	Moderate
14) Perception on tourism media of top hit travel styles i.e. health tourism, etc.	3.25	1.06	Moderate
Total	3.46	0.67	Moderate



As per the above table showing the average and standard deviation of tourism media perception, it is found that an overview of tourism media perception shows the average value of 3.46 or moderate level. When considering each item of the media perception, the perception in a form of word-of-mouth communications i.e. sharing of experiences and comments via Facebook represents the highest value of 3.83 or at high level and ranking in order as the perception on tourism media of tourism information of service and product from the opinion leaders which represents the average value of 3.69 or at high level, the perception on tourism media upon comparison of strength and weakness of tourism services or products which represents the average value of 3.59 or at high level, and finally, the perception on tourism media of top hit travel styles i.e. health tourism which represents the lowest average value of 3.25 or at moderate level, respectively.

Table 2. Correlation Coefficient between Exposure to Media and Media Perception, Travel Behavior and Planning including Attitude towards Media Tools Used for Advertising and Public Relation

	Correlation Coefficient (R : P-value)		
	Exposure to Media	Media Perception	Travel Behavior and Planning
Media Perception	(0.292)		
	(0.000)		
Travel Behavior and Planning	(0.332)	(0.722)	
	(0.000)	(0.000)	
Attitude towards media tools used for advertising and public relation	(0.317)	(0.713)	(0.793)
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)

As shown in Table 2, the correlated factors at significance level of 0.05 with the attitude towards media tools used for advertising and public relation are 1) the correlation of exposure to media = 31.7%, 2) the correlation of media perception = 71.3%, and 3) the correlation of travel behavior and planning = 79.3%, respectively.

Discussions

For tourism promotion to stimulate Thai people to travel, and spend money for economic, and social purposes, as well as contributing better relationships among families, groups of people at all levels, it has been proceeded by means of all types of media tools to motivate them to travel. However, currently due to modern technology, the channels for peoples exposure to media have been extremely altered and the media perception pattern has also been opened unlimitedly. As per the observation from the study, among the sampling group, the transportation used for travelling is mostly a private car and people often travel with friends whereas sea trips are the favorite ones. In view of information search, internet is the main source influencing their decision making on having travel and the most convenient time for travel is during a weekend. For accommodation, a hotel or hostel for each domestic trip is the most preferable and it is sourced by searching and booking rooms via websites/internet. The factor influencing accommodation selection is the room rate including related expenses per night at the average between Baht 1,501 and Baht 3,500 (USD 110 per night).

Furthermore, the tourist exposure to the tourism media is been made 3-4 days a week via on-line social media i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Line and blogs of opinion expressions and experience review such as websites - Pantip, Trip Advisor, EDT Guide, etc. This is in line with



the study of Phornrat Thonglert and Parichart Sathapitanont (2013) focusing on the communication for tourism management of the Royal Agricultural Station Angkhang via place decoration and community participation encouragement by arranging training courses. For the 4th stage, the communication emphasized on a proactive public relation strategy by making public relation media and inviting presses whereas in the 5th stage, it emphasized on the integrated communication strategy and utilization of internet for communication. The communication role of the working team of this captioned Royal Project Foundation and Royal Agricultural Station at Angkhang consists of a communication leader, managers, a media operation team and an information management team (Prance, Kortana, Piyamputra, & Rungthongpongampai, 2019). The communication leader is the communication influencer towards internal and external personnel of the working team, whereas all concerned personnel in each working team play both their roles of promulgating information and publicizing the tourism information of the Royal station including welcoming presses, tourists and visitors.

In view of tourism media perception in the form of word-of-mouth communications such as sharing of experiences and comments on tourism via Facebook and from comments and information reviews of tourism services and products by opinion leaders, the research result concurs with the study of Vasant Janprasit and Sarawut Anantachart (2016). Thus it focused on the brand model development and customer-based brand identity evaluation towards Thailand tourist attractions. The study reveals that the CBBETD model developed by the researchers comprising 6 elements ranking in order from the most important elements: brand loyalty, followed by perceived value, brand reliability, brand awareness, respectively. In addition, it was also found that the CBBETD had the most positive and direct influence on intention to visit a tourism destination, followed by emotional attachment to a tourism destination, satisfaction of a tourism destination, ability of tourism destinations to constantly fulfill the tourists' needs better than the competitors and had a negative, direct influence on perceived risk of tourism destination, respectively.

Recommendation for further research

1. The tourism promotion advertising video should reflect the identity of a tourist destinations or present tourism awareness in order to encourage people to learn in parallel with relaxation.
2. The tourism promotion advertising video emphasizes only a sense of humor impression towards the audiences rather than attracting them to pay deeper attention to the tourist destinations. In some ads, the tourist destinations are not in relation to the advertising content causing the audiences to remember only the ads instead of the tourist destinations. Some of respondents expressed their opinions that some pieces of the tourism ads serve the audiences only as a sense of humor advert, or as a stress release, and make them laugh but they cannot create recognition of the focused tourist destinations. It is thereby recommended that marketers attach a sense of humor to be appropriately in line with the focused tourist destinations in order to encourage and improve consumer recognition in due course.

Conclusion

The findings on the tourism media perception influencing travel behavior and planning of people towards advertising and public relations media, revealed that presentation of tourism advertising and public relations media through celebrities or actors better contributes towards a clear picture of tourist destinations by means of a pattern of various gestures, expressions and careful costume selection. However, the audiences are still not assured of the content on tourism and travel activities shown on the internet in terms of insufficiency of information for option evaluation of the travel planning of consumers.



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