



Behavior and Satisfaction of Indian Tourists towards Thai Tourism Image

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Abstract

Purpose of this study is to examine behaviors of tourists. Outcome of the study relates to the satisfaction of the Indian tourists towards a marketing mix for Thai tourism industry and provides guideline for further development of Thai tourism marketing plan for Indian tourists based on the perception of Indian tourists on Thai tourism. Closed-end questionnaire is used to collect data from related agencies involved in tourism. 400 sample size is taken for the study by using Taro Yamane's formula at 95% confidence level with 5% degree of error.

The result showed that most of Indian tourists traveling in Thailand prefer to travel with friends/acquaintance during vacation for several consecutive days. Attractive tourist images of Thailand followed by other images such as quality and variety of tourist activities, rich Thai culture and convenience of accessing tourist places, respectively. Safety in traveling has been perceived as weak. It is regarded as an obstacle Indian tourist. Demographic characteristics of Indian tourist are significantly different, motivation of Indian tourists towards Thai tourism was statistically significant at the 0.05 confidence level.

Keywords : Tourist behavior, Satisfaction, Tourist image, Indian tourists



Introduction

Tourism industry is one of the main industries in the world facing an intense competition. It is an important industry that contributed to significantly to the overall economy of Thailand in 2016. Since, the total revenue from Thai tourism in 2016 was 2.51 trillion baht, which exceeded the target of 2.4 trillion baht (Office of the Permanent Secretary for Tourism and Sports, 2016), the government and the private sector are aware of the importance of tourism and therefore aim to develop tourism infrastructure to meet the needs of tourists with a view to create added value in the tourism industry. It is seen an increasing trend in development in the tourism sector in Thailand.

Even though, the past performances have been successful in terms of number of tourist arrivals and income from tourism, Thailand encountered many significant problems and obstacles such as concentration of tourist arrival and income in main tourist cities, negative tourist image that needs to be improved to ameliorate the confidence of tourists, reduction in resource allocation to tourism, lack of new tourist attraction development, problems of accessing tourist spots and poor interconnections among tourist attractions, limitation in upgrading personnel engaged in tourism, obsolescence and conflicts of laws relating to tourism, lack of in-depth information for tourism development and planning. Lack of integration of the entire tourism management mechanism (Office of the Permanent Secretary for Tourism and Sports, 2017) and constant changes happening in response to changes in the world situation and consumer behavior in the tourism industry have also been identified as issues to be addressed.

Therefore, it needs to adjust entire tourism strategic plan to address these developments and needs in order to maintain and develop the tourism capability of Thailand.

Constantly changing trends and situations urge Thailand to analyze them and take proper measures that will drive the growth and development of the tourism industry in



Thailand. It is found that the middle class in the society is growing and their incomes are also increasing currently due to continuous global economic development and increased business opportunities. Therefore, the population in the middle class around the world tends to grow by more than 5 percent per year during the year 2009-2030, which is key driver of tourist arrival from countries in the Asia-Pacific region and a large proportion of tourist arrivals from top 10 countries to Thailand are from middle class people. Especially Chinese and Indian tourists are increasing and there is still a tendency for increase in the proportion of middle-class people to arrive to Thailand in the future (Office of the Permanent Secretary for Tourism and Sports, 2017).

However, it has been found that the number of Chinese's tourist arrival in terms of group tours has been decreasing while high income earners travelled by themselves continue to increase. On the other hand, Indian tourists are therefore interested in Thailand and can be a substitute for Chinese tourists. Since, India has the second largest population in the world, and likely to be the No.1 by 2022 as per United Nations estimates. In addition, the National Council of Applied Economic Research estimates that the middle-income population of India will reach 547 million in 2026, which is highly potential and willing to spend more during travelling. (Krungsri Research, 2019)

Although India is in the lower middle-income countries and has a low per capita income, it has the 19th highest international expenditure in the world in 2016 (Krungsri Research, 2019). There is a tendency that more and more Indian tourists will come to Thailand and is likely to become the number one touring arriving country by surpassing China. At the beginning of the year, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) launched an aggressive marketing plan with New Shades of Amazing Thailand campaign in the Indian market. Creating awareness of Thailand from a new perspective for Indian tourists with the aim of having two million Indian tourist arrivals to Thailand by 2021 (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2019).



As importantly mentioned above, the researcher is interested to conduct a study about the Indian Tourists' behavior and satisfaction towards Thai Tourism Image. In particular, deeply understanding of the culture, behavior and needs of Indian tourists which is an important factor affecting tourism both in terms of tourist arrival and spending thus creating a good opportunity for Thai tourism to seize opportunities from high-potential markets. Outcome of this study will be used to manage the satisfaction for Thailand and marketing plan to suit the target tourist group, specify directions for creating Thai skilled labor in the tourism and service industry in the same direction.

Research objectives

1. To study the demographic of Indian tourists traveling to Thailand.
2. To study tourism behavior of Indian tourists traveling to Thailand.
3. To study the satisfaction of Indian tourists on the marketing mix of Thai tourism.
4. To study the perception of Indian tourists on Thai tourist image.

Research methodology

This research on behavior and satisfaction of Indian tourists on Thai tourism industry is a quantitative research, which includes the following aspects.

1. Data sampling

The population is Indian tourists visiting Thailand in January 2019 for 163,794 people (Economic, Tourism and Sports Division, 2019) and the Sample consists of 400 Indian tourists based on the formula for calculating the sample size of Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1973) at 95% confidence level and 5% error with a Convenience Sampling method

2. Research tools



Researcher uses a questionnaire as the primary research tool for data collection divided into 4 sections. Part 1, 2 and 3 comprises of questions with a check list about demographic characteristics, traveling behavior of Indian tourists and perspective of Indian Tourists toward tourism Marketing Mix (8 P's). Part 4 is Rating Scale based on the Likert's Scale model (Likert, R., 1976) questions were answered on a scale of 1–5, with 1 corresponding to the lowest mark and 5 to the highest.

To determine the quality of the questionnaire, the research tools was presented to the thesis adviser for any suggestion for improvement and adjusted in accordance with comments. The questionnaire was checked by 5 experts to find the content validity with the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). IOC is used in test development for evaluating content validity at the item development stage. Score each item as you feel it represents each construct. Enter 1 if the item likely measures the construct, 0 if the item may somewhat measure the construct or it is unclear whether it measures the construct, and -1 if the item likely does not measure the construct. And test reliability of the questionnaire was determined so as to ensure that the responses collected through the instrument were reliable and consistent. The questionnaire was tested with 30 samples (Try-out) that were not in the sample group by finding the alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1990). The mean of the confidence of the questionnaire was 0.751

3. Data analysis

Descriptive Statistics, consisting of Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation and test statistical analysis (Test Statistics) by using the T-test method for the two groups independently and ANOVA (and Paired Sample T-test) to test the 2 groups or more at the confidence of 95 percent are used to analyze data from questionnaires collected by using statistical software packages.

Results

The research on the behavior and satisfaction of Indian tourists in Thai tourism encountered four major issues as follows:



Part 1 Demographic characteristics of Indian tourists from the sample response of 400 questionnaires found that most are men (64.50%), 32% are in the age between 31-40 years, 29.5% are bachelor degree holders, 61.25% are married, 37.5% are professional employees, and 51.75% earn an average monthly income of 100,001 – 150,000 Rs. (46,101 – 69,200 THB). Details are shown as in table 1.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics Data of Indian Tourists

Tourist Information	Frequency	Percentage	Tourist Information	Frequency	Percentage
Gender			Marital Status		
Male	258	64.50%	Married	245	61.25%
Female	142	35.50%	Single	141	35.25%
Total	400	100	Divorced	14	3.50%
Age (Year)			education		
Less than 20	11	2.75%	Elementary School	54	13.50%
21-25	43	10.75%	Primary School	102	25.50%
26-30	84	21.00%	High School	109	27.25%
31-40	128	32.00%	Bachelor's degree	118	29.50%
41-50	97	24.25%	Master's degree	17	4.25%
Above 50	37	9.25%	Total	400	100
occupy			Salary (Rupee)		
Student	30	7.50%	Less than 100,000 (Less than 46,100 Baht)	131	32.75%
Government Officer	11	2.75%	100,001 – 150,000 (46,101 – 69,200 Baht)	207	51.75%
Employee	150	37.50%	150,001 – 250,000 (69,201 – 115,360 Baht)	57	14.25%
Housewife	28	7.00%	Above 250,000 (Above 115,361 Baht)	5	1.25%
Self-employed	139	34.75%	Total	400	100
Unemployed	0	0.00%			
Business Owner	42	10.50%			
Total	400	100			

Part 2 Characteristics of tourism behavior of Indian tourists travelling to Thailand based on sample responses of 400 questionnaires found that most of them are traveling to Thailand more than once (71.50%), and 57% travel for Leisure purpose), 34.5% search for travel information about Thailand through Internet/social media ,29% have a tendency of travelling with friends/acquaintance ,43.25% stay in Thailand for 5-7 days in one trip, 33.25% prefer to



engage in natural activities such as waterfalls, mountains, beaches, etc. and 69% would like to return without specific time as shown in table 2.

Table 2 Indian Tourists Behaviors

Tourism Behavior	Frequency	Percentage	Tourism Behavior	Frequency	Percentage
Time to visit Thailand			Time Spent (Night)		
First Time	114	39.86	Less than 5 nights	144	36.00
More than 1 time	286	71.50	5-7 Nights	173	43.25
			More than 1 week	83	20.75
Total	400	100	Total	400	100
How did you get to know Thailand			Activities in Thailand		
Friend/Acquaintance	36	9.00	Natural Visiting	133	33.25
Family	24	6.00	Learning cultural traditions	86	21.50
Newspaper/Magazine	80	20.00	Learning Local Life	114	28.50
Internet/Social Media	138	34.50	Various activities	37	9.25
Travel Agency	122	30.50	Technological advances	10	2.50
Total	400	100	Travel with doing business	20	5.00
			Total	400	100
Purpose for travelling			Form of Travel		
Leisure Trip	228	57.00	Alone	74	18.50
Visiting Relatives/Friends	34	8.50	With family members	108	27.00
Business Trip	138	34.50	With company	42	10.50
Total	400	100	With friend/acquaintance	116	29.00
			With a tour group	60	15.00
			Total	400	100
Repeated travel requirements					
Coming back later this year	22	5.50			
Coming back later next year	102	25.50			
Coming back without time specify	276	69.00			
Total	400	100			

Part 3 With reference to common views of tourists from India in relation to a mix of marketing factors based on the sample 400 respondents' majority views revealed that Thailand has beautiful natural resources and attractions such as Koh Samui Island, Krabi, Pattaya, etc. (P:1). Further, it finds that appropriation of the price of the product/service ranges between an average cost of 9,001-12,000 Rs. (4,001 – 5,500THB/person/day), (P:2) majority finds tourist information about Thailand from social media, TV, Internet, and Radio, etc. (P:3) and the most popular trip during vacation/holidays is the one that consists of several consecutive days (P:4);



covering various travelling and leisure activities (P:5), Importance of food and beverage as the first criteria (P:6) to select from a wide range of products/services (P:7), and the safety of the journey were highlighted by the respondents (P:8), as indicated in table 3.

Table 3 Tourism Marketing Mix Perspective of Indian Tourists

Satisfaction of Marketing Mix	Frequency	Percentage	Satisfaction of Marketing Mix	Frequency	Percentage
Tourist attractions in Thailand			Time Period		
Sea beach	155	38.75%	Holidays according to various festivals	111	27.75%
Business center city and Various activities	133	33.25%	Vacation / holiday for several consecutive days	223	55.75%
City of arts and culture	74	18.50%	Festival / Thai tradition	66	16.50%
Other places	38	9.50%			
Total	400	100	Total	400	100
Total expenditure during travel in Thailand (Average Rupee/person/day)			The most impressive activities		
Less than 9,000 (Less than 4,001 Baht)	86	21.50%	The various activities: Spa, Golf	36	9.00%
9,001 - 12,000 (4,001 - 5,500 Baht)	198	49.50%	Thai culture and traditions	119	29.75%
12,001 - 15,000 (5,501 - 6,900 Baht)	95	23.75%	Beautiful and varied tourist spots	174	43.50%
More than 15,000 (Above 6,900 Baht)	21	5.25%	Generosity of Thai people	71	17.75%
Total	400	100	Total	400	100
Which the channel of Thailand's Tourism that you know			Form of Travelling in Thailand		
From person	86	21.50%	Visit the way of life Thai culture and traditions	136	34.00%
From printing media	96	24.00%	Beauty of natural	155	38.75%
From Social Media	163	40.75%	Challenging activities	73	18.25%
From organization	55	13.75%	Health Tourism	36	9.00%
Total	400	100	Total	400	100
Reason for travelling in Thailand			Limitations of services in businesses		
Accommodation	103	25.75%	Ease of access to tourist attractions	15	3.75%
Entertainment expenditures	55	13.75%	Quality of products and services	120	30.00%
Food and beverages	135	33.75%	Safety for life and property during travel	132	33.00%
Vehicle travel expenses	39	9.75%	Language	84	21.00%
Souvenir	68	17.00%	Political Issue	49	12.25%
Total	400	100	Total	400	100

Part 4 Tourism image of Thailand, in the view of Indian tourists, based on image factors of Thailand referring to the sample of the 400 questionnaires revealed that most of them have given the highest perception in three areas: The very good perception on the quality and variety of tourism (mean value = 4.26) The good perception on strong culture of Thailand (mean value = 3.79). The convenience of accessing tourist spots (Mean value = 3.42). Value and Tourism's experience had a medium perception (mean value = 3.65) and safety in travelling had the lowest perception (mean value = 3.19). Details of those perceptions are given in table 4.



Table 4 Opinions on the image of Thai tourism

Opinions on the image of Thai tourism	Mean	S.D.	Image Level
Quality and variety of tourism	4.26	0.337	Good
The strong culture of Thailand	3.79	0.494	Good
Safety in travelling	3.19	0.578	Moderate
The convenience of accessing tourist spots	3.42	0.604	Good
Value and Tourism's experience	3.65	0.258	Good
Total	4.19	0.171	Good

In relation to variables that influence planning of tourist visits to Thailand, relationships between demographic attributes of tourists and tourist behavior in Thailand (experience of visiting Thailand, information sources about Thailand, upcoming activities when visiting Thailand, travel time, types of transportation for travelling, and demand for recurrent travel), marketing mix (Product, Price Place, Promotion, Physical Environment, Purchasing Process, Packaging, Partnership) and tourism and image of Thailand (quality and variety of tourism, strong culture of Thailand, the safe of tourism, convenience and accessibility of tourism resources, and the value of tourism and experience) were analyzed by using independent T-Test - and one-way, ANOVA analyses. Findings are given below.

Sex has a significant relationship with tourism behaviors of Thailand. Activities they want to engage while visiting Thailand (Sig 2-tailed = 0.010) and strong relationships with products (Sig 2-tailed = 0.007), purchasing process; (Sig 2 tailed = 0.010) and packaging (Sig 2-tailed = 0.001) in relation to the marketing mix.

Age has a significant relationship with products and services (Sig 2-tailed = 0.026) and price of goods and services; price (Sig 2 tailed = 0.010 in the Thai tourism marketing mix.

Education is significantly related Information about Thailand (Sig 2-tailed = 0.010) and activities to be engaged while visiting Thailand (Sig 2 tailed = 0.014) with reference to tourist behavior in Thailand.

Careers is significantly related to the purpose of travel (Sig 2-tailed = 0.009) with reference to tourist behavior in Thailand.

Income is significantly related to the price of goods and services (Sig 2-tailed = 0.037) and distribution channels; (Sig 2-tailed = 0.014) with reference to Thai tourist marketing mix.



Table 5 The results of the analysis of the relationship between variables and demographic characteristics of Indian tourists

Demographic Factors	Variables affecting behavior and motivation for Thai tourism of Indian tourists		
	Tourism Behaviour	Tourism Marketing Mix	Tourism Image
Gender	**	**	-
Age	-	**	-
Education	**	**	-
Marital Status	-	-	-
Occupation	**	-	-
Income	**	**	-

** Were different or had statistical significance at the level of 0.05

- There is no difference or no relationship.

Discussion

Outcome of the research on behavior and satisfaction of Indian tourists on Thai tourist image found that most Indian tourists traveling to Thailand are male at the age between 31-40 years old, bachelor's degree holders, married, employees from private companies and have average monthly income ranging from 100,001 – 150,000 Rs. or 46,101 – 69,200 THB, and most of them have experienced of more than 1 time in Thailand, intended for travel/leisure, searched Thailand travel information manually from the Internet/Social Media, travelled with a friend/acquaintance with a 5-7 days' trip.

The activities to be engaged while visiting Thailand were nature visits such as waterfalls, mountains, beaches, etc. and returned without specifying the time of coming back. According to the findings of Samran, U. (2011), it was mentioned that most Indian tourists have the purpose of traveling for relaxation and come along with a friend/acquaintance, travel in group and team, but do not correspond to the activities above; as they love shopping while staying in Thailand.



Indian tourists have a perception that Thailand is a country with beautiful natural attractions along with the arts, culture, and Thai lifestyle traditions, and this set up attract Indian tourists and preferred by them. Price of product/service is perceived as reasonable.

The study finds a high average cost/day/person amounting to 9,001-12,000 Rs (4,001 – 5,500 THB/person/day) by Indian tourists and they use Internet as a medium to search for Thailand's travel information by themselves. Travelling is popular during the holidays/long vacations to spend a day out for a wide range of attractions, and Food & beverages is the first priority for Indian tourists in deciding to visit Thailand as well as the availability of a wide range of products/services, including safety during travel.

Results of Tourism of Thailand (2015) further stated that the image of Thailand is the highlight and on the negative attitude of highly potent Indian tourists visiting Thailand for shopping and are interested in the attractions of Thailand due to a variety of tourist spots, with the opinion that tourist spots in Thailand are worthy spending is a risk (weakness) as well.

Further, Indian tourists have a view on Thai tourist image from two perspectives: (1). a positive image of the quality and variety of tourism, the strong culture of Thailand, convenience of access to tourist spots and the value and tourism experience, respectively. Indian tourists have the opinion that the trip to Thailand makes new experiences and can learn new things, and it also explores new lifestyle, cultures such as Thai cuisine, Thai costumes and the kindness of Thai people. Local culture is still the primary magnet to attract the attention of Indian tourists to Thailand. (2). a negative image, including the safety in travelling, is the major aspect that visitors consider in visiting Thailand.

Results of the Somjun, R. (2010) described that factors attracted foreign tourists coming to Thailand have five levels; (1) Hospitality (2) Good human relations (3) The attraction (4) Happiness of the people in country (5) and the excitement. The negative factors that make visitors not to decide coming to Thailand included three main issues; (1) a negative image about political crisis (2) Natural disasters (3) Prostitution and safety had the lowest threshold scores provided by tourists.



Recommendations

The outcome of the analysis of statistical data can be a guide for planning Thailand's tourism industry developments as follows:

1. Infrastructure development and facilities: according to the study, it is important to note that Indian tourists stay in 4-5-star hotels or luxury resorts due to its comfortable and well-equipped facilities. Therefore, to attract this group of tourists, it is important to develop the infrastructure and accommodation facilities to serve this target group.

2. Development and rehabilitation of sustainable tourism sites: due to Indian tourists prefer to explore the nature scenes and eco-tourism, it is important to develop, improve, and restore such tourist sites by maintaining the balance of the ecosystems to attract Indian tourists.

3. Development of products and services including travel support factors: the study finds that one of the most popular tourist destinations is Thailand due to the availability of places to travel around, included places for shopping and dining especially Indian wedding party is popular to be organized in Thailand due to the beauty of Thailand's tourist resources and facilities available and reasonable prices. Therefore, in order to attract tourists, this group should include various tourist support factors that the Indian tourists are interested in.

4. Building trust and promotion: As Thailand still has problems that might reduce the confidence of Indian tourists, such as political problems, etc., it is a good idea to build trust by promoting the target group to understand and be more interested in visiting Thailand.

5. Promoting the public-sector participation process, governance and administrative organization in tourist resource management: It is recommended to establish cooperation between the public sector and the community by sending tourists to mix with the community.

Recommendations on the next research

1. It is recommended to study only the things that Indian tourists are interested in such as marriage or honeymoon in Thailand with a view to get an insight into planning the next Thai Tourism development.



2. To study more about elderly Indians as they are now increasing in the Indian society. Therefore, it is recommended to study in this field in order to continue with relevant research in the future.

3. To develop a more efficient Thai tourism. It is important to study the behavior and motivation related to purchasing power of other potential groups such as the elderly Indians.

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