

South Korea's Destination Image in Attitudes of Thai Tourists

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Abstract : This research aims to study the South Korea's destination image in the attitudes of Thai Tourists and to be a pilot study for destination image promotion for South Korea tourism in the Thai tourist market. This study is quantitative research with a research sample of 528. Regarding South Korea's destination images, the results are as follows: The strongly agreed images are: South Korea is famous for drama and movie settings, it is a cold country suitable for winter activities, it has high-quality communication technology, it is famous for its grill menu and the variety local foods and it is a shopping paradise. The agreed images are: South Korea has cultural activity, transportation is convenient and safe, it is famous for entertaining shows, it has a strict immigration procedure, it has souvenir shops selling Korean stars' merchandise, the tourist areas are safe, it is a romantic place for lovers, it has a problems with communicating in English, it is famous for historical and cultural places, it has beautiful natural attractions, its buildings and architectures are modern, it offers value-for-money for tourists, it is famous for the local liquor, and it has popular theme parks. The neutral images are: Koreans are friendly, and they have a warmly welcoming personality. In conclusion, there are three major images which affect the Thai tourists' decisions : [1] South Korea is cold, which is good for winter activities, [2] it is a shopping paradise, and [3] it is famous for drama and movie settings which make Thai tourists want to visit those places, respectively.

Keywords: Destination images, South Korea, Thai tourists' attitude

บทคัดย่อ : บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาภาพลักษณ์แหล่งท่องเที่ยวของประเทศไทยที่ตั้งในทัศนคติของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวไทยและเป็นแนวทางในการส่งเสริมภาพลักษณ์การท่องเที่ยวของประเทศไทยให้ในตลาดนักท่องเที่ยวชาวไทย ผู้วิจัยเก็บข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณจากนักท่องเที่ยว

ชาว์ไทยที่เคยเดินทางไปท่องเที่ยวที่เกาหลีได้จำนวน 528 คน ผลการศึกษาพบว่า ภาพลักษณ์ด้านการท่องเที่ยวของประเทศเกาหลีใต้ที่นักท่องเที่ยวชาวไทยเห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง ได้แก่ ประเทศเกาหลีใต้มีชื่อเสียงด้านแหล่งท่องเที่ยวตามรอยละคร/ภาพยนตร์ มีอุณหภูมิหนาวเย็นเหมาะสมกับกิจกรรมการท่องเที่ยวช่วงฤดูหนาวมีเทคโนโลยีการสื่อสารที่มีคุณภาพสูง มีชื่อเสียงเรื่องอาหารประเภทปิ้งย่างและอาหารท้องถิ่นและเป็นส่วนรکของการจับจ่ายสินค้า ภาพลักษณ์ที่เห็นด้วยได้แก่ มีกิจกรรมด้านวัฒนธรรมมีระบบคมนาคมที่สะดวกสบายและปลอดภัยมีชื่อเสียงด้านการแสดงเพื่อความบันเทิงมีระบบตราชนเข้าเมืองที่เข้มงวดความโดยดเด่นด้านร้านขายของที่ระลึกของศิลปินเกาหลีมีแหล่งท่องเที่ยวที่ปลอดภัย มีบรรยากาศและกิจกรรมการท่องเที่ยวที่โรงแรมติดเคียงกับครุภัณฑ์ มีอุปสรรคด้านการใช้ภาษาสื่อสารกับนักท่องเที่ยว มีสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวที่มีชื่อเสียงทางประวัติศาสตร์และวัฒนธรรม มีแหล่งท่องเที่ยวทางธรรมชาติที่สวยงาม มีความศิวิไลซ์จากการและสถาปัตยกรรมสมัยใหม่ มีความคุ้มค่าของค่าใช้จ่ายในการท่องเที่ยว มีชื่อเสียงด้านเครื่องดื่มมีเนม่า และมีส่วนสนุกที่เป็นที่ชื่นชอบของนักท่องเที่ยว ส่วนภาพลักษณ์ที่นักท่องเที่ยวชาวไทยรู้สึกเฉย ๆ ได้แก่ เกาหลีใต้มีพลเมืองที่มีอธิราชศั้นดี เป็นมิตรและมีการต้อนรับที่อบอุ่น นอกจากนี้จากการศึกษาปรากฏว่าภาพลักษณ์ที่ได้เด่นของประเทศเกาหลีใต้ 3 อันดับแรกที่ทำให้นักท่องเที่ยวชาวไทยตัดสินใจเดินทางมาท่องเที่ยวที่ประเทศเกาหลีใต้ได้แก่ ประเทศเกาหลีใต้มีอุณหภูมิหนาวเย็นเหมาะสมกับกิจกรรมการท่องเที่ยวช่วงฤดูหนาว เป็นศูนย์กลางการค้าและเป็นส่วนรکของการจับจ่ายสินค้า และมีชื่อเสียงด้านแหล่งท่องเที่ยวตามรอยละคร/ภาพยนตร์ ตามลำดับ

คำสำคัญ : ภาพลักษณ์แหล่งท่องเที่ยว, เกาหลีใต้, ทัศนคติของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวไทย

Introduction

Image plays an important role in public relation strategy for all kinds of business. The image destinations promoted to the market is a key element in the tourist decision process when choosing a tourism destination (Matos, Mendes and Valle 2012). Nevertheless, the influence of destination image is not limited to the choice-of-destination phase, but the tourist's behavior at all stage (Ashworth and Goodall 1988; Mansfeld 1992 cited in Matos, Mendes and Valle 2012). Destination image is defined as what tourists think or perceive about a state as a destination, its tourism resources, its tourist services, the hospitality of its host, its social and cultural norms, and its rules and regulations which influence their consumer behavior (Ahmed and others 2006 : 59).

South Korea is one of the most popular tourist destinations among Thais. The Statistics of Tourism Expenditure, by outgoing Thai travelers from 2009 to 2013, shows that there were 100,336 Thai tourists who visited South Korea in 2009 and 172,088 in 2013; a rise of 71.51% (Department of Tourism of Thailand 2014). In addition, the Korea Tourism Organization (2014) reported, in the Korea Statistics of Tourism/Statistics of Arrivals of 2014, that Thai tourists are ranked at 6th place foreign tourists and Thai tourists are ranked number one among ASEAN countries who visited South Korea. It is possible to claim that South Korea is a major tourism market for Thai tourists. Therefore this paper would like to study the South Korea's destination image in the attitudes of Thai Tourists, focusing on South Korean characteristics and the distinguishing features of tourist destinations that affect Thai tourists' decision making. This study will be useful in adapting destination image promotion for South Korea tourism.

This present study focuses on two aims: 1) To study the South Korea's destination image in the attitudes of Thai Tourists, and 2) To be a pilot study for destination image promotion for South Korea tourism in the Thai tourist market.

Literature Review

The Concept of Tourism Destination

Cooper and others (1998) defined Destination as "the focus of facilities and services designed to meet the needs of the tourists".

Furthermore, Stange and Brown (2010), authors of "Tourism Destination Management Archiving Sustainable and Competitive Results", gave the definition of destination in term of tourism is "any place at my scale defined by the market as a unique location capable of attracting visitation". Buhalis (2000) had been studying about Destination Marketing and Management and considered Destination as "a defined geographical region which is understood by its visitor as a unique entity with a political and legislative framework for tourism marketing and planning", also offered the six as framework which characterized the Tourism Destination into six components starting with all

letter "A" as follows:

- Attraction (natural, man-made, artificial, purpose built, heritage, special events)
- Accessibility (entire transportation system comprising of routes, terminals and vehicles)
- Amenities (accommodation and catering facilities, retailing, other tourist services)
- Available packages (pre-arranged packages by intermediaries and principals)
- Activities (all activities available at the destination and what consumer will do during their visit)
- Ancillary services (services used by tourists such as banks, telecommunications, post, newsagent, hospitals, etc.)

The Concept and importance of destination image

There are definitions of destination image (DI) from others including Alhemoud and Amstrong (1996 :76) defined that Destination image is comprised of “ideas or conceptions held individually or collectively of the destination”. Ahmed and others (2006 : 59) defined the Destination image as “what tourists think or perceive about a state as a destination, its tourism resources, its tourist services, the hospitality of its host, its social and culture norms, and its rules and regulations which influence their consumer behavior”.

Matos, Mendes and Valle (2012) reviewed and explored the destination image construct in the article of “Revisiting the destination image construct through a conceptual model”. They stated that “Image is a set of complex mental impressions and total feelings that a potential tourists hold of a product, place or tourism destination”. They had also studied about how important of the destination image to the tourism and stated that “The image destination is a key element in the tourist decision-making process when choosing a tourism destination”. Moreover, they also reviewed the concept of the important and influence of destination image from several authors, for example, Ashworth and Goodall (1988) and Mansfeld (1992) stated that “The influence of DI

is not limited to the choice-of-destination phase, but affects the tourist's behavior at all stages". While Sonmez & Sirikaya (2002) stated that "It is essential to have a clear understanding of the tourists' destination image (DI) for successful marketing strategies to be developed" as well as Govers (2005) said that "Image is based on the tourist expected benefits, psychological characteristics, and meanings, which as a result influence the destination positioning".

Methodology

1) Qualitative data collection

The Qualitative data collection aimed to find the characteristics and images of South Korea as a tourist destination. The data were from 200 Thais who have either visited or not visited South Korea before being collected for this analysis using a Keyword Questionnaire and Imagery under the topic of 'South Korea as a destination'. The results were used to design the questionnaire for the quantitative research stage.

2) Quantitative data collection

Research instrument

The research instrument of the quantitative data collection was a questionnaire designed from the qualitative data. The questionnaire was an online version answered by Thai tourists who had visited South Korea before. The questionnaire is a check list consisting of 5 components: 1) Personal data 2) The channels to receive South Korea's tourism information 3) The characteristics of South Korea in Thai tourists' attitudes 4) The destination image of South Korea in Thai tourists' attitudes 5) An open question regarding to the most distinguished image of South Korea that affected the Thai tourists' decision making.

Population and sample size

The sample size was calculated based on the Taro Yamane formula with a 5% precision level, 95% confidence level and population size of 172,088 which is the number based on the number of outgoing Thai tourists to Korea in 2013 (Department of Tourism of Thailand 2014). The collected data in this

study were 400 samples. The online questionnaire was posted in an internet chat room called 'Blue planet', the most popular tourism chat room, at www.pantip.com which is the most famous and popular web board in Thailand. Consequently, the respondents who completed the questionnaire come up with 528 responses. Thus, it was decided to analyze all the responses. The collected data were analyzed with Percentage, Arithmetic Mean: and Standard Deviation: S.D.

Results

1) Personal data of respondents

Regarding the collected data, the personal information is as follows. The major groups of respondents are females (69.13%), aged 31-40 years old (42.05%), working as company staff (39.96%), having single status (82.01%), holding a bachelor degree (57.57%), having a salary in the at 500-1,000 USD range (37.88%). All of the information details are shown in table 1.

Table 1: Personal and demographic information

Personal data	Percentage	Personal data	Percentage
1. Gender		4. Marital status	
Male	30.87%	Single	82.01%
		Married	17.23%
Female	69.13%	Divorced	0.76%
Total	100%	Total	100%
2. Age		5. Education	
18 –22 years old	15.15%	Primary school	0.00%
23 –30 years old	35.42%	High school/Vocational school	6.82%
31 –40 years old	42.05%	Diploma	2.84%
41 –50 years old	4.92%	Bachelor degree	57.57%
51 years old and above	2.46%	Master degree	28.98%
		Doctorate degree	3.79%
Total	100%	Total	100%

Personal data	Percentage	Personal data	Percentage
3. Profession Student	15.91%	6. Salary <500 USD	18.18%
Government officer	8.14%	>500 –1000 USD	37.88%
Government staff	15.91%	>1000 –1667 USD	29.36%
State Enterprise staff	2.08%	>1667 –2333 USD	9.28%
Company staff	39.96%	>2333 –3333 USD	2.84%
Business owner	10.98%	>3333 –5000 USD	1.70%
Farmer	0.00%	>5000 –6667 USD	0.38%
Freelance	4.92%	>6667 USD	0.38%
Not working/ retired	2.08%		
Total	100%	Total	100%

2) The channels used to receive South Korean tourism information

It was found that Thai tourists receive tourism information for South Korea mostly from social networks (19.32%), with the second highest number receiving it from TV-dramas and movies (16.07 %), and the third highest number receiving it from tourism websites (14.67%). All the details are shown in table 2.

Table 2: The channels to receive the South Korea tourism information

Channel	Percentage	Channel	Percentage
1. Media (Television, radio, newspaper, magazine)	10.83%	6. Guide book	9.20 %
2. Tourism events	5.94 %	7. Information from tour agents	3.49%
3. TV-dramas/Movies	16.07 %	8. Tourist websites	14.67%
4. Web board/blog	9.90 %	9. Social networks (such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)	19.32%
5. Acquaintances	10.36%	10. Others	0.23%

3) Thai tourists' attitude

The qualitative data collection was received from Thai tourists who have either visited or have not visited South Korea before, by using a Keyword Questionnaire and Imagery under the topic of South Korea as a destination. The results were used to design the questionnaire for the quantitative research stage. The collected data were analyzed and categorized by keywords that indicate the characteristics and destination images of South Korea. The results were 20 characteristics and 20 destination images of South Korea.

The research instrument for the quantitative data collection was a questionnaire designed from the qualitative data collection and presented as an online version. It aimed to find the attitudes of the 528 Thai tourists who visited South Korea before knowing about the characteristics and destination images of South Korea. It was found that the Thai tourists' attitudes towards South Korea's characteristics and destination images were mostly positive. The most strongly agreed characteristic was nationalism ($\bar{x}=4.43$). The most strongly agreed image was that South Korea is famous for drama and movie settings ($\bar{x}=4.44$). The overall analyzed data is shown in tables 3 and 4, respectively.

Table 3: The characteristics and the destination image of South Korea in Thai tourists' attitude

Characteristics of South Korea	\bar{X}	S.D.	Scale of agreement	Characteristics of South Korea	\bar{X}	S.D.	Scale of agreement
1. Modernity	4.29	0.63	Strongly agree	11. Valuable	3.66	0.86	Agree
2. Friendliness	3.31	0.94	Neutral	12. Popularity of famous persons or places	4.03	0.88	Agree
3. Safety	3.92	0.76	Agree	13. Warmly welcoming	3.37	0.86	Neutral
4. Romantic country	3.84	0.92	Agree	14. Cleanliness	3.93	0.73	Agree
5. Nature	3.77	0.94	Agree	15. Tranquility	3.58	0.89	Agree
6. Cultural uniqueness	4.00	0.87	Agree	16. Loyalty	3.48	0.87	Agree
7. Enjoyment	3.76	0.80	Agree	17. Long history	3.77	0.97	Agree

Characteristics of South Korea	\bar{X}	S.D.	Scale of agreement	Characteristics of South Korea	\bar{X}	S.D.	Scale of agreement
8. Discipline	3.78	0.81	Agree	18. Developed city	4.32	0.63	Strongly agree
9. Nationalism	4.43	0.66	Strongly agree	19. Technology leader	4.29	0.68	Strongly agree
10. Beauty business	4.00	0.81	Agree	20. Loveliness of the people	3.55	0.97	Agree
Total					3.85	0.83	Agree

Table 4: The distinguishing images of South Korea in forming Thai tourists' decision making

Image	\bar{X}	S.D.	Scale
1. it is a romantic place for lovers	3.89	0.92	Agree
2. South Korea is famous for drama and movie settings	4.44	0.70	Strongly agree
3. it has beautiful natural attractions such as mountains, islands, etc.	3.79	0.86	Agree
4. it is a cold country suitable for winter activities	4.40	0.65	Strongly agree
5. it is famous for its grill menu and the variety of local foods	4.35	0.72	Strongly agree
6. it has souvenir shops selling Korean stars' merchandise	3.97	0.87	Agree
7. it is a shopping paradise	4.35	0.70	Strongly agree
8. it has problems with communicating in English	3.87	0.94	Agree
9. it has popular theme parks	3.60	0.88	Agree
10. it is famous for historical and cultural places	3.85	0.88	Agree
11. it is famous for the local liquor	3.63	0.90	Agree
12. Koreans are friendly, and they have a warmly welcoming personality	3.34	0.93	Neutral

Image	\bar{X}	S.D.	Scale
13. its buildings and architecture are modern	3.79	0.78	Agree
14. the tourist areas are safe	3.95	0.73	Agree
15. transportation is convenient and safe	4.14	0.78	Agree
16. it has high-quality communication technology	4.40	0.71	Strongly agree
17. it has cultural activities such as Korean food cooking classes, national costume dress, etc.	4.18	0.73	Agree
18. it is famous for entertaining shows such as Jump shows, the Fanta Stick show, etc.	4.00	0.81	Agree
19. it offers value-for-money for tourists	3.79	0.80	Agree
20. it has a strict immigration procedure	4.00	0.84	Agree
Total	3.99	0.81	Agree

4) The most distinguished images of South Korea that affect the Thai tourists' decision

There are three major images which affect the Thai tourists' decisions: First, South Korean is cold which is good for winter activities (23.50%). Second, it is a shopping paradise (17.20%). Finally, it is famous for drama and movie settings, which make Thai tourists want to visit those places (14.70%).

Conclusions and Discussion

1. The most popular channel for receiving South Korean tourism information is via social media, which is relevant to the effects of social media on the tourism industry. These virtual communities are becoming important networks of consumer knowledge that influences consumer behavior (De Valck, Van Bruggen and Wierenga 2009). In tourism, consumer's behavior

has always been influenced by developments in Information Communication Technologies (Buhalis1998; Poon 1993cited in Fotis, Buhalis and Rossides 2012). Social media impacts in travel will, therefore, be tremendous (Gretzel, Kang and Lee 2008). Social media is becoming increasingly important in travel planning, primarily for its function as a vital information source providing access to other traveler's experience (ChungandBuhalis 2008; Yoo, Gretzel and Zach 2011cited in Fotis, Buhalis and Rossides 2012).

The other popular channel is via TV-dramas/movies. This is relevant to the study of 'Exposure to Japan and republic of Korea's tourism communication and tourism behavior in Thailand' (Potranun 2011) Potranun found that TV-dramas/movies are the most popular channel used to receive South Korean tourism information among Thai tourists. The study is relevant to the theory of intercultural communication, in which is stated that South Korea tourism communication is communicated through cultural aspects appearing in TV-dramas, TV-shows, and movies which are part of the pop culture.

2. Thai tourists strongly agree with nationalism characteristics of South Koreans ($\bar{x} = 4.44$). This attitude arises from the intercultural communication, which is related to South Korea government policy on cultural capital promotion through TV-dramas, TV-shows, and movies. Korean culture is represented in all aspects such as Korean history presented through TV-dramas, Korean food and sport presented through TV-shows, Korean national costume presented through K-pop singers' costumes. These promote the branding strategies of South Korea resulting in Thai tourists perceiving South Korea as a nationalist country.

The neutral agreed characteristics are friendliness ($\bar{x} = 3.31$) and warmly welcoming ($\bar{x} = 3.37$). Since these characteristics are not highly distinguished by Thai tourists, the South Korea government might take this opportunity to develop these characteristics by urging South Koreans to express more friendliness and warmly welcoming characteristics as it will help promote positive attitudes in Thai tourists toward South Koreans.

3. From the qualitative data collection, it was found that South Korea destination images are positive rather than negative. The positive images were found in 18 perspectives as follows: 1) it is famous for drama and movie settings 2) it is a cold country suitable for winter activities 3) it has high-quality communications technology 4) it is famous for its grill menu and the variety of local foods 5) it is a shopping paradise 6) it has cultural activities 7) transportation is convenient and safe 8) it is famous for entertaining shows 9) it has souvenir shops selling Korean stars' merchandise 10) the tourist areas are safe 11) it is a romantic place for lovers 12) it is famous for historical and cultural places 13) it has beautiful natural attractions 14) its buildings and architecture are modern 15) it offers value-for-money for tourists 16) it is famous for the local liquor 17) it has popular theme parks 18) Koreans are friendly, and they have a warmly welcoming personalities. There are only two negative images found in this study: 1) it has a problem with communicating in English and 2) it has a strict immigration procedure. The result is that Thai tourists have more positive images than negative ones, which is useful for South Korea's public relations and marketing strategy in Thailand.

4. The strongly agreed images of South Korea among Thai tourists are 1) it is famous for drama and movie settings ($\bar{x} = 4.44$), it has high-quality communications technology ($\bar{x} = 4.40$), it is a cold country suitable for winter activities ($\bar{x} = 4.40$), it is famous for its grill menu and the variety of local foods ($\bar{x} = 4.35$), and it is a shopping paradise ($\bar{x} = 4.35$). In contrast, the study of the factors that affect Thai tourists' decisions to travel to South Korea are: it is a cold country suitable for winter activities (23.50%), it is a shopping paradise (17.20%), and it is famous for drama and movie settings (14.70%), respectively. According to the framework presented in 'Six As framework for the analysis of tourism destinations' by Buhalis (2000 : 98), the presented images are grouped in the 'activities' category. This is related to the Thai tourists' attitude that South Korea is attractive for various tourism activities. The variety of South Korea tourism activities is a strong factor in Thai tourists' decisions to travel to South Korea. In addition, the image that South Korea

has high-quality communications technology, which is in the second rank, is considered as ‘ancillary services’, not a key factor, according to Buhalis’s study (2000: 98).

5. The most distinguishing factor in Thai tourists’ decisions to travel to South Korea is that it is a cold country suitable for winter activities (23.50%). The reason is that Thailand is located in a tropical area, where the weather is warm all the year round, so Thai tourists would like to experience cold weather; especially snow. Moreover, South Korea living costs and ski resort expenses are not very high so it is affordable for Thai tourists to visit for short periods. One particular winter activity that is an important factor in promoting South Korea tourism is the 2014–2015 Winter Festival campaign by the South Korea government through the website at www.visitkorea.or.kr, which is the official website for South Korea tourism. The other important factors are: it is a shopping paradise (17.2%) and it is famous for drama and movie settings (14.7%), respectively. Korean products (especially cosmetics, clothes and accessories, and mobile phones) and TV-dramas, TV-shows, and movies play an important role in Thai tourists’ decision making in traveling to South Korea, because they want to buy those products. This finding is relevant to the study of ‘Factors affecting demand for travel to Korea: a case study of Thai tourists to Korea’ by Aukjinda (2010). The results of this study found that the factor most affecting demand for travel to Korea is Korean wave relating factors which promote revisits to Korea by Thai tourists. In addition, absorbing Korean culture periods also plays a significant role here. The group of people who had absorbed Korean culture over a long period will always support Korea by revisiting. Moreover, those who had absorbed the Korean wave by using Korean cosmetic brands and studying the Korean language have a greater tendency to revisit Korea. However, Korean drama can promote the good image of Korean tourism. The results of the analyzed data found that Korean dramas are one factor that leads demand for travel to Korea.

In conclusion, the study of the destination images of South Korea in Thai tourists' attitudes is the important key in the success in developing tourism public relations and marking strategies. This will help to promote South Korea tourism in the long term, in order to be more successful in the tourism industry.

Suggestions

1. Suggestions for the tourism organization

The suggestions for South Korea tourism image management, to support Thai tourists, might be considered by the relationship between the destination image and the tourism marking strategy. Among the several strategic marketing implications, which can be drawn from the destination image's construct, is that it impacts and influences the tourists' perceptions and expectations, before-during, and after the experience at the destination- as well as their satisfaction. The holistic representations of the destination must not be overlooked, since an overall image will be created by tourists, such as the aura and feelings transmitted by the destination stakeholders. Moreover, the promotional programs should not be over-promising of the destinations attributes in order to avoid tourist dissatisfaction (Matos, Mendes and Valle, 2012).

Regarding our study on destination images in Thai tourists' attitudes, we would like to give some suggestions for South Korea tourism image management to support Thai tourists as follows:

1) South Korea tourism organization should promote its positive images, especially winter activities, shopping, and drama and movie settings travels through various media, to emphasize those images. Furthermore, the variety and types of activities should be added in order to promote the attractiveness of South Korea tourist destinations.

2) The negative images, such as problems with English communications and the strict immigration procedures should be improved by developing English communication proficiency for staff in the tourism market; such as hotel staff, airport staff, and vendors. Moreover the immigration procedure should be more relaxed and friendly because some Thai tourists, especially

women, dare not travel to South Korea, because they are worried that they will be rejected by South Korea immigration.

3) The neutral agreed images of South Korea- viz, that Koreans are friendly and have a warmly welcoming personality- should also be improved by a campaign encouraging South Koreans to be friendly hosts. This will definitely help in promoting South Korean tourism.

2. Suggestions for further research

There are some aspects that we have not studied in this present study, such as the personal factors and channels for tourism public relation promotion, which are related to Thai tourists' attitudes of South Korea tourism. This further study might be about the differences in the important factors that affect the decision making process when traveling. The study of this factor is important as it might reveal the important keys to tourism marketing; as Baloglu and McCleary (1999) stated the image is mainly caused or formed by two major forces: stimulus factors and personal factors. The former are those that stem from the external stimulus and physical object as well as previous experience; the latter are the social and psychological characteristics of the perceiver. Beerli and Martin (2004) also stated that the personal factors along with the different information sources impact on the perceived destination image. Therefore, those aspects should be studied to enhance knowledge in the field of tourism studies.

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