

MOTIVATION TO TRAVEL AND TOURISM BEHAVIOR OF FOREIGN STUDENTS IN THAILAND

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Abstract

This research focuses on the study of travel motivations, tourism behavior, and behavioral intentions in Thailand of foreign students in higher educational institutions by using the questionnaire survey research technique with the non-probability sampling with 400 samples size at a confidence level of 95 percent. The study found that most of the travel motivations were at a high average level; among variable are knowledge enhancement, the beauty of natural resources, adventure, and receiving of new experiences/activities. Travel behavior, most of foreign students to travel within the country takes less than 10 days and go with a friend the same nationality. Most of the behavioral intentions in Thailand were at the high average level. Future travel destinations include Chiang Mai, Phuket, Krabi, Bangkok, Chiang Rai, Ayutthaya, Surat Thani, Sukhothai, Chonburi and Mae Hong Son. The top is attractions include Samui Island, Pattaya, Phi Phi Island, Hua Hin, Chang Island, Tao Island, Samet Island and Pai, Phangan Island and Lipe Island, respectively. The recommendations for improving tourism in Thailand are communication and infrastructure, tourists facilities (tourists feeling), security, and advertising and public relations.

Additional, this study also found that the different of educational level, monthly income, individuals living with, and age influenced the travel motivations with a statistical significant at the 0.05 level.

Keywords: foreign student, travel motivations, tourism behavior, behavioral intentions

Introduction

In 2015, the numbers of foreign tourist arrivals in Thailand were approximately 29 million people (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Department of Tourism, 2015). While the number of foreign students studying in Thailand in the same year was approximately 32,986 people, according to the Information and statistics from the Commission on Higher Education, which compared the proportion of foreign students to the number of foreign tourist arrivals in Thailand at 0.11 percent. Even though this number were not comparable with the market share of visitors from the East Asia, Europe, South America, Asia, Oceania, the Middle East and Africa or even in the countries i.e. China (26.57%), Malaysia (11.46%), Japan (4.62 %), Korea (4.60 %) but it comparable with Brazil (0.16 %) and Nepal (0.11 %). Also, based on the number of foreign students, it seems that the rate of increase raised at least 64 percent when compared to the numbers of foreign students in 2001.

The number of foreign students who come to study in Thailand will be a prime target to fulfill the increasing rate, as well as the number of foreign tourists that increased steadily since 2006-2015 (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Department of Tourism, 2016). Most foreign students who study in the undergraduate level in Thailand will take at least four years to complete the degree. As for the long-term stay, the students more likely to take this opportunity to explore each of tourism destinations and more likely to repeat in many areas.

The educational tourism of foreign students may also bring benefits to the country especially in the academic aspects and the cultural exchange. Furthermore, if students born ties with Thailand, they would have to persuade family, friends, and acquaintances to visit Thailand in both during the period of studying in Thailand and later when they graduate. In turn, as Thailand is one of the tourist destinations, it is also one of the factors that attract foreign students (Douglas W. Naffziger, 2008: 49). Therefore, quality of educational tourism may be a factor in the decision of foreign students to study in Thailand. However, because the educational tourism did not intend to make money from tourists as compared to the typical tourist but the goal is to learn from the journey unintentionally. Moreover, it has not been in the attention of the tourism industry, thus, in general, the educational tourism lack of business

studies both in marketing strategies, the consumer insights and the relevant necessary resources (Paul Williams, 2010).

In terms of research, assessing the field of travel motivations, travel behavior of students, and the likelihood of intention in the future will be the basis information for implementing in education tourism of foreign students in Thailand. The results of this study can be used as a guideline for the development of tourism education of foreign students in Thailand in the future.

Objective

This study aims to assess the motivation to travel, travel behavior, the trend in the future intentions of foreign students studying in higher education institutions in Thailand.

Methodology

1. Review research papers gathering the demographic of foreign students in Thailand as well as the concept and the demographic characteristics and tourism, tourism motivation, tourist Behavior and the educational tourism from relevant sources.
2. Quantitative Research using research survey techniques to study the population of motivation to travel, travel behavior trends, and willingness to travel in the future. The population of the study is foreign students studying in higher education institutions in the academic year 2015 in total 32,986 populations. The selective 400 samples were designated with the confidence level of 95 percent with the tolerances acceptable of 5 percent or significance level at 0.05 (Taro Yamane, 1973) selected by means of a primary residence, not a probability. By selecting a specific sample with higher education institutions zoning, based in the five regions of the country then selected sample set quotas for each regional group to approximately 15% of all regions. Then select a sample method by using selecting a set quota from the university that has the highest number of foreign students in each region. The final step is to select a random sample to get a sample that meets the requirements.
3. Prepare guidelines/suggestions/plans in the complete research report for related stakeholders, including organizations/agencies to promote tourism with the needs and travel behavior of the target audience.

Research Hypotheses

The research hypothesized that the travel motivation will be different if the factors i.e. demographic characteristics of students, including gender, religion, nationality, countries, age, education level, department of education, educational fund, monthly incomes, monthly expenses, type of accommodation, individuals living with, number of free days per month, years stayed in Thailand is different.

Research Results

The questionnaire survey research technique with the non-probability sampling with 400 samples size at a confidence level of 95 percent of foreign students studying in higher education, which found that the information are in Table 1 following:

Table 1. General Information

General Information		Percentage (%)
Education level	Diploma	15.0
	Bachelor	67.8
	Master	12.8
	Ph.D.	1.5
	Certificate	3.0
Monthly incomes	Lower than / less than 5,000 Baht	38.0
	5,001-10,000 baht	23.8
	10,001-15,000 baht	15.3
	15,001-20,000 baht	10.3
	20,000 baht and over	12.8
Individuals living with	No one (Stay alone)	34.8
	All Thai nationality persons	11.5
	All the same as your nationality	34.0
	Other from the above choices	19.8
Age	Lower / less than age 25 years.	80.8
	26-40 years old	17.2
	Age 41 years and over	2.0
Total		100.0

The motivation to travel

The motivation to travel of foreign students studying in higher education in the Thailand have motivation to travel an average level (mean 3.92) by various issues is following in the table 2:

Table 2. Motivation to Travel

Motivation to Travel	Mean	SD	Levels of Motivation				
			Highest (%)	High (%)	Moderately (%)	Low (%)	Lowest (%)
To recreation	3.99	0.860	(28.8)	(47.8)	(19.3)	(2.5)	(1.8)
Develop a health	3.59	1.034	(18.5)	(40.5)	(26.8)	(10.0)	(0.3)
To increase the knowledge	4.15	0.794	(37.0)	(44.3)	(16.0)	(2.5)	(0.3)
The Adventures	4.14	0.853	(39.0)	(40.8)	(16.0)	(3.8)	(5.0)
Retreat from environmentally / from the serious of everyday life	3.79	0.950	(24.0)	(42.0)	(25.3)	(6.8)	(2.0)
The chance to meet new friends	3.92	0.986	(31.8)	(39.8)	(18.5)	(8.5)	(1.5)
Able to experience / new activities from tourism	4.08	0.909	(36.8)	(41.3)	(16.0)	(4.8)	(1.3)
To entertain	3.95	0.960	(33.3)	(37.8)	(20.3)	(8.0)	(0.8)
There are a variety of tourist attractions	3.89	0.921	(28.0)	(42.0)	(22.0)	(7.3)	(0.8)
Attractions have a wide variety of cultural traditions and rituals	3.89	0.942	(29.3)	(39.5)	(22.8)	(7.8)	(0.8)
Activities are in different styles and exciting	3.99	0.880	(31.8)	(42.0)	(20.3)	(5.8)	(0.3)
There are beautiful of Natural Resources	4.15	0.834	(39.5)	(40.0)	(17.0)	(3.3)	(0.3)
The attractions are secure	3.79	0.937	(24.3)	(41.0)	(25.0)	(9.0)	(0.8)
The attractions are Conveniences	3.78	0.960	(25.3)	(38.3)	(26.0)	(9.8)	(0.8)
The attractions are convenient in transportation and fast	3.71	1.046	(25.8)	(34.8)	(27.0)	(9.5)	(3.0)

The behavioral intentions in Thailand

Most of the behavioral intentions in Thailand were at the high average level. Future travel destinations by choosing provinces and tourist attractions more than one source in Thailand include Chiang Mai, Phuket, Krabi, Bangkok, Chiang Rai, Ayutthaya, Surat Thani, Sukhothai, Chonburi and Mae Hong Son. The top is attractions include Samui Island, Pattaya, Phi Phi Island, Hua Hin, Chang Island, Tao Island, Samet Island and Pai, Phangan Island and Lipe Island.

The travel behavior

For the travel behavior of foreign students studying in higher education in the Thailand in Table 5 are following:

Table 5. The travel behavior

travel behavior of Foreign students		Percentage (%)
The type of Attractions in Thailand which interested	historic/landmark history	26.13
	which similar to the community attraction/ traditional festival/ ritual	25.82
	Waterfalls, mountains, ocean, forests,etc.	44.79
	other	3.27
Time you will to travel	weekend	40.5
	the closing date of the First Semester	10.0
	the closing date of the Second Semester	7.3
	the closing date of the Summer Semester	14.3
	weekdays	4.0
	day without classes	24.0
Who traveling	Alone	17.0
	go with a friend the same nationality	51.5
	go with a Thai friend	19.5
	other	12.0
days that you travel within the country	Lower /Less than 10 Days	76.0
	11-20 Days	16.3
	21 Days and over	7.7
Total		100.0

The recommendations for improving tourism in Thailand are communication and infrastructure, tourists feeling, security, and advertising and public relations in the table 6 are following:

Table 6. The recommendations.

The recommendations	Percentage (%)
Transportations and Infrastructures	42.0
Facilities	22.0
Tourists feeling	22.0
Security	10.0
Advertising and Public Relation	4.0
Total	100

The hypotheses testing

According to the hypotheses testing, the study found that the education level, age, monthly incomes, Individuals living with have different motivations for travel vary statistically significant at the 0.05 level, as shown in the table 7 following:

Table 7. Analysis of the hypotheses testing.

Hypotheses	Hypotheses testing		
	P-Value	Results	Least Significant Difference (LSD) and Multiple Comparison
Different in current education level will have different motivation to travel.	.005	Different educational level will have different motivation to travel.	Those who studying in graduate level or those how studying in graduate certificate will have different motivation to travel (Sig = .034)
Different average monthly incomes will have a different motivation to travel.	.014	Different average monthly incomes will have a different motivation to travel.	Those with an average income 5,001-10,000 baht per month have a different motivation to travel. (Sig = .021)
			Those with an average income 15,001-20,000 THB have a different motivation to travel. (Sig = .021)
Different individuals living with will have a different motivation to travel.	.043	Different individuals living with will have a different motivation to travel.	Those who stay alone and with all the same nationality to have different motivation to travel. (Sig = .011)
			Those who stay with all the same nationality and other from above choices have a different motivation to travel. (Sig = .026)
Different ages will have a different motivation to travel.	.039	Different ages will have a different motivation to travel.	Those who under 25 years old and those aged 41 years and over have a different motivation to travel. (Sig = .021)

Conclusions

In this study, the travel trends in Thailand of foreign students studying in Thai's universities, most were intentionally selected travel provinces, including Chiang Mai, Phuket, Krabi, Bangkok, Chiang Rai, Ayutthaya, Surat Thani, Sukhothai, Chon Buri and Mae Hong Son. These are the main attraction province of Thailand. It is close to the statistical data of the Department of Tourism in the overview of the tourists visiting in 10 provinces (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Department of Tourism, 2559), including the top 10 destinations of foreign tourists with the most searches (Skyscanner, 2559). For the future destinations whether as Koh Samui and Pattaya, Koh Phi Phi, Hua Hin, Koh Chang, Koh Tao, Samet, Koh Phangan and Koh Lipe were consistent with the natural attractions selected habits (90 percent), most are the sea and island in the South, Pai is the only natural attraction--mountains and forests in the north.

Biography

Mrs. SUJITTRA CHAIJAN, Researcher at Thai Khadi Research Institute, Thammasat University, Thailand. Area of specialization is Tourism Management, Special Interest Tourism, Museology. Research-related experiences are On-going: Research on "Development of Educational Tourism for Foreign Students". (Research Director) "Exploration of Educational Tourism Products for Foreign Students". (Research Leader) and "Behavioral Tendency in Tourism Among High School in Bangkok". (Research Leader) Completed: "Motivation to travel and Tourism Behavior of Foreign Students". (Research Leader) "THAINESS Tourism Needs of Thammasat University Students" (Research Leader) "Religious Belief, Religious Practice and Gambling Behavior of Thai Buddhists Visiting Temples in Bangkok". (Co-researcher) "Perception, Attitude, and Behavior with Impacts on Educational Tourism in the Province of Pathum Thani: Case Study of Tourists Residing in Pathum Thani Province". (Research Leader) "Perception and Attitude toward Travel in Thailand and Traveling Behavior of Baby-boomers in Bangkok and its Vicinity". (Research Leader) "Management of BMA Museums under BMA (Bangkok Metropolitan Administration) Local Museum Project". (Co-researcher) "Conservation and Development of Cultural Tourism in Nang Leong Area". (Co-researcher) "Evaluation of "Maha-Songkran" Festival for 2011 in Bangkok and Other Provinces". (Co-researcher) "Evaluation of "Visit Five Regions of Thailand Festival": Provinces of Udon Thani, Surat Thani, and Suphan Buri". (Co-researcher)

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