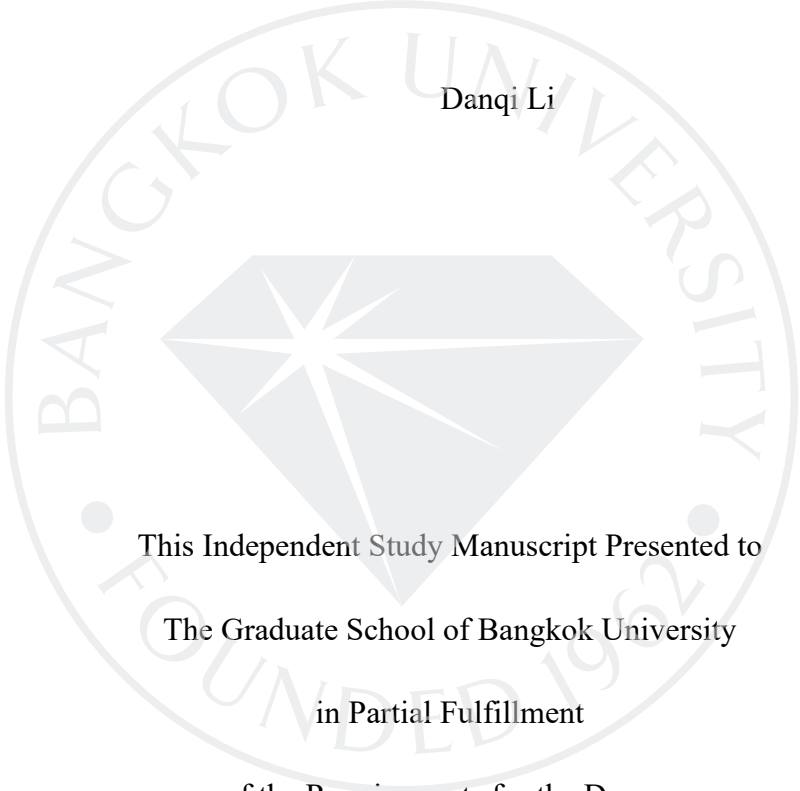


THE IMPACT OF CHINESE TOURISTS' USE OF WEIBO AS THEIR TOURIST  
DESTINATION SELECTION TO THAILAND



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### **ABSTRACT**

Nowadays, with the continuous updating of new media, Weibo has always been concerned by tourists with its functional features. Obtaining tourist information from Weibo has become an important source of tourist information. This study aims to figure out the effect of Weibo on Chinese tourists' destination selection to Thailand, through measures with four factors of Weibo including the strength of Weibo information attraction, Weibo celebrity, information credibility and interact.

Quantitative approach was used to describe and analyze the effects of Weibo on Chinese tourists' destination selection to Thailand. Four hundred and fifty respondents have participated in this survey by using random questionnaire. The Multiple Regression and Simple Regression approach were used for data analyzing with the significance level of .05. The main findings of this study indicated that Weibo has positive influence on Chinese tourists to select destination to Thailand.

*Keywords: Weibo, Chinese Tourists, Destination Selection*

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Problem Statement and Rationale**

In recent years, the tourism market of China to Thailand has been booming. From the perspective of demand, this is the result of China's economic growth, China's per capita income increase, China and Thailand's cultural identity, close education cultural exchange, effective tourism marketing strategies and publicity effect of film and television works. From the perspective of supply, this is the result of supply factors, such as reasonable price, convenient transportation, perfect tourism facilities and new tourism products, and tourism to Thailand has become a popular trend.

According to Xinhua News Agency, Bangkok, January 6, 2017, the total number of foreign tourists who came to Thailand in 2017 exceeded 35 million, which is equivalent to more than half of Thailand's total population, an increase of 8.77% over 2016. In 2017, Thailand's tourism industry generated revenues of more than 1.82 trillion baht, an increase of 11.66% over 2016. At present, the largest contribution to the tourism industry in terms of quantity and income generation is still Chinese tourists. The number of Chinese tourists exceeds 9.8 million, accounting for the highest proportion of foreign tourists. According to statistics, the number of Chinese tourists going to Thailand in 2017 increased by 11.97% compared with 2016, bringing more than 520 billion baht to Thailand.

Compared with other Asian destinations, Thailand has high accommodation and the quality of service is also very good. Visitors' ratings are relatively high. Also, when compared with other Southeast Asian countries, the English popularity rate of Thai people is relatively high, which is convenient for Chinese tourists to communicate. Thai cuisine is more popular than other Southeast Asian cuisines and is more easily accepted by children and the elderly, so it is also suitable for the whole family to travel together. With the popularity of island tourism in China, Thailand, which has many islands, has also become a popular tourist destination. Thailand has officially implemented Visa on Arrival to China since 2014, making the travel process easier and becoming a tourist destination for young people to take a trip without plan.

Weibo is a social networking site launched by Sina.com that provides microblogging services. Users can post messages or upload images through web pages, WAP pages, mobile clients, and SMS messages. Users can write what they see, hear, and think into a sentence, or send a picture or video, share it with friends and discuss it anytime, anywhere via computer or mobile Phone. Also, users can follow friends and instantly see friends release Information. Weibo is characterized by low thresholds (text or images are available), publishing information anytime, anywhere, searching (searching for information published by other users), and information interaction is quick and easy (comment, reply, private chat, etc.). A valuable, interesting Weibo is usually forwarded thousands of times.

With the continuous development of information technology, Weibo has gradually become the basic tool for people's daily communication, and entertainment. It is a new type of social media and information dissemination platform. As of the end of June 2013, the number of Chinese netizens reached 59.06 million, the number of Weibo users was 330.8 million, and the usage rate of Weibo reached 56.01%. With the continuous attention of Weibo, Weibo has become an important management marketing platform, with unique advantages in tourism marketing and management.

Travel Weibo refers to the tourism-related subjects using Weibo's social media platform to express or disseminate travel information through text, pictures, videos, etc. It is a platform for tourists to obtain travel information, share travel experiences, make online travel reservations and exchanges. Travel Weibo is an important channel for government departments and tourism enterprises to promote marketing and build strong social and economic value. (Chen ping & Yan yan, 2012) Different from traditional travel websites, tourism Weibo's advantages are reflected in the large amount of information, strong interaction, strong influence and convenience, because the information of Weibo is perfect, authenticity and reliability, it has become an important auxiliary tool for tourism decision-making, providing very large information guidance for tourists.

In the travel Weibo search, the search for travel information is divided into three main categories: the first category is to search for scenic spots, the second is to

search for areas. The scenic spots in travel Weibo search have been published by many Weibo users, and they have released many pictures and texts related to the scenic spots. Compared to other search engines, people see a lot of beautiful pictures and introductions, but they don't feel authentic. In the travel Weibo, many people actually evaluate or review the scenic spots, and the users are real. Travel Weibo also has travel notes written by tourists, where we can see the scenery and reviews of the experiencing travellers to support other tourists to make tourism decisions. Therefore, in the travel Weibo search results, there are both the appearance of the scenic spot and the presentation of the word of mouth. Weibo search product director Wang Xiaomin interprets the “Weibo Search Travel Data Report” at the 2016 Tourism Impact Summit that in the first half of 2016, the top ten are the islands around China, including Thailand and Malaysia. Travelling island is very popular, especially Phuket in Thailand. From the search data, it reflects the wishes of Weibo users, and the realism is very high.

## **1.2 Objectives of Study**

Due to the above rationale, there are still some questions in terms of Weibo to be answered. For the reason, the objectives of this study are set as below.

1.2.1 To examine the impact of Weibo information attraction on perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

1.2.2 To examine the impact of Weibo celebrity on perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

1.2.3 To examine the impact of information credibility of Weibo on perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

1.2.4 To examine the impact of interaction of Weibo on perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

1.2.5 To examine the impact of perceived value of Chinese Weibo users on tourist destination selection to Thailand.

### **1.3 Scope of Study**

The scope of this paper is to determine whether Weibo has an impact on the selection of destinations for Chinese tourists to Thailand. This paper also studies the Weibo-related factors affecting tourists. Through the perceived value as a mediator variable, it is investigated whether Weibo has an influence on their destination selection.

The research target is 18-45 Weibo users who has the experience of traveling to Thailand, because most young people over the age of 18 have their own financial ability and also have the ability to travel. Between 18-45 years old, it is the comprehensive age of Weibo users. They are more fashionable and use social software to find information.



This study used a quantitative approach. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect data from the respondents. Through the online questionnaire distribution form, the questionnaire software “Questionnaire Star” was used to issue the questionnaire. The purpose of this survey is to better understand whether Weibo has an impact on the selection of destinations for Chinese tourists to Thailand, and what factors are mainly affected.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

1.4.1 How do the strength of Weibo information attraction impact perceived value of Chinese Weibo users in Thailand?

1.4.2 How do the Weibo celebrity impact perceived value of Chinese Weibo users in Thailand?

1.4.3 How do the information credibility on Weibo impact perceived value of Chinese Weibo users in Thailand?

1.4.4 How do the interaction of Weibo impact perceived value of Chinese Weibo users in Thailand?

1.4.5 How do the perceived value of Chinese Weibo users impact tourist destination selection to Thailand?

#### **1.5 Significance of Study**

(1) It is conducive to the better management of Weibo in the tourism industry. The tourism industry uses Weibo to publish travel information, interact with tourists,

conduct business expansion, etc. This study explores the impact of Chinese tourists' use of Weibo as their tourist destination selection to Thailand, constructed a model of Weibo new media influence tourism destination selection. This study can guide the tourism Weibo managers to provide better services, establish a good corporate image and drive tourism development in tourist destinations.

- (2) It is conducive to enhancing the interactive experience of Chinese tourists to Thailand. The interaction between Chinese tourists to Thailand has accelerated the transmission of information and improved the quality and experience of tourists. The Weibo interaction between Chinese tourists to Thailand and tourism companies can promptly solve the problems encountered by tourists and provide better services so that the quality of tourism can be improved.
- (3) People born in the 1980s and 1990s are the main support for families at this stage, and their opinions play a very important role in the decision-making of the whole family. Weibo, as their favorite software, obtains tourist information from Weibo, and it plays an important role in the choice of family travel destinations and tourism decisions. Therefore, under the background of Weibo as a popular social media, research on the influence of Weibo on the choice of tourist destinations for tourists in Thailand has a positive practical guiding role for tourists to travel to Thailand.

## 1.6 Definitions of Terms

The definitions of terms in this paper are defined as follows:

### 1.61 Perceived value

The perceived value in this study refers to the expected travel value that consumers feel can be obtained by viewing Weibo travel information. Tourists based on trust and contact with Weibo tourism information can generate the perceived value of travel results before the tour.

### 1.62 Weibo information attraction

The attractiveness of Weibo tourism information refers to the intensity of attraction that is perceived by tourists or potential travelers during the dissemination of Weibo information. In this paper, it refers to the Weibo information attraction to Chinese tourists.

### 1.63 Celebrity on Weibo

In the Weibo platform, a Weibo celebrity is a highly-focused user, and his behavior will receive a lot of attention from his users. The published Weibo will be highly forwarded and commented. This paper mainly studies the influence of Weibo celebrities.

### 1.64 Information credibility on Weibo

Information credibility refers to the degree of acceptance of the information in the process of information interaction from the source. In this paper, it refers to the Weibo information credibility

### 1.65 Interaction of Weibo

Weibo interaction refers to interactive information between Weibo users with the help of text, symbols, sounds, images and their meanings. In this paper, it refers to the information exchange and interpersonal communication between Weibo users.



## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviews the past studies and aims to provide a synthesis on the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility, interaction of Weibo, perceived value and tourist destination selection on Thailand. The concepts, principles, and the related theories are explored to develop the theoretical framework and hypothesis. The chapter summarizes the following topics:

### **2.1. Related literature and previous studies**

- 2.1.1 Tourist destination selection to Thailand
- 2.1.2 The strength of Weibo information attraction
- 2.1.3 The effect of celebrity on Weibo
- 2.1.4 Information credibility on Weibo
- 2.1.5 Interaction of Weibo
- 2.1.6 Perceived value

### **2.2. Related theories**

- 2.2.1 Motivation Theory
- 2.2.2 Attitude Theory
- 2.2.3 Media Ecology Theory

### **2.3. Hypothesis**

### **2.4. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Related literature and previous studies**

In the following sections, past studies regarding the topics of tourist destination selection, perceived value, the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility and interaction of Weibo will be reviewed.

### 2.1.1 Tourist destination selection to Thailand

The meaning of a tourist destination is mainly defined from a geographical area. The tourist destination in this paper refers to Thailand. Research on the selection of destinations has been around for a long time, and the factors affecting the choice of destinations are diverse. In the study of Woomi and Soocheong (2008), based on psychological theory, it is believed that an individual's perception of things affects his emotions and thus his behavior. In the paper, the perception of tourists plays an important role in the choice of tourist destinations. Many studies have demonstrated the impact of tourist perception on travel destination choices. The perception of the destination image follows the process of building from perception to attitude to behavior. In the study of the influence path of destination image perception, Baloglu and Cleary (1999) divide the relationship between destination image and tourist behavior into two paths: static and dynamic. The construction of tourism destination image in the dynamic process is studied through various factors. Among them, the information source affects the formation of destination emotions and cognition by potential tourists, and directly influences the decision of destination selection.

Factors such as attitudes, perceptions, and terrorist risks based on individual decision-making behaviors are involved in the study of past impact factors. There are differences in the choice of tourist destinations for self-contained tourists and anisotropic tourists. The former tends to choose close-range, familiar and safe destinations, while the latter tends to choose distant, unfamiliar and dangerous places (Plog, 1974). Travel motivation can regulate the distance and price of tourism destinations on tourism decisions (Nicolau, 2006). From the perspective of the psychological distance perception of tourists, the different influences of time distance and social distance on the quantity and quality of word-of-mouth are obtained through experiments, which finally affects the willingness of tourists to choose destinations (Chen Mo, 2017).

In addition to the study of personal factors, there are also studies based on other objective factors in the study of influencing factors. Tourism incentives, personal factors, social factors, and external factors affect the choice of destinations for tourists (Rugg D, 1977). Four factors, personal factors, destination factors, group factors and situational factors, influence the choice of destinations (Rosie, 2006).

The travel destination selection process is primarily a comparative process. The destination is ultimately determined by a so-called funnel-type process, in which many alternative destinations are gradually narrowed down and eventually listed as destinations of choice (Crompton, 1992). The choice of destination is a multi-stage

tiered process, starting with tourism needs, through information gathering, option evaluation and destination selection, to post-tourism evaluation (Sirakaya E, 1996).

The selection of destination is not only a decision result but also a dynamic process. According to the changes in the number of tourists received at the tourist destination, the life cycle model of the tourism destination is divided into six stages: exploration period, participation period, development period to consolidation period, stagnation period, and recession (recovery) (Butler, 1980). Through the structural equation model, the tourism destination image is an important antecedent variable of tourists' expectations, and tourism motivation is an important factor affecting tourists' expectations (Wang Chunyang, 2013). The concept of tourism destination image includes projection image and perceptual image. The destination image of tourist destination operator is the projection image, while the image of tourist destination perceived by potential tourists is the perception image (Wu Xuefei, 2010). In the Internet, the image of tourism destinations, tourists, destinations, and online media are related subjects. In other words, to a certain extent, the network image of tourism destinations directly replaces the image of tourist destinations. It follows that the network media plays a very important role in the selection of tourist destinations. Among all network media, Weibo is the main focus of this article.

#### 2.1.2 The strength of Weibo information attraction



The attraction of Weibo's tourism information refers to the intensity of the attraction that tourists or potential tourists feel during the dissemination of Weibo information. The characteristics of Weibo tourism information are important factors that affect its communication effect and the willingness of tourists to further their behavior. The attraction of Weibo travel information is expressed by two important characteristics of the content's interest and content's richness. The interest of Weibo travel information refers to the intensity of pleasure and attraction that tourists feel when they touch information. The interest of information content not only affects the speed and effect of information dissemination, but also enhances the recipient's acceptance and involvement of information, and leaves a deep impression and memory on the recipient (Tian Xin, 2006). The interest of Weibo travel information content not only enhances the positive emotions and attitudes of the audience, but also affects the audience's willingness to act, including the willingness to comment and the willingness to recommend to relatives and friends.

The most striking feature of the Internet in the new era is sharing and interaction. The bigger wave is gaining momentum with the application innovation, and Weibo will be the beginning of this goal (Gaonkar, 2007). The immediacy, convenience and interactivity of Weibo communication is the reason for the rapid rise and interest in the web3.0 era. Weibo has social interactivity and instant features of news releases (Keenan, 2009). From the perspective of mobile communication, the influence of Weibo is analyzed. It is pointed out that the biggest shock to Weibo

is the establishment of mobile phone platform. Sharing, browsing and querying are the main functions of Weibo. It is more convenient and convenient for offline users to publish information through the mobile platform (Gaonkar, 2010). From the perspective of communication, the core functions of Weibo are selectivity, information disclosure, and life disclosure. Interaction and feedback are the main reasons for users to use Weibo (Oulasvirta, 2010). From the results of the research of scholar, it explains the reasons why Weibo, including tourism information in Weibo, attracts people to use.

According to Ren Jiaxuan (2010), the concept and characteristics of Weibo are introduced, and the needs of Weibo for audience use and satisfaction are explained from the perspectives of audience awareness, emotion, personal integration, social integration and stress relief, and explain the reasons why Weibo is popular. Weibo can record life experience, express personal feelings, make friends, and pay attention to celebrities. It has become a comprehensive platform for public to express speech and obtain information (Liu Hongping & Cao Junru, 2010). The main functions of Weibo: main information architecture function, information screening function, information transmission function and interactive function (Liu Lifang, 2010). From the results of the research of Liu Hongping, Cao Junru and Liu Lifang (2010), the attraction of Weibo and the richness of Weibo information are introduced. The powerful function of Weibo travel information encourages tourists to use Weibo

travel information when they travel, and enhances the attractiveness of Weibo travel information to tourists.

The strength of Weibo information attraction is a key independent variable in this paper that affects perceived value. The hypothesis is developed as follows:

H1: The strength of Weibo information attraction significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

### 2.1.3 The effect of celebrity on Weibo

Weibo celebrities refer to a large number of fans, and the number and frequency of posting information on Weibo is relatively high. There is a certain authority on Weibo (Wang Yide, 2015). The acquisition of Weibo celebrity influence is different from the popularity and word-of-mouth acquisition. Weibo bloggers may grasp the hot issues of society through an accidental opportunity, or create a different and practical topic, it caused a heated discussion among Weibo users and gained fame. Many Weibo users have the habit of paying attention to Weibo celebrities. The young people group advertise themselves with their own behaviors and celebrities (Han Bo, 2018). The attitude of Weibo celebrities has a strong influence on consumers' purchasing decisions (Li Chang, 2015).

The power, activity, and number of Weibo fans are necessary factors to determine the influence of Weibo celebrities (Guo Liang & Xu Hui & Su Xin, 2013). An influential Weibo celebrity account means that this account has a huge fan base

that believes in the information it publishes. It relies on the strong power of the fans. The forwarding volume of Weibo is also incomparable to other articles. Once the Weibo celebrity account has created some topics, it will definitely attract the participation of many Weibo users. If the information published by a Weibo user is pushed into the popular Weibo, then this Weibo must have a lot of forwarding numbers and comments, and its published Weibo content is closely related to social dynamics and fashion trends. In order to maintain the good operation of Weibo, Weibo operators will make certain screenings for this popular Weibo information. Therefore, Weibo users are viewing popular information published by celebrity Weibo accounts through popular Weibo, and the quality of their information is guaranteed (Zhao Hong & Wang Cui, 2014).

Weibo is like real life, and the network plays a huge role. As a relatively influential person in Weibo, Weibo celebrities have many fans and their contacts are relatively wide. In addition, these Weibo celebrities are usually at the front end of the information, and they hold the first-hand information in real time. They release the latest information through the earlier release, and gather the scattered information reflecting the individual opinions to form a collective opinion, and forming authoritative and biased opinions that influence the thinking of its fans and related Weibo users (Huo Liyang, 2013). Under the strong infection of Weibo celebrities, Weibo users often trust the information they publish. Under certain circumstances, fans may even make irrational consumption because of emotional

bias (Han Bo, 2018). This study uses Weibo visitors to analyze the influence of Weibo celebrities on visitors' perception of Weibo information. Therefore, the hypothesis is proposed as follows.

H2: The effect of celebrity on Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

#### 2.1.4 Information credibility

Credibility refers to the degree of acceptance of the information in the process of information interaction from the source (Hovland & Weiss, 1953). Hovland & Weiss (1953) added two important factors to credibility after the definition of credibility, the dependability and professionalism of the information provider. Dependability refers to whether the source of information is willing to provide the most authentic information. Professionalism is the objective degree that information providers can provide real information. Dependability is subjective, while professionalism is subjective. Due to the differences in individual abilities, different people have limited ability to understand and communicate without training, and professionalism will be stronger after training and practice.

After the follow-up empirical case study, the credibility is further classified into three dimensions: source, information and media. The source and information dimensions are self-objective evaluations of whether the audience is accurate about the information they receive. (Metzger, 2003). Information source credibility

research is the earliest form of credibility research. The credibility of the source of confidence that information audiences care more about in information dissemination and the authenticity of the information itself (Ling Zhuo, 2008). In the interpersonal relationship, the credibility of the source is defined, and the attitude change of the information audience against the credibility of the source is taken as the research object, and the credibility is explained by defining the characteristics of the source itself (Hovland & Weiss, 1953). The focus of information dissemination lies in the subjective evaluation of the audience rather than the objective nature of the source of information and the medium, focusing on the self-perception of the information audience (Zhang Mingxin & Zeng Xianming, 2007). According to Ohanian (1990), information source credibility and audience perception are combined to propose and validate new dimensions: professionalism, trust and attractiveness. Based on the above research results, the research on information source and information credibility mainly focuses on the differentiation of variables. No matter how the measurement method changes, it focuses on two dimensions: the objectivity of the information source and the subjective perception of the audience.

There are also many research results of scholars at home and abroad on the credibility of information. Conducting research on new topics in Twitter, measuring the following dimensions: blogger's release content, content length, whether to forward and other variables, measuring the impact of these variables on the credibility of Weibo (Castillo, Mendoza & Poblete, 2013). According to Kang

(2010), the dimensions of measuring blog credibility are: knowledgeable, enthusiastic, imaginative, and reliable.; measured the credibility of blog information content: real, insightful, accurate and popular. Through combing scholars' research results in this field, the research objects of information credibility are concentrated on foreign platforms, and the Weibo platform is rarely used as the main body, focusing on the source and information credibility, and little attention is paid to the credibility of the Weibo comment area. The purpose of current paper is to fill the unexplored area about this topic, and draw on the information source and information credibility, and consider the credibility of the comment, and analyze the impact of the credibility of the microblog information on the perceived value. Therefore, the hypothesis is as follows.

H3: Information credibility on Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

#### 2.1.5 Interaction of Weibo

Weibo interaction refers to the communication and communication between Weibo users and Weibo communication platform, as well as information exchange and interpersonal communication between users. Weibo interaction not only enables fans and microblogs to interact with each other to get more effective information, but also enables fans and fans to interact, supplement missing information and promote emotions. Network interaction directly affects the benefits or utility of

people's interactions and interactions on the network, and ultimately affects purchase intentions and behaviors (Fan Xiaoping, 2007).

Weibo is closely linked to the tourism industry. Tourism Weibo influences the “use” decision of the audience in terms of content, release time and editing methods (Cheng Ping & Yan Yan, 2012). The emergence of Weibo has changed the way information is transmitted, enabling tourism companies to obtain customer's consumption experience, launch word-of-mouth marketing, set up microblog marketing team, continue to provide valuable information, seriously reply to messages, pay attention to user experience, and actively cooperate with leaders and other marketing strategies (Wang Lepeng & Yao Mingguang & Wang Yijun, 2011). The emergence of Weibo and its characteristics have added new vitality to tourism marketing. The interaction of Weibo and the extensiveness of information sources have changed the concept of traditional marketing communication and enhanced the convenience of information dissemination (Wang Ping, 2011). Weibo communication media has the functions of spreading brand information, interacting with consumers, customer service, public relations services, etc. The scenic spots use the communication characteristics of Weibo to promote the image (Xu Xiaowei, 2011). Weibo has the characteristics of short, fast communication and strong interaction. It analyzes the marketing of travel agency for these characteristics and puts forward the idea of travel agency to carry out microblog marketing (Zhang Cuiping, 2011). In view of the monotonous content, lack of interaction and slow



response of the current hotel microblog marketing, it is proposed that the tourism hotel needs to develop an effective microblog management mechanism, including organization and coordination mechanism, content management mechanism, interactive communication mechanism and service inspection mechanism. (Liu Jie, 2011).

In addition to the traditional network interaction dimension, Weibo interaction can bring benefits or utility to both parties, which is very important to attract users to join Weibo and encourage interactive participation (Wei Yonghao, 2014). According to Fan Xiaoping (2007), the results of network interaction are divided into three effects: tool utility, social utility and psychological utility. Tool utility is mainly based on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use in perceived value. From interaction, information acquisition, experience sharing, and knowledge exchange are equivalent. From network interaction, it can promote and complete specific tasks or make better decisions. There are many aspects of social utility, mainly considering social relations such as social and group, such as trust, social connections, and social norms. Psychological utility is the multiple psychological effects brought about by network interaction, such as identity, belonging and happy experience. At the same time, satisfied users also want to be able to share with others, and expect these web pages to persist, so they will also recommend such pages to others (Liu Liu & Liu Qining, 2011). Weibo interaction is also part of the network interaction.

Weibo expects to attract more fans, and must be able to provide users with certain specific benefits or functions. If users do not get enough benefits from Weibo, the decline of Weibo is inevitable, the motivation for people to pay attention to Weibo is diverse. (Wei Yonghao, 2014). At the same time, the benefits of Weibo interaction are also multifaceted. The value of a user who has a strong behavior on a website enhances the brand value of the website. They share interesting things, information, and actively interact with other members, and even recommend the site to others, which has led to a growing popularity of the site (Wei Yonghao, 2014).

According to Lam (2004), consumers who have a positive impression of a brand are more likely to visit their homepage or recommend it to others. Therefore, Weibo interaction can have a positive impact on users. This positive impact is beneficial to enhance users' perception of Weibo and ultimately affect their behavior. Therefore, the hypothesis is developed as follows:

H4: Interaction of Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

#### 2.1.6 Perceived value

Perceived value in this paper, means the value of the expected travel that consumers feel by viewing Weibo travel information. Perceived value is a comprehensive evaluation of the product's utility on the basis of the trade-off between perceived "profit" and the cost it pays (Zeithaml, 1998).

The study of visitors' perceived value is based on the research of customer perceived value. Therefore, more research on perceived value focuses on the perceived value of corporate customers in a broad sense. Since the 1970s, companies have been constantly innovating in the application of marketing, from product-centric, focus on improving product quality, to customer-oriented, and strive for customer satisfaction and loyalty. It was not until the 1990s that the concept of customer perceived value was proposed. The essence of customer perceived value is customer perception, that is, the subjective perception of the customer's interaction process and results with a certain enterprise, including the comparison and trade-off between the customer's perception of "profit" and "profit and loss", it is also a subjective perception of the value of the product or service provided by the customer. With the continuous development of tourism, the tertiary industry occupies an important position. Tourism researchers have also begun to use the customer perception value theory and combine the characteristics of the tourism industry to propose the concept of "tourism perception value". Visitors' perceived value is a psychological expectation of tourists' products and services through an assessment of personal interests and costs (Morrison, 1989). Visitors' perceived value refers to the result of comparing the time and money spent by tourists on the travel experience experienced after travel (Mattila, 2005). The perceived value of tourists is the consumption experience, knowledge and preference that tourists intend to form in the course of their tourism practice. The comprehensive evaluation of

product attributes and their performance and input in the whole tourism consumption process is in line with their desires and expectations (Huang Yinghua, 2007).

Perceived value is not equal to satisfaction, occurs at different stages of the purchase process, including the pre-purchase decision stage, while satisfaction is the post-purchase and post-use evaluation, so the perceived value is generated before the product is purchased or used. Tourists based on trust and contact with Weibo tourism information can generate the perceived value of tourism results before tourism. Between quality, price, perceived value, and willingness to buy, consumers decide whether or not to buy based on the amount of value they feel (Monrce & Krishana, 1985).

Perceived value is the key independent variable that assumed to be influential on tourist destination selection in this paper. The hypothesis is developed as follows:

H5: Perceived value of Chinese Weibo users significantly influences tourist destination selection to Thailand.

## **2.2. Related theories**

The objective of this paper is to examine the influence of Weibo on tourist destination selection. The influence of Weibo is one of the main issues discussed a lot in social media studies. Three theories could be applied in this paper, the first is Motivation Theory, the second is the Behavior intention in Attitude Theory and the

third theory is media ecology theory. The notion of these three theories will be reviewed in this section.

### 2.2.1 Motivation Theory

The principle of motivation believes that the driving force of an individual to take a specific behavior comes from both external motivation and internal motivation. External motivation refers to behavioral perceived value and performance, measured by goals and external values; internal motivation refers to behavior itself (Calder & Staw, 1975). In 1992, Davis and Bagozzi et al. applied motivation theory to the field of information technology acceptance and proposed a motivation model. Perceived entertainment is an intrinsic motivation, and perceived usefulness is an external motivation (Chau, 1996). The behavior of users using computers in their work environment is mainly perceived usefulness, influenced by the level of experience and pleasure in the work process, while perceived entertainment and perceived usefulness are affected by perceived ease of use (Davis, Bagozzi & Waeshaw, 1992). In 1992, Davis et al. introduced the perceived entertainment into the information technology receiving model to better explain the user's acceptance and use behavior. This research conclusion was accepted by the majority of researchers (Wu Rushuang, 2013).

In the study of the use of the Internet, it is found that users' attitudes and behavioral willingness are affected by perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, as well as perceived entertainment (Teo & Lim, 1999).

In the field of Weibo, users have a strong recognition of the interest of Weibo content and the entertainment of Weibo. The main reason for the large amount of microblog forwarding is jokes, pictures and videos. At the same time, it can be seen from the motivation of Weibo that entertainment is a big motivation for users to use Weibo. Therefore, when the technology acceptance model is involved in Weibo, the variable of perceived entertainment is also widely accepted to explain the user's acceptance and use behavior. On the basis of Davis' motivation model, scholars modify the technology acceptance model according to different situations. Among them, the variable of interactivity is cited by many scholars as one of the influencing factors of information system acceptance (Liqiong, 2013). Interactivity enhances user efficiency, effectiveness, and enjoyment of information systems (Hauptmann, 2010). Interactivity is introduced into Weibo's willingness to use and influences the model. Empirical research proves that interactivity has a positive impact on consumer attitudes and willingness to participate. Travel Weibo's interactive marketing method can guide Weibo users to record their feelings and share feelings through Weibo. This process helps to enhance the relationship between tourist destinations and tourists, and realize the promotion of tourist destinations. It is the secret to improve the satisfaction of tourists and cultivate customer loyalty. A large

number of studies have suggested that interactivity has become one of the main motives for the use of Weibo. Some researchers have used interactivity as a research variable affecting consumer attitudes and behavioral willingness (Liqiong, 2013).

### 2.2.2 Attitude Theory

The concept of behavioral intention originates from attitude theory, which refers to the strength of users' intention to perform specific behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Tourists' willing behavior has always been a hot spot in tourism research, and tourists' behavior is more effective through the prediction of tourists' behavioral willingness (SooCheong, Billy & Clark, 2009). According to Chen&Tasi (2006), the willingness to act is defined as the possibility of tourists recommending their destinations and revisiting destinations to their relatives and friends. Therefore, this study defines the willingness of tourists to behave as a tourist's willingness to travel, the willingness of tourists to recommend, and the willingness of tourists to revisit. Among the factors affecting the willingness of tourists, the Internet has become one of the factors affecting the behavioral will of tourists. Tourists' tourism decision-making depends on tourism information and tourism motivation, while the Internet provides tourists with strong information search and utilization capabilities. In the survey, 77.27% of the respondents made travel decisions through Weibo, which is higher than other websites. Therefore, to some extent, Weibo influences tourism decision-making by tourists (Yuan, 2012). Tourists make tourism decisions,

such as destination selection, tourist reservation form and application media. Travel websites are the most powerful medium in the information flow of websites, and they are the fastest growing information flow factors. Therefore, the travel Weibo as one of the streams of website information will affect the choice of destinations. In summary, the travel Weibo has a certain effect on the willingness of tourists to act.

### **2.2.3 Media Ecology Theory**

The importance of electronic media is also a key idea of Media Ecology Theory. Electronic media is said to have the ability to bridge the world together and give us the ability to receive information instantaneously. The electronic media in Media Ecology Theory are not limited in the use of computer and internet, but include telephone, photograph, and etc. (McLuhan, 1964). The notion of Media Ecology Theory gives an explanation about the strong influence of media in our daily life, no matter which type of the media is. In this paper, we focus on Weibo, and the influence of it to tourism.

### **2.3 Hypothesis**

To answer our research question, there are several hypotheses developed. Hypotheses are proposed below.

H1: The strength of Weibo information attraction significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

H2: The effect of celebrity on Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.



H3: Information credibility on Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

H4: Interaction of Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

H5: Perceived value of Chinese Weibo users significantly influences tourist destination selection to Thailand.

## 2.4 Theoretical Framework

As noted above, the key factors influence the tourist destination selection to Thailand is perceived value. The key factors influencing the perceived value include four aspects. They are the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility, interaction of Weibo, and the strength of Weibo information attraction.

Figure 2.1 is the theoretical framework developed based on the literature review to show the relationship between all the variables.

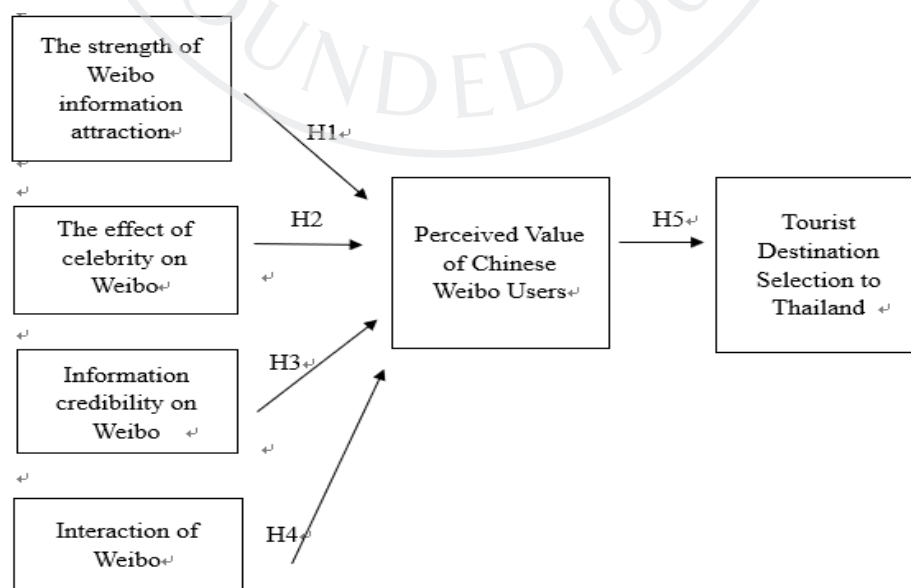


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

## **CHAPTER 3:**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter includes the research methodology and the sampling method to examine the relationships between the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility on Weibo, interaction of Weibo, perceived value of Chinese Weibo users, and tourist destination selection to Thailand. This chapter is composed of the following sections:

- 3.1 Research Design
- 3.2 Population and Sampling Method
- 3.3 Research Instrument
  - 3.3.1 Interpretation of the Scale
- 3.4 Research Pretest
- 3.5 Data Collection Procedure
- 3.6 Demographic Data of the Samples

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The objective of this study is to develop and test a theoretical framework, which represents the relationship between the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility on Weibo, interaction of Weibo, perceived value of Chinese Weibo users, and tourist destination selection to Thailand.

Quantitative research approach will be applied in this research by using questionnaire survey to collect the data in order to test the relationship between each variable.

### 3.2 Population and Sampling Method

According to Saiful (2011) suggested that an applicable sample size is within 30 to 500 respondents. Thus, in this research, a total set of 200 questionnaires were designed and distributed to target respondent in order to reach the requirement and better representative of target population. According to Table 3.1 by Sudiyanti (2009), 200 of sample size is fair adequate to get reliable correlation coefficients results. Thus, for the good results, my sample size is 450.

Table 3.1: Guidelines for the adequacy of the total sample size

<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Level of Adequacy</b>
50	Very poor
100	Poor
200	Fair
300	Good
500	Very Good
1000 or more	Excellent

The sample was drawn from researcher's Chinese friends with sampling, and the respondents were only Chinese Weibo users who had travel experience to come to Thailand. The sample size was 450. The researcher defined people from 18 to 45

years old to be the sample of this study and used Convenience sampling method to launch the survey.

### **3.3 Research Instrument**

To achieve the research goal, a self-administrated questionnaire was designed to measure variable constructs in the research framework. Each variable (e.g. the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility on Weibo, interaction of Weibo, perceived value of Chinese Weibo users, and tourist destination selection to Thailand) was measured by using multiple items. The survey instrument consisted of seven parts covering the following issues: demographics of respondents, the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility on Weibo, interaction of Weibo, perceived value of Chinese Weibo users, and tourist destination selection to Thailand (see appendix).

The first section is about demographic characteristics of respondents. The respondents were asked to fill in basic demographic information in this section, including six items: gender, age, level of education, number of times to visit Thailand and monthly income.

The second section is the strength of Weibo information attraction. This study draws on Gilly's (1998) metrics for consulting and the measurement of travel information of online media, and makes simple modifications to Weibo. Respondents were asked about their use of Weibo. There are four items in total. A

five-point rating scale (from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) was employed to measure respondents' the strength of Weibo information attraction.

The third section is the effect of celebrity on Weibo. There are four items that were adapted from Han Bo (2018) study to understand the effect of celebrity on Chinese Weibo users. A five-point rating scale (from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree).

The fourth section is information credibility on Weibo. According to the credibility of Weibo information content and the credibility of the comments, there are four items that were adapted from Li Chenyu (2017) study to understand the influence of information credibility on Chinese Weibo users. A five-point rating scale (from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree).

The fifth section is interaction on Weibo, there are four items that were adapted from Fan Xiaoping (2007) study to understand the influence of Weibo interaction on Chinese Weibo users. There are four items in total. A five-point rating scale (from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) was employed to measure respondents' interaction on Weibo.

The sixth section is the perceived value. Souter (2001) proposes the dimensions of perceived value through empirical methods: emotional value, social value and functional value. It believes that perceived value is dimensional and can better explain consumer behavior. This study draws on the study of Souter (2001) and measures for Weibo. There are four items in total. A five-point rating scale

(from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) was employed to measure respondents' perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

The last section is tourist destination selection to Thailand. Three items that were adapted from Han Bo (2018) study. Respondents were asked about their tourist destination selection to Thailand. A five-point rating scale (from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) was employed to measure respondent's destination selection to Thailand.

### 3.3.1 Interpretation of the scale

Table 3.2: Criteria for degree of agreement dimension

Opinion toward the statement	Score	Criteria	Meaning
Strongly Disagree with the statement	1	1.00 - 1.50	Strongly Disagree
Disagree with the statement	2	1.51 - 2.50	Disagree
Neutral with the statement	3	2.51 - 3.50	Neutral
Agree with the statement	4	3.51 - 4.50	Agree
Strongly agree with the statement	5	4.51 - 5.00	Strongly agree

### 3.4 Research Pretest

Since the sample of the current paper is Chinese people only, before distributing the questionnaire to the respondents, the researcher had translated it into Chinese.

That is, the statements of all instruments were translated into Chinese and then translated back into English. The two versions were crosschecked in translation.

After some adjustments of the wordings in the questionnaire, questionnaires were distributed to 30 respondents as a pretest to make sure all the questions and translations in this research are clear for respondents to understand and respond. According to this pretest, several modifications were made. Also, a pilot test was carried out and internal consistency and reliability were examined. Table 3.3 shows the results of the reliability tests for each variable, Cronbach's alpha coefficients of most sections was above .70, which is considered satisfactory for exploratory studies (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess the reliability of the instrument was shown as follow:

Table 3.3: The reliability of instrument

Variable	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
The strength of Weibo information attraction	.911
The effect of celebrity on Weibo	.903
Information credibility	.901
Interaction of Weibo	.902
Perceived value	.903
Tourist destination selection to Thailand	.880

Table 3.4: The comparison of each variable's alpha

	Sample 30	Cronbach's Alpha	Sample 450	Cronbach's Alpha
The strength of Weibo information attraction	4	.926	4	.911
The effect of celebrity on Weibo	4	.920	4	.903
Information credibility	4	.938	4	.901
Interaction of Weibo	4	.928	4	.902
Perceived value	4	.934	4	.903
Tourist destination selection to Thailand	3	.885	3	.880

### 3.5 Data Collection Procedure

In this research, self-administered questionnaire was distributed to respondents for the data collection and data analysis purposes. Self-administered questionnaire is the easiest and common method used for data collection. It does not require the assistance of interviewer where respondents can answer the question via questionnaire paper and internet themselves (Zikmund et al., 2013). Online questionnaire was conducted in order to reach large amount of potential respondent effectively.

Eventually, 450 completed questionnaires were collected. Data collected from the questionnaire was computed using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) software.



### 3.6 Demographic Data of the Samples

The demographic information included gender, age, education background, travel abroad experience, number of visiting to Thailand and monthly income. The summarized descriptive analysis of the frequency and percentage of 450 samples is in the following tables.

Table 3.5: Gender of the samples

<b>Gender:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	235	52.2
Female	215	47.8
Total	450	100

As shown in Table 3.5, the male percent of the samples was 52.2 percent (n=235) while female was 47.8 percent (n=215).

Table 3.6: Age of the samples

<b>Age:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
18-28 years old	154	34.2
29-39 years old	153	34.0
40-45 years old	143	31.8
Total	450	100

The descriptive finding in Table 3.6 indicated that the majority respondents were between age range of 18-28 years old (34.2%, n=154), followed by age between 29-39 years old (34%, n=153), and 40-45 years old (31.8%, n=143).

Table 3.7: Education background of the samples

<b>Education Background:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Primary school	78	17.3
High School	95	21.1
Bachelor degree	138	30.7
Master's degree	95	21.1
Doctoral degree	44	9.8
Total	450	100

The descriptive finding of education background was shown in the Table 3.7 which revealed that the majority of samples obtained Bachelor degree (30.7%, n=138). Moreover, there were 21.1 percent (n=95) obtained High School, 21.1percent (n=95) of samples obtained Master degree, 17.3 percent (n=78) obtained Primary school and 9.8 percent (n=44) obtained Doctoral degree.

Table 3.8: Travel abroad experience of the samples

<b>Travel Abroad Experience</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1-3countries	165	36.7
4-6 countries	224	49.8
More than 6 countries	61	13.6
Total	450	100

The descriptive finding in Table 3.8 indicated that the travel abroad experience was between range of 4-6 countries (49.8%, n=224), followed by range between 1-3 countries (36.7%, n=165). In addition, range of more than 6 countries (13.6%, n=61) was the minority of the samples.

Table 3.9: Number of visiting to Thailand of the samples

<b>Number of visiting to Thailand</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1	249	55.3
2	147	32.7
3times or More than 3	54	12.0
Total	450	100

As shown in Table 3.8, the most of the samples visited Thailand one time (55.3%, n=249), and two times (32.7%, n=147), and only 12 percent (n=54) were 3 times or more than 3.

Table 4: Monthly income of the samples

<b>Monthly Income:</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Less than 3,000 RMB	34	7.6
3,001 - 4,000 RMB	32	7.1
4, 001 - 5,000 RMB	91	20.2
5,001 - 6,000 RMB	76	16.9
6,001 – 7,000 RMB	74	16.4
7,001-8,000 RMB	103	22.9
More than 8,000 RMB	40	8.9
Total	450	100

There majority of the samples earned a monthly income of 7,001-8,000 RMB (22.9%, n=103). There were 7.6 percent (n=34) of the samples earned a monthly income less than 3,000 RMB, 7.1 percent (n=32) of the samples earned a monthly income of 3,001 - 4,000 RMB, 20.2percent (n=91) of the samples earned a monthly

income of 4,001 - 5,000 RMB, 16.9 percent (n=76) of the samples earned a monthly income of 5,001 - 6,000 RMB, 16.4 percent (n=74) of the samples earned a monthly income of 6,001 - 7,000 RMB, 8.9 percent (n=40) of the samples earned a monthly income more than 8,000 RMB.



## **CHAPETER 4: DATA ANALYSIS**

This chapter demonstrates data analyzed results of the quantitative statistic which was surveyed from 450 Chinese Weibo users who has the experience of traveling to Thailand by means of online questionnaire. Linear Regression approach will be used for hypotheses testing. The topics outlines of this chapter are as follows:

4.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.2 Summary on Findings of Descriptive Analysis

4.3 Hypotheses Findings and Testing

### **4.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

SPSS window 24.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used for data analyzing. There were four independent variables, one mediator variable and one dependent variable. The measurement of this study included Multiple Regression and Simple Regression.

H1: The strength of Weibo information attraction significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

The independent variable was the strength of Weibo information attraction. The dependent variable was perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

H2: The effect of celebrity on Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

The independent variable was the effect of celebrity on Weibo. The dependent variable was perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

H3: Information credibility on Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

The independent variable was the information credibility on Weibo. The dependent variable was perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

H4: Interaction of Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

The independent variable was the interaction of Weibo. The dependent variable was perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

The sum of the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility on Weibo, interaction of Weibo, and perceived value of Chinese Weibo users were calculated through the 5 point-interval scale.

The interval scale of perceived value of Chinese Weibo users was used to measure the dependent variable, and there were four interval independent variables of four hypotheses above, respectively. Multiple Regression Analysis was used for finding the significant predictor of dependent variable.

H5: Perceived value of Chinese Weibo users significantly influences tourist destination selection.

The independent variable was perceived value of Chinese Weibo users. The dependent variable was tourist destination selection. Since there was one interval dependent variable and one interval independent variable, the significant predictor of dependent variable was measured by Simple Regression Analysis.

#### 4.2 Summary on Findings of Descriptive Analysis

As shown in Table 4.1, the descriptive statistics analysis of means, standard deviation, and interpretation on the characteristic of Weibo indicated the total mean of Chinese Weibo users perceived the characteristic of Weibo is 3.82 ( $\bar{X}=3.82$ ). The highest mean is effect of celebrity on Weibo ( $\bar{X}=3.88$ ). And the mean of strength of Weibo information attraction ( $\bar{X}=3.86$ ), information credibility ( $\bar{X}=3.86$ ), and interaction of Weibo ( $\bar{X}=3.84$ ), respectively. The means of characteristics of Weibo are ranked between 3.51 and 4.50, according to the criteria, it is indicated that the Chinese Weibo users positively perceived characteristics of Weibo.

Table 4.1: Means, standard deviation, and interpretation on the samples of the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility and interaction of Weibo.

	$\bar{X}$	SD	Interpretation
<b>The strength of Weibo information attraction</b>			
The information on food, accommodation, travel, shopping, entertainment, etc. on Weibo is detailed and visualized.	3.92	1.27	Agree
Weibo presents attractive travel articles, videos and pictures.	3.81	1.34	Agree

(Continued)

Table 4.1(Continued): Means, standard deviation, and interpretation on the samples of the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility and interaction of Weibo.

Weibo presents interesting and exciting moment of experienced travelers.	3.90	1.24	Agree
Tourist information on Weibo has made me interest in tourist attractions	3.81	1.14	Agree
Total	3.86	1.06	Agree
<b>The effect of celebrity on Weibo</b>			
I think the content of recommended by celebrity on Weibo is highly credible and reliable.	3.92	1.32	Agree
I think the content recommended by celebrity on Weibo is attractive to me.	3.83	1.14	Agree
I think I can trust the tourist information on Weibo presented by celebrity.	3.94	1.19	Agree
I am more likely to choose a travel route recommended by celebrity on Weibo.	3.82	1.16	Agree
Total	3.88	1.06	Agree
<b>Information credibility</b>			

(Continued)



Table 4.1(Continued): Means, standard deviation, and interpretation on the samples of the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility and interaction of Weibo.

I think the tourist information on Weibo is knowledgeable.	3.94	1.30	Agree
I think the tourist information on Weibo is reliable.	3.85	1.16	Agree
I think the tourist information on Weibo is useful.	3.90	1.20	Agree
I think the comments on tourist information on Weibo are true and accurate.	3.76	1.16	Agree
Total	3.86	1.06	Agree
<b>Interaction of Weibo</b>			
I often communicate with Weibo users and get a lot of tourist information.	3.85	1.30	Agree
I am willing to provide information to Weibo users to help them successfully travel.	3.86	1.13	Agree
I often participate in the topic of Weibo, discuss and share information to each other.	3.86	1.24	Agree

(Continued)

Table 4.1(Continued): Means, standard deviation, and interpretation on the samples of the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility and interaction of Weibo.

I am more explicit about the choice of destinations through Weibo interaction.	3.79	1.15	Agree
Total	3.84	1.06	Agree
<b>Perceived value</b>			
I like travel information on Weibo.	3.88	1.30	Agree
I feel that I will get a happier travel experience by following the travel information on Weibo.	3.83	1.18	Agree
I think the sights described on Weibo are worthy of acceptance.	3.84	1.22	Agree

As shown in Table 4.2, the mean of the perceived value is 3.82 ( $\bar{X}=3.82$ ), which is among 3.51 and 4.50, according to the criteria of mean score that indicated that the Chinese Weibo users positively perceived value of Weibo. When examining each statement, respondents agree with the statement, “I like travel information on Weibo.” with the highest mean ( $\bar{X}=3.88$ ), followed by the statement, “I think the sights described on Weibo are worthy of acceptance.” ( $\bar{X}=3.84$ ), and “I feel that I will get a happier travel experience by following the travel information on Weibo.” ( $\bar{X}$

=3.83), respectively. The lowest mean of them is the statement “Watching travel notes, guides, pictures and videos on Weibo makes me feel happy.” ( $\bar{X}$  =3.73).

Table 4.2: Perceived value

Perceived value	$\bar{X}$	SD	Interpretation
I like travel information on Weibo.	3.88	1.30	Agree
I feel that I will get a happier travel experience by following the travel information on Weibo.	3.83	1.18	Agree
I think the sights described on Weibo are worthy of acceptance.	3.84	1.22	Agree
Watching travel notes, guides, pictures and videos on Weibo makes me feel happy.	3.73	1.12	Agree
Total	3.82	1.06	High perceived value

As shown in Table 4.3, the descriptive statistics analysis of tourist destination selection to Thailand revealed that tourists have “High Intention” to select Thailand ( $\bar{X}$  =3.95). When examining each statement, respondents agree with the statement, “I plan to travel to Thailand again in the future.” with the highest mean ( $\bar{X}$  =3.98), followed by the statement, “When I will travel, Thailand is the first place in my mind that I choose to travel.” ( $\bar{X}$  =3.95), and “in the future, I will recommend Thailand to relatives and friends.” ( $\bar{X}$  =3.93), respectively.

Table 4.3: Tourist destination selection to Thailand

Tourist destination selection to Thailand	$\bar{X}$	SD	Interpretation
I plan to travel to Thailand again in the future.	3.98	1.27	Agree
In the future, I will recommend Thailand to relatives and friends.	3.93	1.16	Agree
When I will travel, Thailand is the first place in my mind that I choose to travel.	3.95	1.19	Agree
Total	3.95	1.08	High intention to select Thailand

### 4.3 Hypotheses Findings and Testing

The Multiple Regression Analysis was used to test the hypothesized effects of four independent variables (1) The strength of Weibo information attraction (Strength); (2) The effect of celebrity on Weibo (Celebrity); (3) Information credibility on Weibo (Credibility); (4) Interaction of Weibo (Interaction). The results of hypotheses are as following:

H1: The strength of Weibo information attraction significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

H2: The effect of celebrity on Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

H3: Information credibility on Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

H4: Interaction of Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

As shown in table 4.4, there were strongly positive correlations among characteristics of Weibo and Chinese Weibo users perceived value on Weibo, the strength of Weibo information attraction ( $r=.892$ ,  $p<.01$ ), the effect of celebrity on Weibo ( $r=.901$ ,  $p<.01$ ), information credibility on Weibo ( $r=.886$ ,  $p<.01$ ), interaction of Weibo ( $r=.889$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and which demonstrated that the higher the strength of Weibo information, the effect of celebrities on Weibo, the credibility of information and the interaction of Weibo, the higher the perceived value of Weibo users on Weibo.

Table 4.4: The Correlations of different independent variables and perceived value

	Perceived value	The strength of Weibo information attraction	The effect of celebrity on Weibo	Information credibility	Interaction of Weibo
Perceived value	1	.892	.901	.886	.889
The strength of Weibo information attraction	.892	1	.901	.901	.894

(Continued)

Table 4.4(Continued): The Correlations of different independent variables and perceived value

The effect of celebrity on Weibo	.901	.901	1	.900	.895
Information credibility	.886	.901	.900	1	.897
Interaction of Weibo	.889	.894	.895	.897	1

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As the results shown in Model Summary of table 4.5, the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility, interaction of Weibo has a strong statistic significant effect on the Chinese Weibo users perceived value with the correlation coefficient (R) 0.929 while the coefficient R Square is equal to 0.863, which means that the Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, interaction of Weibo, information credibility on Chinese Weibo users perceived value is at 86.3% level.

As the Significant is equal to 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) which was shown from ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) table, it indicated that the null hypothesis was supported. Therefore, the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility, interaction of Weibo has significant effect on Chinese Weibo users perceived value at the 0.05 significant levels.

As the results from Coefficients table shown, the significant of the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility, and interaction of Weibo are equal to 0.000, 0.000, 0.000 and 0.000, respectively, those are all less than 0.05. Those revealed that null hypotheses were supported and the Weibo significant effect on perceived value is at the 0.05 significant levels. In addition, as shown in Coefficients table, the unstandardized coefficient Beta of the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility, and interaction of Weibo are equal to 0.237, 0.323, 0.173, and 0.233, respectively, while the standardized coefficient are equal to 0.238, 0.322, 0.173 and 0.233, respectively.

Table 4.5: Multiple Regression Analysis of the characteristics of Weibo and perceived value

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.929 <sup>a</sup>	.863	.861	.39506	.863	698.196	4	445	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), The strength of Weibo information attraction, The effect of celebrity on Weibo, Information credibility, Interaction of Weibo

ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	435.878	4	108.696	698.196	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), The strength of Weibo information attraction, The effect of celebrity on Weibo, Information credibility, Interaction of Weibo

b. Dependent Variable: Perceived value

Coefficients							
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	.096	.073		1.310	.919	-.048	.239
Strength	.237	.048	.238	4.941	.000	.143	.332
Effect	.323	.048	.322	6.667	.000	.277	.418
Credibility	.173	.049	.173	3.565	.000	.078	.268
Interaction	.233	.047	.233	4.996	.000	.141	.324

a. Dependent Variable: Perceived value

H5: Perceived value of Chinese Weibo users significantly influences tourist destination selection to Thailand.

As the results shown in table 4.6, perceived value of Chinese Weibo users has a strong statistic significant effect on the tourist destination selection with the correlation coefficient (R) 0.878 while the coefficient R Square is equal to 0.771, which means that perceived value of Chinese Weibo users has effect on tourist destination selection to Thailand at 77.1% effect levels.



As the Significant is equal to 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) which was shown from ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) table, it indicated that the null hypothesis was supported. Therefore, perceived value of Chinese Weibo users has significant effect on tourist destination selection to Thailand at the 0.05 significant levels.

As the results from Coefficients table shown, the significant of perceived value of Chinese Weibo users is equal to 0.000 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), which revealed that null hypothesis was supported. The Weibo has significant effect on perceived value of Chinese Weibo users at the 0.05 significant levels. In addition, as shown in Coefficients table, the unstandardized coefficient Beta of perceived value of Chinese Weibo users is equal to 0.896, while the standardized coefficient is equal to 0.878.

Table 4.6: Simple Regression Analysis of perceived value of Chinese Weibo users and tourist destination selection to Thailand

Model Summary								
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
.878 <sup>a</sup>	.771	.771	.51774	.771	1512.109	1	448	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant). Perceived value of Chinese Weibo users

#### ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	405.326	1	405.326	1512.109	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Tourist destination selection to Thailand

b. Predictors: (Constant): Perceived value of Chinese Weibo users

Coefficients							
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	.531	.091		5.807	.000	.351	.701
Perceived	.896	.023	.878	38.886	.000	.850	.941

a. Dependent Variable: Tourist destination selection to Thailand



## **CHAPETER 5:**

### **DISCUSSION**

The key findings and results were summarized in this chapter. The discussion and summary are outline as follows:

#### 5.1 Summary of the Descriptive Findings and Discussion

#### 5.2 Discussion of the Research

##### 5.2.1 Implications of the study

#### 5.3 Limitations of the Study

#### 5.4 Recommendation for Future Research

### **5.1 Summary of the Descriptive Findings and Discussion**

Multiple Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesized effects of the strength of Weibo information attraction, the effect of celebrity on Weibo, information credibility, and interaction of Weibo. Hypothesis H1, H2, H3, H4 were tested by using regression model and the results were shown in Table 4.5. As the results present that Weibo users perceived high strength of Weibo information attraction ( $\beta=0.000$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) positively predict Weibo users' perceived value. Thus, Hypothesis H1 is supported. The second Hypothesis H2 is also supported. The results showed that Weibo users perceived high effect of celebrity on Weibo ( $\beta=0.000$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) positively predict information credibility on Weibo. Similarly, the results of the third Hypothesis H3 is significant ( $\beta=0.000$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), it means that Weibo users' perceived high information credibility on Weibo, positively predict

Weibo users' perceived value. Again, Weibo users' perceived high interaction of Weibo ( $\beta=0.000$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) positively predict Weibo users' perceived value. Thus, the fourth Hypothesis H4 is supported. In addition, in Table 4.5, the results from Model Summary Table present that the Correlation Coefficient (R) is 0.929 and the Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ ) is 0,863. Those indicated that Weibo users have positive perceived value. Moreover, the Unstandardized Coefficients Beta of the effect of celebrity on Weibo equal to .323 has the highest impact on perceived value and the strength of Weibo information attraction, interaction of Weibo, information credibility B equal to .237, .233, .173, respectively.

To test the final Hypothesis H5, Simple Regression analysis was used and the results are presented in Table 4.6. The results showed that Weibo users with high positive perceived value ( $\beta=0.000$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) significantly predict the tourist destination selection to Thailand. In conclusion, all Hypotheses were supported and the results as followed:

H1: The strength of Weibo information attraction significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

H2: The effect of celebrity on Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

H3: Information credibility on Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

H4: Interaction of Weibo significantly influences perceived value of Chinese Weibo users.

H5: Perceived value of Chinese Weibo users significantly influences tourist destination selection to Thailand.

## 5.2 Discussion of the Research

According to Baloglu and Cheary (1999), in the Internet era, Internet word-of-mouth as a source of information for destination image transmission has a more significant impact than mass media and tourism promotion. Internet word-of-mouth can better market and build the image of tourist destinations, attracting more tourists (Lee, R & Lockshin, Halo, 2011). As an important tool for Internet word-of-mouth communication, Weibo has been paid more and more attention by tourists. The characteristics of Weibo tourism information are important factors that affect its communication effect and the willingness of tourists to further their behavior. The attractiveness of Weibo information content not only affects the speed and effect of information dissemination, but also enhances the recipient's acceptance and involvement of information, and leaves a deep impression and memory on the recipient (Tian Xin, 2006). Also, the attractiveness of Weibo travel information content not only enhances the positive emotions and attitudes of the audience, but also affects the audience's willingness to act, including the willingness

to comment and the willingness to recommend to relatives and friends, thus affecting the choice of travel destinations.

The paper examines the perceived value of Chinese tourists on Weibo to understand the impact of Weibo on the choice of destinations for Chinese tourists to Thailand. Ren Jiaxuan (2010) explains Weibo's need for audience use and satisfaction from the perspectives of audience awareness, emotion, personal integration, social integration and stress relief. According to Sobel Kate & Chowdury (2009), Weibo is an important tool for customers to spread word of mouth.

Weibo plays an important role in the destination selection process. Weibo contains a lot of information related to tourism in Thailand. Tourists will also search for the corresponding Thai tourism information according to their own requirements. The Weibo information platform not only improves the efficiency of tourists' search information, but also makes the search information more targeted. After collecting the corresponding information, participating in interactive discussion and communication is an effective stage for tourists to confirm the reliability of information. The attraction of Weibo tourism information and the attitude of information publishers will largely affect the tourists' judgment on information. At the same time, before, during and after the tour, tourists will share their experiences and feelings through Weibo, so that more tourists can learn from them. Through previous theoretical and practical research, it reveals the behavior of tourists using Weibo for destination selection and explores the influence of Weibo on the choice of

tourist destinations. According to the conclusions of this study, Weibo characteristics perceived by tourists have a positive impact on destination selection. Weibo marketing is also an important strategy for enterprises to conduct marketing in the future. Weibo plays an increasingly important role in people's travel life. For tourism companies, Weibo marketing has become a hot topic nowadays. Using Weibo to carry out various tourism marketing activities is not only welcomed by tourists. It also brings more benefits to tourists' travel activities.

### **5.2.1 Implications of the Study**

#### **5.2.1.1 Use Chinese celebrity to endorse Weibo.**

Since Weibo is very influential, therefore, Chinese celebrity, for example, Yang Zi, a popular Chinese star can help endorse Weibo. She shoots Weibo advertising, promotes and stimulates Chinese tourists to use Weibo more, which ultimately can affect the user's travel destination choice.

#### **5.2.1.2 Encourage tourists to post Thailand travel experiences**

As a beneficiary of Weibo's tourist information, tourists should be encouraged by the official Thai Weibo to actively publish real and interesting Thai tourist information. The true experience of tourists can attract other Weibo users to choose Thailand as their destination. The tourist experience also provides a reference for other tourists to develop tourism plans, and should be encouraged to actively release.

#### **5.2.1.3 Open the official Weibo of Thailand**

Weibo's travel information and Weibo interaction will not only affect the preferences of tourists, but also affect the user's trust in Weibo attractions. Fans of the official Weibo are tourists or potential tourists of the scenic spots. They actively interact with them through the official Weibo, increase fans and attention, create a good image of the attractions, and inspire tourists to choose Thailand as a tourist destination.

#### 5.2.1.4 Establish a professional Weibo management team

The professionalism of the Weibo team is very important, standardized and active. Weibo, which has a novel and positive topic, is often published on the content. The technical image processing and video production must be professional, and the official Weibo should be managed to attract more fans.

### 5.3 Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations within this study that are important to acknowledge. This paper mainly studies the influence of Weibo on the choice of Chinese tourists. However, there are many other factors that influence the choice of destinations, such as price, service and experience. Weibo is just one of the impression factors.

Moreover, this study used the form of a network-issued questionnaire, which made the respondent unmanned during the questionnaire process, and the answer might be affected. With online survey method, the data collection process is convenient and feasible to reach more targets, but it may limit generalizability of



results. Thus, future research can modify the data collection process to raise generalizability of result.

#### **5.4 Recommendation for Future Research**

According to limitations of this study, there are some recommendations for the future research as follows:

5.4.1 This kind of research can be implemented in many social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. The more social media platform means more diversified channels and more accurate result will receive.

5.4.2 The period of measuring effect of Chinese tourists' perception of Weibo should not only be in terms of short-term responses but also in terms of frequent exposures over a long period of time.

5.4.3 This study is only to study the role of Weibo in the choice of tourist destination. In the future, we can further study the application and influence of Weibo in eating, accommodation, travelling, shopping and entertainment.

5.4.4 The respondents of this study include Weibo users who live in China, and Weibo users who travel and study in Thailand. In the future, respondents can be distinguished to obtain more detailed results.

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## QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire survey is designed to obtain a better understanding of the impact of Chinese tourist' use of Weibo as their tourist destination to Thailand. It will take you less than 15 minutes to finish the questionnaire, and the information you provide is for research use only. Thank you for answering this questionnaire. It will be a great help for my research. The questionnaire is divided into 7 parts as follows:

Section I: Basic Information

Section II: The strength of Weibo information attraction

Section III: The effect of celebrity on Weibo

Section IV: Information credibility

Section V: Interaction of Weibo

Section VI: Perceived value

Section VII: Tourist destination selection to Thailand

### Section I: Basic Information

In this part, we will ask you some basic information about yourself, and all the information is for research use only.

Direction: Please put the  $\surd$  in the box that best represents your demographic profile.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age: 18-28 29-39 40-45
3. Level of Education: Primary school High school Bachelor degree Master degree Doctoral degree
4. How many countries have you visited before?  
1-3countries 4-6 countries More than 6 countries
5. How many times have you visited Thailand before?"  
1 2 3 times or more than 3
6. What is your monthly income?  
Less than 3000RMB 3001-4000RMB 4001-5000RMB 5001-6000RMB  
6001-7000RMB 7001-8000RMB More than8000RMB

### Section II: The strength of Weibo information attraction

In this part, we would like to know about the strength of information attraction on Weibo. Please check each item and answer it based on your former use experiences.

(1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree).

Direction: Please put the  $\surd$  in the box that best represents your degree of agreement/disagreement on the following statements.

<b>The strength of Weibo information attraction</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. The information on food, accommodation, travel, shopping, entertainment, etc. on Weibo is detailed and visualized.					
2. Weibo presents attractive travel articles, videos and pictures.					
3. Weibo presents interesting and exciting moment of experienced travelers.					
4. Tourist information on Weibo has made me interest in tourist attractions					

### **Section III: The effect of celebrity on Weibo**

In this part, we would like to know about the effect of celebrity on Weibo. Please check each item and answer it based on your former use experiences. (1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree).

Direction: Please put the  $\surd$  in the box that best represents your degree of agreement/disagreement on the following statements.

<b>The effect of celebrity on Weibo</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. I think the content of recommended by celebrity on Weibo is highly credible and reliable.					
2. I think the content recommended by celebrity on Weibo is attractive to me.					
3. I think I can trust the tourist information on Weibo presented by celebrity.					
4. I am more likely to choose a travel route recommended by celebrity on Weibo.					

#### **Section IV: Information credibility**

In this part, we would like to know about the information credibility on Weibo.

Please check each item and answer it based on your former use experiences.

(1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree;

5=Strongly agree)

Direction: Please put the  $\surd$  in the box that best represents your degree of agreement/disagreement on the following statements.

<b>Information credibility</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. I think the tourist information on Weibo is knowledgeable.					
2. I think the tourist information on Weibo is reliable.					
3. I think the tourist information on Weibo is useful.					
4. I think the comments on tourist information on Weibo are true and accurate.					

#### **Section V: Interaction of Weibo**

In this part, we would like to know about impact of interaction on Weibo. Please check each item and answer it based on your former use experiences. (1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree)

Direction: Please put the  $\surd$  in the box that best represents your degree of agreement/disagreement on the following statements.

<b>Interaction of Weibo</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. I often communicate with Weibo users and get a lot of					

tourist information.					
2. I am willing to provide information to Weibo users to help them successfully travel.					
3. I often participate in the topic of Weibo, discuss and share information to each other.					
4. I am more explicit about the choice of destinations through Weibo interaction.					

### Section VI: Perceived value

In this part, we would like to know about the feeling when you using travel information on Weibo. Please check each item and answer it based on your former use experiences. (1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree).

Direction: Please put the  $\surd$  in the box that best represents your degree of agreement/disagreement on the following statements.

Perceived value	1	2	3	4	5
1. I like travel information on Weibo.					



2. I feel that I will get a happier travel experience by following the travel information on Weibo.					
3. I think the sights described on Weibo are worthy of acceptance.					
4. Watching travel notes, guides, pictures and videos on Weibo makes me feel happy.					

### Section VII: Tourist destination selection to Thailand

In this section, we would like to know your travel experience and whether you would like to select Thailand as a tourist destination. For the next three questions, 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree

Direction: Please put the  $\surd$  in the box that best represents your degree of agreement/disagreement on the following statements.

<b>Tourist destination selection to Thailand</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. I plan to travel to Thailand again in the future.					
2. In the future, I will recommend Thailand to relatives and friends.					

3. When I will travel, Thailand is the first place in my mind that I choose to travel.					
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Thank you for your cooperation to respond this survey!



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