

**COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TOURISM CAMPAIGN BETWEEN JAPAN
AND THAILAND: MESSAGE AND MEDIA**



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TOURISM CAMPAIGN BETWEEN JAPAN AND
THAILAND: MESSAGE AND MEDIA

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This Independent Study Manuscript Presented to
The Graduate School of Bangkok University

in Partial Fulfillment

of The Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Communication Arts

2020



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**This Independent Study has been approved by
the Graduate School
Bangkok University**

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August 22, 2020

Ruangdet, N. Master of Arts in Communication Arts, August 2020, Graduate School,
Bangkok University.

Comparative Study of Tourism Campaign in 2019 between Japan and Thailand:

Message and Media (72 pp.)

Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Rosechongporn Komolsevin, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The tourism campaigns have played a significant role in stimulating tourism flows and increasing the economy to the host country. Thus, the research aims to examine and compare the tourism campaign in 2019 through the official tourism websites of Thailand and Japan. The textual analysis approach will be applied to receive qualitative data to compare the outcome. The information from the official tourism websites of both countries can be categorized into two major aspects, such as message, and media. Additionally, the message includes information and a slogan. Media consists of communication, transaction, relationship, and technical merits. Regarding the derived result, Japan and Thailand have implemented better in different dimensions. For instance, Japan emphasized the messaging aspect more than Thailand. While Thailand has done better on media parts.

Keywords: Tourism Thailand, Tourism Japan, Message, Media

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This independent study has been through a lot of work and efforts to finish completely. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to thank and appreciate my friend and family for their kind support and encouragement as always. Besides, this research would have not happened, if I had not got the inspiration ideas to examine the topic from the tourism promoting video of the Tourism Authority of Thailand. On top of that, I would like to express my thankfulness to my supervisor, Associate Professor Rosechongporn Komolsevin, Ph.D. who has spent her time teaching useful knowledge to accomplish this work from the first step until the last part.

Napatllada Ruangdet

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale and Problem Statement

At present, people have become interested in traveling more than in the past and that can stimulate the economy in every nation massively. The tourism industry has been growing continuously as a popular trend for people around the world. Thus, it is one of the industries which can promote the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the country significantly. According to Sumaco and Richardson (2011), tourism is the major revenue generator that can provide the advantage balance of trade and many aspects for host countries. Therefore, every government has to shed light on this industry. Similarly, Agaraj and Murati (2009) stated that tourism is a major sector of economic improvement relating particularly to macroeconomic growth such as income creation and career accumulation. It can be a significant income for the government and the labor force.

Hence, this research will concentrate to examine especially two countries in Asia which are Thailand and Japan since both nations are considered as popular and famous countries for tourists around the world. “Bangkok retains crown as top destination” (2019) indicated that both countries also have similar nature sources of tourism, biodiversity, and impressive culture. Both countries are also the top destinations of Asia in 2018 which was ranked by The World Travel Organization (UNWTO). It revealed as in table 1.1 by World Tourism Organization (2019) that the international tourist arrivals of Thailand in 2018 were 38,277,000 which gained the international tourism receipts of 63,042 million USD. Likewise, Japan got a total of

international tourist's arrivals in 2018 of 31,192,000 and the international tourism receipts of 41,115 million USD.

It may be inferred from the statistics that tourism in Thailand was greater than in Japan in 2018. Furthermore, according to “Bangkok retains crown as top destination” (2019), Bangkok is ranked number 1 of the tourist destinations around the world and in Asia-pacific. Kasikorn Research Center (2019) also illustrated the forecast number of Thailand's International tourist arrival in 2019 that has increased to 39.8 million people, especially Chinese tourists which may cause an income of around 2.16-2.20 trillion Thai baht. On the other hand, Taylor (2019) illustrated that Japan is the fourth most-visited country of tourists around the world in 2019 ranked by the World Economic Forum (WEF). As shown in JTB Tourism Research & Consulting (2020), tourists to Japan reached 30 million people that were higher than the previous year to 5.6% and also predicted that it will rise around 10% at the end of 2019.

Table 1.1: International Tourist Arrivals and Tourism Receipts by Country of Destination

International Tourist Arrivals						International Tourism Receipts		
Country	(1000)			Change (%)		(USD million)		
	2010	2017	2018	17/16	18/17	2010	2017	2018
Asia and the Pacific	208,174	324,041	347,731	5.4	7.3	254,367	395,996	435,460

(Continued)

Table 1.1 (Continued): International Tourist Arrivals and Tourism Receipts by
Country of Destination

International Tourist Arrivals						International Tourism Receipts		
Country	(1000)			Change (%)		(USD million)		
	2010	2017	2018	17/16	18/17	2010	2017	2018
China	55,665	60,740	62,900	2.5	3.6	45,814	38,559	40,386
Thailand	15,936	35,483	38,277	9.1	7.9	20,104	56,938	63,042
Japan	8,611	28,691	31,192	19.4	8.7	13,199	34,054	41,115
Hong Kong	20,085	27,885	29,263	5.0	4.9	22,200	33,339	36,703
Malaysia	24,577	25,948	25,832	-3.0	-0.4	18,115	18,323	19,143
Macao	11,926	17,255	18,493	9.9	7.2	22,276	35,575	40,187
India	5,776	15,543	17,427	6.7	12.1	14,490	27,365	28,568
Vietnam	5,050	12,922	15,498	29.1	19.9	4,450	8,890	10,080
Korea	8,798	13,336	15,347	-22.7	15.1	10,328	13,368	15,319
Singapore	9,161	13,909	14,673	7.7	5.5	14,178	19,738	20,528
Australia	5,872	8,815	9,246	6.6	4.9	32,584	41,732	45,035

Source: World Tourism Organization. (2019). *International tourism highlights the 2019 edition*. Retrieved from <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284421152>.

Therefore, it can be summarized from the previous information that tourism in Thailand and Japan has increased more than previous years which is a significant sign of tourism since there are a lot of tourism destinations to open more in 2019. Moreover, both countries have done many campaigns to stimulate tourism, especially in 2019. Although, COVID-19 has halted the economic growth of tourism significantly and the arrival of tourists in both countries, their campaigns are still worth investigating. Since after the COVID-19 pandemic is over, the governments have to reactivate tourism and it is expected to boom again. It is an interesting point to criticize further factors such as culture, geographic, country characteristics.

In Thailand, the tourism industry is overseen by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) which is an organization that has responsibilities for improving tourism and maintaining tourism resources as well as promotion travel for tourists for both Thai and foreigners. The tourism campaign of Thailand generally aimed at stimulating tourism in domestic for Thai people and inbound marketing for international tourists by Tourism Authority of Thailand (n.d.). The tourism campaign that was launched by TAT in 2019 is Amazing Thailand: Open to the New Shades aimed for an international market and Amazing “Thai Tay” campaign for the domestic market which was under the major campaign “Amazing Thailand.” According to Supadhiloke (2007), this existing strategy has been accomplished greatly in representing Thailand as a world tourist destination for a long time. Opening to the new shades campaign aimed to encourage international tourists to visit Thailand with the key message to persuade tourists to travel in Thai unique local experience through the campaign “Amazing Thailand” It will lead tourists to be

impressed with the unique local experience of travel and culture in the feature of the millions of hidden shades.

Furthermore, the Amazing “Thai Tay” campaign is the campaign that stimulated Thai people to travel and explore exotic places in Thailand; the word “Tay” in Thai means cool. Therefore, TAT would like to change the perception of traveling in domestic of Thai people and also build awareness to travel in every part of Thailand with insightful and approachable manners. This campaign also represented local people as the heroes who protected and conserved their traditional lifestyle and culture.

Also in Japan, Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) encourages people around the world to travel in Japan; for instance, the publication of sightseeing attractions and information related to tourism in Japan. The tourism campaign of Japan is Japan endless discovery which is the campaign that JNTO used in 2019 for promoting traveling by focusing on inbound tourism. The concept is to represent their country where tourists can explore and earn the experience with endless discoveries such as traditional culture and history, the bounties of nature, and a variety of tourism resources (Japan National Tourism Organization, n.d.).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

As mentioned above, both tourism organizations emphasized communication as the key message which is to promote tourism to the audience by using a variety of media such as advertising on social media, television, events, and print media. Moreover, there are several methods and strategies to develop tourism and it is the main responsibility of the National Tourism Organization. The tourism campaign is

the program or project that is created for supporting tourism objectives, and it is also one of the methods used to integrate travel motivation. Therefore, it can lead to research that aims to examine the message and media in tourism campaigns. The purpose of this study is to examine the message and media of the tourism campaign of Japan and Thailand. It aims as well to compare the message and media of the tourism campaigns of Japan and Thailand.

1.3 Research Questions

Regarding the objective of researches that were mentioned earlier, it can bring to the elaborated research question as following:

1.3.1 Did official tourism websites of Thailand and Japan yield the following effects: increasing awareness of the destination, providing global publicity, and strengthening the destination image as a favorite destination, and targeting a specific market?

1.3.2 What is the effectiveness of the official tourism websites of Thailand and Japan? Did they contain the five dimensions of the ICTRT model: Information, Communication, Transaction, Relationship, and Technical Merit? And how are they different between the two tourism campaigns?

1.4 Scope of the Study

The official website presented by the tourism department of government from both countries was selected as the main research documents. Therefore, the website of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in Thailand and the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) in Japan will be used to examine the study in terms of the

message and media. The content analysis will be applied to examine the slogan and media of Japan and Thailand that were presented on the main website.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The paper aims particularly to explore the characteristics of the attribute of the message and media strategies implemented by Japan and Thailand in terms of the tourism campaigns. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of comparative study in the tourism campaign in previous research about message and media. Consequently, these circumstances can be drawn to the study that will concentrate on the message and media strategies used on the campaign for the comparison in the differences and similarities between Thailand and Japan. This research will also analyze the message and media of the tourism campaigns of both countries to improve it more effectively. This study attempts to accomplish new insight that provides the appropriate outcome which will be a positive advantage for people who are interested in this particular area about communication campaigns for further study in the future. Furthermore, the tourism department of the government from Thailand and Japan can also deploy the findings in this research to develop their official tourism website for increasing the number of tourists in the future.

1.6 Definition of Terms

The tourism campaign refers to a series of promotional activities that are planned to succeed in tourism proposes. Wattanacharoensil and Schuckert (2016) indicate that the campaign is the plan to persuade visitors to travel in the country repeatedly in every season. Typically, the tourism campaign was organized by the

travel agencies and the official tourism department from the government as the communicator. The main objective of tourism campaigns is to build the perception and pictures of destination in the mind of the receiver or tourist. (Natalija, Davor & Željko, 2016) Moreover, OASIS is the term that is used to refer to the step for making the campaign effectively that consists of Objective, Audience insight, Strategy or Idea, Implementation, and Scoring or Evaluation. For example, the Amazing “Thai Tay” campaign was launched in 2019 by the tourism authority of Thailand (TAT) to utilize for improving the domestic economy in the country. TAT implemented this creative tourism campaign in accordance with the Twelfth National Economic and Social Plan (2017-2021).

Message in terms of communication means the information that was transmitted by both verbal and non-verbal; for instance, the word in speech, written, symbol, and sign. It can be considered a major part of the communication process since the message is the content that the sender would like to inform the receiver by “Effective communication” (n.d.). Therefore, the message in this research will focus chiefly on tourism information and tourism slogans. Regarding Farhana (2012), the major compositions of brand identity involve name, logo, and slogan. However, the name and logo are difficult to adjust as well as also have some barrier to transmit the message to the receiver. Therefore, the slogan can relieve this gap issue since it can represent the particular message that catches up the meaning of the brand and hooks into the memories of people. The function of the slogan is to accumulate the brand’s image and its recognition and to create a brand memorably. Besides, tourism information is the content that relates to traveling, such as, tourist attraction,

transportation, accommodation, food, customs, etc. It can be presented in the form of passage and pictures to communicate with the readers effectively.

Media is a communication tool or medium that conveys and also delivers the message to the receiver or audience included verbal, visual image, and written. This research will focus on mass media communication which applies to the large audience through media. It can be divided into 3 components which are print-based communication modes (magazines), electronic-based communication modes (television), and online or internet communication. The online platform can be considered as the most effective media which is growing rapidly nowadays, for example, social media, and websites. Since it is easily accessible for people around the world and also takes a lower cost for advertisement than television and magazines. Various tools of media that can be integrated with the tourism industry, for instance, internet, billboard, printed paper, book, television, and magazine.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Message in the Tourism Campaign

Most countries or cities have their own distinctive images that can influence people to remember them. For instance, Rome and Paris are broadly acknowledged as a romantic city that can stimulate tourists to visit once in a lifetime. This distinctive image mentioned is called brand image or brand equity. According to Farhana (2012), the brand identity involves major compositions which are name, logo, and slogan. However, the name and logo are difficult to adjust as well as also have some barrier to transmit the message to the receiver. Therefore, the slogan can relieve this gap issue since it can represent the particular message that catches up the meaning of the brand and hooks into the memories of people.

The function of the slogan is to accumulate the brand's image and its recognition and to create a brand memorably. Kohli, Thomas, & Suri (2013) stated that the compositions of brands such as slogans can be applied in the tourism industry for promoting the travel of tourists in the form of phrases for advertising and marketing purposes (Doyle, 2011). For example, one of the most effective slogans is "I Love New York" which was created in the late 1970s and remains popular until now (Bendel, 2011).

According to the research of Galí, Camprubí, & Donaire (2016), the analysis of tourism slogans in top destinations was the study that aims to investigate and analyze slogans in 50 top countries around the world in tourism which was measured by The World Travel Organisation (World Tourism Organization, 2019). In terms of

methodology, researchers distinguished words on slogans into the number of words, meaning, and meaningless words, and also analyzed the positioning of the slogans.

Consequently, countries attempt to decrease the word used in a slogan as possible by selecting only meaningful words to accrue the effectiveness of slogans and persuade the visitor to travel to the destination. As well as, it demonstrates that the geographical scope in the slogan is a significant influence on the tourists since it can reinforce the decision-making process and build within people the imagination of the destination. Even though the slogan can be beneficial for promoting tourism strategy, the study indicated that top countries do not use a slogan as part of their communication strategy and 10% of them do not use the slogan to relate with the logo.

On the other hand, there is a research by Huang and Lin (2017) which examined awareness effects of the tourism slogans, especially in ten prominent destinations in Asia, including China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, Macau, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, and Indonesia, respectively. The interesting point of this study is that the questionnaire is used to investigate and study destination recognition, slogan recall, and the impact of characteristics on slogan awareness. As a result, it presents that China and Hong Kong have the most effective slogan which is relevant to destination recognition, whereas Indonesia was the worst. Similarly, in terms of slogan recall, China and Taiwan were the best correct, but contrarily, Thailand and Macau were of the low rankings.

This research concluded that the slogan should be simple and short for easy recall and it could overcome the rhyme (Pike, 2009). Moreover, to achieve the outcome of destination recognition, the effective slogan should initiate with the name

of the destination. However, this notion was in contrast to that of Foster (2001) that the slogan with only the name of the destination can achieve the recognition. Besides, the study also shows the participants who were aged between 36-50 years with high English knowledge and education, and who have been to the destination had been more affected than other people on slogan awareness. The significant factors affecting slogan awareness are age, education, and travel experience with the destination. Thus, the slogan should be translated into many languages for helping tourists in different countries to realize the message and develop recognition and recall. The tourism organization should represent the slogan together with essential information as much as possible on a variety of media so that people can remember the destination automatically.

2.2 Media in the Tourism Campaign

Various tools of media can be integrated with the tourism industry, for instance, internet, billboard, printed paper, book, and magazine. After the internet was operated since the mid-1990s, the trend of marketing has been changed from the traditional way into online since people's behavior on the internet usage has increased. Hence, the internet can be applied for multiple purposes, such as reserving accommodations, as well as providing and collecting information. Pike (2009) illustrates that the tourism organization would become aware of the importance of the internet in the future, thus they express the slogan of destination through the website from which visitors can look for tourism information.

According to relevant research, Kiralova (2014) reveals that social media is a tool of tourism destination marketing campaigns. The paper points out that the

tourists' behavior nowadays has changed to use social media more than in the past. Thus, the researcher would like to examine how to apply social media as a tool to promote a tourism marketing campaign. This study shows that changes in behavior in the 20th century tend to search for the tourism destination as preliminary information via the internet and then they will make decisions for travel. However, people do not believe in advertising of one-way communication, but they rely on two-way communication.

The percentage of social media stated that internet a user in Thailand in 2020 presents that there are 52 million people or 75 percent who use the internet and be active social media users. People will spend time using the internet via any device for 9 hours per day which can be categorized as the content activities to watching online videos, listening to music streaming service, and watching the Vlog, respectively (Muangtum, 2020). Furthermore, social media users in Japan have 78 million which is 61.9 percent of the population and there are 93 percent of the internet users (Bugajski, 2020). Therefore, it will be an advantage for the marketer to integrate tourism campaigns with social media and online platforms since more than 60 percent of the population in both countries have used the internet and social media. Also, the cost of online advertisement is less expensive than offline such as television commercials, billboards, and newspapers.

Regarding the study of Kiralova (2014), the use of the internet of traveler increased significantly which includes using for searching information, reservation, and arrangement. It can lead to the best practices of applying social media as a medium in real situations. In the case of Thailand, they released an e-campaign "The ultimate Thailand explorers" in 2009. It was a contest that awards free 6 days' holiday

and the chance to travel to 1 of 5 Thailand's top destinations. The contestants have to post and share pictures, videos, and articles via social media to stimulate Thailand as a popular place for tourists. As a result, there were 248,000 contestants from 59 countries around the world and the contest was uploaded into 576,000 articles which recorded 25 million views. Besides, the campaign “Thailand extreme makeover” in 2014 was established by the Tourism Authority of Thailand for promoting medical tourism. It convinced people to participate in a “reality-type” contest. The winner can undergo the surgery makeover in Thailand. Hence, it can be concluded that interactive marketing communication is the key technique to achieve the goal effectively.

Moreover, a social media campaign should include the following: firstly, increasing awareness of the destination; secondly global publicity, thirdly, strengthening the destination image as a favorite destination; and fourthly, targeting a specific market. In addition, it can connect to the study of Pai, Xia, and Wang (2014) that examined the comparison of the official tourism website in five East Asian countries. Pai, Xia, and Wang (2014) indicate that the information of five East Asia countries was collected from the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) which has a responsibility to promote tourist destinations in each country. It was evaluated by the Information, Communication, Transaction, Relationship, and Technical Merit model (ICTRT) of Li and Wang (2010) that is the latest version for DMO website assessment. There are two major reasons that the author decided to apply this model in the study. Firstly, it was created especially for DMO websites, and secondly, it can minimize the difficulty of the evaluation process.

In conclusion, the result of website effectiveness among five official websites ranked in the ICTR model by Li and Wang (2010) is Korea with 67.81 scores, Japan

with 67.03 scores, Thailand with 62.03 scores, Hong Kong with 55.96 scores, and Macau with 36.81 scores, respectively. All five tourism websites have provided a lot of information about promotion; nonetheless, there was still a lack of information about transaction and relationship dimensions. The notion of Vogt (2011) mentioned that the significant function of the DMO website is to maintain a relationship with tourists. Furthermore, the researcher also advises three recommendations earned from the study. Firstly, the website should provide reliable and updated information as much as possible for accommodating visitors who are interested in traveling to the destination. Secondly, the website should distinguish the information into a diverse market. Thirdly, media exposure should be applied to websites such as television, Facebook, and Youtube.

However, the study mentioned about DMO website in Thailand to show that it did not concentrate on the transaction. Positively, the Thai website serves the virtual tour from which people can find the picture together with the video of tourist attractions. As well as in communication functions, they also present an impressive photo to destinations with many languages. Moreover, people can connect to social media from the Thai website for sharing their travel experiences and can gain special advantages, such as deals, incentive programs, and discounts.

As mentioned above in the previous studies, it can be concluded that the major characteristic of the message should be simple, short, and beginning with the country's name. Moreover, the most effective media in present is social media on the internet. Therefore, the website of tourism organizations should provide reliable and up to date information. On the other hand, tourists tend to be involved with the

campaign of Japan more than Thailand, and tourists use social media on the internet to seek a tourism destination.

2.3 Related Theories

Regarding the study of Huang and Lin (2017), researchers apply the questionnaires to examine destination recognition, the impact of characteristics on slogan awareness, and slogan recall of the top ten countries in Asia. The questionnaire is divided into three parts consisting of collecting personal information of participants, destination recognition, and slogan recall. In the destination recognition part, the participants have to match the list of slogans correctly. Moreover, the participants have to fill out the tourism slogan of each country in the slogan recall part.

According to the research of Pai, Xia, and Wang (2014), the ICTRT model was selected to be used for the analysis tourism website of DMO and this model had been developed from the previous model which was called the ICTR model. Thus, researchers will deploy the ICTRT model as proposed in figure 2.1 which composes with five dimensions: Information, Communication, Transaction, Relationship, and Technical Merit by Li and Wang (2010) to evaluate the effectiveness of the media that is used for promoting tourism official websites. Firstly, Li and Wang (2010) gathered information from the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) websites; such as slogans, documents, and videos. Secondly, all gathering information that was observed will be used to analyze 48 items in the ICTRT model. Then the result from the analysis in the previous process was calculated by using the formula effectiveness = performance x importance x complexity. In comparison, websites that were

implemented better in terms of importance and complexity will get a higher score than another one.

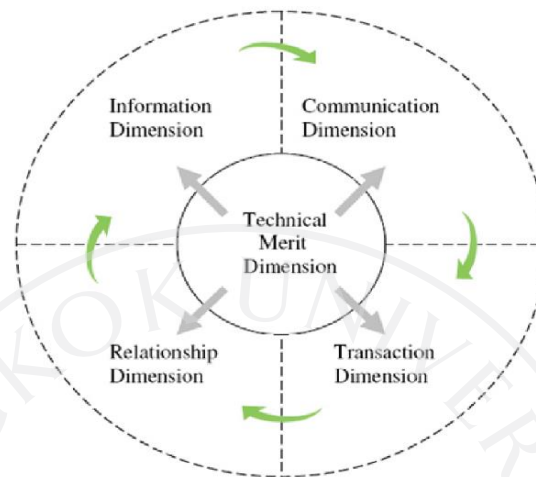


Figure 2.1: ICTRT Model

Source: Li, X., & Wang, Y. (2010). Evaluating the effectiveness of destination marketing organizations' websites: Evidence from China. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 12(5), 536-549.

In summary, the research will compare messages and media in tourism campaigns between Japan and Thailand as the conceptual model that is shown in figure 2.2 Therefore, the message in slogans on official tourism websites is the key aspect that will be discussed. Due to the lack of a past study about the comparison in the campaign of these two countries, it can lead to an interesting issue for the researcher to decrease this gap for further education in the future. Besides, it can be a

benefit for the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) of Thailand and Japan to learn the result of this study for handling and improving the tourism industry.

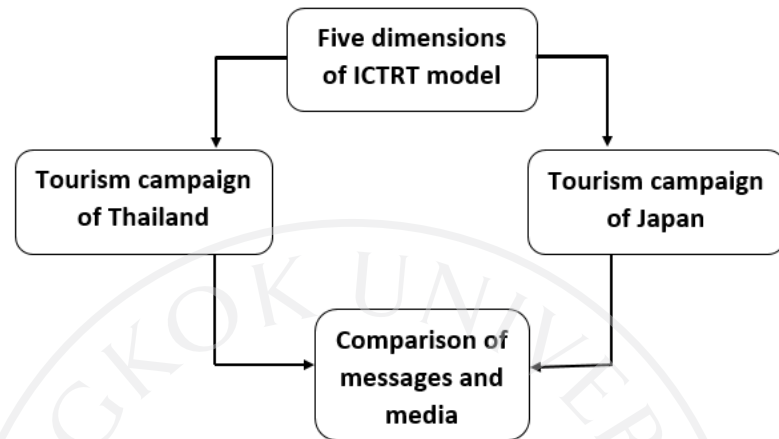


Figure 2.2: A Conceptual Model

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will describe the methodology part of this research comprehensively. Hence, it consists of research design, key documents used as the main data, research tool, or the criteria used to analyze the information, data collection or procedure, and data analysis. Moreover, it also explains how to gather and interpret data to realize the differences and similarities of the tourism campaign in 2019 between Thailand and Japan.

3.1 Research Design

The study aims to examine the comparative study of tourism campaigns in 2019 between Japan and Thailand in terms of message and media. Therefore, the research design deploys qualitative research and will concentrate on the main tourism campaign used in 2019 from the official tourism websites. Message and media in the campaign will be used to analyze by using the textual analysis approach. Since the selected method is the appropriate instrument in academic research to interpret and describe the exploration of message and media from the tourism campaign of both countries as the objective of the study (McKee, 2001). It can disclose the theme which includes information, communication, transaction, relationship, technical merit, and slogan. Moreover, the code sheet in this research will integrate five dimensions from the ICTRT model of Li and Wang (2010) which will be used to analyze the primary information from both tourism websites.

3.2 Key Documents

As the research emphasizes the tourism campaign in the message and media aspects, the official tourism websites of Thailand and Japan which offer useful information and interesting visuals about traveling for people who would like to visit the tourist attraction will be used to analyze. The issues for analysis include the main tourism slogan, the article, and video about the tourist attraction, food, activities, entertainment, and event. Therefore, this study will mainly collect information that will be analyzed from websites that are administered by the Tourism Authority of Thailand and Japan National Tourism Organization. Thus, the primary information is the homepage of the official tourism website of both countries. The secondary data is the official social network that presents comments or interactions with the audience to understand the effect of message and media that was generated by the Tourism Authority of Thailand and Japan National Tourism Organization.

3.3 Research Tool

The study adopted the textual analysis approach by deploying Li and Wang (2010) and Huang and Lin (2017) models for the media and message aspect as the reference of the study. Therefore, the themes and factors will be designed following the methods mentioned previously. It includes tourism slogan recall and five dimensions of the ICTRT model which compose 48 items as shown in table 3.1. For instance, 8 items for the technical merit dimension, 18 items for the information dimension, 7 items for the communication dimension, 5 items for the transaction dimension, and 10 items for the relationship dimension.

Table 3.1: The Evaluation Items of the ICTRT Model

Website items
Information dimension
Attraction information
Activities information
Maps and directions
Destination background information
Themed products
Transportation information
Events calendar
Restaurant information
Travel guides/brochures
Travel agents
Accommodation information
Travel packages
Entertainment information
Local weather information
Shopping information
Travel tips

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued): The Evaluation Items of the ICTRT Model

Website items
Trip/vacation planner
Linked to regional/city/area pages
Communication dimension
Search function
Interactive communication tools
Online forum
Comment box
Online survey
Frequently asked questions
Email newsletter
Transaction dimension
Online reservation
Secure transaction
Attraction tickets
Events tickets
Shopping carts
Relationship dimension

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued): The Evaluation Items of the ICTRT Model

Website items
Personalization
Complaints handling
Best deals
Virtual tours
Cross-selling opportunities
Privacy policy
Special offers
Web seal certification
Customer loyalty programs
Incentive programs
Technical merit dimension
Search engine recognition
Webpage design
Link check
Load time
Navigation

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued): The Evaluation Items of the ICTRT Model

Website items
Visual appearance
Site map
Multiple languages

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The procedure of this paper comprises four phases; collecting data, categorizing data, analyzing data, and comparing data respectively. Regarding the code sheet mentioned previously, five dimensions of the ICTRT model and tourism slogan from Japan and Thailand official tourism websites are the significant factors to process using the textual analysis. Besides, this research will focus on the tourism campaign used in 2019 that both countries applied to promote and stimulate tourism economic development.

Firstly, raw data from the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) websites and social media of Thailand and Japan will be gathered by screening; such as slogans, content, and video. Two official tourism websites are mainly used which consist of www.tourismthailand.org for Thailand and www.jnto.or.th for Japan. Secondly, all gathered information will be used to categorize the data into six categories as following details, information dimension, communication dimension, transaction dimension, relationship dimension, technical merit, and slogan. Thereafter, all data from the previous will be analyzed and evaluated as shown in the

code sheet. This process is the textual analysis approach which is the most significant step in the research and spends much time to gain output. Thirdly, all the information gained from the textual analysis will be applied to compare the result as the objective of the study. Finally, the result was realized and polished into the dissemination of findings in the end.

3.5 Data Analysis

According to Thomas (2006), the inductive approach can be divided into three key points. It will shorten the massive data into the summary format and link obviously between the purpose and the result of the study to make sure that the research is defensible. In addition, it can also improve the model or theory derived from the findings of raw data. Hence, this paper will employ the inductive approach and textual analysis as the methodology to examine the characteristics, differences, and similarities of the official tourism websites between Thailand and Japan. The mentioned approaches include the following details;

3.5.1 Investigate thoroughly and collect data from both sources: the official tourism websites social media of Thailand and Japan

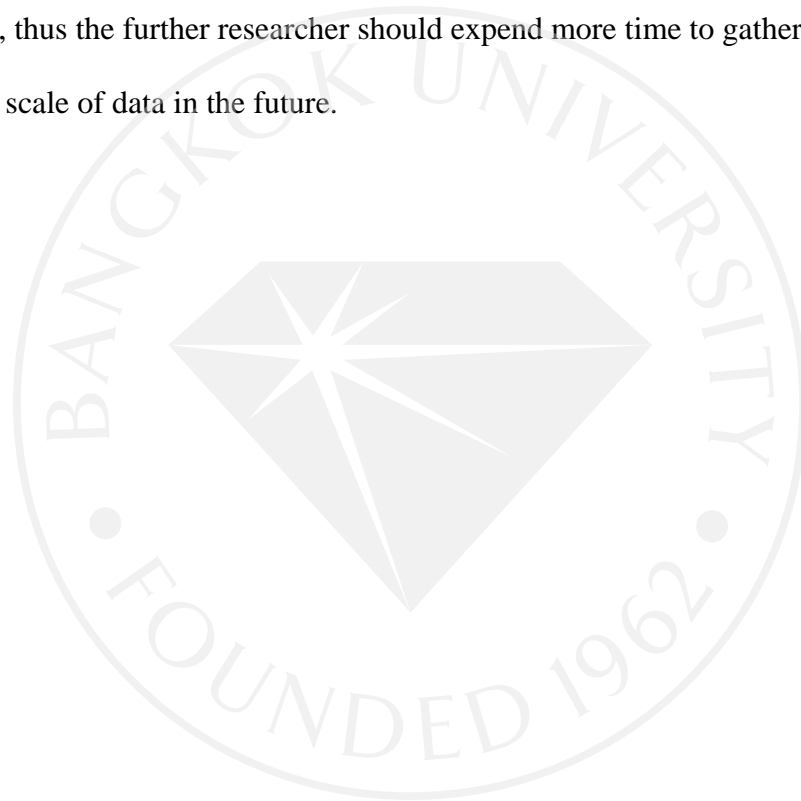
3.5.2 Record and categorize the data into six categories as an above classification system

3.5.3 Analyze the gathering information regarding the code sheet

3.5.4 Compare the content that was analyzed in terms of differences, and similarities between Japan and Thailand

3.6 Validity and Limitations

Additionally, the content validity of this paper will be ensured by one expert of the communication field to check precisely on content validity that was following the code sheet. Due to the limitation of time and accessibility, all the data that will be collected from online platforms: tourism websites and social media as the representative of tourism. Moreover, the period of study to run on the process is three months, thus the further researcher should expend more time to gather information and the scale of data in the future.



CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter indicates the outcome information that earns from the textual analysis process. The data used to analyze is based on the official tourism website of Thailand and Japan. In this section, the textual analysis was used to analyze the data which were collected from the official tourism website of Thailand and Japan. Then, all data were categorized into two main categories such as media and message. To reach questions of the study, the content on both websites will be analyzed textually under the ICTRT model by Li and Wang (2010). This research aimed to examine the comparative study of tourism campaigns between Japan and Thailand in 2019. The differences and similarities in the research were considered in terms of a slogan, information, communication, transaction, relationship, and technical merit in the following details below.

4.1 Message

4.1.1 Information

4.1.2 Slogan

4.2 Media

4.2.1 Communication

4.2.2 Transaction

4.2.3 Relationship

4.2.4 Technical Merit

4.1 Message

4.1.1 Information

On the message, it can be roughly divided into two main categories, including information and slogan. The information part will describe the message in terms of the effectiveness of tourism information on both selected websites.

Additionally, the slogan part will analyze the content of both slogans. Moreover, eighteen distinguishing elements will be evaluated in terms of information. It revealed the results of the message part comprehensively on both official tourism websites as tabulated in table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Information Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Attraction information	It presents many articles of attraction by dividing it into each province.	There is a variety of highlight attraction information presents on the website.
Activities information	The topic of the experience of traveling on the homepage has many activities in detail.	The outstanding drop-down list shows interesting activities information.
Maps and directions	Maps and directions information displays partially on the article of tourism attraction.	It indicates in-depth detail of maps and directions in each location nicely.

(Continued)

Table 4.1 (Continued): Information Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Destination background information	In the article on the tourism attraction page, there is background information to present.	The destination background information has shown roughly in the article.
Themed products	The information about the themed product does not show on the website.	Authentic Japanese products link to another website shown on the bottom of the homepage.
Transportation information	Only general transportation information is provided on a website.	Transportation detail has shown completely both on the homepage and the article.
Events calendar	It is hard to find the data of the events calendar on the webpage.	The event calendar shows interesting activities on the first page.
Restaurant information	There are many famous restaurant articles in each province recommended.	It can link to another website of JNTO which has lots of information about the restaurant.

(Continued)

Table 4.1 (Continued): Information Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Travel guides/brochures	Travel brochures and guides are not available for the traveler to watch.	Tourists can download plenty of travel brochures that display on the homepage.
Travel agents	The information on travel agents does not appear on the website.	It shows travel agents, guides, airlines, and agents who sell JR Pass tickets.
Accommodation information	It has an accommodation name to suggest with little information provided.	The homepage indicates the accommodation information topic with full detail and link directly to the reservation.
Travel packages	It has a travel package to offer customers in sub-websites on the article about the TAT department store.	This information also does not exist on the website.
Entertainment information	It does not show the entertainment information on the website.	The traditional entertainment information is presented on the first page.

(Continued)

Table 4.1 (Continued): Information Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Local weather information	The weather forecast information of each location can check on the homepage.	Japan weather forecast displays on the homepage for people to check before traveling.
Shopping information	The popular markets in the local area are presented on the second page of the website properly.	The shopping information shows in the article on an interesting activity topic.
Travel tips	There are many travel tips to suggest tourists; such as the traveling period of each place.	The suitable season for traveling in each destination is provided for tourists.
Trip/vacation planner	It has suggested a trip plan with full detail for travelers to follow easily.	16 routes for traveling 5-7 days in every region of Japan are presented on the homepage.
Linked to regional/city/area pages	The information about tourism regional presents on the website, but it does not link to another website.	People can click the link on the homepage to visit each tourism information on each regional page easily.

In the case of the similarities, the information dimension from both countries presented that they similarly provided the travel information. Most of which was

general information such as vacation planner information, travel guidelines, and tips, and weather forecast information. For both countries, there was much-guiding information for traveling. The interesting information was the travel tips which were suitable for traveling. For instance, the tourism website of Thailand extraordinarily recommended traveling at waterfalls, mountains, and national parks in June. Due to its rainy season, the plants and rainy season flowers will generously bloom. Moreover, Japan also recommended visiting the park, particularly Yoyogi, in autumn. All such information was informative, particularly for the beginners to design the travel plans before visiting these countries. Moreover, the official website of the tourism of Thailand and Japan also provided up-to-date information on maps and directions, restaurant information, shopping information, and other related information as presented in Table 4.1. In short, the overall information from both countries covered all the general information that the travelers should know.

However, some of the official tourism website items between Thailand and Japan had different varieties of information in detail. For Thailand, some information was absent on the tourism website such as entertainment information, themed products, travel guides or brochures, and relative links. However, the travel package was presented on the tourism website of Thailand only. It was an alternative function that was used to recommend the interesting travel package for travelers. In 2019, the tourism of Thailand focused on promoting the Amazing Thailand campaign, especially in secondary cities and communities via the social network which was more incentive tools than the information dimension. Recently, social media tools are mostly used in all communities and are easily used to access information. Thus, some information was roughly described on the website compared to Japan.

In the case of the tourism of Japan, it generally provided intensive information on such elements, especially the relative links. It sufficiently provided the relative links on the website to visit other websites that connected to the interesting travel topics. Thus, it revealed that the Japan tourism website is more friendly-use to visitors than Thailand in terms of the information dimension of the tourism website. For example, if you would like to travel to Kyoto, you can visit the tourism website directly. It will provide you not only the general information, but also recommend the extra prices of travel agents, guides, and airlines. Moreover, the Japan tourism website presents the entertainment information which is lacking on the tourism website of Thailand. The tourism section relies on the entertainment dimension to complete tourism packages and guarantee tourists.

4.1.2 Slogan

Regarding the literature review part, the tourism slogan is one of the significant factors for promoting tourism. The reason is that it can bring the identity and uniqueness of the country into a particular message to pursue the memory and impression of tourists. (Farhana, 2012). The tourism slogan of Thailand mainly used is "Amazing Thailand" which will analyze the content in this part. As well as, the Japan tourism slogan currently on the website is "Japan endless discovery" that has been launched since 2010. As the paper of Galí, Camprubí, & Donaire (2017) and Huang and Lin (2017), it is necessary for an effective slogan to include the country name together with the slogan. Therefore, the slogan of both countries comprises the country name. However, the study of Huang and Lin (2017) also added a further summary that the most effective slogan should initiate with the country name, for instance, Japan's endless discovery.

In terms of wordplay on the tourism slogan, Thailand chooses to minimize the word used in the slogan and contains only two words, for example, amazing, and Thailand. Moreover, the word “amazing” is the adjective that modifies a noun or pronoun clearer. As Khan (2014) reveals in the study that amazing is related to the emotional association to convey the readers to feel and have appealed the emotion with the word in the slogan. The main purpose of using this word is to make people feel spellbound and would like to experience travel in that country.

Besides, the wordplay on the Japan tourism slogan can be analyzed by deploying the study of Khan (2014). Japan, endless discovery consists of two nouns and one adjective. Thus, the word “endless discovery” aims to persuade tourists to explore and travel in the country. Especially countries that was not famous in the traveler's mind to imagine the destination. People will feel that they would like to discover attractions that have not yet become popular destinations and it also may create adventure memories and find the mesmerizing moment while traveling.

Finally, it can summarize the comparison of the slogan analysis that Japan can achieve better performance than Thailand. The reason that Japan’s slogan begins with the country name and the purpose of this slogan is an obvious and remarkable message to invite tourists to explore every part of the country that still has not been discovered yet.

4.2 Media

4.2.1 Communication

As aforementioned on the outline, there are four categories to analyze both official tourism websites for the media part comprising communication, transaction,

relationship, and technical merit respectively. The derived information illustrates extensively as the table 4.2 communication dimension, 4.3 transaction dimension, 4.4 relationship dimension, and technical merit dimension. Furthermore, the communication dimension includes seven sub distinguishing items, while the transaction dimension consists of five sub distinguishing items. The relationship dimension has ten sub distinguishing items as well as the technical merit dimension comprises eight sub distinguishing items.

Table 4.2: Communication Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Search function	The search function is available at the top of the website for searching the keyword.	It also has the function to search on the top of the page to fill the keyword that it would like to find.
Interactive communication tools	Many kinds of social media are used as interactive communication tools; such as FB, IG, Youtube, and Twitter.	Facebook and Instagram are other communication tools for tourists that allow interacting conveniently.

(Continued)

Table 4.2 (Continued): Communication Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Online forum	It does not have an online forum on the website for people to post and communicate with an officer.	An online forum on the website does not appear, but it might change to social media instead.
Comment box	On the tourism article or homepage do not include the comment box on it.	The comment box also disappears on the website as an online forum.
Online survey	It has an online survey on the bottom of the website; for example, the website's satisfaction and TAT contact center Facebook page satisfaction.	Japan tourism website does not put an online survey section which is considered as less interactive with visitors.
Frequently asked questions	There are FAQs both in Thai and English language which provide different questions for tourists.	Frequently asked questions are located at the bottom of the homepage which answers useful details for people who like to travel in Japan.

(Continued)

Table 4.2 (Continued): Communication Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Email newsletter	The email newsletter does not show for registration on the website for tourists to get information.	People can register to receive the updated tourism information of Japan via email on the homepage.

The overall communication dimension between Thailand and Japan tourism had similar tools which were search function, interactive communication tools (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), and frequently asked questions (FAQs). These communication tools were provided on the first page of the tourism website. Moreover, visitors can directly communicate with tourism administrators. The frequent questions asked on the website were about the must which tourists need to know before coming to the destination. For example, “Where are the tourist information centers located?” which was frequently asked by visitors because the centers are commonly located at the airports. Thus, travelers can easily ask for the tourist information which is not available on the website such as maps, brochures, and helpful information on tours, shopping, dining, and accommodation. Moreover, “Do I need a visa for traveling in Japan?” was also one of the frequent questions. The interactive communication tools can be used to directly ask additional information to the officer such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Line.

The tourism of Thailand and Japan were both lacking remarkable platforms (i.e. online forum, and comment box). This might be affected by absent-minded tourist feedback. Moreover, the benefits of these platforms were a motivation for tourist decisions and can be also used to organize and improve tourism activities. In terms of practical usage, these platforms may be difficult for users to interact with the administrators in real-time. Thus, other tools, which are friendly-use, should be considered. However, “Email newsletter” was provided on Japan’s tourism website, but it was lacking on Thailand’s website. It can be used to receive updated tourism information from the official website. Thus, it should be added as an alternative way to communicate between visitors and administrators. The online survey was presented only on the Thailand tourism website as the questionnaire to evaluate the satisfaction of the users with the websites and campaign. This can be used to ask the opinions of tourists and realize mistakes for developing in the future.

Specifically, interactive communication tools are now the most important tools and are also the biggest social media platform. These platforms facilitate an increase in tourism online visits. They are used to gather tourist or visitor feedback and are also used to find areas for improvement. Moreover, due to the Covid-19 situation, the Japan and Thailand tourism organization are temporarily out of service. Thus, convenient tools are used to publicize and communicate the official announcement through social media platforms, especially Facebook. For example, the tourism of Japan has been organizing the Facebook webpage, namely “Visit Japan”. It is used to update various interesting places in Japan in real-time. As well as, the tourism of Thailand announced a TAT contact center who is responsible to advise,

solve, and answer the question about traveling in Thailand via Line application and phone call 1672.

In conclusion, the tourism website of Thailand and Japan had a similar platform of the communication dimension, particularly the search function and interactive tools which are recently important platforms during the Covid-19 situation. However, there were some different functions compared between these two countries. For Thailand, there was an additional interactive function which was the official Youtube channel. It was used to promote the actual destination by using the video clip that was easy to understand. While the tourism website of Japan had the e-mail newsletter function that tourists can register to receive up-to-date news or any information in real-time. This function was absent in Thailand's website. However, the other communication platforms should be considered such as a comment box and an online survey for better improvement in the future.

4.2.2 Transaction

The transaction dimension, which was considered in this section, consisted of five elements on the website of the Tourism of Thailand and Japan. The transaction is one of the interesting platforms which is used to attract users to visit the website. The differences and similarities between Thailand and Japan are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.3: Transaction Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Online reservation	Every article on the website that is related to an online reservation can link to the main page directly.	Hotel reservation can be considered as an online reservation where tourists can click the link to the hotel's website from the homepage.
Secure transaction	The website informs about privacy policy information, but it does not include secure transactions on it.	It does not have any transaction to occur on the website, so it also does not need to have secure transactions.
Attraction tickets	The website provides the link to the main page of that attraction for people to book tickets directly.	There are links to another website that includes all tickets of tourist attraction places for travelers to book.
Events tickets	The event ticket can be booked by clicking the link on the bottom of the page to another website that shows event information monthly.	Special deal and events function are on the homepage that offers updated events each season for people to make reservations.

(Continued)

Table 4.3 (Continued): Transaction Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Shopping carts	Since it does not have any transaction on the main website, it also does not have the shopping cart on it.	The shopping cart on the website does not exist, since the main responsibility of JNTO is to provide useful information for tourists.

Transaction dimensions of both Thailand's and Japan's tourism website had similar functions provided on the homepage. There was an online reservation, attraction tickets, and event tickets. These beneficial functions were useful and convenient to directly reserve the tickets and hotel to the host. Moreover, the benefits of the transaction dimension, especially an online reservation. For example, ticket booking which allows visitors to take on their booking at any time. Thus, this is one of the most convenient options for them. However, the secure transaction was only presented on the tourism of Thailand in terms of a privacy policy. This policy is one of the most important functions that can help site visitors or travelers trust the security of the destination.

Even transaction is an optional function for travelers to reserve online reservation or shopping. In this case, the shopping carts could not be found on both websites since this function is commonly required by the other related organization to support the platform such as financial support, e-commerce supporters, and

coordinators. It also has some concerns, especially security concerns. For instance, consumers are at a higher risk of online shopping than direct shopping at the store.

In recent years, due to the Covid-19 situation, tourism in Thailand has been promoting online shopping via the Line platform. This is an additional project under the Amazing Thailand campaign which is promoted to help the tourism business. Moreover, customers can directly communicate with business owners. It can also increase their income. However, the official tourism department of both countries should consider other platforms to support the tourism business after this situation has gone.

In conclusion, the transaction dimension of the tourism website of Thailand and Japan provided the similarities of the website items. They paid attention to the relative online reservation and services, especially the ticket booking. However, there was a different item which was provided by Thailand's tourism website only. It was security information which was the most important for the tourists' securities. This function can be used to express the credibility of the official website. Thus, the security and privacy of tourism information should be added to the tourism website of Japan to make people feel much safer when they know what the official administrators do with their personal information.

4.2.3 Relationship

One way of delivering a message is a relationship through an interesting thing. The visitors can perceive the message via this kind of communication. This section presented the description of the relationship dimension based on the information provided on the tourism website of Thailand and Japan. Table 4.5 shows

the differences and similarities of the relationship dimension which consisted of ten-dimensional elements.

Table 4.4: Relationship Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Personalization	The privacy policy of the website has secured the personalization for the user who visits the page.	It has information about the privacy policy about personalization to present on the main website.
Complaints handling	The tourism complaint and suggestion are located at the bottom of the website in the request inquiry topic.	Complaints handling topic does not appear on the homepage, so tourists can contact the officer via phone call and email.
Best deals	The website gives the best hotel deals for tourists by visiting the TAT department store on another sub-website in the link at the bottom of the homepage.	The best deals offer on another website partner that people can link from the homepage directly.

(Continued)

Table 4.4 (Continued): Relationship Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Virtual tours	Visual tour campaign is the latest campaign that was created during the COVID-19 situation in April 2020.	The VR tours are on the “I miss you” campaign of the JNTO Thailand website that aims to promote tourism after COVID-19.
Cross-selling opportunities	The website aims to provide tourism information for tourists, so it does not have the cross-selling opportunities.	The cross-selling opportunities from the website do not present obviously.
Privacy policy	The website has a privacy policy that informs the confidentiality and security of personalization.	It has explained the privacy policy precisely for ensuring security to tourists who visit the website.

(Continued)

Table 4.4 (Continued): Relationship Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Special offers	The special offers will come together with the best deal and travel package which is the campaign to persuade tourists to travel in the country.	The special deals on the homepage can offer interesting deals and prices in traveling and activities in Japan.
Web seal certification	The information about web seal certification is absent from the website, so it can't confirm that the website was certificated web seal.	JNTO website does not present the details of receiving the web seal certification.
Customer loyalty programs	The customer loyalty programs on the website do not appear, but it has only the campaign that requires tourists to participate and give rewards.	It does not have the customer loyalty programs, but it has only the participation in the events and announces the rewards for the winner.
Incentive programs	It does not present the incentive program for tourists on the website.	The website has the Japan incentive program that will provide the model course, exclusive experience, etc.

The particulars of each element between Thailand and Japan were different in some elements. The tourism website of Thailand rather paid attention to particularly the personal security and customer complaint. It was an important way to voice their dissatisfaction via online services. On the other hand, the tourism website of Japan had no customer complaint function provided on the first page. However, the visitors can write their compliant message through the administrators via other platforms such as E-mail and phone calls, but it may not be comfortable to the users due to their private information disclosure. Moreover, the incentive program was only presented on the tourism website of Japan. It is an important digital business model that can revolutionize the tourism business. Thus, it should be considered as an additional function on Thailand's tourism website.

In the case of the similarities, the comparison of the relationship elements between tourism websites of Thailand and Japan was analyzed. They were having the relationship website items presented on both websites which were personalization, special offers, best deals, virtual tours, and privacy policy. The personalization and privacy policy were given on the website of both countries. For Thailand, these options were significant attributes that can keep the customer's information. For instance, the user's information was collected by the officer under the privacy policy. It can be used to help the admin understand the interests of users, and to help the admins to improve their platforms. For Japan, they were also used as legislation that may pertain to the tourism business. Additionally, personalization and privacy can be created to build a transparent environment in which visitors will be more confident when they are visiting the websites.

Moreover, the other options, which consisted of special offers, best deals, and virtual tours, were used to contribute users to visit their websites. Especially, the virtual tours were the new options that were attracting travelers with several benefits during the Covid-19 situation such as an available 24-hours basis, a smart and effective tourism strategy. For Thailand, virtual tours of Thailand organized by TAT presented the new experience to travel at 10 destinations in 9 provinces around Thailand. Most of which were ancient places such as Wat Si Chum, Sukhothai and Somdet Phra Narai National Museum, Lopburi, etc. For Japan, Japan's VR tour was presented to travel in Japan by using 360-panorama tools. Travelers can visit the destinations as seen in real places such as the Blue pond at Hokkaido, the Tokyo sky tree in Tokyo, and the Bamboo forest at Kyoto.

However, the official tourism website of Thailand and Japan were lacking on some options (i.e. cross-selling opportunities, web seal certification, and customer loyalty programs). These options did not appear on the webpage. In particular, the web seal certificates of both countries were not illustrated. This may affect the decrease of confidence and security of the visitors. Although the certificates were not presented, the privacy policy of both countries was one of the supporting tools which could be used to guarantee their individual privacy and security.

In short, the relationship dimension was one of the interesting platforms which can be used to participate with the visitors to visit their tourism websites. Thailand's tourism website paid more attention to the traveler's complaint handling than Japan. However, the noticeable element, which was only presented at the tourism websites of Japan, was an incentive program that can be used to create long-term

relationships with tourists through website marketing. Thus, the Thailand tourism website should consider this element for better improvement.

4.2.4 Technical Merit

The technical merit was applied to fulfill the tourism marketing platforms of tourism websites. Therefore, it can directly impact the performance of other dimensions. The significant function of this technique is a navigator which is used to link with the relative website. This section illustrates the differences and similarities in terms of the technical merit dimension of the tourism websites of Thailand and Japan as presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Technical Merit Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Search engine recognition	The recognition of wording that was searched on the search engine of the website can record five latest keywords.	The search engine can recognize the last five keywords that people search to find the information on the website.
Webpage design	The webpage was designed appropriately, but it is hard for visitors to find tourism information on the website since they have to go to the other page.	The design of the website is systematic with various attraction pictures. It also informs a lot of tourism information in Japan.

(Continued)

Table 4.5 (Continued): Technical Merit Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Link check	The link that people can click to know further information on the website is applicable to connect to other websites.	The links that are provided on the website can work effectively. For example, the hotel and accommodation categories, and ticket booking.
Load time	The load time of the website is in good and stable condition since the page speed test is 77 percent which is considered as a high level.	The webpage speed of this website is 42 percent which is considered as low to average. If we open the website with a mobile phone, it will take more time to load than a desktop.
Navigation	The navigation on the website can support users to use easier; such as the link back to the homepage on the TAT logo at the top left of the page.	Many functions show the effectiveness of navigation on the website, for example, search box, site map, and drop-down menu.

(Continued)

Table 4.5 (Continued): Technical Merit Dimension

Website items	Thailand	Japan
Visual appearance	The appearance of the website looks interesting with pictures and the color of the background made the content more outstanding.	The background of the website is a white color and puts lots of information and pictures. So the general view of visual appearance is clear and colorful.
Site map	The site map is on the bottom of the website for showing the overall topic on the website.	There is a site map on the homepage for visitors to know the instruction of information on the website.
Multiple languages	There are 12 language versions on the website to serve tourists who come from different countries in the world. People can choose on the top right of the homepage on international mode for English.	If you click on the main website of JNTO, the first step is to select the language that you like. Then it will link to another JNTO website of that selected language. It has 25 languages available.

Technical merit was one of the most important functions which were applied to create an interesting strategy on the tourism website. These functions represented

the image of the websites and can be used to indicate how social skills they are. The technical merit dimension which was illustrated in the official tourism websites of Thailand and Japan consisted of search engine recognition, web page design, link check, load time, navigation, visual appearance, site map, and multiple languages. In this section, the overall comparison of technical merit between Thailand and Japan were similar. There were some differences in terms of technical usage in each element. Thus, the technical merit of tourism websites of Thailand and Japan were independently concluded for easier to understand.

Firstly, the overall technical merit dimension of Thailand's tourism website has a great visual appearance with an imaginative design that can attract visitors to enjoy spending their time on websites. Many aspects of web design were easy to find tourism information. For example, the visitors can search the things or any information that they need to know by searching with keywords on the search engine which was provided on the top of the home page. Moreover, the navigators, which were used to prioritize the relative function, allowed visitors to flow from the first page to another related page without frustration. In particular, the link check function can be used to get additional information on other websites. For example, if you need to visit Chiang Mai's information on the home page, it will provide you with additional information about Chiang Mai by directly clicking on the recommended linkage. Additionally, the functions that can be utilized for increasing the participants were a multiple language function and a site map. Specifically, the multiple-language function was provided on the first page of the tourism website with 12 languages. The visitors can easily select on the top of the home page. The additional important thing

was loading time with 77% speeding which can increase customer satisfaction. This can also make a few more seconds to engage visitors and make tourism sales.

Secondly, in the case of Japan, the tourism website items were quite similarly provided as Thailand. The overall technical merit dimension of the tourism website of Japan had a systematic design with various fascinating pictures that informed a lot of tourism information. It also provided the relative link which can work effectively. Moreover, the overall visualization of the webpage had a white background that can see the navigation clearly. However, it was quite a simple design which could not attract the participants. The tourism website provided the link between the destination information by the JNTO and its relative information by the tourism owners, especially hotels, accommodation, and ticket packages. Moreover, the multiple languages were provided in 25 languages, but it was quite difficult to use since the users should select the language first, and then the website will link to another page with the selected language. Although the navigators of the tourism website of Japan had various functions and linkages which were slightly convenient for the users, the website speed was low compared to Thailand's website. Thus, users may waste their time and face poor site experiences.

In conclusion, tourism websites had their own unique and social skills. This section revealed that the tourism website of Thailand had a better visual appearance and design than Japan. This can impact on the number of users that participate in their websites. In practice, the navigators of Japanese tourism websites were easier to find tourism information than Thailand's webpage. The website of JNTO has more varieties of international languages than Thailand. Thus, this was one of the tools that can help more international tourists. However, overall a technical term, the tourism

website of Thailand was more convenient to the users than Japan, especially the loading time of the website, and the relative linkage.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will recapitulate the overall results derived from the findings of the study, such as message and media aspects. The message part includes two categories, for instance, information dimension and slogan. The media part comprises four sub-distinguish topics, for example, communication, transaction, relationship, and technical merit. Thereafter, the conclusion of the results from the textual analysis will be discussed to answer the research question about the effectiveness of official tourism websites from Thailand and Japan. Moreover, it will explain the limitation of the study as well as the recommendation for the official tourism department and the researcher who would like to examine this similar study in the future.

5.1 Results Summary

According to the findings, there were six categories of the message and the media which were analyzed based on the official tourism website of Thailand and Japan. The findings covered many interesting aspects regarding information dimension, slogan, communication dimension, transaction dimension, relationship dimension, and technical merit. The results are concluded as follow:

Firstly, the information dimension was considered as the message part which was significant to deliver the message to the visitors or tourists in terms of the effectiveness. The information of both countries was used to provide travel information such as vacation planner information, travel guidelines and tips, and seasonal information. The online information was available on the tourism websites

for 24 hours. Thus, visitors from both countries can access tourism information from anywhere and anytime. Furthermore, the information which was provided in the tourism websites of Thailand and Japan had the other effective aspects, especially activities, shopping, and accommodation information. This information can help travelers to decide on traveling much easier and more convenient.

However, the tourism websites' information of Thailand and Japan had their way of information dimension. For Thailand, it focused on providing general information such as destination information, travel tips, and travel packages, etc. Most of which was provided in terms of the formal information sources which can be used as references and easy to communicate with the users. Although there was various beneficial information, they were defective in terms of the interesting points. On the other hand, Japan's tourism website had different information which was lacking on the tourism website of Thailand. There was interesting intensive information, especially entertainment information. This was novel information to attract tourists to visit the website. Additionally, the tourism website of Japan also provided the relative links which are more friendly-use to visitors than Thailand in terms of online usage. Thus, the overall of this dimension can be indicated that the tourism website of Japan was more interesting and accessible than Thailand's website.

Typically, the second consideration is a slogan that is commonly used in the form of a phrase or sentence which aims to present to the identity and uniqueness of the brand significantly. Thus, many countries in the world emphasized in their tourism slogan, likewise, Thailand and Japan. According to the tourism slogan of Thailand, they have tried to apply the emotional association to combine in the slogan, for example, the word "amazing" which can stimulate the feeling of tourists to experience

and excite to travel in Thailand (Khan, 2014). Additionally, they also posited the country name on the slogan to remind the readers to remember and imagine the picture of the country in their mind at the same time. (Galí, Camprubí, & Donaire, 2016 and Huang & Lin, 2017).

By the way, the slogan of Japan used “Japan, endless discovery” and also integrated the emotional association with the phrase “endless discovery”. It aims to persuade tourists to explore and discover new attraction destinations by themselves with the adventure feeling (Khan, 2014). Moreover, the slogan initiates with the country name which can emphasize the readers to repeat this name in their mind more effectively than putting it on somewhere else (Huang and Lin, 2017). Overview of comparison of the tourism slogan from both countries, it can conclude that Thailand and Japan have deployed the emotional words together with the slogan. However, Japan did better than Thailand at the point of the positioning of the country name on the slogan.

The third dimension is communication which is basically related to the information dimension. Thailand and Japan tourism websites had similar functions of the communication options. There were interactive communication tools (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), and frequently asked questions (FAQs). These were the most important and the biggest tools to communicate between tourists and the administrators in real-time. However, there were both lacking the specific functions which were absent on the websites. For example, comment boxes were not available on the websites of both Thailand and Japan and an online survey was not available on Japan’s website. This may impact on getting visitor feedback and affect further improvement.

In comparison, there were some different functions between the tourism websites of Thailand and Japan. For Thailand, there was a unique function that was provided on the website, especially the Youtube application. This interactive function was presented only on Thailand's tourism website. Recently, it was used to promote the Amazing Thailand campaign. While the tourism website of Japan had no such interactive function. But the E-mail newsletter function was presented to receive weekly or monthly tourism news. This function was lacking on Thailand's tourism website. However, in the case of communication, the overview of tourism websites of both countries should be considered the other communication platforms for better improvement and development.

In the case of the transaction dimension, both the tourism websites of Thailand and Japan had similar functions of transaction. It was an optional function for travelers or tourists who was used for online reservations, especially event booking and hotel reservations. The transaction function was one of the interesting strategies which were used to engage the number of tourists or visitors. However, there were some differences in the case of transaction elements between Thailand and Japan, specifically to the secure transaction. For Thailand, it paid attention to protect and secure the private information of the customers. The privacy policy was one of the most important things to express the trustworthiness of the official tourism website. It was presented only on the tourism websites of Thailand, especially the privacy policy of online shopping via Line application under the Amazing Thailand campaign during the Covid-19 situation. While the tourism website of Japan did not have a secure transaction on the official page, the English version provided the secure

transaction in terms of a privacy policy. Thus, it should be considered for better improvement.

However, it is hardly possible to differentiate the pros and cons of the tourism websites of Thailand and Japan. Thus, the overall of this dimension should be considered the transaction together with the protection or security. For instance, due to the increase in online shopping, online shopping platforms should be required on their websites. It also should be cooperated with the security supports to endorse the platform and make people feel reliable.

Another media part is the relationship dimension which is basically used to deliver the messages between tourists and the website officers. Most of the relationship elements of tourism websites of Thailand and Japan had similar functions, particularly personalization, special offers, best deals, virtual tours, and privacy policy. These can be used to identify the preferences of the tourists due to the systematic information. Moreover, those platforms, especially personalization and privacy policy can build up a transparent environment that can make good conditions between the users and administrators. Both tourism websites did not have some elements such as cross-selling opportunities, web seal certification, and customer loyalty programs. This could not guarantee the privacy and security of the tourists in terms of satisfaction.

However, the differences in the relationship elements between Thailand and Japan were personal security and customer complaint. The customer complaint was a significant platform presented only on the tourism website of Thailand. This was indicated that the official tourism of Thailand observed the tourist's concerns through this complaint platform. While Japan had no such element. Thus, it should be added

to improve tourism management. Another different element was the incentive program which is recently used as a digital business model of tourism management. It was presented on the tourism website of Japan. Therefore, the tourism website of Thailand should be included on this platform for better tourism development. The overview of this dimension could be revealed that the tourism website of Thailand concentrated on the traveler's complaint handling than Japan. While Japan has been applying the new business model to attract the relationship between the visitors and the official website.

The last media part is the technical merit dimension. It was utilized to complete the tourism marketing on tourism websites. The navigator is the most important technique to prioritize the related functions which are provided on the home page. The technical merit dimension illustrated the tourism website's image. The comparison of each element between Thailand and Japan was Thailand had a greater visual appearance with imaginative design than Japan's website. It also had better web speed than Japan, and thus the visitors could spend less time consuming any information than visiting the tourism website of Japan. This can affect the satisfaction of the visitors. Additionally, they both had similar functions in terms of the increasing engagement of the visitors by providing multiple-language functions and site maps. However, the tourism website of Japan provided more international languages with 25 languages, while Thailand had only 12 languages. Thus, Japan's website can attract more international tourists than in Thailand.

However, in the case of practical usage and visualization, the tourism website of Japan had more easy functions than Thailand. There was a simple design that can work effectively with clear navigation. Thus, people may be familiar with those

systematic functions, especially the relative link and sub-categorize of each function. On the other hand, some visitors may be attracted to Thailand's tourism website because it created the colorful web page and put the interesting pictures. It was also easy to find out the link or any other information. This dimension presented that the tourism websites had their own unique and social skills that were used to participate in the visitors on their websites. Thus, the overall performance of the technical merit dimension of tourism in Thailand had a better visual appearance and design than Japan. While the tourism website of Japan had more friendly-use than Thailand in terms of systematic functions.

5.2 Discussion

The objective of the study aims to examine and compare the tourism campaign in 2019 on the official tourism websites from Thailand and Japan in terms of the similarities and differences, and effectiveness. Regarding the result summary part that was stated earlier, it can highlight many critical outcomes that can be brought to explain in the discussion part and answer the research question as following details below.

RQ1: Did official tourism websites of Thailand and Japan yield the following effects: increasing awareness of the destination, providing global publicity, and strengthening the destination image as a favorite destination, and targeting a specific market?

Generally, the official tour of Thailand and Japan has been promoting their tourism information through social media and websites that are one of the global publicity strategies. The tourism websites of both countries inform tourists to visit a

destination and any information that tourists need to know about the place. Tourism websites can also help the tourists or visitors to get familiar with the destination even before visiting it directly. Technically, tourism is not a product of manufacturing. It is defined as one of the services that sell to their customers. Thus, the tourism industries of both Thailand and Japan sell the destination based on the customer's imagination skills. Therefore, they always offer PR and marketing of tourism destinations, and communications guidance and information.

Due to the global travel market currently expanding, the tourism websites of Thailand and Japan, they created an interesting tourism campaign which was one of the motivations for advertising tourism marketing. They had their own exclusive events that showed the strength of the destination focused on the tourism campaign in 2019. For Thailand, the "Amazing Thailand" campaign, which was organized by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), has promoted travel to second-tier provinces. This campaign can contribute more tourism income during particularly the festive season to locals. This can involve local and international tourists. For Japan, there were VR tours under the "I miss you" campaign organized by the JNTO Thailand website. It was used to promote the local destination of Japan after the Covid-19 situation. The host promoted the campaign by using attractive logos as well as disseminating interesting Japanese travel information through various channels, especially websites and Facebook. This also contributes to the people in Thailand and international tourists.

RQ2: What is the effectiveness of the official tourism websites of Thailand and Japan? Did they contain the five dimensions of the ICTRT model: Information,

Communication, Transaction, Relationship, and Technical Merit? And how are they different between the two tourism campaigns?

The overall effectiveness of the official tourism websites of Thailand and Japan are presented in both the users and the owners achieving goals, especially in terms of communication and information. The tourism websites are basically used as an intermediary between the users and administrators. For example, when the message flows from the administrators to the users, this term is used as given tourism information or any related details about tourism programs. Additionally, for instance, if the message flows from the administrators to the users, this might be used to give advice and comments. Another one of effectiveness was a reliable tool. Reliability is important since if the tourism website has some aspects which do not function properly, the customers or travelers may not be able to accomplish their goals for visiting the website. Furthermore, tourism websites provide additional features or elements which can help the customers or visitors meet their needs. For example, tourism information can be easily downloaded by having reduced loading times due to proper website's functions.

The official tourism websites of Thailand and Japan provided tourism information through message and media aspects. The messaging aspect consists of two categories which are information dimension and slogan. The media aspect comprises four sub-distinguish dimensions which are communication, transaction, relationship, and technical merit. These dimensions are identified as the Information, Communication, Transaction, and Relationship (ICTR) model. In this research, the official tourism websites of Thailand and Japan provide the differences and the similarities of the sub-elements function of each dimension. The results of the tourism

websites of both countries were analyzed based on the ICTRT model. The overall results revealed that the best tools were the communication and information dimensions because these dimensions may vary substantially in their content and approach to achieve the message delivery through the visitors. However, other dimensions can be also used to communicate and transfer the relative information to the tourists. For instance, the online reservation was one of the transaction tools. It was a useful function that can help the tourist's reserve accommodation or any facilities. Additionally, the most important feature which can be used to fulfill other communication platforms is technical merit since it can immediately affect the performance of other dimensions. However, the details of each dimension were summarized as a comparison between the tourism websites of Thailand and Japan as presented in Chapter 4.

As discussed in the RQ1, the differences between the tourism campaign of Thailand and Japan have their own advertisement strategies. For Thailand, in 2019, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) emphasized international tourists with high purchasing power. They also created new projects which can attract tourists, such as organizing "the Amazing Thailand Week" which was responded to by TAT officers cooperating with partners from all sectors to persuade tourists to visit Thailand. Moreover, the Amazing Thailand campaign needs to promote the second-tier provinces to directly distribute the income through the local communities. They exploited the communication dimension by promoting the campaign through social media which can engage a high number of tourists and visitors. Thus, this pattern can also make Thailand stand out and appear more remarkable throughout the event.

On the other hand, the JNTO Thailand has promoted the “I miss you” campaign to participate with foreign tourists, especially Thai people by publicizing the "Miss Japan" logo to connect good relationships including love and gratitude from Japanese people to Thai people. However, this campaign will be released after the Covid-19 situation is gone. The JNTO disseminates interesting travel information through various channels to provide information for future planning trips. Although there was a variety of promoting channels, the tourism campaign of Japan mainly provided tourism information through the official websites to enjoy traveling in Japan with the VR Tour.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

Considering the research limitation, it can be highlighted that accessibility is the barrier to collect the data completely due to several factors as the following information. The COVID-19 outbreak situation that has been happening currently since 2019 is limited to the data collection approach. It is difficult to interview and do the questionnaires since the government restriction has ordered the closing of every school and airport to prevent the outbreak of COVID-19. Even though, there was described on the methodology part that the textual analysis was the most suitable for collecting information and interpreting it to be qualitative data.

Therefore, it might affect some results of the study. The further researcher should collect the data from various sources, such as interviews, surveys, investigating social media platforms to increase more credibility and reliability of results.

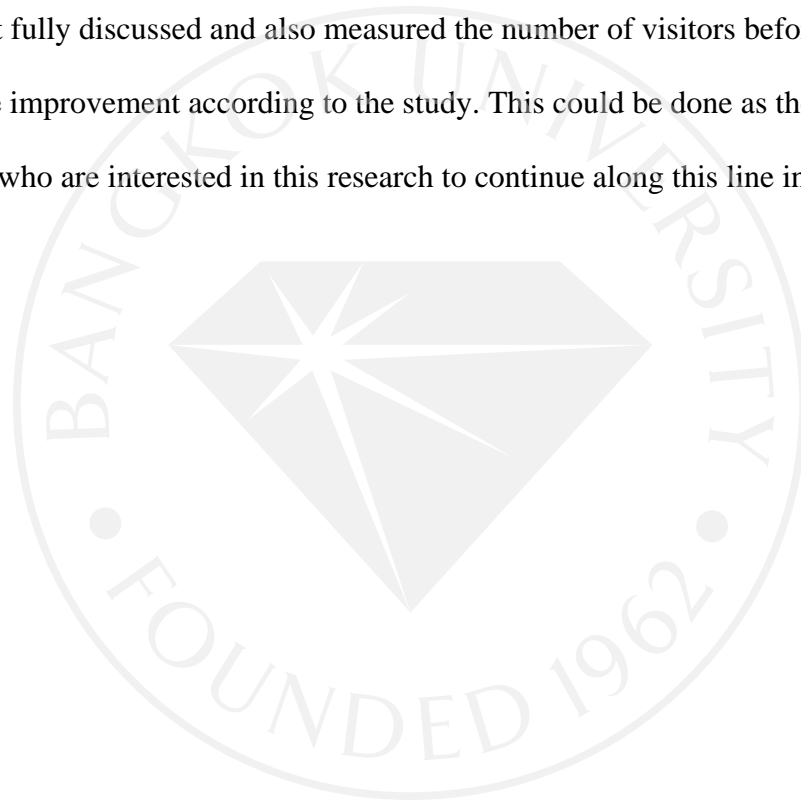
5.4 Recommendation for the Official Tourism Department

Due to this research being directly related to the official tourism website of Thailand and Japan, it will be useful to apply the results to improve the websites to persuade tourists to travel in their country. Regarding the findings of this study, it may help to promote the tourism industry of the country as the major responsibility of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO). Furthermore, it can draw attention to the host country to concentrate on their tourism website since it is one of the reliable and accurate sources for tourists to search for travel information. However, the result of this study does not cover all dimensions, for instance, the qualitative from the interview with the tourists who used to visit the tourism website, observation on social media platforms, the survey by questionnaire. Hence, the recommendation is to further study mentioned to perceive the outcome absolutely for the development of websites in the future. Additionally, social networks are one of the interesting online marketing which needs to be considered and implemented in these platforms for reaching all kinds of target audiences, such as Facebook, Instagram, Line, Twitter, and TikTok.

5.5 Recommendation for Further Research

This research would like to compare the tourism campaign in 2019 in terms of message and media via official tourism websites to improve the knowledge of how these factors are implemented on the websites. Nevertheless, the objective of this paper scoped to examine and compare only two official tourism websites including Thailand and Japan. Firstly, the future researcher can extend the scale to study in other Asian or Western countries to realize the similarities and differences aspects and

cultures through tourism websites. Secondly, the data collected from the websites in this research are from Thai and English language, thus it should be examined in the original language of the country to get more helpful details for analysis. As stated previously, the content was analyzed and interpreted by the researcher who is Thai hence it could be done by other nationality experts to reduce the biased information with the study. Thirdly, the effectiveness of the tourism campaign from both countries was not fully discussed and also measured the number of visitors before and after on website improvement according to the study. This could be done as the direction for people who are interested in this research to continue along this line in future studies.



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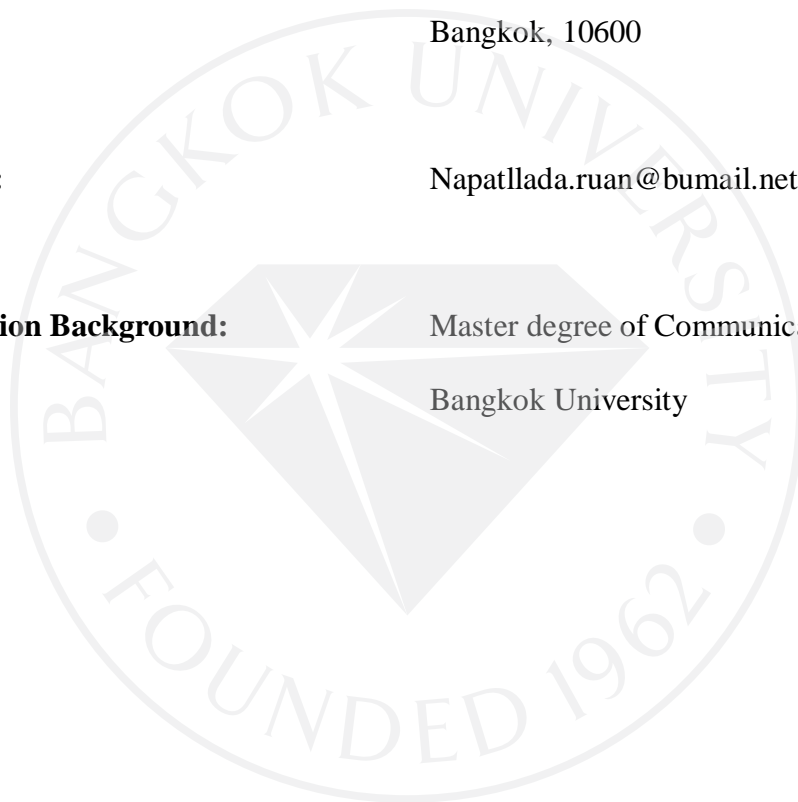
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