THE IMPACT OF DESTINATION IMAGE AND WORDS OF MOUTH ON

CHINESE TOURISTS' DESTINATION DECISION TO VISIT THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

Thailand is a very good destination for traveling. Every year there are a lot of tourists come visit Thailand. As of 2016, the total tourist come visit Thailand up to 32.58 million people.(CRI.cn, 2017) Meanwhile, the 25% among them are Chinese tourists.(CRI.cn, 2017) The total Chinese tourists who came visit Thailand up to 8.7 million people.(Thai Rath, 2017) Of all the tourist groups, the number of Chinese tourists is the largest.(Thai Rath,2017) the purpose of this study is to find out the impact of Thailand's destination image and words of mouth on Chinese tourists' destination decision.This study used the questionnaire as a research methodology to collect data. The 247 samples are the Chinese tourists who came visit Thailand. The statistical techniques used for interpreting the data include frequency, percent, mean, standard deviation, and multiple regression and analysis.

The research findings are found that both destination image and words of mouth have the impact on the tourists' destination decision to visit Thailand.

Keywords: Thailand's tourism industry, Destination image, Words of mouth, Destination decision.
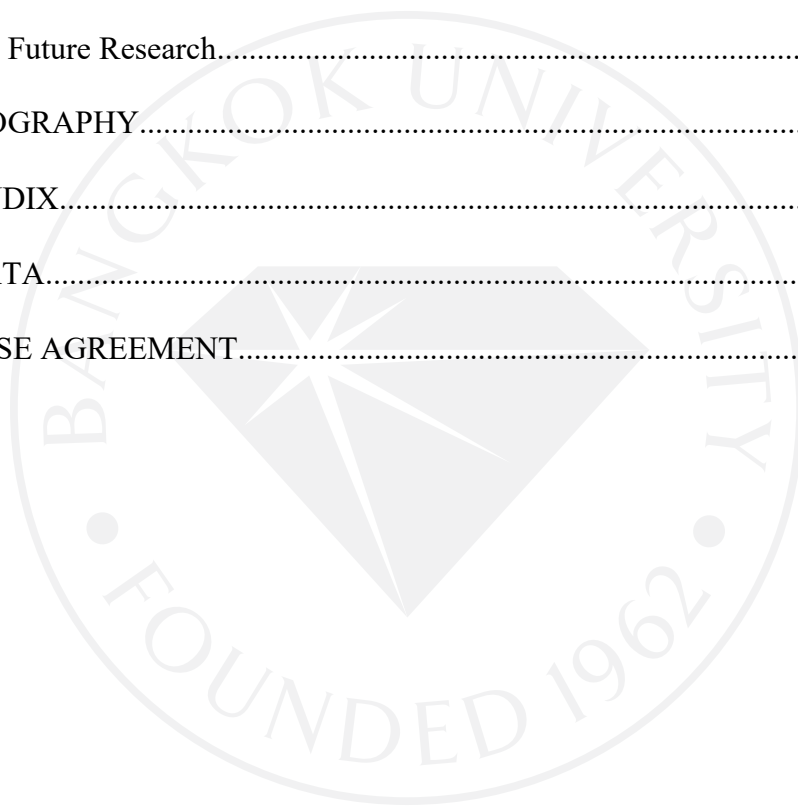
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale and Problem Statement

There are many researchers studying about what are the main reasons that many Chinese tourists come to visit Thailand. For example, Bian & Zhang (2005) discovered that destination image of Thailand was the factor that influencing Chinese tourists' decisions to visit Thailand. Hou & Fang & Zhu (2013) explained that destination image in terms of attractive places, inexpensive budget for visiting, including convenience of transportation highly impact tourists' decision to visit Thailand and their intentions to come to revisit in the future.

Moreover, regarding the impact of words of mouth, it is explained that the words of mouth is one of the factors that influencing customers to buy the products and service. (Li, 2015) That means words of mouth can affects the customers decisions in 2 aspects. The first aspects was that the words of mouth is the channel accessing through the target customer, while the second issue was the words of mouth included the content of messages that customers interest in. Therefore the customers can update the information about the products and review all the time.

1.2 Objectives of study

This research is aimed to study whether the destination image has influenced the Chinese tourists' decisions to visit Thailand. This is because the rates of the Chinese tourists are still increasing while other countries are trying to promote their travailing programs to attract the Chinese tourists to visit their countries. (China national tourism administration, 2017) In addition, the researchers would like to confirm how the impact of words of mouth on the Chinese tourists' decisions will be in the aspects of tourism industry, whether the impact would be the same as other kinds of product

or service. Finally, between destination image and words of mouth, which one highly influences the Chinese tourists' decisions to visit Thailand?

1.3 Contribution of Study

The research finding will help Thailand tourism industry to understand the factors that should be consider to increase the number of tourists.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEWS

2.1 Related theories and Previous Studies

Destination image

The concept of tourist destination image appeared in the early 1970s. Due to the image plays an important role in the tourism destination image in the tourism consumption decision making process, and can be used as a tourism destination market segmentation, market positioning and competitive analysis of the reference index, thus destination image becomes an important concept in the field of tourism destination marketing.(MBAlib, 2017)

Researchers have different definitions from different views. Walton (1966) explained that general feeling of tourists to the destination will be the main influenced by cultural, political, history, economic and personal factors. Hunt (1975) explained that the destination image is the impressions that a person or people hold about a state in which they are not resided. Fakeye & Crompton (1991) explained the composition of the destination image. The first is for people who never travel to a destination but influenced by a lot of commercial information, they will have the basic destination image. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) explained that the destination image could be separated into perception/cognitive, and affective. The perception/cognitive is for people who has the basic cognition of destination. Affective was influenced by the feeling of destination. Gartner (1993) explained that the destination could be separated in to 3 parts: Original Image, Induced image, and Compound Image. The original Image refers to an individual's impression of destination, which is formed by the nature of the mass culture, the public media, the literature and so on. Induced Image refers to the destination by the conscious advertising, promotion, publicity to promote the impact of the image. Compound Image refers to the tourists to travel to the destination, through their own experience, combined with the previous knowledge

of the formation of a more comprehensive destination image. Xie（2002）indicated
from the aspect of tourism stratum, the destination image is the integration and
refinement of various elements in tourist destination. O'Leary and Deegan (2003)
explain that the definition of the destination image comprises attribute, holistic,
functional, psychological, common and unique components.

Table 2.1: Definitions of the destination image.

Authors	Definition
Hunt (1975)	Impressions that a person or people hold about a state in which they are not reside.
Fakeye & Crompton (1991)	The destination is combined with perception & affective.
Gartner(1993)	Original Image, Induced image, and Compound Image
Baloglu & McCleary(1999)	Destination image could be divided into 3 part: perception/cognitive and affective.

The impact of tourism destination image to tourists' destination decision:

Foster (2002) consider that the factors that could influence the tourists to make a
decision are 4 parts, they are: Economics, destination image, stimulate, and others.
Once these 4 factors have effected on a tourist, he/she will start to have the travel
desire. Next step is to collect the tourism information, and then make a decision.

Alcaniz (2009) indicated that the destination image can influence on tourists'
experiences and behaviors in the future. Cathy N Ekonde (2010) explained that from
previous researches, different cultures can influence the visitor's decision. In this
research, the author Cathy N Ekonde indicates that the tourists' words of mouth &
destination image have influenced the tourists who travel to Gotland Island, Sweden.
Cultures from different countries have an impact on the destination choice from
tourists, and both impact on their journey patterns.

Zhang (2010) explained that budget is an important element of destination image,
before tourist travel to some place; the budget is regarded as a symbol of destination
brand. Yang (2017) explained that the basic elements for tourist go travel are leisure

time, enough money and travel motivation. The budget is an important factor for tourists. The price is high or low is directly relating to the destination image.

Liu (2013) explained that forming process of destination image of tourists. Destination image start from the locations of the travel places, where is it and then consider how it is look like? Location, which is the basic cognition compare from locations and spaces. Cognition of destination image could consider as the first step for tourists to discover the destination.

Mo (2007) explained that a successful travel destination must have its unique destination image from its culture. For example, Singapore is a city of garden; "gamble city" Las Vegas, "Floating city" Venice. Those famous destination images are already remember by tourists. The tourists are easily to remember those basic destination image generated by culture.

Charlotte and Ritchie (1991) explained that the destination image also be attributed by attractions and accommodations. The attractions mean the places to travel, tourism activities, and other tourist entertainments. The destinations with various travel places or attractions are more probability to be chosen. Frank Howie (2003) explained that a basic requirement in a destination is tourists' accommodations. R Rajesh (2013) discovered that the satisfaction of tourists would influence the destination image after tourist travel to the destination. The satisfaction constructed by entertainments, destination attractions and accommodations.
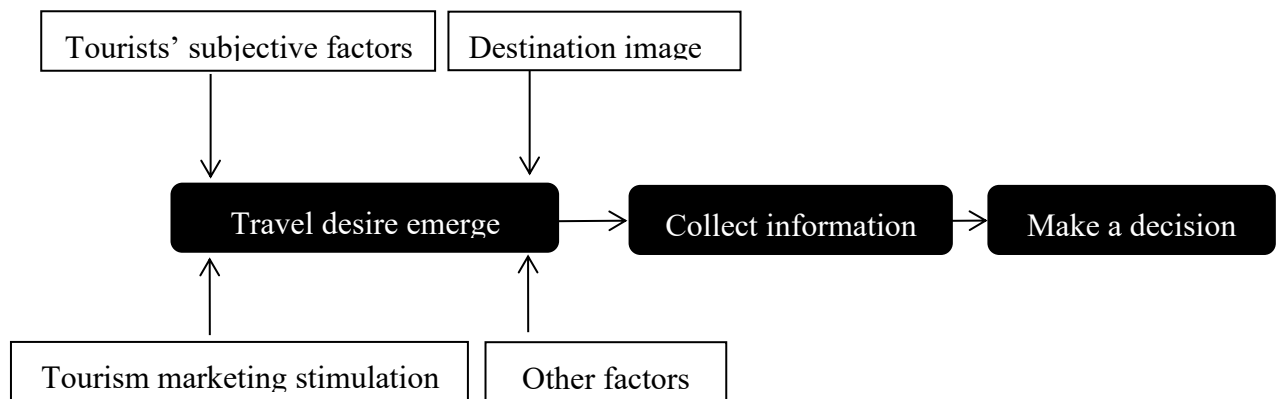
Figure 2.1: Model of destination image effect on decision making.

According to the previous research mentioned before, the research hypothesis concerned with the effect between the destination image and destination decision is as follow:

Hypothesis 1: The Thailand's destination image has effect on the Chinese tourists' decision making.

Words of mouth

Zhu & Hou (2013) explained that word of mouth communication is an interpersonal communication, which is characterized by strong two-way, punctual feedback, high frequency of interaction, flexible and so on. Word of mouth communication refers to the way consumers communicate through face to face or telephone, network and so on. Words of mouth communication is a non-commercial purpose method to share the experience of the product.

Wu (2010) explained that tourism words of mouth mean the traveler who shares their experience during a trip as an evaluation. Tourism product is an experience product. So before the tourist buy the product, tourists cannot give a reviews or feedback from the product, there is a potential risk included in it. But words of mouth communication is a reliable, high accurate method. More and more tourists believe in the tourism words of mouth, in order to get some information from it.

Bai & Guo (2010) explained that the formation of tourism words of mouth is the process of various factors. The desire of word of mouth would be affected by

destination image, satisfactions or other factors. The relationship between destination image and tourism words of mouth. There is a positive relationship between destination image & tourism words of mouth.
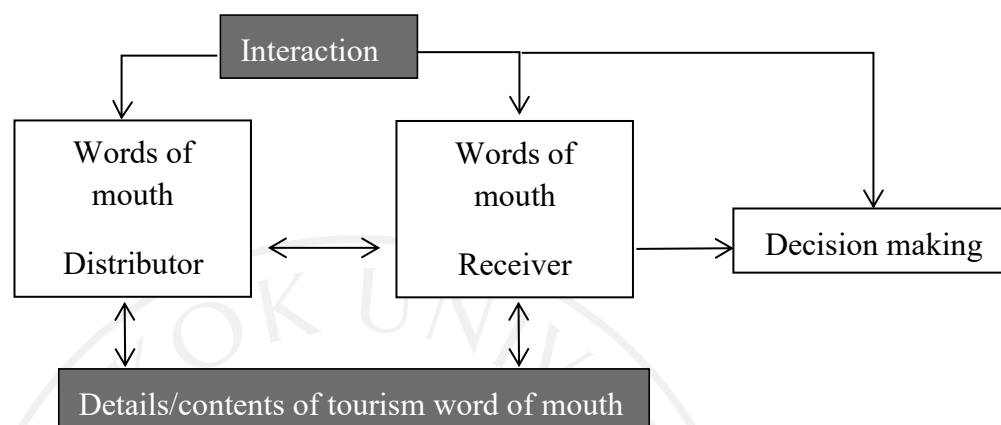
Figure 2.2: The model of tourism words of mouth communication.

Patterson (2006) revealed that the word of mouth has a special influence on the elder people. The research has revealed that the older people average age level at 55, 60% of them used the words of mouth information to make the destination decision to travel to Michigan, USA.

Lai (2011) indicated that the impact of Internet words of mouth on the tourists' decision making. The researcher revealed that the internet words of mouth has influenced the tourists who choose the destination. The researcher's target is the Chinese tourists who choose the Huang Shan Mountain (One of the most famous mountain in China) as the travel destination. The impact factor is more than 0.6, the research indicated that the internet words of mouth has effected on Chinese tourists when they make a decision.

Han (2013) explained that the words of mouth information is divided into 2 kinds, positive & negative words of mouth. Helm & Schlei (2008) explained that the positive words of mouth can raise the consumers' perception of the product. So that can raise the desire of purchasing of consumers. Meanwhile the negative words of mouth will reduce the consumer's willingness to purchase the product.

According to the previous research mentioned before, the research hypothesis concerned with the effect between the words of mouth and destination decision is as follow:

Hypothesis 2: The words of mouth has influenced the Chinese tourists before they make a destination decision.

Destination decision:

Wang (2012) explained that Decision making, means customers make a decide and choice. It is a part of purchasing behavior. The 3 following definition of the decision making are widely accepted: Consider the decision making is a process of asking question, setting target, design and plans choosing. This is the broad sense understanding. The decision making is a process of choosing the best choice from multiple choices. This is the narrow sense understanding. The decision making is a decision to deal with contingencies that occur under uncertainty. To make a decision need to face some risks.

Mayo and Jarvis (1981) explained that tourism decision making is the tourists make a decision in the tourism behaviors. Tourism decision making has many interactions. In the case of many other influencing factors, tourism needs and tourism motivation will directly lead people to make travel decision. There are 3 types of decision making from tourists, conventional decision, extensional decision, and impulsive decision.

Conventional decision, A decision made by a decision maker to solve the general problem of tourism, based on the experience of dealing with such problems. Conventional decision making is also known as habitual decision making or routine decision making.

Extensional decision, a decision making that deal with some major problems in tourism. For this kind of decision, tourists need to spend more time and energy to collect the relevant information and consider variety of programs, and then make a choice from it. Therefore, this kind of decision is also called the generalized decision

or the extension decision. For majority tourists, choosing a destination is also an extension decision, there are many factors need to consider, such as satisfaction, economic, leisure time. So extension decision making method is very suitable for tourists when choosing destination. Before tourists make a decision, tourists might ask information from friends, colleagues, media platforms.

Impulsive decision, this is different with Conventional decision. Impulsive decision is the decision making that before consider, for example advertisement bill boards, or other advertisement. Or the herd behaviors of tourists, such as the experience, persuade, motivation.

These 3 types of decisions, different tourists will have different decision making styles. For example, high-frequency tourists will take the conventional decision because they have many experiences in traveling. For tourist who is lack of experience in traveling, but have much interesting in traveling, they might choose the extensional decision. LaPage & Cormier (1977) explained that a new destination for tourists, the destination image is more attractive than the reality of the destination. This could spur the motivation of traveler stronger.

2.2 Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The Thailand's destination image has effect on the Chinese tourists' decision making.

Hypothesis 2: The words of mouth has influenced the Chinese tourists before they make a destination decision.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

From previous researches, when tourists make a decision, they are mainly influenced by destination image, tourism sale promotions, and personal factors. The framework model is like this:

Budget
Places of travel
Social & culture image   Independent Variables   Dependent Variable
Accommodation   Affect on
Locations & transportation   Destination Image
Tourism activities
                                                                        Destination decision
Reliable source of words
of mouth
Attitudes toward words   Words of mouths   Affect on
of mouth
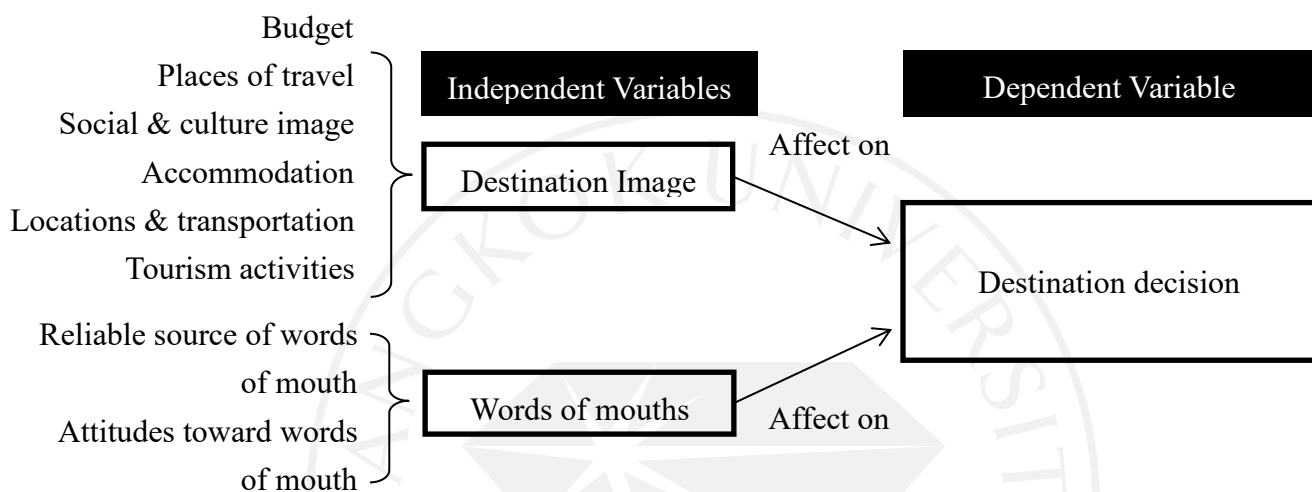
Figure 2.3: The framework of research model.

The figure 2.3 represents the impact of destination image and words of mouth on destination decision.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This research is a quantitative research. The researcher uses the questionnaire as the tool of methodology to collect the data. Qiu (2004) explained that the advantages of questionnaire are beyond the limitation of time and space. It can investigate in a wide range, a large number of survey respondents simultaneously. Questionnaire method is more convenient to study the results quantitatively. It also can discover anonymity, saving manpower, time and money.

3.2 Population and samples

The population of this research is Chinese tourists who came to visit Thailand. The sample of this research is not including the long-stay Chinese people who living or study in Thailand. This formula is used for sample size calculation as below Bernhard (2008):

$$N = \frac{1}{\frac{4e^2}{z^2}}$$

Square is the confidence level in standard error units (1.96 for 95% confidence level) e is the level of precision (in this study the researcher specified the level of precision = 0.05 at the confidence level of 95 %)

After calculation, the sample size is 385 samples. The author designed the questions in questionnaire in English version and translates into Chinese. After translation, the researcher made the questionnaire into a web. So that Chinese tourists can read it and understand clearly and conveniently.

3.3 Research Instrument

The researcher shared the web of questionnaire to Chinese tourists online to spread the questionnaire to collect samples. The places that researcher shared the web are group chat rooms of each Chinese social applications. The group chat rooms are

about traveling in Thailand. This could ensure the collections of sample more accurate.

The first part is demographic data. There are 6 questions in total. These 6 questions are Nominal questions.

Table 3.1: The questions of demographic data.

Gender	1. Male 2. Female	Nominal
Age	1. 17-25 2. 26-35 3. 36-45 4. 46-55 5. Over 55	Ordinal
Education	1. Below bachelor's degree 2. Bachelor's degree 3. Higher than bachelor's degree	Ordinal
Occupations	1. Students 2. Employee of private company 3. Employee of public organization 4. Private business owner 5. House keeping	Ordinal
Types of travel	1. With group 2. With family 3. individual	Nominal
Monthly Income levels	1. Less than 2000CNY 2. 2000CNY – 4000CNY 3. 4000CNY- 6000CNY 4. 6000CNY-8000CNY 5. 8000CNY-10000CNY 6. More than 10000CNY	Ordinal

The second part is questions of decision making; there are 16 questions in total. These questions are ordinal scale.

Table 3.2: The questions of destination image.

Budget	Traveling in Thailand is cheaper than other countries.
	The accommodation is cheaper than other countries.
	The food & beverage of Thailand are available at the reasonable price.
Places of travel Images	Thailand has many places to travel.
	The natural places of traveling are various and beautiful.
	The culture and religions places are merit and exotic.
Social & Cultures Images	Thailand has a lot of different society and culture in specific parts of Thailand to visit.
	Thai people are friendly and so kind to help and support Chinese tourists.
	Thailand's social living and cultures are very interesting to study.
Locations and transportation	Since Thailand is near China, it has triggered you to visit many times.
	The transportation to Thailand is very convenient.
Accommodations	Thailand's accommodation is clean.
	Thailand's accommodation is easy for Chinese tourists to find.
Tourism activities	Thailand has a lot of entertainment activities.
	Thailand has a lot of culture activities to learn.
	Thailand has a lot of religious activities to join.

The third part is questions of words of mouth, there are 7 questions in total.

These questions are ordinal scale.

Table 3.3: The questions of words of mouth.

Reliable sources of Words of mouth	Words of mouth among your family members is still reliable for you to make a decision.
	Words of mouth among social channels is still reliable for you to make a decision.
	Words of mouth among your close friends is still reliable for you to make a decision.
	Words of mouth among your colleagues is still reliable for you to make a decision.
Attitudes toward Words of mouth	You believe or trust on the information that you get from any kinds of reliable sources about traveling in Thailand.
	You think words of mouth could be positive and negative information, but it's helpful for you to make a decision.
	You think words of mouth could be positive and negative information, but it's helpful for you to make a decision.
	You think words of mouth are playing an important role for your decisions to travel to Thailand.

The following questions are about the Chinese tourists' destination decision base on the Thailand's destination image and words of mouth of Thailand's tourism industry.

Table 3.4: The questions of destination decision.

destination decision	You decide to visit Thailand if you have opportunity.
	Thailand is the best choice for your visiting abroad.
	You decide to visit Thailand regarding the reliable information from others.
	You decide to visit Thailand since someone suggested you to do that.
	You are sure that you will be visiting Thailand now and then.
	You decide to visit Thailand according to the cheaper budget.
	You decide to visit Thailand to discover the attractive tourism environments.
	You decide to visit Thailand in order to touch with different cultures.
	You decide to visit Thailand according to its convenience to go there.
	You decide to visit Thailand because of its convenient accommodation and food availability.

In order to rise the convince of the research, and find out the potential questions that might emerged during the research. The author did the pretest of the research. The pretest is including destination image, words of mouth and decision making. The researcher has selected 40 examples to start the pretest. The result is as table 3.5. In this research, author will use SPSS22.0 to analysis the data and go through the research. The researcher refers the reliability-Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure the reliability. Zen & Huang (2005) In previous researches, if the Cronbach's alpha no less than 0.7, the research is reliable. Between 0.35 to 0.7, the research is acceptable, once the alpha is less 0.35, the research is not reliable.

3.4 Reliability and Content Validity

Table 3.5: The pretest of Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire (Pretest)

The result of 40 samples		
Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Interpretation
All parts	.960	Very high
Destination image	.923	Very high
Words of mouth	.901	Very high
destination decision	.884	Very high

All the Cronbach's alpha is higher than 0.7, which means the questionnaire is reliable. After the collection of samples, the researcher collected 247 samples of Chinese tourists. The researcher used the 247 samples to test the Cronbach's alpha.

Table 3.6: The Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire (Total)

The result of 247 samples		
Variables	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
All parts	.964	Very high
Destination image	.937	Very high
Words of mouth	.896	Very high
destination decision	.900	Very high

The Cronbach's alpha of all samples is higher than 0.7, the questionnaire is reliable.In this research the measurement of Content Validity refer from Zen & Huang's view in 2005. If KMO is lower than 0.5, means not appropriate for the

research. This is the KMO and Bartlett test of this research, The KMO and Bartlett

test result is 0.951 which is higher than 0.5.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Summary of Demographic Data

Table 4.1: Frequency and percentage of demographic data: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	96	38.9
Female	151	61.1
Total	**247**	**100.0**

In this research, majority of the samples gender are female (61.1%, N=151), while minority of samples gender are male (38.9%, N=96).

Table 4.2: Frequency and percentage of demographic data: Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
17-25 Years old	159	64.4
26-35 Years old	70	28.3
36-45 Years old	9	3.6
46-55 Years old	7	2.8
Over 55 Years old	2	.8
Total	**247**	**100.0**

Majority of the samples aged between 17-25 years old (64.4%, N=159), and aged between 26-35 years old (28.3%, N=70), It is provide that majority of Chinese tourists who come travel to Thailand is young people.

Table 4.3: Frequency and percentage of demographic data: Education

Education	Frequency	Percent
Below bachelor's degree	34	13.8
Bachelor's degree	136	55.1
Higher than bachelor's degree	77	31.2
Total	**247**	**100.0**

Majority of the samples are Bachelor Degree (55.1%, N=136), and Higher than bachelor's degree (31.2%, N=77), respectively minority of samples are Below Bachelor's Degree (13.8%, N=34)

Table 4.4: Frequency and percentage of demographic data: Occupations

Occupations	Frequency	Percent
Students	96	38.9
Employee of private company	83	33.6
Employee of public organization	24	9.7
Private companies owner	6	2.4
Business owner	21	8.5
House holding	17	6.9
Total	**247**	**100.0**

Majority of the samples are Students (38.9%, N=96), and Employees of private company (33.6%, N=83), the statistics can show that the majority of Chinese tourists are students and Employees of private company.

Table 4.5: Frequency and percentage of demographic data: Monthly Income Levels

Monthly Income levels	Frequency	Percent
Less than 2000CNY	61	24.7
2000CNY – 4000CNY	59	23.9
4000CNY- 6000CNY	54	21.9
6000CNY-8000CNY	30	12.1
8000CNY-10000CNY	16	6.5
More than 10000CNY	27	10.9
Total	**247**	**100.0**

Majority of the samples monthly incomes ranged is less than 2000CNY (24.7%, N=61) and 2000CNY-4000CNY (23.9%, N=59) and 4000 CNY -6000CNY (21.9%, N=54) it can shows that majority of Chinese tourists, their monthly incomes level is not very high.

Table 4.6: Frequency and percentage of demographic data: Types of travel

Types of travel	Frequency	Percent
With group	13	5.3
With family	31	12.6
individual	203	82.2
Total	**247**	**100.0**

Majority of samples they are traveling individual in Thailand. (82.2%, N=203)

4.2 Results of Research Variables

From the second part to fourth part, all the questions are using 5 Linker scale method. Each question would be marked from 1 to 5. Determined as "1=strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=moderate, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree." As this survey adopts Likert scale 5 point questions, the average level of influencing factors. Will be defined as following:

Average score of 1.00-1.80 refer to strongly disagree

Average score 1.81 - 2.60 refer to Disagree

Average score 2.61 - 3.40 refer to Moderate

Average score 3.41 - 4.20 refer to Agree

Average score 4.21 - 5.00 refer to strongly agree

Table 4.7 The Mean and Standard deviation of destination image in Chinese tourists'
mind (N=247)

Destination image		Mean	Std. deviation	Interpretation
Budget	Traveling in Thailand is cheaper than other countries.	3.73	.988	agree
	The accommodation is cheaper than other countries.	3.61	.956	agree
	The food & beverage of Thailand are available at the reasonable price.	3.65	.941	agree
Places of travel Images	Thailand has many places to travel.	4.19	.918	agree
	The natural places of traveling are various and beautiful.	4.15	.911	agree
	The culture and religions places are merit and exotic.	4.08	.892	agree
Socials and Cultures Images	Thailand has a lot of different society and culture in specific parts of Thailand to visit.	4.19	.865	agree
	Thai people are friendly and so kind to help and support Chinese tourists.	3.91	.858	agree
	Thailand's social living and cultures are very interesting to study.	4.15	.837	agree
Locations and transportation	Since Thailand is near China, it has triggered you to visit many times	4.19	.906	agree
	The transportation to Thailand is very convenient.	4.08	.934	agree

(Continued)

Table 4.7 (Continued): The Mean and Standard deviation of destination image in Chinese tourists' mind (N=247)

Destination image		Mean	Std. deviation	Interpretation
Accommodations	Thailand's accommodation is clean.	3.83	.905	agree
	Thailand's accommodation is easy for Chinese tourists to find.	3.98	.869	agree
Tourism activities	Thailand has a lot of entertainment activities.	4.11	.867	agree
	Thailand has a lot of culture activities to learn.	4.08	.893	agree
	Thailand has a lot of religious activities to join.	4.01	.895	agree
Total		**3.99**	**.902**	**agree**

In the table 4.7, the result was shown that the majority of destination image is agreed. In budget image part. Majority of Chinese tourists agree that traveling in Thailand is cheaper that other countries. (Mean=3.73, Std. deviation =.988) Accommodation in Thailand is cheaper than other countries are ranked in agree level. (Mean=3.61, Std. deviation =.956) The food & beverage of Thailand are available at the reasonable price is ranked in agree level. (Mean=3.65, Std. deviation =.941) From the result we can found that the budget of traveling in Thailand is cheap.

In the places of travel image part. The Chinese tourists agree that Thailand has a lot of places to travel. Majority Chinese tourists agree that the natural places of traveling are various and beautiful. (Mean=4.15, Std. deviation=.911) And majority Chinese tourists agree that the culture and religions places in Thailand are merit and exotic. (Mean=4.08, Std. deviation=.892)

In the Social and cultures image part. Chinese tourists agree that Thailand has different societies and cultures in specific parts of Thailand to visit. (Mean=4.19, Std.

deviation=.865) It could be a factor that attracting Chinese tourists to visit Thailand. Thai people are friendly and so kind to help and support Chinese tourists is rank in agree level. (Mean=3.91, Std. deviation=.858) Majority Chinese tourists agree that The Thailand's social living and culture are very interesting to study. (Mean=4.15, Std. deviation=.837)

In the locations and transportation image part. Majority of Chinese tourists agreed that since Thailand is near China, it has triggered them to visit Thailand many times. (Mean=4.19, Std. deviation=.906) The transportation to Thailand is very convenient is ranked in agree level. (Mean=4.08, Std. deviation=.934)

In the accommodation image part. Majority Chinese tourists agree that the accommodation of Thailand is clean (Mean=4.08, Std. deviation=.893) Thailand's accommodation is easy for Chinese tourists to find is ranked in agree. (Mean=3.98, Std. deviation=.869)

In the tourism activities part. We can find that majority Chinese tourists agree that Thailand has a lot of entertainment activities. (Mean=4.11, Std. deviation=.867) Thailand has a lot of culture activities to learn is ranked in agree level. (Mean=4.08, Std. deviation=.893) Thailand has a lot of religions activities to join is ranked in agree (Mean=4.01, Std. deviation=.895)

Table 4.8: The Mean and standard deviation of Words of mouth (N=247)

Words of mouth		Mean	Std. deviation	Interpretation
Reliable sources of Words of mouth	Words of mouth among your family members is still reliable for you to make a decision.	3.99	.917	agree
	Words of mouth among social channels is still reliable for you to make a decision.	3.68	.883	agree

(Continued)

Table 4.8 (Continued): The Mean and standard deviation of Words of mouth (N=247)

Words of mouth		Mean	Std. deviation	Interpretation
Reliable sources of Words of mouth	Words of mouth among your close friends is still reliable for you to make a decision.	4.10	.818	agree
	Words of mouth among your colleagues is still reliable for you to make a decision.	3.83	.872	agree
Attitudes toward to Words of mouth	You believe or trust on the information that you get from any kinds of reliable sources about traveling in Thailand.	3.48	1.031	Moderate
	You think words of mouth could be positive and negative information, but it's helpful for you to make a decision.	3.95	.861	agree
	You think words of mouth are playing an important role for your decisions to travel to Thailand.	4.04	.828	agree
Total		**3.86**	**.887**	**agree**

From the table 4.8. In reliable sources of words of mouth part. It can be shown that in majority Chinese tourists' mind, Chinese tourists are agree that Words of mouth among their close friends is still reliable for them to make a decision. (Mean=3.99, Std. deviation=.917) The words of mouth among social channels are still reliable for them to make a decision is ranked in agree level. (Mean=3.68, Std. deviation=.883) The words of mouth among your close friends is reliable for them to make a decision is ranked in agree level. (Mean=4.10, Std. deviation=.818) The words of mouth among your colleagues is still reliable for you to make a decision is ranked in agree. (Mean=3.83, Std. deviation=.872) The attitudes toward to words of mouth part. Majority Chinese tourists moderate agree that they believe or trust on the information that they get from any kinds of reliable sources about traveling in

Thailand. (Mean=3.48, Std. deviation=1.031) Chinese tourists agree that Words of mouth could be positive and negative information, but it's helpful for them to make a decision. (Mean=3.95, Std. deviation=.861) Majority Chinese tourists agree that Words of mouth are playing an important role for their decisions to travel to Thailand. (Mean=4.04, Std. deviation=.828)

Table 4.9: The Mean and standard deviation of destination decision (N=247)

destination decision	Mean	Std. deviation	Interpretation
You decide to visit Thailand if you have opportunity.	4.36	.838	Strongly agree
Thailand is the best choice for your visiting abroad.	4.28	.841	Strongly agree
You decide to visit Thailand regarding the reliable information from others.	4.08	.847	agree
You decide to visit Thailand since someone suggested you to do that.	3.40	1.150	Moderate
You are sure that you will be visiting Thailand now and then.	4.33	.833	Strongly agree
You decide to visit Thailand according to the cheaper budget.	3.60	1.038	agree
You decide to visit Thailand to discover the attractive tourism environments.	4.15	.818	agree
You decide to visit Thailand in order to touch with different cultures.	4.05	.916	agree
You decide to visit Thailand according to its convenience to go there.	3.77	.941	agree
You decide to visit Thailand because of its convenient accommodation and food availability.	3.69	.938	agree
Total	**3.97**	**.916**	**agree**

From the table 4.9, it can be shown that the destination decision of Chinese tourists are marked in agree. Majority Chinese tourists agree that they decide to visit Thailand if they have opportunity. (Mean=4.36, Std. deviation=.838) Thailand is the best choice for Chinese tourists in visiting abroad is ranked in agree level. (Mean=4.28, Std. deviation=.841) Majority Chinese tourists agree that Chinese tourists decide to visit Thailand regarding the reliable information from others. (Mean=4.08, Std. deviation=.847) Chinese tourists are moderate that they decide to visit Thailand since someone suggested them to do. (Mean=3.40, Std.deviation=1.150) Majority Chinese tourists consider that they are sure that you will be visiting Thailand now and then is ranked in agree (Mean=4.33, Std. deviation=.833) Chinese tourists decide to visit Thailand according to the cheaper budget is ranked in agree level. (Mean=3.60, Std. deviation=1.038) Chinese tourists agree that they decide to visit Thailand to discover the attractive tourism environments. (Mean=4.15, Std. deviation=.818) Majority Chinese tourists agree that they decide to visit Thailand in order to touch different cultures. (Mean=4.05, Std. deviation=.916) Chinese tourists agree that they decide to visit Thailand according to its convenience to go there. (Mean=3.77, Std. deviation=.941) Chinese tourists agree that they decide to visit Thailand because of its convenient accommodation and food availability. (Mean=3.69, Std. deviation=.938)

Table 4.10: The summary of Mean and Standard deviation of all variables.

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Destination image	3.99	.902	agree
Words of mouth	3.86	.887	agree
destination decision	3.97	.916	agree

Table 4.11: The destination image and words of mouth toward the destination
decision.

Independent variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Destination image	.386	.033	.563	11.595	.000*
Words of mouth	.489	.066	.358	7.356	.000*

a. Dependent Variable: destination decision

Adjusted R^2: .747   df: (2), (246)   F: 360.667 $P \leq .000$

*Significant at .05 level

The researcher uses the regression analysis method to analysis the impact of destination image on the tourists' destination decision. From the table 4.11, the value of Adjusted R^2 can explain that, the destination image has moderate prediction power 74% of total destination decision. The Destination image ($\beta=0.563$) had positively affected on the destination decision ($P \leq 0.05$)

Therefore, the hypothesis 1 was accepted. The significant level is at 0.05.

The researcher uses the regression analysis method to analysis the impact of words of mouth on the tourists' destination decision. From the table 4.11, the value of Adjusted R^2 can explain that, the destination image has moderate prediction power 74% of total destination decision. The Words of mouth ($\beta=0.358$) had positively affected on the destination decision ($P \leq 0.05$)

Therefore, the hypothesis 2 was accepted. The significant level is at 0.05.

It can revolve that the between the influence of destination image ($\beta=0.563$) and words of mouth ($\beta=0.358$) differently affects the destination decision to Visit Thailand. The destination image is stronger that the words of mouth.

After the hypothesis testing, the following table is the results of hypothesis.

4.3 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Table 4.12: The summary of Hypothesis testing and results

Hypotheses	RESULTS
H1: The Thailand's destination image has effect on the Chinese tourists' decision making.	Accepted
H2: The words of mouth of Thailand' tourism industry has influenced the Chinese tourists when they make a destination decision.	Accepted
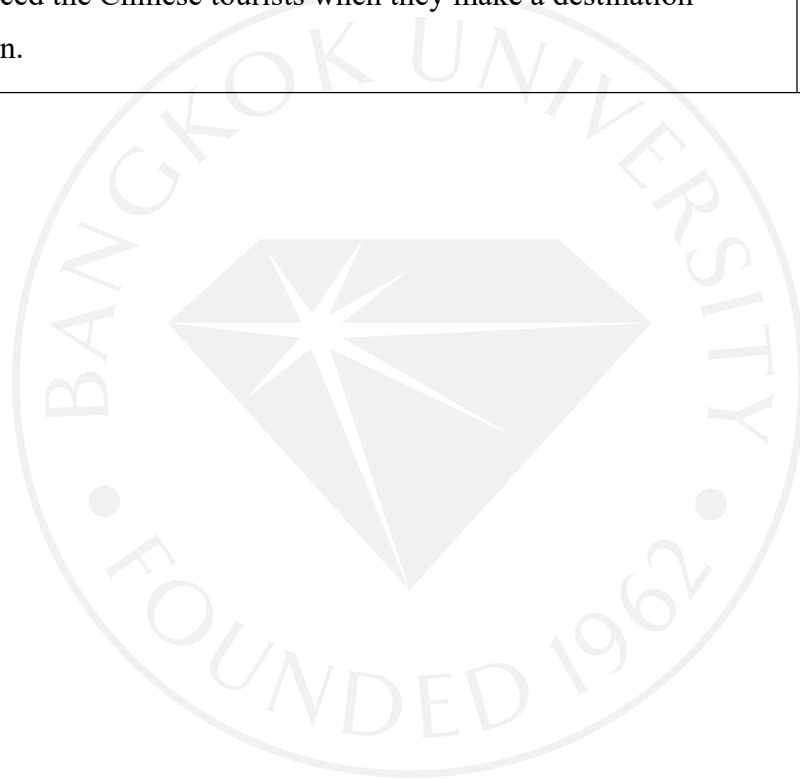
CHARPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Research Findings and conclusion

In this research, the author had set a framework of theoretical concept. The purpose of this study is to invest the impact of Thailand's destination image and words of mouth information on Chinese tourist's destination decision. The researcher used the questionnaire as the methodology to collect the samples and data, and use the SPSS to analyze and test hypotheses. And the results of hypotheses as following are accepted:

1. The Thailand's destination image positively effect on Chinese tourists to make a destination decision to visit Thailand.

2. The words of mouth information positively effect on Chinese tourists to make a destination decision to visit Thailand.

3. Compare with the destination image and words of mouth, the impact of destination image is stronger than words of mouth.

The populations of this study are Chinese tourists who came travel to Thailand. After the collection of samples, the author had collected 247 samples. The demographic information indicated that, the majority of samples are female, age at 17-25 years old. Education level is at bachelor's degree, and occupation are students with monthly income level less than 2000CNY (10,000THB) Majority of them like to travel to Thailand individually.

The analysis of Thailand's destination image was consisting of reasonable prices, beautiful and various places to travel, different social and culture to study, locations and transportation to Thailand are convenient. The accommodation of Thailand is clean and easy to find. Thailand's tourism activity is attractive and various.

The analysis of words of mouth information was consisting of reliability of words of mouth information and the attitude towards the words of mouth information.

The analysis of Chinese tourists' destination decision are consist of the expense of traveling in Thailand is cheap, have interest in discovering the attractive tourism environment, touching the different social and culture, decide to travel to Thailand because of convenient, the accommodations and food and beverage are convenient and available. Decide to travel to Thailand because of other people's suggestion; decide to travel to Thailand because of the reliability of words of mouth.

From the views of destination image of Thailand, we can find that there is a positive impact on the Chinese tourists to make a decision to travel to Thailand. Meanwhile, the words of mouth of Thailand's tourism industry also have the positive impact on Chinese tourists to make a decision to travel to Thailand.

Refer from the result of tests of hypothesis, there are positive influences between destination image and destination decision and words of mouth and destination decision.

5.2 Discussion

The destination image had positively influence the Chinese tourists to visit Thailand, as a specific Buddhism country，has a good fame in traveling in this world. From this research, we can find that, the Chinese tourists decide to visit Thailand because of they would like to visit different Buddhism culture and different social. According to Chinese consumers' behavior, there is a main factor that Chinese tourists choose travel to Thailand, because of budget. This result was related to Yang (2017) who explained that general feeling of tourists to the destination will be the main influenced by culture political, history, economic. And Thailand has a lot of tourism activities and travel places. In this study, researchers found that Chinese tourists consider that travel to Thailand is cheaper than other country. Refer from this research the location is also a factor that Chinese people choose to visit Thailand, since Thailand is near China. What's more, Thailand has a very good fame in

traveling, because Thailand has a lot of places to travel and tourism activities. This result is confirmed by Liu (2013) who stated that destination image starts from the locations and travel places, cognition of destination image could consider as the first step for tourists to discover the destination. Frank Howie (2003) explained that the basic requirement in destination is accommodations. The satisfaction of accommodation also can influence the destination image after travel. From the result of study, the Chinese tourists agree that the accommodations of Thailand are cheaper, clean and easy to find for them. This could relate to Frank Howie's view (2003)

The words of mouth information also have positive effect on Chinese tourists' destination decision. In this research, the author found that Chinese tourists consider the words of mouth information is reliable if it comes from the reliable sources. The words of mouth information make an important role for them to make a decision. This result from study is related to Lai (2011) who stated that Words of mouth is a reliable and accurate method, and many tourists believe in the tourism words of mouth. Helm & Schlei (2008) explained that positive or negative words of mouth information will influence the consumers' perception of the product. In this study, majority of Chinese tourists consider that the words of mouth information could be positive and negative, but it is reliable for them to make a destination decision. This is can proof the statement of Helm & Schlei (2008).

In this study, the researcher invested that majority of Chinese tourists consider that travel to Thailand is a good decision for them. Which means Thailand is a good destination for them to travel. Chinese tourists had also influenced by the Thailand's words of mouth information before they make a destination decision.

5.3 Managerial implementation

In business part, the companies that have tourism business or tourism organization can refer the results of this research to offer the good service for Chinese tourists. For example, the reasonable prices of food and beverages. Create more tourism activities to Chinese tourists. The hotel business companies or cooperation

can refer from this study to improve the services of accommodation. Tourism Authority of Thailand can refer this study. Since majority Chinese tourists decided to visit Thailand because they would like to visit and learn the different culture and societies. Authority of Thailand can refer this study can improve the image of Thai culture and Thai society in order to attract more tourists.

The tourism companies or cooperation, whether the public company or private sectors can use the advertisement industry of China or Thailand to distribute the positive tourism information or tourism advertisements to Chinese tourists. From the result of this study, Chinese tourists consider that the words of mouth information is reliable for them to make a destination decision.

The implementation of the findings of study could be used as a reference for understanding Chinese tourists' preferences, any factors that could influence the destination decision of tourists. The services providers can refer the finding of this study, to improve the quality of services for tourists. Refer from the finding of this study. The media industry of Thailand providers can spread attractive information to Chinese tourists for example the beautiful places of Thailand, the tourism activities of Thailand.

5.4 Future research

The finding of this research can be used as a reference for Tourism Industry of Thailand to offer the better service for Chinese tourists to visit Thailand. Another author considered that the numbers of Chinese tourists will become bigger and bigger. The lack of this study is the method to collect the sample. The method is spreading the questionnaire in online channels, since the users of internet are young people. So the majority of samples are young people.

This study is focus on finding the impact of destination image and words of mouth on Chinese tourists' destination decision to visit Thailand. In the future, another author can try to find out the interrelationship between destination image and words of mouth. And author can try to find another factor that can influence the

Chinese tourists to make a destination decision according to the different situation in the future.

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APPENDIX

Reliability testing pretest (All Parts)

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	40	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	40	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.907	36

Reliability testing total (All Parts)

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	247	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	247	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.908	36

Content Validity:

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.951
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6027.570
	df	528
	Sig.	.000

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

GENDER

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	96	38.9
Female	151	61.1
Total	**247**	**100.0**

AGE

Age	Frequency	Percent
17-25 Years old	159	64.4
26-35 Years old	70	28.3
36-45 Years old	9	3.6
46-55 Years old	7	2.8
Over 55 Years old	2	.8
Total	**247**	**100.0**

EDUCATION LEVELS

Education	Frequency	Percent
Below bachelor's degree	34	13.8
Bachelor's degree	136	55.1
Higher than bachelor's degree	77	31.2
Total	**247**	**100.0**

OCCUPATIONS

Occupations	Frequency	Percent
Students	96	38.9
Employee of private company	83	33.6
Employee of public organization	24	9.7
Private companies owner	6	2.4
Business owner	21	8.5
House holding	17	6.9
Total	**247**	**100.0**

MONTHLY INCOME LEVELS

Monthly Income levels	Frequency	Percent
Less than 2000CNY	61	24.7
2000CNY – 4000CNY	59	23.9
4000CNY- 6000CNY	54	21.9
6000CNY-8000CNY	30	12.1
8000CNY-10000CNY	16	6.5
More than 10000CNY	27	10.9
Total	**247**	**100.0**

TYPES OF TRAVEL

Types of travel	Frequency	Percent
With group	13	5.3
With family	31	12.6
individual	203	82.2
Total	**247**	**100.0**

Descriptive Statistics

DESTINATION IMAGE

Destination image	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Traveling in Thailand is cheaper than other countries.	247	3.73	.988
The accommodation is cheaper than other countries.	247	3.61	.956
The food & beverage of Thailand are available at the reasonable price.	247	3.65	.941
Thailand has many places to travel.	247	4.19	.918
The natural places of traveling are various and beautiful.	247	4.15	.911
The culture and religions places are merit and exotic.	247	4.08	.892
Thailand has a lot of different society and culture in specific parts of Thailand to visit.	247	4.19	.865
Thai people are friendly and so kind to help and support Chinese tourists.	247	3.91	.858
Thailand's social living and cultures are very interesting to study.	247	4.15	.837
Since Thailand is near China, it has triggered you to visit many times	247	4.19	.906
The transportation to Thailand is very convenient.	247	4.08	.934

Thailand's accommodation is clean.	247	3.83	.905
Thailand's accommodation is easy for Chinese tourists to find.	247	3.98	.869
Thailand has a lot of entertainment activities.	247	4.11	.867
Thailand has a lot of culture activities to learn.	247	4.08	.893
Thailand has a lot of religious activities to join.	247	4.01	.895
Total	**247**	**3.99**	**.902**

WORDS OF MOUTH

Words of mouth	N	Mean	Std. deviation
WOM among your family members is still reliable for you to make a decision.	247	3.99	.917
WOM among social channels is still reliable for you to make a decision.	247	3.68	.883
WOM among your close friends is still reliable for you to make a decision.	247	4.10	.818
WOM among your colleagues is still reliable for you to make a decision.	247	3.83	.872
You believe or trust on the information that you get from any kinds of reliable sources about traveling in Thailand.	247	3.48	1.031
You think words of mouth could be positive and negative information, but it's helpful for you to make a decision.	247	3.95	.861
You think words of mouth are playing an important role for your decisions to travel to Thailand.	247	4.04	.828
Total	**247**	**3.86**	**.887**

destination decision

destination decision	N	Mean	Std. deviation
You decide to visit Thailand if you have opportunity.	247	4.36	.838
Thailand is the best choice for your visiting abroad.	247	4.28	.841
You decide to visit Thailand regarding the reliable information from others.	247	4.08	.847
You decide to visit Thailand since someone suggested you to do that.	247	3.40	1.150
You are sure that you will be visiting Thailand now and then.	247	4.33	.833
You decide to visit Thailand according to the cheaper budget.	247	3.60	1.038
You decide to visit Thailand to discover the attractive tourism environments.	247	4.15	.818
You decide to visit Thailand in order to touch with different cultures.	247	4.05	.916
You decide to visit Thailand according to its convenience to go there.	247	3.77	.941
You decide to visit Thailand because of its convenient accommodation and food availability.	247	3.69	.938
Total	**247**	**3.97**	**.916**

REGREESION ANALYSIS

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	TotalWOM, TotalDM[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: TotalDestinationdecisionmaking

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.864[a]	.747	.745	3.37328

a. Predictors: (Constant), TotalWordsofmouth, TotalDestinationimage

ANOVAᵃ

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8208.104	2	4104.052	360.667	.000ᵇ
	Residual	2776.487	244	11.379		
	Total	10984.591	246			

a. Dependent Variable: TotalDestinationdecisionmaking

b. Predictors: (Constant), TotalWordsofmouth, TotalDestinationimage

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.194	1.379		2.317	.021
	TotalDM	.386	.033	.563	11.595	.000
	TotalWOM	.489	.066	.358	7.356	.000

QUESIONNAIRE

Direction: This questionnaire will be used by a student from Bangkok University for independent study. The purpose of this questionnaire is to test the impact of destination image and words of mouth on Chinese tourists' destination decision to visit Thailand.

The questionnaire has 37 questions in total, and will be divided into 4 parts: Demographic data, destination image, words of mouth, destination decision.

Part1: Demographic Data

Instruction: Please tick the answers that matched with you.

1. Gender   Male   Female

2. Age   17-25   26-35   36-45   46-55   Over 55

3. Education levels

   Below bachelor's degree

   Bachelor's degree

   Higher than bachelor's degree

4. Occupations (   )

   Students

   Employee of private company

   Employee of public organization

   Private business owner

   House keeping

5. Types of travel (   )

With group

With family

individual

6. Monthly Income levels (   )

    Less than 2000CNY

    2000CNY – 4000CNY

    4000CNY- 6000CNY

    6000CNY-8000CNY

    8000CNY-10000CNY

    More than 10000CNY

Part 2: Destination image

Instructions: The questions No. 9 to No. 22 are the questions about the destination image of Thailand. The tick the answers in that mostly matched with you. Please tick the answers that matched with you mostly.

1=strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=moderate, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

<u>**Destination image**</u>	**Level of Opinions**				
7. Travailing in Thailand is cheaper than other countries.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Travailing in Thailand the accommodation is based on budget.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The food & beverage of Thailand are available at the reasonable price.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Thailand has many places to travel.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The natural places of travailing are various and beautiful.	1	2	3	4	5

12. The culture and religions places are merit and exotic.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Thailand has a lot of social and culture to visit.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Thai people are friendly and so kind to help and support Chinese tourists.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Thailand's social and cultures are very interesting to study.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Since Thailand is near China, it has triggered you travel to Thailand.	1	2	3	4	5
17. The transportation to Thailand is very convenient.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Thailand's accommodation is good.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Thailand has lot of unique entertainments and lifestyle projects.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Thailand has a good fame of traveling.	1	2	3	4	5

Part 3: Words of mouth

Instructions: The questions No. 23 to No. 29 are the questions about the words of mouth. The tick the answers in that mostly matched with you. Please tick the answers that matched with you mostly.

1=strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=moderate, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

Words of mouth	Level of Opinions				
21. You always or ever searched words of mouth information of traveling in Thailand.	1	2	3	4	5
22. You believe the word-of-mouth information of online channels. (Social medias, internet, etc)	1	2	3	4	5
23. You believe the word-of-mouth information of offline channels? (advertisements, books, newspaper, etc)	1	2	3	4	5
24. You believe the word-of-mouth information of your friends/family/Closed people.	1	2	3	4	5

25. Do you think the word-of-mouth from distributor who has the real travel experience in Thailand?	1	2	3	4	5
26. Have you ever heard that traveling in Thailand is a good experience?	1	2	3	4	5
27. You think words of mouth could be positive and negative information, but it's helpful for you to make a decision.	1	2	3	4	5

Part 3: destination decision

Instructions: The questions No. 23 to No. 29 are the questions about the words of mouth. The tick the answers in that mostly matched with you. Please tick the answers that matched with you mostly.

1=strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=moderate, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

destination decision	Level of Opinions				
28. You decide to visit Thailand if you have opportunity.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Thailand is the best choice for your visiting abroad.	1	2	3	4	5
30. You decide to visit Thailand regarding the reliable information from others	1	2	3	4	5
31. You decide to visit Thailand since someone suggested you to do that.	1	2	3	4	5
32. You are sure that you will be visiting Thailand now and then.	1	2	3	4	5
33. You decide to visit Thailand according to the cheaper budget.	1	2	3	4	5
34. You decide to visit Thailand to discover the attractive tourism environments	1	2	3	4	5
35. You decide to visit Thailand in order to touch with different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
36. You decide to visit Thailand according to its convenience to go there.	1	2	3	4	5
37. You decide to visit Thailand because of its convenient accommodation and food availability.	1	2	3	4	5

Thanks for your participant!

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