

Traveling Abroad of Thai Working People in Bangkok, Thailand

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Abstract

This study aims to search for traveling behavior and the marketing mix levels affecting traveling abroad of Thai working people in Bangkok. The data were collected from 400 working people by using questionnaires. The statistical method used included frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation-test was used to evaluate the mean between two groups, F-test for one-way analysis of variance)One-way ANOVA(

The results were that, most Thai tourist were women, 26-35 years old, single, company employees, bachelor degree, and more than 35,000-baht monthly income. They traveled abroad to enjoy and relax, preferred natural tourist attraction in Asian country out of ASEAN, used vacation period, spent 5-7 days, traveled once a year, budgeted 20,001-40,000 baht excluded shopping expenses, paid cash, managed their own program and reservation, and traveled with family. The levels of marketing mix implemented ranking respectively were 1) personnel 2) service process 3) tourism product 4) contact/reservation channel 5) physical evidence 6) traveling expense and 7) marketing promotion.

Thai working women emphasized on traveling expense and marketing promotion more than men. Working people who went to Oceania country, Europe & America and ASEAN country had different tourism product. Thai tourist who spent 2-4 days and 5-7 days had different tourism product and physical evidence. And different travel companion affected on service personnel and physical evidence.

Key Words: Marketing mix, traveling behavior, Thai tourist, traveling abroad.

Introduction

Traveling is one of the most popular leisure activities of people all over the world. For Thai people in the past, traveling abroad was the luxury tourism limited for high-income and well-educated people. However, nowadays Thai economics grow continuously since Domestic Product per capita in Thailand at 6,125.66 US dollars in 2017 up from 1960 until 2017 averaged 2,647.12 USD (trading economics, 2018) due to the prosperity of Asian financial situation, including more free visa allowed from ASEAN countries, Japan and Taiwan so Thai people travel abroad increasingly as indicated in Figure 1. Moreover, many low cost airlines and budget accommodation are available to enhance traveling abroad opportunity. Therefore, the working people segment can afford to spend their vacation and holiday in both domestic and abroad traveling to relax themselves and earn more experience.

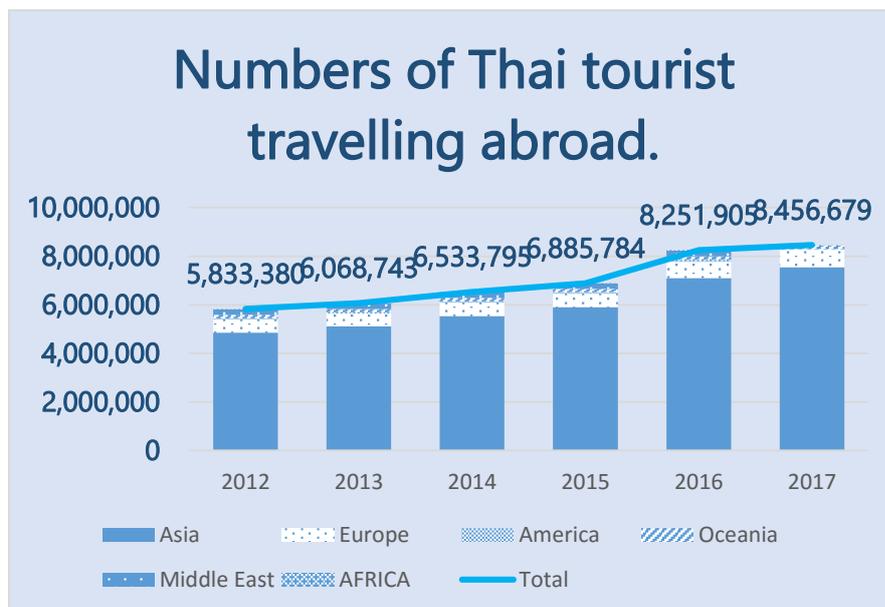


Figure 1 Increasing numbers of Thai tourist traveling abroad in 2012-2016

Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2017.

The growth of online system also played important role in searching information and making reservation in traveling abroad resulted in the most E-Commerce spending as figure 2. Many websites and applications such as booking.com, expedia.com, agoda.com, travelvoka.com, etc. support to communicate marketing promotion, provide customer review and complete buying tourism-related service.



Figure 2 E-Commerce of Thailand spending by category.

Source : www.hootsuite.com, 2018.

Objective of Study

1. To study traveling abroad behavior of Thai working people including reason to travel abroad trip, favorite tourist attraction feature, the most popular destination country, kinds of traveling abroad period, frequency of abroad travel in a year, days spent in traveling, expenditure per trip (excluding shopping expense), payment method, how to setup traveling program and travel companion.
2. To study and compare the levels of marketing factors affecting traveling abroad decision consisting of tourism product, expenditure per trip, channel of contact and reservation, marketing promotion, service process involved in traveling abroad, persons involved in traveling abroad, and physical evidence of tourist attraction divided by personal information of Thai working people and traveling abroad behavior of Thai working people.

Literature Review

Ugo Junior Salamone (2017) studied about the factors that affect the decision of Thai tourist in buying a package tour to travel to Italy and to analyze the methods in developing the Italian traveling goods in accordance with the tourists' desire. The study was conducted through the survey made by the 400 Thai tourists who bought the package tour to Italy from the tour operator company. The research found that the tourists consist of both male and female, aged between 31- 40 years old, single status, private company employee with the average income of 30,001- 45,000 Baht and most of them were bachelor degree graduated. The importance of the

company's marketing mix is the personnel of the service provider and the famous of Italy's places is also most effect to the decision of Thai tourists. The hypothesis test found that age, status and income of tourists contributed to different decision making in buying a package tour to Italy. All of the company's marketing mix and Italy traveling factors, including geography, currency, popular attractions and publicity are connected to the decision making in buying a package tour to Italy with the material statistics at the rate of 0.05.

ORC International (2018) studied about the macro trends in global travel intentions study highlights 2018. The results found that desire to travel continues with increase in frequency of travel across most markets. Increase in the average number of trips taken from 2015 to 2017 is the most evident in Americas, followed by Asia-Pacific and MEA (albeit coming from much lower base). Travelers around the world are taking shorter trips, the average length of holiday keeps getting shorter from 10 nights in 2013, 9.5 nights in 2015 to 9 nights per trip in 2017. Intra-region travel is still dominant, travelers from Americas & Africa are most open to exploring outside their region/going long-haul; whilst Europeans & Asia are the keenest on proximity. Top five global destinations changes from 2015-2017 as Japan, USA, Australia, Hong Kong, Thailand to Japan, USA, Australia, Thailand, Italy in 2017-2019. USA is consistently one of the most popular destinations outside of region of origin, followed by European destinations such as UK/England, France and Germany.

Methodology

1- Tools for Data Collection

Questionnaires were used in this study for Thai working people, be the deciders in traveling abroad and paid the trip expenditure by their own income. The questionnaires consist of three parts as followings:

Part 1: Personal information about the respondents.

Part 2: Traveling abroad behavior of Thai working people including reason to travel abroad trip, favorite tourist attraction feature, the most popular destination country, kinds of traveling abroad period, frequency of traveling abroad in a year, days spent in traveling, expenditure per trip (excluding shopping expense), payment method, how to setup traveling program and travel companion.

Part 3: The levels of marketing factors affecting traveling abroad decision consisting of tourism product, expenditure per trip, channel of contact and reservation, marketing promotion, service process involved in traveling abroad, persons involved in traveling abroad, and physical evidence of tourist attraction.

2- Population and Sample Group

The population used in this study was Thai working people during June-August 2017. The sample group contained 400 Thai working people in Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand.

One of non-probability sampling called a convenience sampling is deployed in Thai working people survey. The method of sampling was personal interview by using questionnaires.

3- Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as percentage and average value were used to analyze data regarding the respondents' general information, traveling abroad behavior and levels of marketing factors affecting traveling abroad decision consisting of tourism product, expenditure per trip, channel of contact and reservation, marketing promotion, service process involved in traveling abroad, persons involved in traveling abroad, and physical evidence of tourist attraction. The testing hypothesis by One-way ANOVA using t-test, F-test at significant level = 0.05 following by LSD .

Results and Conclusion

Personal information of Thai working people in Bangkok

Most Thai working people who traveled abroad were female (54.50%), aged 26-35 years old (47.00%), single/separated/divorced (68.30%), company employees (71.50%), bachelor degree or lower (73.30%), monthly income more than 35,000 baht or 1,100 US\$ (41.50%).

Traveling abroad behavior of Thai working people in Bangkok

Most of Thai working people in Bangkok traveled abroad because they would to relax from work and had fun in vary atmosphere out of Thailand (42.50%) followed by having particular experience and atmosphere different from homeland (36.20%). They preferred the beautiful natural attraction (25.00%) and shopping site (19.50%). The most popular country was Asian countries where spent more than 3-hours traveling by air (33.00%) but some people liked to change the destination to many countries (31.00%). Due to the promotion period, Thai working people used annual vacation leave to travel (43.50%) so they spent 5-7 days for traveling (58.50%). Traveling abroad in long vacation period had only once a year (40.30%) except long working lives people who spent 2-3 times (34.50%). Each traveling budget was 20,001-40,000 baht or 625-1,250 US\$ (51.80%). Cash and credit card were used for all reservation and other expenses (49.80%, 41.70%). Free and independent traveling was more popular than using tour company service (71.50%) because online searching and reservation was done easily. Thai working people preferred to travel with friends (41.50%) and family (34.00%) for having the happy time together. (Table 1)

Table 1 Traveling abroad behavior of Thai working people in Bangkok

Traveling abroad behavior of Thai working people in Bangkok		Number	Percent
Reasons of traveling abroad	To relax and have fun.	170	42.50
	To have new experience/atmosphere	145	36.25
	To visit friends and relatives.	17	4.25
	To indicate financial position.	5	1.25
	To get discount from marketing promotion	57	14.25
	Others	6	1.50
	total	400	100.00
Favorite tourist attraction feature	Natural tourist attraction.	100	25.00
	Cultural tourist attraction .	63	15.75
	Museum	27	6.75
	Shopping market	78	19.50
	Casino	7	1.75
	Amusement Park	40	10.00
	Local site	58	14.50
	Flower garden / orchard/ agricultural farm.	25	6.25
	Others	2	0.50
total	400	100.00	
Popular destination country	Asian countries (≤3- hours flight).	89	22.30
	Asian countries (> 3- hours flight).	132	33.00
	Europe/ America	33	8.30
	Oceania	14	3.50
	Others.	8	2.00
	Many countries (various destination)	124	31.00
total	400	100.00	
Occasion to travel abroad	Long weekend.	72	18.00
	Vacation.	174	43.50
	Long weekend, added with vacation.	154	38.50
	total	400	100.00
Duration of traveling abroad	2-4 days	126	31.50
	5-7 days	234	58.50
	8 days or more	40	10.00
	total	400	100.00
Frequency of traveling abroad in a year	Once	161	40.30
	2-3 times	138	34.50
	4 times or more	17	4.30
	Uncertain	84	21.00
	total	400	100.00
Expenditure per trip(excluding shopping expense)	≤20,000 baht	56	14.00
	20,001-40,000baht	207	51.80
	40,001-60,000 baht	89	22.30
	>60,000 baht	48	12.00

	total	400	100.00
Payment method	Cash	313	49.80
	Credit card	262	41.70
	Online application	53	8.40
	total	628	100.00
Selected program	Free and independent program	286	71.50
	Buy tourist company program.	114	28.50
	total	400	100.00
Travel companion.	By oneself	20	5.00
	With spouse.	62	15.50
	With family.	136	34.00
	With relatives.	16	4.00
	With friend.	166	41.50
	total	400	100.00

Marketing mix affecting Traveling Abroad of Thai Working People.

Among the marketing strategy applied for Thai working people, the highest level was on persons involved in abroad trip ($\bar{x} = 4.61$) followed by service process involve in traveling abroad ($\bar{x} = 4.58$), channel of contact ($\bar{x} = 4.42$), physical evidence of tourist attraction ($\bar{x} = 4.40$), expenditure per trip(excluding shopping expense) ($\bar{x} = 4.17$), and marketing promotion ($\bar{x} = 3.88$) respectively.

From the highest level of marketing factor affecting traveling abroad of Thai working people, persons involved in trip, companions were the most important ones who shared those particular moments. Using touring company service might face the problem among tourists who were neither friend nor family in the same trip therefore Thai working people preferred to set their own program with friend or family and traveled independently.

The second-high level was service process involved in traveling abroad. Using online searching and reservation was the most convenient and easiest tactic to set travel abroad plan. Not only website for making accommodation, flight, car rental and other reservation, but guiding review in every step of traveling also available in website. Some reviews started from applying visa, amount of traveling budgets and all details of traveling. This information encouraged Thai free and independent tourist to travel abroad. In addition, beautiful figures of tourist attraction sharing in social media stimulated working people to find out new atmosphere different from Thailand.

The third high level was tourism product of traveling abroad. Beautiful tourist attraction was impressive and worth for spending time and money to travel. Accordingly, to Thailand is a tropical country where mostly in hot and rainy season, traveling to see autumn and winter was exciting and provided extraordinary experience for Thai working people. Visiting the famous tourist

attraction and taking photograph to show in Facebook have been a popular activity of Thai tourist. Walking on the snow, watching the color-changed leaves or doing particular activity abroad were interesting for their followers.

The fourth high level was channel of contact and reservation. Online reservation was the most convenient method because most of Thai working people had credit card. As most of Thai tourists set up their own traveling program, they did all the reservation through internet. They usually used booking.com because they reserved by credit card but paid by cash at the hotel.

The fifth high level was physical evidence of tourist attraction. Clean and full-facilitated accommodation was required as well as the place had good location, easily to find out with the clear direction sign. Kitchen and refrigerator should be available as Thai people preferred to have Thai or oriental food. Safe and good-condition vehicle was also important for Thai tourist and home car was very interested for Thai tourist.

The sixth high level was expenditure per trip. Thai tourists were willing to pay for the precious experience and joyful trip. Thai youngster did not think that traveling abroad was the very extravagant activity and they need not to be wealthy to have international trip. However, Thai tourists disliked deception to overpay. Once the cheating case happened, victims would spread it in review and social media as a word of mouth. Some Thai tourist paid by installation through credit card to travel in high-budgeted country such as Scandinavian countries.

The seventh high level was marketing promotion. Online communication played the important role in getting the information. Some Thai tourist waited for discount in promotion period which was informed by the online travel agent. In addition, word of mouth from friends or relatives could enhance traveling abroad requirement. (Table 2)

Table 2 Marketing mix affecting Traveling Abroad of Thai Working People in Bangkok

Marketing mix affecting Traveling Abroad of Thai Working People in Bangkok.	\bar{x}	S.D.
Persons involved in traveling abroad	4.61	0.57
1. Companion is the key element of precious trip	4.54	0.69
2. Local people is friendly to tourists	4.29	0.69
3. Staffs of the accommodation and tourist service are service-minded and friendly.	4.35	0.71
4. Can communication with staffs of the accommodation and tourist service	4.22	0.77
Service process involved in traveling abroad	4.58	0.58
1. Travel planning is easy and convenient.	4.49	0.64
2. Reservation and payment process are simple.	4.38	0.66
3. Can get travel visa easily. (Or go to a country where does not require a visa)	4.34	0.75
4. Travel abroad is convenience, do not consume much energy.	4.18	0.85
Tourism Product	4.43	0.63
1. Beautiful tourist attractions are worth to travel abroad.	4.47	0.64

2. Famous tourist attractions meet their ambition.	4.30	0.75
3. Experience exotic atmosphere such as snow, color changed leaves.	4.40	0.74
4. Have a local meal, enjoy native culture.	4.17	0.82
5. Enjoy popular activities of tourist attraction such as sailing, watching aurora.	4.04	0.87
Channel of contact and reservation	4.42	0.66
1. Can use online booking.	4.58	0.64
2. Can be booked through travel agent.	3.91	0.95
3. Can make every reservation s in advance.	4.39	0.70
4. Can find accommodation and travel without reservation (walk-in)	3.63	1.10
Physical evidence	4.40	0.66
1. Weather condition is not the obstacle of your trip.	3.98	0.77
2. Accommodation is clean and fully equipped.	4.38	0.95
3. Traveling vehicle is safe and comfortably.	4.29	0.67
4. Tourist attractions are safe, warning signs are available.	4.26	0.78
5. The location of tourist attractions is easy to find out with adequate direction sign.	4.34	0.72
Expenditure per trip (excluding shopping expense)	4.17	0.71
1. Expenses are worth to the experience and happiness of traveling abroad.	4.43	0.66
2. Expenses of abroad tourism are not much more than domestic ones.	3.90	0.91
3. Expenses can be paid in installments.	3.43	1.12
4. Various payment methods are available such as by cash, credit cards, mobile banki	4.22	0.88
5. There is no deception to overpay.	4.34	0.79
Marketing Promotion	3.88	0.85
1. Get information through online media such as reviews on social networking sites.	4.39	0.80
2. Get information through TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, book guides.	3.69	0.96
3. Get the word of the mouth of the people around.	3.71	0.96
4. Get discount from advance booking for a long time.	3.87	1.00
5. Get discount on group travel.	3.48	1.12

Hypothesis Testing

Comparison level of marketing mix affecting traveling abroad of Thai working people divided by personal information

Gender: Thai male and female had different opinion level of expenditure per trip (at significant level 0.05) and marketing promotion (at significant level 0.01). Female spent more money for safe and comfortable accommodation. Thai women did not like hostel where they could save money but they might have to stay with the stranger. Due to Thai women allocated more on shopping budget including souvenir, fashion, cosmetic, and dress accessory expenses, they preferred to have seasonal discount on the other expenses. Females intended to travel and take photograph in the famous tourist attraction where they had seen in Facebook/ Instagram/ reviews in website or as they heard from word of mouth. (Table 3)

However, the other personal information such as age, marital status, occupation, education level, monthly income did not have different level of marketing mix affecting traveling abroad. Most Thai tourists who traveled abroad had not been segmented by demographic factor because they had the similar purpose, to had fun and be joyful to the new experience / atmosphere.

Table 3 Hypothesis testing of marketing mix affecting Traveling Abroad of Thai Working People in Bangkok divided by gender.

Marketing mix affecting Traveling Abroad of Thai Working People in Bangkok	\bar{x}		T	t-Prob
	Male	Female		
1. Tourism Product.	4.37	4.37	1.184	0.277
2. Expenditure per trip(excluding shopping expense)	4.09	4.24	6.331	0.012*
3. Channel of contact and reservation	4.35	4.47	0.075	0.785
4. Marketing Promotion	3.76	3.97	12.607	0.000**
5. Service process involved in traveling abroad	4.58	4.58	3.600	0.059
6. Persons involved in traveling abroad	4.57	4.64	2.187	0.140
7. Physical evidence of tourist attraction.	4.42	4.38	0.014	0.907

*At the significant level of 0.05

**At the significant level of 0.01

Comparison level of marketing mix affecting traveling abroad of Thai working people divided by traveling abroad behavior

Popular destination country: Thai people who traveled in Asian countries where took less than 3-hours flight and Oceania countries or various destination had different opinion level in tourism product (at significant level 0.05). Nearby destinations such as Hong Kong, Singapore were popular for shopping and dining whereas Oceania, United of America, European countries were famous in beautiful tourist attraction and distinctive western culture.

Duration of traveling: Thai tourists in 2-4 days trip vs. 5-7 days trip had different opinion level in tourism product and physical evidence (at significant level 0.01). Because particular weather and atmosphere different from Thailand were in the faraway countries, Thai tourist had to spend more days. Some special activity such as watching aurora must be in Scandinavian countries or Russia where took longer period of time to arrive. However, Thai people tended to have shorter period in traveling from 10 nights in 2013, 9.5 nights in 2015 to 9 nights per trip in 2017 (ORC international, 2018) whereas they would increase frequency of traveling.

Travel Companion: Thai tourists who traveled by themselves had different opinion level in persons involved in traveling abroad (at significant level 0.01) from the ones who traveled with

spouse, family or friends. Sole traveler had to do everything by themselves so they requested more details and confirmation from service personnel. On the other hand, group traveler usually depended on the trip leader and they could help each other. And Thai tourists who traveled with friend vs. with family had different opinion level in persons involved in traveling abroad. The family tourists with small children or aging parents might require some service personnel to take care their companions.

In addition, Thai tourists who traveled with their spouse vs. with family or friends had different opinion level in physical evidence of tourist attraction (at significant level 0.05). While group travelers preferred fully facilities such as kitchen, refrigerator in room, hair dryer in bathroom, a couple tourist required private place, dining restaurant, and some challenged facility such as home car.

Table 4 Hypothesis testing of marketing mix affecting Traveling Abroad of Thai Working People in Bangkok divided by traveling abroad behavior.

Marketing mix affecting Traveling Abroad of Thai Working People in Bangkok	F-Prob						
	Popular destination country	Occasion to travel abroad	Duration of traveling	Frequency of traveling	Expenditure per trip	Selected program	Travel Companion
1.Tourism Product.	0.002*	0.189	0.001**	0.180	0.169	0.240	0.857
2.Expenditure per trip(exclude shopping)	0.727	0.623	0.472	0.761	0.525	0.189	0.172
3.Channel of contact and reservation	0.490	0.721	0.600	0.407	0.941	0.185	0.139
4. Marketing Promotion	0.522	0.650	0.274	0.371	0.250	0.003	0.468
5. Service process involved traveling abroad	0.673	0.366	0.326	0.338	0.209	0.524	0.314
6. Persons involved in traveling abroad	0.241	0.422	0.651	0.096	0.992	0.559	0.007**
7. Physical evidence.	0.239	0.326	0.044*	0.470	0.214	0.118	0.039*

*At the significant level of 0.05

**At the significant level of 0.01

Acknowledgement

1. Thai people preferred to communicate in Thai or English language therefore tourist attraction sign, brochure, map and the other media should be in Thai or English.
2. Thai people are sensitive to the manner of persons involved in traveling, both service personnel and local people. Avoid to demonstrate discrimination, inaction gesture, profane manner. Most Thai people are very helpful to foreign tourists in Thailand and they expect to have it back when traveling abroad.
3. Word-of-mouth is the most powerful marketing promotion among Thai people. They also read the reviews from social network and customer comment on website. Thai working people like to share their figures in social media such as Facebook and Instagram therefore travel advertisement should have beautiful figures, showing special activity or unique scene at such tourist attraction.
4. As Thai people enjoy eating and shopping, tourist attractions or accommodations should be surrounded with Thai restaurant, oriental food, local flea market, supermarket, souvenir shop or shopping place.
5. Some Thai people, mostly in baby-boomer generation, do not familiar with self-service system. Service by person is preferably. However, Thai youngster can use new technology especially online application.
6. Installment payment through credit or debit cards for travel program will be attractive to someone who likes to have different experience abroad with higher budget travel program such as traveling to Scandinavian countries to see aurora.
7. Tourist information for preparing need all relevant details about traveling such as the weather, special festival, appropriate dress and shoes, visa application, standard traveling expense, cautions, etc.
8. For tour business, the small group of customer limited only among friends or family as a package tour program should be available. Customization strategy is appropriate for this target customer because it can be focused on program which satisfies everyone.

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