

FACTORS AFFECTING TRAVELERS TO THE WESTERN REGION OF THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

Tourist travel will contribute to many issues such as income, infrastructure development, and generating income for communities in the area, this research is to analysis of factors affecting travel to western Thailand, the research to collect data with the sample group of 402 people who are tourist traveling to the western region of Thailand. The analysis of model showed that it was harmonious consistent with the empirical data of the chi-square value (CMIN/DF) is equal to 1.973 which is less than 2, the level of conformity (GFI), is equal to 0.923 which is greater 0.90 and the CFI value (comparative Fit Index), is equal to 0.967 which is greater 0.90. The root index at the approximate square mean of discrepancy (RMSEA), is equal to 0.049 which is less than 0.08 which is consistent with the empirical data and the results of hypothesis testing which are analysis of casual influences between the talent variables within the image of the attraction. The repeated travel experience, satisfaction, intention of returning on re-tourism and the intention of telling more and including to external latent variables is the re-tourism experience, had statistically significant direct influence at the 0.001, which can tell that, the develop tourism in the western region of Thailand, there has to be an emphasis on experience creating destination image and, gaining satisfaction that impacts revisit intentions and word of mouth on the return journey of both Thai and foreign tourists.

Keyword: Travel, Destination Image, Revisit Intention, Word of Mouth, Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Returning tourists in bulk for cost-effective marketing to the tourist operators and it is in great demand for the tourist industry. Because there is not to create as much marketing intensives as new tourist (Zhang, Fu, Cai & Lu, 2014) such behavior has promoted a stable influence on traveling to Tourist destinations (Lau & Mckercher, 2004) in which domestic travelers or tourists who are different from foreigners are more likely to travel to the same destination in many times compared to foreigners. Domestic tourists consider a second trip from an attraction or experience that have not been signed or traveled from the first visitor at times, re-travel is to travel back to the past or to experience the positive aspects of the place that have been traveled before which sometimes some tourists may have to travel back and travel again if you have been impressed or have enjoyed your destination travel in the first two.

However, those traveling within the country still have problems with service restrictions such as the rest of the trip that will affect the return trip later which is based on the concept of a solution to the problem of relaxation constraints, that is, when you have known an experienced tourism in the past in the next tour or trip (Yang, Isa, Wu, Ramayah & Jermisittiparsert, 2020). Tourists will have limitations or past experiences that they do not want to receive again and will design different leisure needs of individual and sometimes they do not want to get involved in activities in the tourist area again from past experience

(Jackson, 2000). Although some scholars view the limitations of past travel experiences in getting involved in the activities in the tourist area that is not important (Nyaupane, Morais & Graefe, 2002), but sometimes it can affect to the number of travel frequencies back to the original tourism destination which will relate to other subsequent Tourism behaviors as well. Therefore, from the issue of problems from the chance that behavior changes that will affect the return journey of tourists. It is therefore, necessary to have an education to understand the intention on the return trip and informing or introducing Tourist attractions of the western region of Thailand. Hence, it needs to be studied and corrected by rapidly changing behavior of tourists. However, studies of the above will find limitations on destination images, which is what will be cited earlier which is an influence the intentions of returning to ravel (Jackson, 2005), and from the study of issues that are relevant by Chen & Okumus (2013), showed that the image of destination before the re-tourism of non-tourist were negatively related to those compared with those how traveled. There are also some researchers gave a different opinion that relationship between, resting behaviors and what to expect on a return trip that will affect the introduction or impart will be complicated when compared to the group traveling for the first time (Aybar- Damali & McGuire, 2013; Kleiber et al., 2005; Kleiber et al., 2008; McGuire & Norman, 2005) which, if the real problem of the area has been studied, the results may be propose to the possibilities are useful and beneficial to the area (Aybar - Damali & McGuire, 2013; Kleiber et al., 2005).

The aim of this study is to investigate the concept of re-tourism of Thai tourists as well as the satisfaction of tourism that has an effect on talking about the experiences gained from the traveling. Therefore, this article is the application of the study guideline of Chen, et al., (2013), that is the study of the journey back again and the application of the relationships that will arise from word of mouth or suggesting tourist attractions or impressions when traveling to the western region of Thailand through a variable predicting the relationships of the tourism experience, image of attraction and satisfaction in which scholars have provided interesting research results that relationships after traveling, sometimes there will be a good feeling and will be remembered very well. In addition, from past studies it was found that the experience of tourists can affect the image of the destination positively (Kim, Hallab & Kim, 2012) and give rise to the intention of the traveling again (Zhang et al., 2014).

Therefore, from the aforementioned reason, this study aims to develop model of experiences of destination image and satisfaction that affect the intention of word of mouth on the return trip to travel western Thailand and lead to testing his findings on return travel and word of mouth to the tourist area of tourists caused by the behavior of traveling to the tourist attraction before, through experience variables, image of the area and its satisfaction. Therefore, the development of intent and word of mouth model on the return journey through the integration experiences of destination image and satisfaction. It is therefore, something that is used in education for government agencies and business operators related to the tourism industry in the area, the results can be used for further business and area development plans.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Experience, destination image and intention of word of mouth. If talking about tourism, it can be said that depending on the experience that business owners create, gain experience or arise from a place attraction and experience with tourists. There is a study in the literature on the need to create an experience for tourists is very important (Laing, Wheeler, Reeves & Trost, 2014). Holiday destination in particular, are often created to provide an enjoyable and memorable experience (Foster, 2014), for tourists who want to experience from the tourist area which is consistent with the assumptions of what was gained from economic experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), that are based on many tourism purchasing decisions and what results in a decision is based on the idea and socially

generated image of what has been obtained before travelling to the tourist area that is called a compelling or engaging experience (Curtin, 2005) according to Pine & Gilmore (1999). Experience is a psychological process is complex and characterizes intrinsic things through their individual interpretations that are associated with emotions, wisdom and beauty to the place or service that is received including the fun received during the journey (Mei, 2014).

Experienced economy concepts are useful in determining destination locations and give the destination a competitive advantage in each area (Neuhofer & Buhalis, 2014) (Dmitrovic & group, 2009), explained the experiential economy that it is an area that combines consumer and tourism products resulting in a holistic experience and moreover, tourist resources will encourage tourists to have a different tourism experience (Laing et al., 2014; Goldsmith & Tsiotsou, 2012), and that is an important place for tourist to create a different experience (Stamboulis & Skayanis, 2003), has suggested that the experience the on-site experience of the tourist will be related to interaction between tourists and destination where the destination will be what tourists will interpret from experience to be given that varies (Richard, 2001), because if tourists have experience a good deal of tourism in the past, most are willing to pay more money for experience in the same area, but there are activities that can be experienced differently (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), which sometimes travel experience can be used to make a travel program (Fesemmaier & Xiang, 2014).

To experience the concept of Pine and Gilmore (1999), said that destinations will offers an experience that is not the same as everyday life which is sometimes to escape the monotony. There are 3 types of escape that (Oh, Fiore & Jeoung, 2007), states these include escaping to reach different destinations and taking part. Escaping from the same place such as at home to change daily routine escaping to a specific destination that you have chosen on your Trip (Oh et al., 2007). In addition, tourists will be experienced in the form of education that takes place when a traveler learn in enhancing knowledge or skills which will have different contents and the overall dimensions will provide the best travel experience. (Oh et al., 2007; Loureiro, 2014; Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011; Oh et al., 2007), which from the literature review suggests that the experience of tourists will promote intention in direct return visit (Kim et al., 2012). The experience of tourists has an influence on the image creation of the destination (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Kim et al., 2012), that point is a complex combination of products, services and features that make an impression that will benefit from areas that are most often categorized as cognition, such as beliefs, attitudes of the individual regarding the destination, include the emotions that are felt about the destination (Beerli & Martin, 2004) that is considered both a direct and indirect experience (Sommes & Sirakaya, 2002) which indirectly is influenced by the review of intention, through the destination image, Due to the past studies have shown that the image of the destination gives rise to the intention of the word of mouth and travel again (Kim et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2014), from a review of the importance of relevant literature, researcher then determined the hypothesis of the research based on the principles theory which can be summarized as a conceptual framework for the research work in 4 points as follows:

- H1: Experience elements in tourism has direct influence on the image of the tourist attractions in Kanchanaburi Province.*
- H2: Experience elements in tourism has direct influence on the satisfaction of tourist traveling to the study area.*
- H3: Experience elements in tourism has direct influence on word of mouth.*
- H4: Image elements of the Kanchanaburi Province attractions directly influence the intention of the return trip*

The satisfaction of tourists is important to improve the products and services that focus on delivering products to the traveler as important part. The traveler opinions are valuable information for any management and traveler satisfaction (Chuah, 2017), and also gives the idea that the product and service quality are the key factors affecting traveler

satisfaction in word of mouth (Dawi, 2018), which word of mouth is widely recognized as one of the most influential forms of information transmission to Travelers (Martensen & Gromholdt, 2016), that are relevant to the purchasing decisions of tourists or consumers (Shi, Tang, Zhang, Gao, Zhu & Zhu, 2016).

H5: Satisfaction elements has direct influence on the elements of word of mouth intention.

Traveler satisfaction is the key to assessing relationship with market, which is a permanent target of the operating policy and it's key elements in enhancing the reputation of the tourist destination as well as a fundamental approach to the processes that affects satisfaction of tourists will influence the intention of returning to the tourist destination (Chuah, 2017), since it is something that has been greatly affected by obtaining a service that is interpreted as experience and affects the individual traveler satisfaction. The nature of the meaning of receiving different services in different tourist areas. Dawi (2018), including the quality of the people who provide different services which from the nature of the different that will contribute to affects both positive and negative satisfaction that will affect the intention of returning to the tourist attraction in the future.

H6: Satisfaction elements has direct influence on the elements of intention to return to the tourist attraction again.

METHOD

Population and Sample

Tourist who travels to research areas in the western region of Thailand as a tourist destination both nature and culture of this sample group in the study of quantitative study. The researcher chooses an accidental sampling method and determining the number of samples that can represent the population. From finding the sample size by determining the sample group in the questionnaire testing with the sample size number of 42 sets and calculation for value of Partial R_z to estimate the sample size by using the program G*Power which is a program created from formula of Cohen (Cohen, 1977) for approximating the sample with effect size equal to 0.683, calculated from the sample values of 40 sets. Probability of error in a type of lest (OC) is equal to 0.1, the number of predicted variables is equal to 70, test power (1-B) is equal to 0.95 (Cohen, 1962), resulting in a sample size of 402 samples.

Data Collection

Characteristics of the tools used in this research were divided to the nature of research method into 1 type namely, the quantitative research apparatus, which is characterized by the research tools, is divided into 3 parts as follows:

Part 1. Questionnaire on the general status of people traveling in the study area. The nature of questionnaire is a check list form. Part 2. Questionnaire about the opinions towards the issue of this study that consists of 5 components as follows: 1) Experiencing the repeat tourism 2) Image of attraction 3) Experiencing repeated tourism, satisfaction 4) The intention of returning to fraud again 5) The intention of telling others. Which is a rating scale that has the criteria for giving the weight of the assessment at 6 levels, according to the method of Likert Scale. Part 3 Questionnaire on comments and suggestions for western region travel. The researcher has created a questionnaire as follows, check the conformity index verification (IOC), which the results of the audit this review wore between 0.80-1.00. In the part of the question that is in the form of approximate scale question for the value of

Cronbach Alpha (Thanin Sinjaru, 2020), which results of the analysis discrimination in each item. The results were between 0.67 - 2.00 and Corrected Item - Total Correlation, value is between 0.38 - 0.70. The analysis of the confidence of the questionnaire by finding the Alpha Coefficient of Cronbach, the analysis result is equal to 0.96. Data Analysis in this research has an initial process of analyzing the data with descriptive statistics and multivariate statistic with a software package that analyzes the structure equation model (SEM) of the studied issues in which the analysis of the model must be developed through the development of component values or latent variable adjustment to be completed. By using the criteria for considering the assessment with the consistency of the latent variable adjustment that containing value of CMIN-DF, NFI, GFI, CFA, RMSEA (Arbuckle, 2016).

RESULTS

Most of the tourists came to the western region with 140 males, representing 34.84% females 259, representing 64.4% aged between 16-25 years, total 302 people, accounted for 75.1%, followed by age 26-35 years, number 41 people, accounted for 10.2%, have the status of unmarried, total 334 people, representing 83.1 %, followed by a marriage of 62 people and most of them are students with the number of 272 people, representing 67.7%, followed by personal business, number of 54 people, accounted for 13.4% and occupation of private company employees, Total 29 people, representing 7.2%.

Table 1
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL FOR FACTORS AFFECTING TRAVELERS TO THE WESTERN REGION OF THAILAND IN STANDARDIZED ESTIMATE MODE

Variables	Estimate		Variance	R ²	C.R.	P
	Standard	Unstandard				
Experience			0.25			
- Destination Image	0.86	0.96	0.11	0.74	11.03	***
- Satisfaction	0.77	0.20	0.20	0.60	10.32	***
- Word of Mouth	0.23	0.26	0.22	0.57	2.98	
Satisfaction			0.20	0.60		
- Revisit Intention	0.36	0.43	0.25	0.50	5.66	***
- Word of Mouth	0.56	0.67	0.22	0.57	6.98	***
Destination Image			0.11	0.74		
- Revisit Intention	0.41	0.51	0.25	0.50	6.38	***
Word of Mouth			0.22	0.57		***
- WOM1	0.85	1.00	0.19	0.72	N/A	***
- WOM2	0.80	0.94	0.27	0.64	18.49	***
- WOM3	0.84	1.00	0.22	0.70	19.45	***
Revisit Intention			0.25	0.50		
- Revis1	0.83	1.00	0.22	0.70	N/A	***
- Revis2	0.85	1.04	0.21	0.72	19.92	***
- Revis3	0.87	1.06	0.22	0.75	20.61	***
Experience			0.11	0.74		***
- Exp1	0.75	0.95	0.35	0.56	12.58	***
- Exp2	0.76	1.18	0.37	0.57	14.02	

- Exp3	0.72	1.22	0.36	0.52	13.45	***
- Exp4	0.70	1.14	0.44	0.49	13.00	***
- Exp5	0.75	1.11	0.31	0.56	13.89	***
- Exp6	0.71	1.00	0.25	0.50	N/A	***
Destination Image			0.11	0.74		
- Image1	0.60	1.00	0.28	0.36	N/A	***
- Image2	0.69	1.15	0.33	0.47	11.95	***
- Image3	0.67	1.16	0.45	0.45	12.04	***
- Image4	0.66	1.38	0.49	0.43	10.30	***
- Image5	0.72	1.37	0.30	0.52	11.05	***
- Image6	0.74	1.28	0.49	0.54	11.22	***

*** With statistical significance at 0.001 level

Structural equation model analysis results on destination image and satisfaction that affect the intention of word of mouth in returning to travel to western Thailand, consist of 5 latent variables, divided into 1 exogenous latent variable including experiencing re-tourism and endogenous latent variable in the number of 4 characters including the image of the tourist attraction, experiencing re-tourism satisfaction, the intention of returning to travel repeatedly and the intention of word of mouth. The experience elements were found to have variance 0.25 by directly influencing the image of the tourist attraction (standardized Regression Weight) at the weight value of 0.86 with statistical significance at the level 0.001, the correlation of multiples squared (R^2), is 0.74, variance is 0.11 and also direct influences to the elements of satisfaction at the weight value of 0.77 with statistical significance at the level 0.001, the correlation of multiples squared (R^2) is 0.60, variance is 0.20 and also direct influences to the elements at word of mouth at the weight value of 0.23 with statistical significance at the level 0.001, the correlation of multiples squared (R^2) is 0.57, variance is 0.22. The satisfaction elements were found to have variance 0.20 by directly influencing to the elements of intention on returning to tourist attraction at the weight value of 0.36 with statistical significance at the level 0.001, the correlation of multiples squared (R^2) is 0.50, variance is 0.25 and directly influencing to the element of intention of word of mouth at the weight value at 0.56 with statistical significance at 0.001, the correlation of multiples squared (R^2) is 0.57, variance is 0.22. The image of the tourist attraction elements was found to have variance 0.11 by directly influencing to the elements of intention on returning to tourist attraction at the weight value of 0.41 with statistical significance at 0.001, the correlation of multiples squared (R^2) is 0.50, variance is 0.25 as in Table 1.

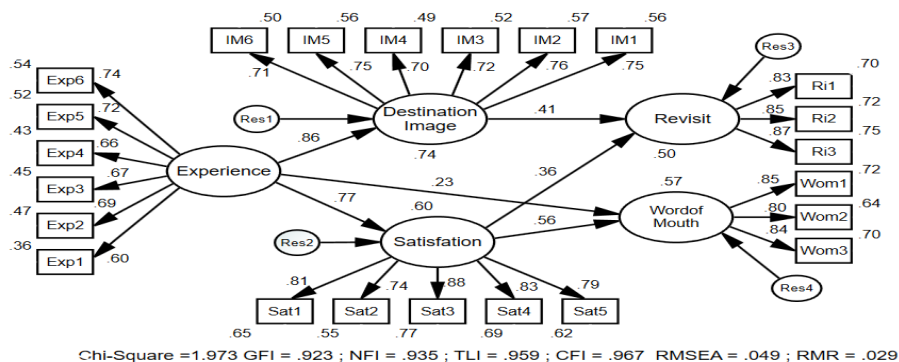


FIGURE 1
STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL

The results of the conformity assessment before the model improvement, found that the probability of chi-square probability level is equal to 0.917, the relative at chi-square value (CMIN/DF) is equal to 3.361, the level of conformity index (GFI) is equal to 0.879 and the root index value of the square mean of the error estimation (NFI) is equal to 0.879, the measure of the suitability level based on the criteria (RMSEA) is equal to 0.077 which in some indicators did not pass the conformity assessment criteria with empirical data or are not consistent enough.

Therefore, the researcher has worked to improve the model by considering the conditions for improvement from consideration at Modification Indices value, according to the instructions of Arbuckle (2016) by considering the value of the result obtained from the package with theoretical principles. This is in order to have all 5 statistical values passed, the structural equation model is considered complete in harmony with the empirical data. So, after updating the model has been completed. Which found that the relative chi-square value (CHIN/DF) is equal to 1.973 that is less than 2, Compliance Index (CFI) is equal to 0.923 which greater than 0.90 and CFI value (Comparative. Fit Index) is equal to 0.967, which is greater than 0.90, the measure of the suitability level based on the criteria (NFI) is equal to 0.935, which is greater than 0.90, the roof index of the square mean of estimation of the error (RMSEA) is equal to 0.049 which is less than 0.08. It was therefore, concluded that all 5 statistics passed the evaluation criteria. So, the experience model on destination image and satisfaction that affect the intention of word of mouth in returning to the western Thailand. Therefore, it is consistent with the empirical data.

The results of hypothesis testing for analyzing the casual influences among the 6 internal hypothesized variables, which is based on the established research hypothesis that is directly influencing with statistical significance at level 0.001, with hypothesis 1, having value of Factor Loading=0.86, H2 : having value of Factor Loading=0.77, H3 : having value of Factor Loading=0.23, H4 : having value of Factor Loading=0.36, H5 : having value of Factor loading=0.56 and H6 : having value of Factor Loading=0.41

DISCUSSION

The important issues found from the research results and presented the issue for discussion by the relevant research papers are cited, supported or given different reasons as follows details.

The experiences of choosing the Thai tourists to travel to the area is very important, because of what has been developed as a tourist experience will after the decision of the travel choice next time. Which is consistent with the concept of Otto & Ritchie, (1996) that the tourist experience is a state of mind and the feeling that tourists are involved in receiving services. Because tourists will have experience enjoy in touching the atmosphere of the design, decorate and create the pattern of the attractions to stand out of each place or business (Neuhofner & Buhalis, 2014; Dmitrovic, et al., 2009). This is to attract tourists to make them feel the impression of their trip or use a service, which may be because the western region of Thailand is a tourist destination that has new and interesting activities and can Travel in all seasons.

Image of the choice of Thai tourists traveling it is the results of the tourists' perception of the image of tourist attractions in different western regions, each of which is beautiful and unique, resulting in more and more tourists or people pay more and more attention to attract. Especially the place that has a novelty which corresponds to Echtner & Ritchie (2003), said that the image of tourist attraction is an impression picture or images that are remembered per place or remember about a place, and are consistent with the research of Chi & Qu (2008), said that the image of tourist attraction affects the satisfaction and loyalty of tourists who will return to travel again (Loureiro, 2014). So it can be concluded that the image play an important role in making Thai tourists choose to Travel because of the western

region has a wide variety of attractions and attractions with both natural and cultural attractions.

Satisfaction tourists are very satisfied with their travels in the western region, because of the activities during the trip and has also been fulfilled by the travelling. The tourists feel impressed with the atmosphere of the beauty of the tourist attraction which is consistent with the study result of Quintal & Polczynski (2010), said that satisfaction is associated with a multidimensional perception of attraction, for example the perception of quality and value that results in satisfaction (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2016). This will affect the intention to return to travel again in the future.

Intention to return tourism according to the study, it was found that the tourist were impressed with their visual experience and satisfaction with tourist attractions which affect the decision to travel again. This is a good thing on the issue of marketing that does not require new customers because it creates an impression through style or activities that tourists have done in tourist attractions until it creates an impression and affects a decision to travel back to the western region. Which the study results are consistent with Pyo, Uysal & Chang (2002), gives the idea that the tourist attractions are beautiful, the sights are safe, it has a very serious influence on the intention of repeated tourism and in addition, Katreeya Pantana (2014) also gave an interesting point in the issue of satisfaction from the result of the research that tourists who will come to travel repeatedly is the tourist, who are most impressed with the service factor. From the results of the study are consistent in the western region, due to the fact that in the travel tourist, the results of the study showed that the tourist has been an unforgettable experience from the tourist attraction in the western region especially Kanchanaburi Province, which from the aforementioned reasons.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, it can be concluded that the strategic planning for the tourists to return to the western region of Thailand consists of the importance of experience, satisfaction and image of the tourist attraction. That affects word-of-mouth and will make tourists have the intention of traveling back to travel again. This is due to the fact that tourists can feel the relaxation. There is the enjoyment of tourism in the western region. And the western region has a good image. The eyes of tourists are reflected by the environment that will result in recommending other tourists to travel, including those who have traveled to have a feeling of wanting to return. Again in the future. Further research should study guidelines to improve the quality of attractions or the quality tourism of the western region, increasing tourism potential and that might potentially leading to become a sustainable tourism region of Thailand.

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