

ปัจจัยที่ส่งผลต่อพฤติกรรมการซื้อของนักท่องเที่ยว ชาวอาเซียนในประเทศไทย

FACTORS AFFECTING PURCHASING BEHAVIOR OF ASEAN TOURISTS IN THAILAND

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** ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ และปริญญาเอก รองคณบดีฝ่ายหลักสูตรและเครือข่ายนานาชาติ วิทยาลัยบริหารธุรกิจ นวัตกรรม และการบัญชี มหาวิทยาลัยธุรกิจบัณฑิต

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บทคัดย่อ

ข้อมูลจากการท่องเที่ยวแห่งประเทศไทยระบุว่า มีจำนวนนักท่องเที่ยวจากประเทศอาเซียนที่เดินทางมาประเทศไทยเพิ่มขึ้นอย่างต่อเนื่องถึง 8.6 ล้านคนในปีพ.ศ. 2559 ปรากฏการณ์นี้มีบทบาทสำคัญในการขับเคลื่อนอุตสาหกรรมเกี่ยวเนื่องอื่นๆ เช่น ธุรกิจการบิน และเศรษฐกิจของประเทศไทย เพื่อรักษาสถานะเชิงบวกนี้ไว้ จึงอาจจำเป็นต้องศึกษาพฤติกรรมการซื้อและปัจจัยต่างๆ ที่มีอิทธิพลต่อพฤติกรรมการซื้อของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวอาเซียนในประเทศไทย เช่น ปัจจัยส่วนบุคคลและพฤติกรรมการค้นหาข้อมูลด้วยสื่อสังคมออนไลน์ งานวิจัยเชิงสำรวจนี้ใช้การสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบโควต้าและใช้แบบสอบถามในการเก็บข้อมูลจากนักท่องเที่ยวชาวอาเซียนในประเทศไทยจำนวน 100 คนจาก 5 ประเทศ ได้แก่ กัมพูชา ลาว เมียนมาร์ มาเลเซีย และฟิลิปปินส์ ทำการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้สถิติพรรณนาและทดสอบสมมติฐานโดยใช้สถิติไคสแควร์ (X^2 -test)

ผลจากการวิจัยพบว่าผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามส่วนใหญ่มีสถานภาพโสด เป็นเพศหญิง และมีรายได้เฉลี่ยต่อเดือนอยู่ที่ 500-1,000 ดอลลาร์สหรัฐอเมริกา ผลการทดสอบสมมติฐานพบว่า นักท่องเที่ยวชาวอาเซียนที่มีความแตกต่างกันในด้านประชากรศาสตร์ เช่น เพศ อายุ และเชื้อชาติจะมีพฤติกรรมการซื้อขณะท่องเที่ยวที่แตกต่างกัน เช่น ระยะเวลาที่พักและค่าใช้จ่ายเฉลี่ยต่อครั้ง นอกจากนี้ยังพบว่า มีความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างพฤติกรรมการค้นหาข้อมูลโดยใช้สื่อสังคมออนไลน์ (เฟสบุ๊คและอินสตาแกรม) และพฤติกรรมการท่องเที่ยวของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวอาเซียนในประเทศไทยอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ 0.05

คำสำคัญ: นักท่องเที่ยวชาวอาเซียนในประเทศไทย พฤติกรรมการค้นหาข้อมูลด้วยสื่อสังคมออนไลน์ พฤติกรรมการซื้อของนักท่องเที่ยว

Abstract

Department of Tourism of Thailand indicates that tourists' arrivals from ASEAN countries to Thailand have been increasing up to 8.6 million in 2016. This phenomenon is significant in driving several related industries e.g. airlines business and the Thai economy. To maintain this positive circumstance, we might need to address the purchasing behavior and its possible influencing factors e.g. socio-demographic profiles and the social media search behavior of ASEAN tourists who travel to Thailand. This study is a survey research using a quota sampling and questionnaires to collect data from one-hundred tourists of five ASEAN countries including Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia and the Philippines who travelled to Thailand. Data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics and the hypotheses were tested by using Chi-Square (X^2 -test).

This study found majority of respondents are single, female and earn average monthly income of 500-1,000 USD. Results of hypothesis testing revealed that ASEAN tourists in Thailand who have different socio-demographic profiles e.g. gender, age and nationality are likely to be different in terms of their purchasing behavior e.g. length of stay and average spending amount per trip. Moreover, we found that there is a significant relationship between social media search behavior (by Facebook and YouTube platforms) and purchasing behavior of ASEAN tourists in Thailand at significant level of 0.05.

Keywords: ASEAN Tourists in Thailand, Social Media Search Behavior, Tourist's Purchasing Behavior

Introduction

Thailand is one of the world’s most popular tourism destinations, considered as Asian’s top tree tourist destination by the World Tourism Organization Report (2017). A tourism industry is one of a major driver of Thai economy (Thiumsak & Ruangkanjanases, 2016). The continuous growth of Thai tourism has played significant role in the Thai economy in recent years, boosting several related industries such as airlines business and hospitality and helps compensate for the weak growth in other sectors (Olivier Languépin, 2017). In 2016, Thailand has been visited by 32.7 million foreign visitors generating 2.52 trillion Baht (Sritama, 2017a).

Table 1 showed that arrivals from ASEAN countries to Thailand were 8.6 million. Tourists from Malaysia remained the largest group with 3.5 million visitors following by Laos, Singapore and Vietnam with numbers of tourists of 1.4, 0.9 and 0.8 million people, respectively. The fastest growing arrivals of ASEAN tourists in Thailand were Myanmar, which increased by 31.56% and Cambodian, which increased by 27.65% (Department of Tourism, 2016).

Table 1: Number of ASEAN tourists in Thailand in 2016

Nationality	2016P	2015	Change %
Brunei	14,032	13,836	+1.42
Cambodia	686,682	537,950	+27.65
Indonesia	535,625	469,125	+14.18
Laos	1,409,456	1,220,522	+15.48
Malaysia	3,533,826	3,418,855	+3.36
Myanmar	341,641	259,678	+31.56
Philippines	339,486	310,968	+9.17
Singapore	966,909	938,385	+3.04
Vietnam	830,394	751,162	+10.55
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>8,658,051</i>	<i>7,920,481</i>	<i>+9.31</i>

Source: Department of Tourism (2016)

Social media is a revolution in the world of communicating, and helps to listen to customer suggestions and complaints to react immediately. A huge portion of travelers search and collect information shared by others travel experiences from their trips. Facebook, Twitter, blogs, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube are some of the famous online platform to do marketing (Neti, 2011).

Internet, digital, social media and mobile activity in Southeast Asia is experiencing a rapid growth with over 370 million internet users and social media penetration up to 55% of the total population in January 2018 (ASEAN up, 2018). The development of information and communication technologies and their increasing use has radically changed the relationship between the destination and travelers. The growing role of social media in tourism is undeniable so the use of social media to market destinations is likely to be an excellent strategy (Kirářová & Pavlířeka, 2015).

It was claimed that aggressive marketing campaign is a key factor of Thailand being marked as a favorite destination among international travelers" (Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), 2017). TAT has implemented marketing policies by using digital marketing and social media as a marketing tool to promote the positive image of Thailand and sustain the strength of Thai tourism as well as exchanging information and viewpoints among users. Moreover, the TAT has been running public relations via online communities and developing presentation strategies through social media channel, such as Instagram, Google+ and Pinterest (Pichaya Svasti, 2012).

Although the TAT has been launching several aggressive social media marketing to make Thailand appeal to new markets and expand customer base online, there is no academic research study particular in factors of social media search behavior affecting the growth of ASEAN tourists in Thailand. Thus, the researcher tends to find out the effects and contributions of social media search behavior and socio-demographic factors on purchasing behavior of ASEAN tourists in Thailand.

This study aims to test whether there are relationships between socio-demographic profiles, social media search behavior and purchasing behavior of ASEAN tourists in Thailand. Therefore, this study proposed two hypotheses as follows:

H1: ASEAN tourists in Thailand who have different socio-demographic profiles will have different purchasing behavior.

H2: There is a significant relationship between social media search behavior and purchasing behavior of ASEAN tourists in Thailand.

Investigating Constructs

This study addresses the purchasing behavior of ASEAN tourists in Thailand. The proposed factors of socio-demographic profiles and social media search behavior were used to examine the relationship with purchasing behavior of ASEAN tourists in Thailand. The definitions of key terms in this study are described as follows:

- **ASEAN Tourists** - travelers or visitors who come from Southeast Asia region. This research focuses on 5 ASEAN countries from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia and the Philippines. (Not expats or students who are living in Thailand)
- **Socio-demographic Profile** – characteristics of ASEAN tourists in particular gender, age, status, educational level, occupation, monthly income, nationality, and religion.
- **Social Media Search Behavior** – social media platform that ASEAN tourists use to search for travel information including Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, Twitter, Line App, and WhatsApp.
- **Purchasing Behavior** – is defined as ASEAN tourist purchasing behavior based on selected elements of the 6W's 1H concept (Who, What, When, Where, Who participated, Why and How) (Kotler & Keller, 2006). These are a type of attractions (What), preferred destination (Where), period for visiting (How), frequency of visiting (How), length of stay (How), spending during visiting (How), travel parties (Who participated) and purpose of travelling (Why).

To further understand the relationship between socio-demographic profiles, social media search behavior and purchasing behavior in marketing and tourism context, the following relevant studies have been reviewed. A study of Dardis et al., (1981) and Goodall & Ashworth (1988) revealed that socio-demographic characteristics, such as age, income, education, and occupation, were important factors in describing household recreation expenditure behavior and influencing the formation of the tourist images and perceptions of the travel experience. Moreover, a study of Lepisto and Damonte (1994) found that age was a discriminating demographic variable that influenced destination choices, while Zimmer, Brayley and Searle (1995) identified that income and education affected travellers' decision when choosing destinations. The study suggested that travellers who are better educated and have more disposable income tend to travel farther from home.

In addition, a study of White (2010) used content analysis and semiotics of travel related photos published in Facebook. She suggested that certainly photos generate interest from friends, and identified that photos published are of two types, including human subjects and not including, suggesting that portraying humans are likely to attract a comment from a friend rather than those without humans, claiming that "one person's travel snapshots can very easily become part of another person's travel plans Bilal, Ashfaq, and Shahzad (2014) also showed that media and social networking has an impact on consumer decision making. The study showed that social networks had a positive impact on consumer's behavior, in addition to the positive population interaction with virtual community of the social media. It also highlighted the importance of raising awareness, consumer loyalty and trust.

Methodology

The research is a survey research design that uses a self-administrative questionnaire to collect data from respondents. The research adopted quota and convenience sampling method by distributing questionnaire to ASEAN tourists in Thailand who were in Suvarnabhumi Airport during 15th January – 28th February 2018. The respondents are from five out of ten ASEAN countries including Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Malaysia and the Philippines, 20 samples from each country in hope to ensure there will be low sampling bias. They were not expats or students who are living in Thailand. Due to the number of population is unknown, the researcher use Taro Yamane table to calculate by the approximately sample size for this study (Poldongnok 2009). The 384 samples at 5% sampling error is suggested according to Taro Yamane (1967), however this study collected data from 100 samples due to a limited research operation period. This is also one of the limitations in this study which can be rectified by conducting with larger sample size. Similar to the study of Nongbunnak et. Al., (2018) and Nop et. Al., (2018), these studies collected data from 100 samples.

Data has performed normal distribution with $-1 < \text{Skewness} < 1$ and $-2 < \text{Kurtosis} < 2$ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Data was analyzed using descriptive statistic and Pearson's Chi-Square (X^2 -test) was used to test the relationship between demographic profiles, social media search behavior and purchasing behavior of ASEAN Tourist in Thailand at the confidence level of 95% or $\alpha < 0.05$.

Results and Discussion

This study collected data from ASEAN tourists in Thailand who were at Suvarnabhumi Airport from 15th January – 28th February 2018. ASEAN tourists were five out of ten ASEAN countries including Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Malaysia and the Philippines. Questionnaires were distributed to 130 respondents and 100 responses were received and all were used in data analysis, hence a response rate of 76.92% was achieved.

Respondents are tourists from ASEAN countries as expected consisting of 20 tourists (20%) from each of the five countries: Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia and Philippines. Most of them are single (61%), female (54%), age between 18-35 years old (65%), and have bachelor's degree (60%). They mostly work in private companies (30%) and earn average monthly income of \$500-1,500 USD (41%) and are Buddhist (55%). Most respondents agreed that searching information, reviewing posted comments, perception of advertised package and promotion, and watching shared viral video from social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube have an impact on their decisions to travel to Thailand. However, social media search behavior from Instagram, Twitter, Line APP and WhatsApp didn't influence the purchasing behavior of ASEAN tourists in Thailand. ASEAN tourists in Thailand mostly visited Bangkok as their favorite destination. They were likely to go to shopping mall followed by visiting natural sites. The visit frequency of the respondents were 2-4 times in their life, staying around 3-7 nights per a trip with the spending budget of \$200-1,000 USD. Most of them travel to Thailand for their holidays and leisure with their friends and families. The results of hypothesis testing can be discussed as follows:

H1*: ASEAN tourists in Thailand who have different socio-demographic profiles will have different purchasing behavior.

Table 2: Result of H1: Relationship between Socio- Demographic Factors and Purchasing Behavior

Socio-Demographic Factors	Purchasing Behavior of ASEAN tourists in Thailand						
	Type of Attraction	Frequency of Visiting	Length of Stay	Spending Budget	Period for Visiting	Travel Party	Purpose of Visiting
Gender	-	-	-	-	-	.013*	-
Age	-	-	.017*	.007*	-	.015*	.022*
Status	-	-	-	-	-	.002*	.022*
Education Level	-	.001*	-	-	-	-	-
Occupation	-	-	-	.036*	-	-	-
Monthly Income	-	-	.020*	.000*	-	-	-
Nationality	.001*	.000*	-	-	.023*	.041*	-
Religion	.004*	.026*	-	-	.004*	-	-

Note: Significant at $p < 0.05$

With regard to hypothesis 1 in Table 2, the study found that there is a partial relationship between demographic profiles and purchasing behavior of ASEAN tourists in Thailand. The findings showed that different gender was not found significant relationship with purchasing behavior except travel party of ASEAN tourists in Thailand. Male tended to travel with family (34.8%), while female were more travelling with friends (46.3%). The result was in line with a study of Moscardo (2004) which found that gender is not a significant factor in segmenting shopper.

Moreover the results showed that ASEAN tourist from different age, occupation and monthly income have different purchasing behavior on spending during visiting Thailand in each time. Tourists with average income between \$500-1,500 USD were likely to spend \$200-1000 USD (75.61%). In contrast tourists who has average income over \$2,500 USD were likely to spend more than \$2,000 USD (47.1%). The results was in line with the study of Poldongnok (2009) which reveal that customers with different age, occupation and monthly income have different behavior on spending amount in each time and average money spending at Major Karaoke in Bangkok.

The study has also found significant relationship between demographic profiles such as education level, nationality, religion and purchasing behavior on type of attraction and visit frequency. Based on the result, tourists from Cambodia, Myanmar and Malaysia tended to visit shopping mall (55.0%) while Laos tended to visit natural sites (45.0%). However, tourists from the Philippines tended to visit cultural sites and temple in Thailand (45.0%). This finding was not in line with a study of Chang (2006) who studied the characteristics of tourists who visited the Rakai tribal which reveal that it there is no conclusive remark regarding the role of demographic factors in explaining tourists’ travel activities.

H2*: There is a significant relationship between social media search behavior and purchasing behavior of ASEAN tourists in Thailand.

Table 3: Result of H2: Relationship between Social Media Search Behavior of Purchasing Behavior

Social Media Search Behavior	Purchasing Behavior of ASEAN tourists in Thailand						
	Attraction type	Frequency of Visiting	Length of Stay	Spending Budget	Period for Visiting	Travel Party	Purpose of Visiting
Facebook							
Travel information search	.035*	-	-	.021*	-	.042*	-
Positive comments	-	-	-	.020*	-	-	-
Tour package promotions	-	-	-	.006*	-	-	-
Tourism viral video	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
YouTube							
Travel information search	-	-	-	.001*	-	-	-
Positive comments	-	-	-	.012*	-	-	-
Tour package promotions	-	-	-	.000*	-	-	-
Tourism viral video	.015*	-	-	.022*	-	-	-

Note: Significant at P<0.05

With regards to hypothesis 2 in Table 3, the study revealed that there is a partial relationship between social media search behavior and purchasing behavior of ASEAN tourists in Thailand. For example, there is a significant relationship between travel information search by Facebook and a type of attraction ($P < 0.035$); for instance, the majority of the respondents agreed that they use Facebook as a tool to search for information about type of attraction such as shopping mall (61.1%). This result was in line with a research of Cox et al. (2009) who found that social media are predominantly used for information search purposes before the trip and social media has become increasingly important in planning vacations of tourists. In addition, there is also a significant relationship between tourism viral video shared on YouTube and spending during visiting ($P < 0.022$). For instance, most respondents agreed that Tourism viral video posted on YouTube could motivate them to visit Thailand tended to spend approximately \$200-1,000 USD (51.7%). This result was in line with Gretzel, Yoo & Purifoy (2007) who found that online reviews and rating websites help to increase travellers' confidence during decision making because travelers read reviews through various stages of travel planning-pre, during and post trip.

Implication of the study

1. Based on the results that majority of the respondents were in the ages range between 18-35 years old, holding bachelor's degree, mostly worked in private companies and earned average monthly income of \$500-1,500 USD; This implies that ASEAN tourists from these 5 countries, including Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia and Philippines who are young to mid ages range with bachelor's degree and medium income could be major target groups for Thailand tourist industry. Thus, to gain more tourists to Thailand, tourist companies or related parties should be the first priority when implementing marketing strategies and allocating marketing budgets.
2. The research findings showed that different nationalities are likely to be differed in tourist destination choices. Tourists from Myanmar, Cambodia and Malaysia preferred to visit shopping mall in Thailand while tourists from Laos tended to visit natural site. However, tourists from the Philippines were interested in visiting cultural sites and temples. These results will benefits tourism companies and also TAT in order to better specify the right marketing strategies for particular countries.
3. We also found that during the rainy season, there are very few ASEAN tourists travelled to visit Thailand. In order to encourage ASEAN tourists to travel more during this season, both tourism companies and governments should launch privilege campaigns and promotions for ASEAN tourists for example the cheap flight ticket with 5 stars accommodations for family travellers.
4. This study indicates that ASEAN tourists are more relying on Facebook's Pages and friends' comments on Facebook as well as watching videos and reading comments on YouTube. Thus, Tourism Authority of Thailand might adopt this finding to define proper marketing strategies for the growth of tourism in provincial level and also for the sustainable development of tourism in Thailand.

5. This study also showed that some popular social apps like Instagram, Line App, WhatsApp and Twitter are not effective to tourists in ASEAN countries. Based on the results of the research, they don't use these apps to search for travel information and don't have an impact of purchasing behavior during visiting Thailand. Thus, tourism companies, marketers, and TAT officers should not invest much in advertising or running campaigns on these social media tools.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Study

There are few limitations which should be considered when generalizing the findings of this study and may give room for future study as follows:

1. This study collected data from 100 respondents in only 5 out of 10 ASEAN countries including Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Philippines. In order to increase a generalization power of the reliable results, future studies should expand to conduct with tourists from 10 ASEAN countries, also in a larger sample size from each country.
2. Future studies may conduct an examination at the particular destination from the top list destinations found in this study individually such as shopping mall and specific natural attraction. Such the study may help to reveal the insight factors affecting traveling decision of tourists to that particular destination. It will be helpful information for local organization to develop tailored marketing strategies for that specific destination, hence better capture tourists' need.
3. Future studies may explore others factors influencing purchasing behavior of ASEAN tourists in Thailand such as destination image, marketing mix and another social media tools such as TripAdvisor, and mobile application so that the findings of future research can provide alternative marketing strategies that could be used as guidelines for marketers and related tourism organizations.
4. Future studies may conduct this study model in other country in ASEAN based on the growth rate ranking of tourist arrival numbers to Thailand such as Myanmar and Cambodia. Such the study may help to identify specific factors affecting tourists' decision from different countries. Thus, marketer shall be able to better customize proper marketing strategies for different tourist's need.

In conclusion, the results of this study might benefit local tourism authorities, tourism companies as well as stakeholders in tourism industries of Thailand. Findings can be served as guidelines to improve their marketing strategies that better capture the rapid changes in the tourism market in Thailand and hence be able to better satisfy the needs of ASEAN tourists in Thailand.

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