

ABSTRACT

This study contains four major objectives. **First** is to study forms and behaviors of old markets: European and Japanese and emerging markets: Chinese and South Korean in Thailand (totally 6,081 samples) including those countries in Mekong sub-region (998 samples in Cambodia, 841 samples in Lao PDR and 782 samples in Vietnam). **Second** is to study family travelers behavior (from 1,750 international tourists). **Third** is to study resident opinion toward tourism development and foreign tourists' behavior in the four destinations (1,470 samples) and perceive value of tourism impact in Phuket, Chiang Mai, Pattaya, and Pai. The **last** objective is to study behaviors of Thai people's economical trips (503 samples). The tools of this study are questionnaire for international tourists and residents including in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs. The process of data analysis consists of descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Model (SEM) in order to study the causal relationship of different models.

It is found that the most important image of Thailand as perceived by foreign tourists are social atmosphere and the relaxing way of Thai lifestyle. The old tourist markets were more satisfied comparing to the emerging markets. All tourist market groups are highly loyal to traveling to Thailand. The Chinese tourists have not encountered more deception than the tourists from other countries. Additionally, the Chinese tourists are greater daily spenders than other groups of tourists.

The study in Laos PDR found that the tourists are most satisfied with hospitality while eco-tourism impression purposely delivered by the government has not been effective. In spite of this Cambodia is superior regarding world heritage while Vietnam possesses a variety of impressions with no distinguished aspects.

The study of family travelers discovers that such tourists are mostly Asians followed by Europeans. Most of them organized their own visit rather than contacting a tour

agency. These tourists are significantly attracted by the social atmosphere, culture, food and prices.

The research related to the local's perception about the tourism impact in 4 major destinations namely show that local residents has different perceptions referring to the attractions development. The positive economic effects are mostly considered in every tourist spot.

According to the study of domestic tourism, economical tourists take short-trip sightseeing. They prefer natural attractions and lower daily expenditures than Chiang Mai's standard. However, such tourists can be an important market because the groups are rather large and they make three trips per year. They are therefore present a good potential for distributing income to the tourism community.

This study also provides policy recommendations on destination images and destination management.

Key Word: Tourism Image, Family Travelers, Resident Opinion, Perceive Value of Tourism Impact, Economic Tourists