

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the theories and literature that are relevant to the two main variables of this study; the independent variables and dependent variables, which build up significantly a conceptual model of this research. Additionally, the related studies are reviewed to support this research. Any gaps that can be filled by the current research are indicated. The key areas represented in the literature are as follow:

1. Holidays and Festivals - Songkran Holidays
2. Tourist Behaviors
3. Influence for festival experiences
4. Theory of Decision-making

Holidays and Festivals – Songkran Holidays

By definition, holidays were a time that was free from work and routine things. Gram (2005) emphasized that “A holiday, in general, is defined as a distinct break away from everyday life, routines and chores; happy times that fly, and a time you long for.”

Festival was “a time of feasting or celebration; an anniversary day of joy, civil or religious” (Webster, 1913).

Festivals were known as the fast growing types of the world leisure tourism industry. They can be found in a variety of size in the communities around the country. Li, Huang and Cai (2009) emphasized that festivals could expand the tourist season of destination which affected positively in economic benefits (Park, Reisinger and Kang. 2008). Also, it encouraged educational and cultural opportunities in order to foster sustainable development in terms of natural, social and cultural environments. Moreover, it helped to contribute the feeling of community pride particularly to new generations (Park, Reisinger and Kang. 2008).

Li, Huang and Cai (2009) explained that there were many studies about festivals. One was about attendee motivation. The first academic study was in 1988 by Ralston and Crompton. The study was taken with visitors who attended the Dickens on

the Strand Festival in Galveston, Texas. They adopted a set of 48 motivation statements from the literature on leisure motivation which cover the factors of “stimulus seeking, family togetherness, social contact, meeting or observing new people, learning and discovery, escape from personal and social pressures, and nostalgia”(Li, Huang and Cai. 2009). Also, they tried to delicate demographic factors which share the same motivation; “age, income, and family group type” (Li, Huang and Cai. 2009). The outcome of the study found that “the motivation dimensions were generic across all groups” (Ralston and Crompton, in Getz, 1991 as cited in Li, Huang and Cai, 2009).

This literature provided the significant view on this study in terms of the factors influencing on decision making on festival. It was applicable to the Songkran experience.

Another article reviewed focused on the Thai festival called “The Tenth Month Merit-Making Festival (TMMF)” (McDowall, 2010). This was a local festival held in Nakhon Si Thammarat (NT), a province in the south of Thailand. The origin of this festival came from the Hindu-Buddhist belief about reincarnation and Karma, which if people had good behavior, they would get merit. This merit could be accrued by family and friends through making merit to monk at the temple in the tenth lunar month (McDowall, 2010). Therefore, during this period, people went to the temple making merit to the monks in order to dedicate the merit to their deceased ancestors. This showed the sense of unity among community members when they went to the temple to do religious activity all together (McDowall, 2010). Besides the religious ceremony, people also celebrated this festival with folk music, dance and food. One more significant thing of this festival was people who were away from home would come back to visit their family and friends as family reunion. When they brought their children to the festivals, it was the way to educate their children to be proud and loyal to their hometown (McDowall, 2010).

Even though it was a local festival in the south of Thailand, this festival and Songkran holidays had many traditions and values in common in term of traditional way of celebration and cultural values behind the traditional activities, which was the important information on this study.

1. Songkran Holidays

Songkran Holidays (Thai: สงกรานต์) was recognized as the most important and grandest holidays in Thailand. It used to be celebrated officially as New Year's Day until 1941 before the international New Year's Day was adopted. It was a time for family reunion like Christmas (Pattaya Daily News, 2011). They participate in activities with their family (Wipawapinyoo, 2001).

The word 'Songkran' was from Sanskrit language. It meant 'to pass', which implies the moving of the sun and other planets into one of the zodiacal orbits (ThailandLife, 2010). The festival date was primarily set by astrological calculation between 13 and 15 April. The festival was influenced from Indians (Tourism Thailand, 2010). As during the festival was the best season of India which was known as spring, it was a moment that agriculturists were free from their regular work in order to pay respect to their ancestors. In Thailand, it was the value of family (Office of the National Culture Commission, 2009). Family members used this opportunity to go back home gathering in order to express the respect to their elders, made merits together for their ancestors (Wipawapinyoo, 2001). Also, it was the value of society to create the unity because it was an opportunity to meet and enjoy the joyful activities together and the value for society to originate social collaboration to clean houses, temple and other public places (Office of the National Culture Commission, 2009). Eventually, the value of religion (Office of the National Culture Commission, 2009) was created through merit making, Dhamma practice and also Buddha images-bathing during Songkran festival (AmericanThai, 2010).

2. Traditional activities in Songkran festival

As the festival was originally the family time and also New Year, the typical activities were about family gathering and doing good things for good luck on New Year. The activities began in early morning; people dressed up in their best attire and went to the temple with their family (Rattanamontri, 2003). They prepared the best varieties of food and made merit by offering those foods to monks (Office of the National Culture Commission, 2009). After that, they released freely the animals such as birds, turtles and fish because a long time ago, before the period of Songkran, fish was too small to eat due to the droughty weather so that people kept the animals at home until there were more water during Songkran, and then, released them to their

nature (Rattanamontri, 2003). This tradition had evolved time by time until now. Further, people also released birds and turtles as an act of merit-making (Office of the National Culture Commission, 2009).

Paying homage to the ancestors was another traditional activity in order to pass on merits to them (Office of the National Culture Commission, 2009). In the old days, Thai didn't bring ashes of dead people back home but buried it under the tree in the monastery and monks were asked to perform the rite over there. This rite was not Indian influence but local because Indian people released ashes in the river (Koh Samui, 2011).

The significant part of the day was to pay respect to their elders by pouring Nam Ob (scented water) over their hands and in return they wished the younger for good luck, prosperity and happiness (Office of the National Culture Commission, 2009). After that, the younger ones brought a new set of cloths and personal belongings. Then they gave the elders those stuff to get dress along with the traditional candles, joss sticks and flowers in order to pay the highest respect to them (Wipawapinyoo, 2001).

The bathing ceremony for Buddha images was the traditional honor that Buddhists made homage to the Buddha and blessings for New Year (Office of the National Culture Commission, 2009). Firstly, people made an offering of flowers, candles, and incense sticks to the Buddha images and then poured a little quantity of the scented water on the hands of the Buddha image (Thailand Life, 2010). The ceremonial bath was also for monk particularly the chief monk since in the past time and also in the remote villages today, a monk is implied as a leading personage in the community life and also the teacher and adviser with wide knowledge and experience. Furthermore, he combined the role of doctor and astrologer. After bathing rite, the abbot gave sermon to people and blessed them for a good luck (TourismThailand, 2011).

Splashing of water normally started in the afternoon. It was primarily a way to pay respect to people (Office of the National Culture Commission, 2009). The water implied the washing all of the bad luck away. It was sometimes filled with scented water (Wipawapinyoo, 2001). People used the water that had been poured over the Buddha images as "blessed" water pouring gently on their shoulder in order to

give good luck to them and their family. Among young people, the holiday was also the fun time to relieve the heat, since April was the hottest month in Thailand. Some days the temperatures could rise up to 100°F or 40°C (Tourism Thailand, 2011).

Another interesting activity in this festival was when people carried sand into the monastery's premise in order to remunerate the sand that they had carried away on their feet before, and the monastery could use it for construction or restoration in the future (Office of the National Culture Commission, 2009). The sand was built into pagoda-shape and decorated with colorful flags (Rattanamontri, 2003). During this time, it was a chance to gather all the people to look after their holy places by cleaning the buildings and the area around the temple as merit acting and it demonstrated the unity of the community as well (Office of the National Culture Commission, 2009).

Moreover, in each community, there were also its own entertaining activities such as folk performances and traditional games for enjoyment including Miss Songkran Contest in which young women presented themselves through their beauty and special talents and the judgment was conducted from the audience (Office of the National Culture Commission, 2009).

Songkran was also the opportunity to stop bad behavior and do good things as New Year resolutions. On the eve of Songkran, it was a time for giving their home a whole cleaning and renewal as the belief that bad things that belonging to the old year would go away with the dirt and old stuff (Tourism Thailand, 2010).

3. Today's activities in Songkran Festival

Many activities in this festival have been changed over time. Thais today were more likely to spend this holiday individually, particularly people in Bangkok because of the change of family structure. Thai families have changed in character from extended families to nuclear families (Jaichalard, 2006). Many nuclear families spent a holiday with their members without going for family reunion. Single people were likely to spend a holiday alone or with friends instead of their family such as traveling to upcountry or abroad to escape routine life or seek for a new adventure (Kim et al, 2003). Dailynews (2012) reported that many Thais wanted to go abroad during Songkran Holidays. China, Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore are popular destination in 2012 due to the distance terms. Nevertheless, some people spent the

time at home watching series, reading a book or sometimes going out for shopping, eating and seeing the movie alone (Dailynews, 2012). Rojanaprapayon (2006) mentioned that Thais particularly in Bangkok were likely to eat outside more because buying fresh food to cook took them time more than buying cooked food or eating out.

Also, the traditional activities of the festival today had changed in character. New generations emphasized on fun and water-splashing rather than the traditional aspects. The throwing of water became like water war (ThaiTourism, 2011). Water players wandered the road with water guns, or stood at the side of street with water container and splashed over each other and over people riding in vehicles. There were many alcohol-related road accidents as well as injuries ascribed to extreme behavior such as splashing water into the faces of traveling motorcyclists (ThaiTourism, 2011). For water splashing spot in Bangkok, six famous locations of water splashing were Central World, Khao San Road, Silom Road, Nagaraphirom Park, Santhichaiprakan Park and Wongwiengyai.

In order to conserve a traditional festival and generate income for the country, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) created 'Bangkok Songkran Splendors Festival 2012' around the Rattanakosin Royal Square during 10-15 April, 2012 at 10.00-20.00 hrs (TAT 2012). The event demonstrated traditional foods and performances of 4 regions. There were also religious activities such as bathing of Buddha image, paying homage to the ancestors, nine temple worship tour and sand building into pagoda-shape (TAT 2012). They promoted and encouraged Bangkok people who didn't have plan on Songkran holidays to bring out their family and friends to have fun and cultural experience instead of staying home (Dailynews, 2012) as well as to circulate money from their spending.

With the government campaign about promoting this festival as Songkran Splendors, it had recently become a party for foreigners and also a further reason of many visitors coming to Thailand during the festival. However, government had recently tried to encourage people to keep the traditional way of the festival via media campaign and activities (The Government Public Relations Department, 2009) but no research proved if it worked out.

Tourist Behavior - Influences made for celebrations and travel

Kotler, Keller and Burton (2009) defined that “customer behavior was the study of how individuals, groups and organizations select, buy, use and dispose of goods, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants”. Khan (2006) defined customer as a decision making process and ‘physical activity involved in acquiring, evaluation, using and disposing of goods and services’

In perspective of hospitality, it was important to understand customer behavior in order to attract targeted customer to experience companies’ products and services. Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2010) described that hospitality companies had to research customer behavior because if they were successful in understanding the need of their customers and was able to fulfill them, they would gain more than fair share of the market.

In perspective of tourism, Page (2007) stated that “consumer behavior concerns the way tourists as purchasers of products and services behave in terms of spending, their attitudes and values towards what they buy.”

The behavior of the people when they made their own leisure, they felt they wanted to do something they were not pushed to do (Stebbins, 2005). However, there was no way people deny that there might be something people wanted to do but could not do because of some limitations on choices or even what they decided to do something also depends on some influences affect their decision making.

Influences made for festival experience

In this research, the factors influencing Thai’s decision making on Songkran Holidays could be divided to demographic factors and push and pull factors.

1. Demographic Factors

Demographic factors referred to personal characteristics which mean “The characteristics of human populations and population segments, especially when used to identify consumer markets” (The American Heritage Online Dictionary, 2009). Reisinger (2008) described that age, gender, education level, occupation and monthly income were some of the major demographic factors that influence customers’ behavior. Marshall and Johnston (2010) added that there were two reasons to understand demographics; one, to evaluate the target group by comparing the

demographic data, and another reason was some demographic factors such as age, income and education affected consumer decision making significantly.

Gender

Gender was a significant factor on tourists' decision to travel. Han, Hsu and Lee (2009) explained that the studies of gender differences in customer behavior were based on theory and psychology. Men and women were socialized in a different way and they play in the different roles in our society. "The impact of gender on buying behavior is generally acknowledged in marketing and consumer behavior studies" (Han, Hsu and Lee, 2009). There were some researches comparing men to women on buying activities. Homburg and Giering 2001; Han, Hsu and Lee (2009) discussed that gender obviously influenced the relationship between satisfaction on sales process and repurchase intention and the connection was stronger for women than men. In tourism aspect, there were some studies shown that gender was a major influence on travel. Collins and Tisdell (2002); Bowen and Clarke (2009) explained in a study of life cycle travel patterns of outbound Australian traveler that gender was important to indicate, they explained about their findings that women in all groups traveled on the holiday and VFR more than men while men traveled for business and conference than women.

Age

Marshall and Johnston (2010) discussed that buying behavior was figured by the age of person. Therefore, it was the universal factor on marketing research including tourism and hospitality field. Han, Hsu and Lee (2009) emphasized that age was an important factor of buying behavior as the outcome of previous studies shown that age affected consumers' decision making. The younger individuals tended to be innovative by experiencing and adopting a new product and service with a new brand or provider while older people tended to be conservative about a new product and service from a new provider (Im, et al., 2003). Evanschitzky and Wunderlich (2006) added that younger people searched more new and alternative information while the older ones would rely on the existing information because "information processing capacities declined with age" (Evanschitzky and Wunderlich, 2006). Han, Hsu and Lee (2009) emphasized that most studies supported a role of age as a significant factor

in the marketing and consumer behavior and strongly influenced the customer decision-making process.

Income

This was another potential factor on decision making. Reisinger (2008) described that this factor affected the choices of buying product and service. People who had the lower income would also have less saving so that they didn't go to restaurant very often. They didn't spend the money frequently on expensive entertainment and vacation, while the higher income person tended to spend money more on luxury and expensive goods, wine and beer or stay in the high-class hotel and upgraded air travel (Reisinger, 2008). Burke and Resnick (2000) discussed that how much people spent on their travel depends on how much they earned.

Occupation

Work environment affected consumer decision making. Reisinger (2008) explained that occupation of person influenced their choices. The senior executive usually had lunch at a full-service restaurant but the junior staffs brought their lunches from home or bought it from a quick-service restaurant. Marshall and Johnston (2010) added that variety of occupation would also influence people's buying behavior; "Physicians, for example, have a host of products, from PDAs to vacations, designed specifically for them." As a result, occupation was used to specialize travel products for different group of people (Burke and Resnick, 2000). Schiffman and Kanu (2004) added that income related closely to occupation. People who had high income were likely to have high level of occupation; therefore, level of income and occupation affected buying behavior of people in the same way.

Education Level

There was a study shown that this factor influenced customer behavior in tourism. March and Woodside (2005) described that educated tourists needed more information and time to meet travel decision. Higher education level conducted to the lower satisfaction level. Wood (1998), March and Woodside (2005) discussed that education was useful to indicate buying behavior. Moreover, the spending was greater in the higher level of education. Burke and Resnick (2000) added that the higher education level was more likely to travel.

All of those factors have informed the survey instrument to be used in this study.

2. Push and Pull factors

"The push/pull factors" were likely to be considered as influencing factors in this study. The push/pull factors were accepted by many researchers in term of tourist motivation (Woodside and Martin, 2008; Hsu and Lam, 2003). This was based on the difference between the factors that encourage people to travel from their residence to destination called 'Push factor' and another factor of destination that attract people to travel is called 'Pull factor'. Crompton (1979), Kim and Beck (2009) believed that the tourists were pushed by invisible factors or the internal motivation encourage tourists looking for the activities to release their needs to travel, while on the other hand, they were pulled by visible factors or destination that stimulate forces and some knowledge to let tourists know about their destination (Woodside and Martin, 2008). Therefore, it was said that people traveled because they were pushed by their own socio-psychological forces first and then pulled by the destination.

2.1 Push factors

Push factors can be identified as a need of tourists to travel. Wu, et al., (2009) said that push factors can contribute to tourists' decision making for their holiday. Iso-Ahola (1982) explained that there are two basic dimensions of tourist behaviors; escaping and seeking, to influence tourists to take a vacation. Tourists might decide to travel in order to escape from their routine life or release their stress (Kim, et al., 2003). They might seek for new experiences such as knowledge (Zhang and Lam, 1999), social interaction (Kim, et al., 2003), self-exploratory (Dann, 1977) and adventures (Jamrozy and Uysal, 1994). Kim (2003) discussed on his research that building friendship or family togetherness are push factors which influence domestic visitors into the national park.

In collectivist cultures such as Asian culture, the degree of decision making influence of family and friends were stronger than in individualistic cultures. Family members in collectivistic cultures were dependent to each other. In Japan, tourist destination would be chosen by all members of the families. (Reisinger and Turner, 1997c, 1999c; Reisinger, 2009) Research has also presented that more families agree that their children had a significant effect on the leisure holidays decisions

(Nanda, 2006). Khan (2006) supported that family recommendations sometimes came from outside of the family group; for instance, aunt or uncle. Significantly, the structure of the family today was becoming to more for nuclear family instead of the joint family, which was likely to affect the change in the role of push influence on consumer behavior (Khan, 2006).

Friends and colleagues had also greater push influence to decision making of people than individual cultures. For instance, In South Korea, friends influenced on buying decisions to people more than in the United States (Park and Jun, 2003). To travel on holidays, friends are a significant influence for collectivistic cultures. Moreover, this group had more influence on consumers more than media and advertising.

Reisinger (2009) explained that in collectivist cultures like Thailand, people's behavior and decision making were likely to depend on one another or the social setting as a part of social networks and relationships so that the development of consumers' decision making would be achieved through the social group, social acceptance, and social image.

There are more literatures for push factors as follows:

Family togetherness

Family is 'a group of two or more people living together and related by birth, marriage, or adoption' (Marshall and Johnston, 2010). Family has been investigated by researchers as one of the main factors affecting buying behavior. Nanda (2006) supported that researchers in consumer behavior have commonly viewed family as one of the factors influencing the decision making process. Marshall and Johnston (2010) explained that family influenced decision making of buyer in two ways; first, it was the influencing teacher of cultural value. Family was the first source that children would pass their value into their community. Second, children learnt buying behavior from their family members such as parents, siblings and relatives.

Building friendship

Friends were referred as a social group that share some attitude and had the same interest. Khan (2006) said that when people met in a social setting they would talk about their experience on products and services they have used and expressed their preference on them. Friends were also a group that had a positive or

negative influence on a persons' attitude and behavior. The degree that the group would affect a purchase decision relied on their involvement with the group (Khan, 2006).

Khan (2006) discussed that word of mouth, particularly from friends, was the most powerful marketing media. As a result, friends always set their networks and shared a lot information and attitude among themselves. For example, when people watched the movie and share the review of the movie to their friends, they create a n interest among the group that might make a belief to their friends that the movie was better than their real perception. And the news spread wider if their friends like it (Khan, 2006).

Past experience

Past experience was an internal stimulus that people have perceived toward objects from previous experiences and learn how to deal with those needs in order to satisfy them. If people have an impressive experience on the destination, they are likely to come back and repeat their experience again. Lovelock, Patterson and Walker (2007) discussed that past experiences can be used to evaluate products and service during purchase and consumption. They release people's sense of uncertainty or risk in purchasing situation. For example, people could not feel the beauty of Phuket on an informative brochure or travel experts' review until they experience it and then recognize it when you go there again. Past experience can push your desire to travel on the repeated destination.

Cultural Value

Culture played a significant part of consumer behavior. Marshall and Johnston 2010 stated that culture absorbed "shared artifacts such as values, morals, beliefs, art, law, and customs into an organized system that enables people to function as members of society" (Marshall and Johnston, 2010). Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2010) discussed that culture was the most basic factor of a person's behavior that a person learns consistently in a society. It affected people in many ways from childhood until throughout the life. Marshall and Johnston (2010) explained that in the study of behavior, culture was aware for two reasons; understanding culture of targeted market helped to plan a marketing strategy and misunderstanding cultural norms of target market affect negatively on product acceptance. Lovelock, Patterson

and Walker (2007) explained that Thailand was likely to be group oriented as collectivist culture. People's satisfaction tends to depend on the in-group such as family, friends or social network. Therefore, people in this culture tended to be of a high loyalty to products and services. Also, words of mouth tend to be more effective on evaluation of products and services than media.

2.2 Pull factors

Pull factors demonstrate as a contrast of push factors. Pull factors could lead to influence of tourists to travel in to the specific destination (Goossens, 2000). Kim, et al., 2003 said that pull factors are related to features of the destination such as attraction itself (Klenosky, 2002), recreation and entertainment activities (Kim, et al., 2003), accessibility into the destination (Reisinger, 2008), and accommodation and transportation (Kim, et al., 2003).

More suggestions from the literature of pull factors include:

Safety

Lovelock, Patterson, and Walker (2007) stated that "security is the need to feel secure and unthreatened by physical, psychological or even economic circumstances." Safety was considered as an influencing factor on tourist decision making because people desired protection. Reisinger and Mavondo (2005) described that risk perceptions influence perceptions of safety. Azim (2010) emphasized that risk perception and feelings of safety had impact on travel behavior. People would avoid unsafe destination and if they felt threatened during traveling; they would not likely to return to such destination.

Yoon and Uysal (2005) investigated on their study of motivation in a structural model that integrated satisfaction and destination loyalty that the important pull factors were cleanness and shopping, reliable weather and safety. Reisinger (2008) discussed that safety and security of destination is the evaluating factor on tourism industry.

Cost of Activities

Cost of activities was a pocket for participating an activity. Nicolau and Mas (2009) explained that income was likely a greater tendency to take a vacation. Investigating Motivation of Visiting Domestic Destinations in China, Wu, Xu and Ekiz (2009) examined that save money and time was the considerably pull

factor influencing tourists' decision to the destination. Reisinger (2008) described that local prices and cost of trip package were the criteria used to evaluate the tourism destination in his study.

Attractions

Attraction was a place where the tourists visit. There was a study that interviewed 53 university students on their opinion of their next spring break vacations. Klenosky (2002) investigated that various types of attractions were the recognized pull factors influencing the students to travel; beaches, historic/cultural attractions, scenic/natural resources, new/unique location, party atmosphere and skiing.

Facilities and Infrastructure

On the study of the motivations for overseas pleasure travel among tourists from Japan, France, West Germany and the UK, Yuan and McDonald (1990); Woodside and Martin (2008) identified that there are seven important pull factors influencing the decision-making process: budget, culture and history, wilderness, ease of travel, cosmopolitan environment, facilities, and hunting. Additionally, ease of local transportation was the evaluated criteria to tourism destinations (Reisinger, 2008).

3. Relationship between push and pull factors

Kim, et al., 2003 explained that the concept of push and pull factors were a tourist decisions to travel because his own internal attributes push him to travel and external attributes of destination pull him to select the particular destination. Kim, et al., (2003) added that push and pull framework was the concept that focus on two separated factors which one was 'go or not' and another was 'where to go'.

There were related researches discussing about push and pull factors. One, Bogari (2004) researched on the 'Motivation for domestic tourism; a case study of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia'. 36 Push and 40 pull items were used as motivational influences for domestic travel to tourists in two cities, Jeddha and Abra. The result found that top nine push items were cultural value, convenience of facilities, family togetherness, social, knowledge, economical, interest, relaxation and utilitarian while top nine pull items were religious, safety, budget, leisure, upscale, historical/cultural, activity, beach sports/activities and nature/outdoor. Bogari (2004) summarized that cultural attributes played an important role on domestic tourism in Islamic cultures.

Therefore, the most significant push and pull attributes for Saudi tourists were cultural value and Islamic religion.

Another, Bayrak (2011) surveyed on 'Festival motivators and consequences: a case of Efes Pilsen Blues in Turkey'. Efes Pilsen Blues was an annual festival for blues lover. The festival was held for two days in many different cities of Turkey. The researcher collected the data from the 19th Efes Pilsen Blues Festival in 2008. The festival was held in Hilton hotel in Izmir. The outcome of the study has shown that push and pull attributes were the major influences of motivations into event and festival businesses. Escape and socialization were major push attributes while a main pull attribute was performance of the event. Bayrak (2011) proved the relationship between pull and push factors.

Theory of Decision making

Decision making was about a choice among alternatives. Fitzgerald (2002) stated that "a decision is the point at which a choice is made between alternative – and usually competing-option." There were many researches talking about decision-making model which were reviewed as follows:

1. The Engel et al model

This was the consumer behavior model that shows the decision process to purchase the products and services. Bowen and Clarke (2009) explained that the model was divided into a number of stages and the main stage was the decision-making process. The model contained need recognition, search for information, alternative evaluation, purchase, and outcomes. See figure 2:

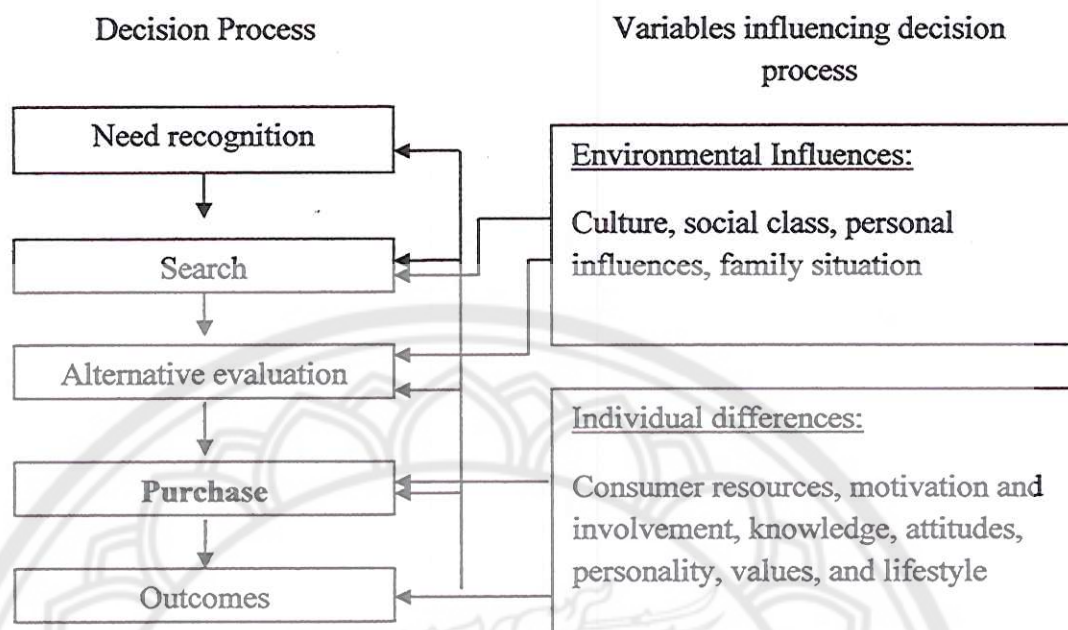


Figure 2 The Engel, et al model

Source: Applied from The Engel, et al Model, 1993

Gilbert (1991); Bowen and Clarke (2009) suggested that the model considered the consumer behavior as a decision process and focused on individual vision rather than group. From the model, need recognition occurred to the customer, it drove them wanting to buy the product and service, and then they search the information and evaluate the alternative choices before they decide to buy the product and service. Gilbert (1991); Bowen and Clarke (2009) added that the information searched for the alternative evaluation could come from both internal and external source. From the model, the variable influencing decision making from outside sources were environment influences: culture, social class, personal influences and family situation, and internal variable or individual differences were consumer resources, motivation and involvement, knowledge, attitudes, personality, values, and lifestyle.

2. The Mathieson and Wall model

The Mathieson and Wall model (1982) was another model to center on a tourist decision-making process. It moves through a number of stages starting from travel desire, information search, assessment and travel decision respectively. Bowen and Clarke (2009) used this model to the elder Chinese tourist. The model started

when the tourists had a feeling of travel. They will search for the information. Bowen and Clarke (2009) assumed that on this stage, the word of mouth was the major information search of the elder Chinese tourist. Next, the tourists needed others information as alternative assessment such as trip feature and destination resources. Information of destination could affect the awareness of travel and tourists decide whether to go or to not go to the destination. After assessment, the tourist would decide that they would go or not go (See figure 2).

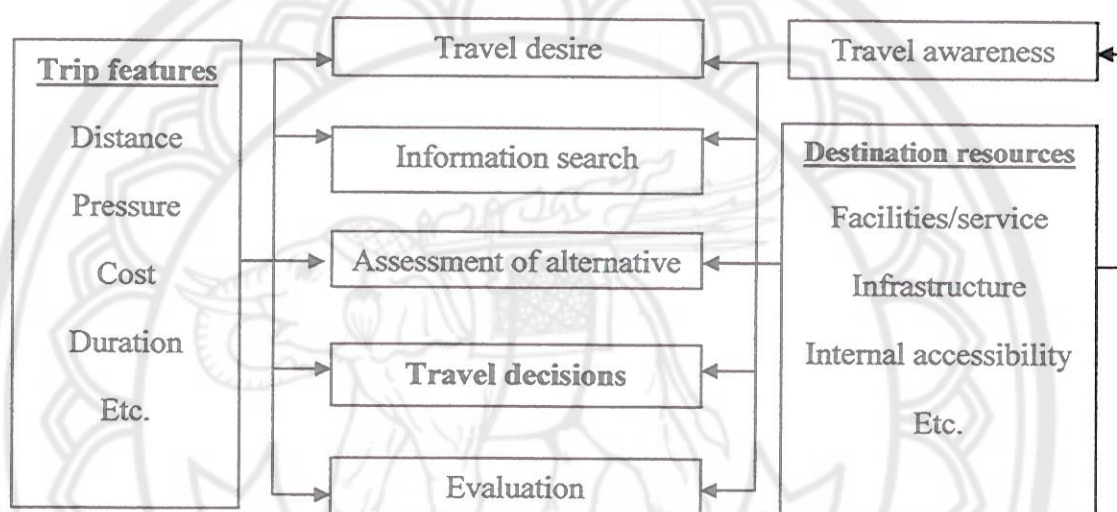


Figure 3 Mathieson and Wall model (1992)

Source: Applied from Mathieson and Wall model, 1992

The outcome of the study was shown that ‘tourists may be motivated to travel but, unless they are informed of what opportunities are available, they may be unaware of the means of meeting their requirement’ (Bowen and Clarke, 2009). As a result, the elder tourists were informed about the travel awareness and trip feature through the stage of assessment.

At this stage, destination resources, such as facilities and service, infrastructure, internal accessibility, primary resource, political, economic and social structure, geography and environment influence the assessment and it could also influence the travel awareness to the tourist; Bowen and Clarke (2009) added that

television and internet were more influential for travel awareness of the new generation of elder Chinese tourists.

Moreover, trip features such as distance, trip pressure, cost, duration, size of tour group, confidence and risk and uncertain perception would also influence the tourists' decision at the assessment stage.

3. Choice sets

One of the decision-making concepts was "choice sets". Crompton's choice set concept (1992) was first introduced in the consumer behavior literature on consumers' purchase decisions (Petrick, Li and Sun-Young, 2007). This concept mentioned that "consumers make a final choice from gradually reduced groups of alternatives among finite numbers of potential options" (Petrick, Li and Sun-Young, 2007). Later, the research on choice sets had grown to be an important part of studies in travel decision-making. There was a review that the choice sets approach provided more simple and practical view to understanding the tourists' decision-making process. Crompton supported this concept that it provided practical advantages to other types of models (Petrick, Li and Sun-Young, 2007). Petrick, Li and Sun-Young (2007) used this concept to investigate the reason on the final choice of the cruise's passenger. And the main reason of choosing the final choice were from product/service, familiarity/loyalty, other guests, the ship, superior crew, convenience, and price (Petrick, Li and Sun-Young, 2007)

4. Theory of planned behavior (TPB)

This was another theory on decision-making. Sparks and Pan (2009) described that 'this model has been successfully tested in a wide range of contexts, disciplines and countries, including tourism and hospitality'. Sparks (2007) explained that there are three keys of TPB to drive behavior:

4.1 Attitude – "the overall evaluation of the behavior" (Sparks, 2007) or "a favorable or unfavorable predisposition to respond in a consistent way toward and object such as holiday choice" (Lam and Hsu, 2006)

4.2 Subjective norms – "the influence of others about whether to engage in the behavior" (Sparks, 2007) or 'the importance people attach to reference groups' endorsements and people's willingness to conform to these groups' shared beliefs,

attitudes and choices, such as their holiday choices” (Moutinho, 1987 “ Quintal, Lee and Soutar, 2010)

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4.3 Perceived control – “the perceived ability to engage in the behavior” (Sparks, 2007) or “a measure of the difficulty people attach to the performance of a behavior, such as making holiday choices” (Lama and Hsu, 2006)

Quintal, Lee and Soutar (2010) explained that the TPB seemed to be a proper framework in the current situation including tourism and hospitality.

5. Cognitive models of vacation decision-making

Blichfeldt (2008) explained that this model is like classical model of consumer decision-making in terms of perception and process but different because vacation decision-making was much more than the generic decision 'to go' (Woodside and MacDonald, 1994; Blichfeldt, 2008). It was significant that varied decisions usually rely on tourists; for instance, the family that decides to visit Disney World, all other decisions on that vacation would be the 'Disney package'. Blichfeldt (2008) mentioned that a vacation was a unique 'product' because all vacations contain components of up-front decision-making, which means even if attractions or “a hotel made of ice may act as the reason to go, this does not mean that all guests have made all decisions pertaining to their vacation upfront” (Blichfeldt, 2008)

Related research of this study

First one, Hemmin (2008) researched ‘Factors influencing travel within the country of Thai people’. The researcher selected eleven factors. They were attractions, public relations, cost of living, distances and duration, readiness, travel costs, safety, infrastructures, facilities, government policy and currency exchange. The results of the study found that overall factors are the average. The top three factors influencing Thais to travel within the country are attractions, facilities and travel costs respectively.

Another, Pangruang (2006) researched “Trends on Traveling during Songkran Festival in 2006 of working age population in Bangkok”. The result of the study found in psychological dimension that level of the motivation of working age Thais for relaxation was high, followed by new experience in the moderate level. In

social and cultural dimension, it was found that working age Thais had a motivation to visit family, travel and cultural learning in a high level.

As a result, this research provided us an idea about the tourist decision-making on their holiday.

Conclusion

As the purpose of this study was to investigate influences of Thais' decision making on Songkran Holidays, the researcher reviewed the literature about holidays and festivals including Songkran Holidays in order to broaden the view on the activities and trends that Thais were likely to be interested in participation so far in order to explore the activities that influence Thais decision making on Songkran Holidays. The activities were divided in two types; traditional activities and other leisure activities. The researcher also studied on influences that affect consumer decision-making in order to investigate what influences affect Thai decision-making on Songkran Holidays. The influences included demographic factors and the push and pull factors. The research also reviewed the theory of consumer decision-making including decision-making model.

Reviewing the literature provided useful information for the study to compare the previous processes studied to be compared with the outcomes of this study in order to contribute to the wider knowledge within the area of study field.