# A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCING FACTORS IN TRAVEL DECISION OF THAI SENIOR TOURISTS FOR OUTBOUND TOURISM

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## ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to study the key factors that influence the travel decision of Thai senior tourists for travel abroad. The Data collection was carried out by questionnaires, which were distributed online to Thai seniors aged over fifty-five years old who used to travel abroad at least one time. This study found that there are several key factors that influence the Thai senior tourists to travel by themselves (as Free Independent Travelers or FIT) or to travel with travel agencies (as Package Travelers).

KEY WORDS: Thai Seniors/ Tourism Motivation/ Senior tourism/ Free Independent Travelers (FIT)/ Package Travelers

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# CHAPTER I
# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Research Background

The research topic of this thematic paper is to study the motivation and constraining factors that influence Thai senior travelers in outbound tourism. Nowadays Thailand is one of the aging societies. We have high and increasing proportion of elderly people, as the birth rate is lower, and the death rate is also lower than before. So, the aging population will have the effect in several industries due to the increasing number of elderly consumers in Thailand and the World. This is the reason that this research focuses on Thai senior citizens.

Apart from spending in the healthcare industry, Thai senior citizens also spend a lot in tourism industry as their leisure or relaxing activities after years of working hard. In the past, it was more expensive and difficult to travel abroad independently as the information was not easily accessible. Also, the people who already visited countries abroad were not many, so we did not have lots of customer reviews like these days. Moreover, the travel agency cost is very high even it already had high competition, as they provided all in-kind service. So, it is a trade-off between convenience and cost.

Tourists can easily plan their trip these days with the technology development, the world has become smaller and the information is fully provided in the online world. One caution is people must concern about distorted information. The travel business is now more competitive, transparent and there are various options to choose from. Each generation has its own preference and lifestyle. So, in this study, the research will focus on Thai seniors as they tend to be the major group of the citizens in Thailand, also have time to travel and have ability to spend. This group of people may have opportunity to travel within Thailand when they were young or in the working age. So, this research wants to focus on travel abroad as it was just within the last 5 years

that the internet was widely uses, the influencers or customer reviews became popular and people are more open to travel abroad than in the past. While the Free Independent Travel (FIT) trend is increasing, I still believe that travel agencies are also required as most of the Thai people, especially seniors, prefer the familiarity and convenience of agency travel services.

## 1.2 Research Questions

1.2.1 What are the Thai senior tourists travel behavior and requirements in outbound tourism?

1.2.2 What are the influencing factors for Thai senior tourists in selection of Free Independent Travel (FIT) or Travel Agency in outbound tourism?

1.2.3 What are the Thai senior tourists' expectations about travel agency services?

## 1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 To study the travel behavior and requirements of Thai senior tourists in outbound tourism

1.3.2 To study the influencing factors in selection of Free Independent Travel (FIT) or Travel Agency

1.3.3 To study the Thai senior tourists' expectations about travel agency services

## 1.4 Research Scope

        1.4.1 The scope of the research is limited to the population of Thai senior citizens (aged 55 and above) living in Thailand, who are in the socio-economic group that is interested in and can spend on outbound tourism

        1.4.2 The duration of the study is 3 months, from September to November 2019

## 1.5 Expected Benefit

        We can learn more about the requirements of the Thai senior tourists to offer them the services that meets their needs. This study benefits to both the outbound travel business and tourists. This study also aims to know the pain points of senior tourists when traveling abroad to customize suitable offers that attract this group of people. The countries who would like to attract this group of customers can also use this research to support their promotional activities to draw their attention as well.

        This research project enhances the tourism industry as it improves the capabilities and competitive advantage of the travel service companies. The project aims to uncover challenges and opportunities in the tourism business targeting senior travelers and make recommendations to overcome them.

# CHAPTER II
# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1  Definition

### 2.1.1 Thai Seniors

In this study, Thai senior means the "Baby boomers who born between 1946-1964" (Leoprapai, 2014). These people are aged between 55-73 in 2019. Thailand is currently ranked the third most rapidly ageing population in the world. The latest United Nations Population projection for Thai population in the next 3 decades is shown in Table 2.1. The number of people aged 60 and above which define as older population in Thailand, will significantly more than double by 2050 from 2015. The aging population in Thailand is expected to increase to 23.1 million which is approximately 35% of the population by 2050. The older people proportion will represent one of the largest groups in the total population, based on the future trend.

**Table 2.1 Population age 60 and older according to United Nations projections, Thailand, 2015-2050**

| Year | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | 2045 | 2050 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Number in 1000s | 10,731 | 13,237 | 15,824 | 18,355 | 20,486 | 22,082 | 22,892 | 23,153 |

Source: United Nations Population Division 2015 Population Estimates and Projections (UN 2015)

### 2.1.2 Tourism Motivation

"Tourism comprises the activities of the person traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purpose not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited." (World Tourism Organization : W.T.O, 1993)

Motivation is a state of need that drives individual toward action that satisfy them. Typically, one action may have more than one motivation. Motivations theory is only part of behavior theory. Behavior is from biological, cultural, situational and motivational. Motivation theory are from physiological needs (Maslow, 1943). Tourists have their own internal and external reasons for traveling (McGehee, Loker-Murphy, & Uysal, 1996). According to Heung, Qu and Chu (2001), Internal reasons refer to sociodemographics (age, income and image), values, and motives of travelers while external reasons mean sources of information, including, media, word-of-mouth, and travelers' experience. So, it is interesting to investigate if extrinsic motivation (external forces/pull motivation) or intrinsic motivation (internal forces/push motivation) have more effect on the level of satisfaction and drive decision behavior. The positive experiences and recommendations (word-of-mouth) also drive tourists' repeat visits. There are the relationships among the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, satisfaction and positive experiences that related to tourism industry.

### 2.1.3 Senior tourism

Senior tourism is directly linked to accessible tourism based on (Kasimoglu, 2012). These two types of tourism will become growing and important segments. It is important to have tourism for all, which means the tourism and leisure that all people can access (physical, mental and sensory) without any discrimination. The senior market is not homogeneous and Cleaver et al. (1999) classified senior tourists into seven segments, labeled according to the motivation: Nostalgics, Friendlies, Learners, Escapists, Thinkers, Status-Seekers, and Physicals. The seniors' most common travel motivations were relaxation, nostalgia, excitement and social interaction based on Fleischer and Pizam (2002) studies. There are many sub-groups of senior tourists, Shoemaker (1989) segmented senior market into three sub-groups based on the senior Pennsylvanians survey on travel behavior and reasons for travel, which are 'family

travelers', 'active resters', and 'older set', and concluded that the market based on the members' requirements.

Baby boomers are a large group of people in Thailand, they can have impact on several industries. Most of the people in this group have high life experiences, confidence, conservative and have lots of savings. Moreover, it is found that the Baby boomers have high spending for tourism. Base on the survey of 615 Thai people aged 50-85 of College of Management Mahidol University (2018), more than 72% of the Thai elderly treat themselves by travelling. Among elderly people surveyed, 73% like to travel in a group with family and friends, 21% like to travel by themselves and 6% like to use a travel agency. The constraints of using travel agency are the limitation of the travel time, the inconvenience in transportation and the awkward moments traveling with unknown people. From the survey, 54% of Thai elderly travel 2-3 times a year and 33% travel more than 4 times a year. For the transportation, 50% of Thai elderly tend to travel by car and 25% prefer airplane.

### 2.1.4 Free Independent Travelers (FIT)

Travelers are identified into two groups in travel industry according to their travel styles which are free independent travelers and package travelers. According to Morrison, Hsieh, and O'Leary (1993), independent travelers are those who plan their own trip, make their own transportation, accommodation arrangements and do not buy packages or tours provided by others. This group of travelers is increasing in international tourism, especially this era, when the technology has developed, internet is widely used, and the travel information is easily accessible. Independent travelers have more flexibility in their itinerary, the can choose their activities, places to visit, duration and place to stay according to their preferences and budget.

Even though independent travelers tend to increase in the tourism industry these days, there is still some concern for those who never be independent travelers. "Three characteristics are identified that distinguish the nature of independent travel: the traveler experiences an evolving itinerary, the traveler is willing to take risks in selecting vacation elements, and the traveler possesses a desire to experience the unplanned" (Hyde, Lawson, 2003, p.1). According to Poon (1993), the changing in demographics and lifestyles have affected the traveling styles. Poon describes about the

growing group of new tourists as the travelers who are flexible, experienced and independent, who have different values and lifestyles from mass travelers.

### 2.1.5 Package Travelers

According to World Tourism Organization (1993), the homogeneous group package tour has become outmoded, it is not aligned with the individual expression trend. In traveling to unfamiliar destinations, package travelers can have high uncertainty avoidance, lower cost and less time spend in collecting information and arranging a trip (Sheldon et al., 1987). Package travelers or tours vary considerably in their inclusivity. There are basic tour which typically includes accommodation, transportation and baggage handling. While inclusive tours also offer some activities or entertainment at the destination and some sightseeing. All-inclusive tours are fully equipped with meals and every activity.

Travel agents' role is to act as the intermediary between consumers and providers. They normally sell products on a commission basis. Therefore, their profit depends on two factors. First is to sell the high commission products to maximize income. Second is to process efficient arrangement to minimize costs (McKercher, et al., 2003). According to Porter's Five Forces Framework which is a tool for analyzing competition of the business, there are many challenges for travel agents to survive in a long run if they do not transform according to the consumers behavior. Tourism industry has a high competition due to low barriers of new entrants. Also, the suppliers have higher power and they can reach consumers directly without having travel agents. Suppliers can offer lower price and promotion directly to consumers if they can cut travel agents commission. Customers power is also high as they can easily access to information worldwide, and they can directly contact suppliers. There are also plenty of close substitute available in the tourism industry these days.

## 2.2 Travel Decision Framework

According to the Conceptual Framework for Travel Decision (Figure 2.1), travel decision comes from two components; the first component is the motivation and the second component are the constraints. In this case, I will consider two motivation

which are external motivations or pull factors, and internal motivations or push factors. The example of pull factors are influencers which inclusive of close relationships like family, friends or from other people like celebrities, bloggers or other travellers' word-of-mouth (WOM) channels. The marketing activities from the travel agency or media also considered as pull factors as well. On the internal motivation side, push factors are experience, desire or needs, assessment of risk and the confidence level of each person.

Another component of travel decision is the constraint which include many aspects such as budget, time, information accessibility or knowledge, and companions. Both motivation and constrains are leading to travel decision for Free Independent Traveler (FIT) or Package Traveler. The hypothesis is that senior tourists tend to select the type of travel which can cope with their constraints.
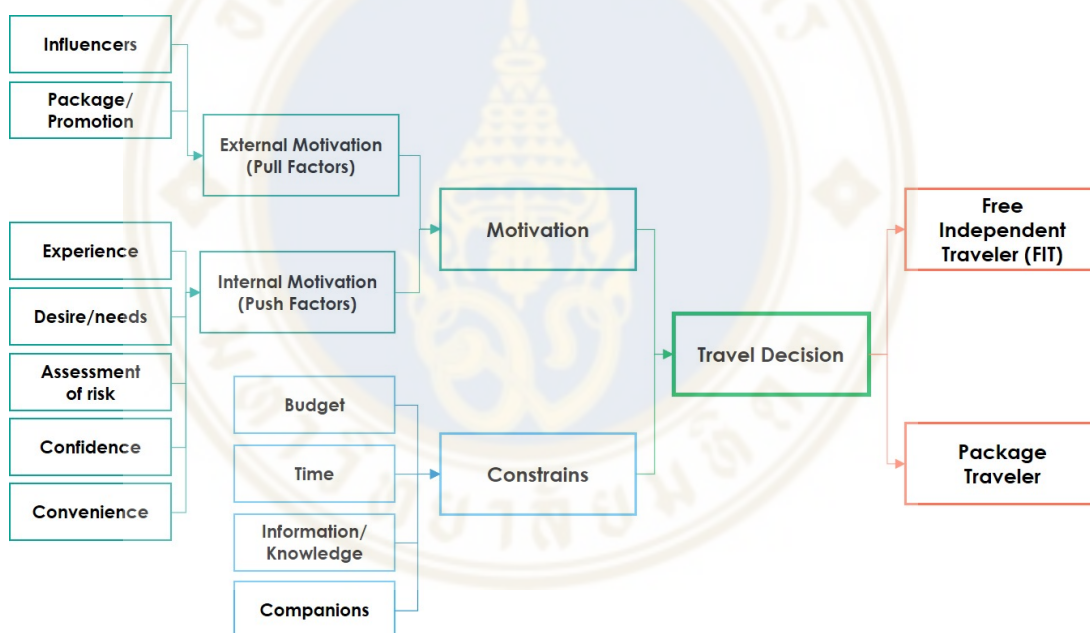


**Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework for Travel Decision**

# CHAPTER III
# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Data Collection Methodology
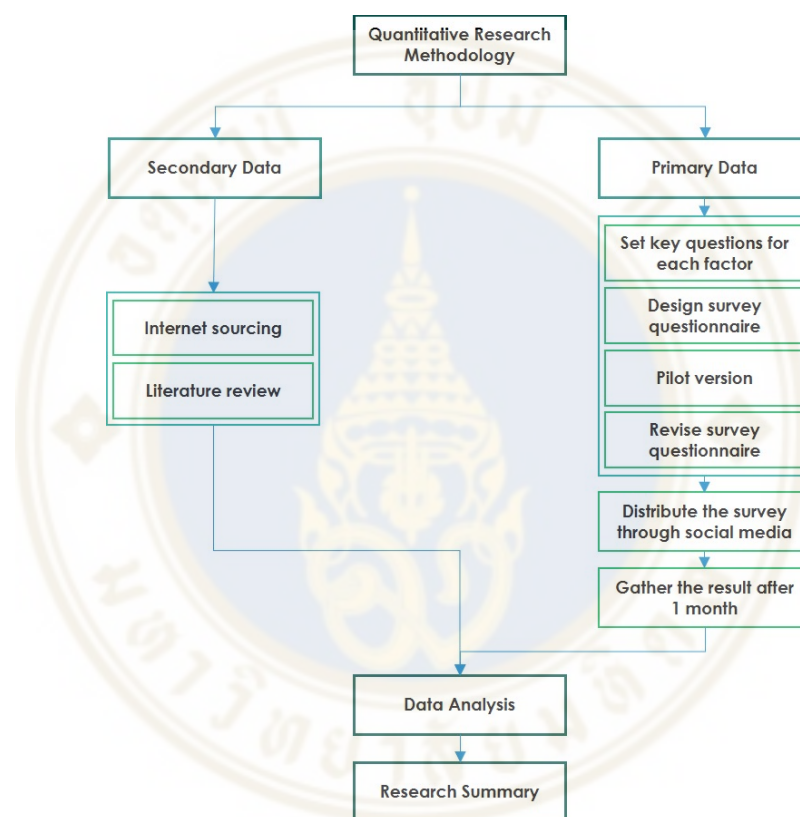


**Figure 3.1 Conceptual Framework of Research Process**

This research uses quantitative research methodology for data collection. It is carried out by a two-stage process according to Figure 2. First stage is the internet sourcing and literature review for secondary data. The literature review is an extensive review of literature on relevant topics such as senior tourism, travel motivations and decisions, and the tourists' types. The second stage is for the primary data collection, starting from a set of key questions for each factor, designing a survey questionnaire,

launching a pilot questionnaire for feedback and then adjusting accordingly. After the survey questionnaire is finalized, then is the stage for distribution through social media. The planning for result gathering is 1 month after the survey questionnaire is launched, or when we reach the target number of the respondents.

After the two stages, then will be data analysis process to interpret the data collected from primary sources and secondary sources. The last process is the research summary after data analysis to conclude or synthesize the knowledge learned from the overall process.

## 3.2 Population and Sample

The target sample size for this study is at least 100 Thai senior tourists, aged 55 years old and above who used to travel to other countries. The survey questionnaire was conducted by Google forms and distributed online through social media such as Facebook, Line, Whatsapp and Instagram.

## 3.3 Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was developed in both English and Thai language for quantitative data collection, because I would like to acquire the large sample for the senior tourists' behavior. The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part is about the personal information or characteristics of the respondents. The second part was designed to gather opinions on travel motivations & decisions. Senior tourists were requested to give opinion on a four-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree to 4-strongly agree). The third part is an option for short suggestions about travel agencies and packages, using open questions. As the quantitative methodology like survey questionnaire has limitation of the questions and format, so the third part may be an opportunity to study more if the respondents share their opinion.

The key survey questions are provided below based on the literature. The hypothesis is that senior tourists tend to select the type of travel which can cope with their constraints and support their motivations. So, the key questions are conducted based on 6 factors as follows:

**Factor 1: Budget**

- I think using a travel package is cheaper than booking by myself
- I think using a travel package safes money
- I select the package that matches my budget
- I think booking by myself is cheaper than using a travel package

**Factor 2: Time**

- It consumes much time and effort to plan a trip by myself
- Using a travel agent saves time
- I do not want to spend a lot of time on travel planning
- I enjoy spending time on planning for travelling
- It is convenient when an agent arranges the travel plans, transportation and accommodation

**Factor 3: Information/Knowledge**

- Gathering information for planning a trip by myself is easy
- I tend to buy travel packages for first-time visited places, as it is difficult to find information on local transportation, sights and accommodation
- It is easy to find travel information in the internet so I can plan the trip by myself
- I prefer to use travel packages, as they have better knowledge about local attractions, transportation and accommodations
- I do not need to use a travel package, because I can rely on my family or friends to plan and book a trip for me

**Factor 4: Companions**

- I don't like to travel with other people that I don't know
- If I need to travel alone, I prefer to travel with an agency
- I love travelling with new people
- Travelling is best done with a large group of people

**Factor 5: External Motivation**

- I prefer travel package as the activities are interesting
- I select travel packages based on the promotion offered

- I select the travel packages which my family/friends recommend

- I follow the advice from other travelers on Pantip and other websites

- Internet reviews are important when planning a trip

**Factor 6: Internal Motivation**

- I like to plan my own trip and select interesting activities

- It is risky to arrange the trip without help of a professional agency

- Travelling with a group (package tour) is safer

- I prefer a flexible schedule, so I don't like travel packages

- I don't want to use a travel package if I have experience visiting that place

- I believe I can travel by myself without using a travel agency

- Travel packages do not provide sufficient time to fully explore a new destination, so I prefer to arrange the travel myself

## 3.4 Data Analysis

The survey data are analyzed with basic descriptive statistics and hypothesis tests. The data will be sorted into 2 groups for analysis and comparison. The first group is the senior tourists who used to travel abroad only by themselves, this group is considered as Free Independent Travelers (FIT). The second group is the senior tourists who used to travel abroad with travel agency which will be considered as Package Travelers.

The analysis will be based on 6 factors as mentioned above to test the hypothesis that senior tourists tend to select the type of travel which can cope with their constraints and suited for their motivations.

# CHAPTER IV
# RESEARCH FINDINGS

The survey questionnaire was conducted by Google forms and distributed online through social media such as Facebook, Line, Whatsapp and Instagram. There are 102 Thai senior tourists, age 55 years old and above who answered this questionnaire.

## 4.1 Respondents Characteristics

The demographics of the respondents are important for the survey research. In this study, the respondents were asked about age, gender, marital status, education, career status and experience in travel abroad. The respondents are 43 males and 59 females as shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Gender of respondents**

| Gender | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
|--------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Male   | 43                   | 42.16%                    |
| Female | 59                   | 57.84%                    |
| **Total** | **102**           | **100%**                  |



Male 42.16%

Female 57.84%
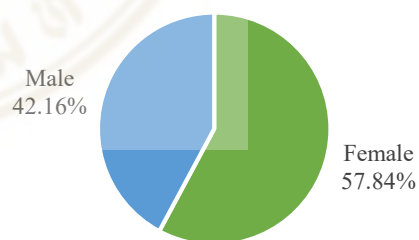
From Table 4.2, there are 2 major groups of respondents which are the respondents with age between '55-59 years old' (41.2%) and age between '60-64 years old' (40.2%). These 2 groups are more than 80% of the total number of respondents.

**Table 4.2 Age of respondents**

| Age | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
|---|---|---|
| 55-59 years old | 42 | 41.18% |
| 60-64 years old | 41 | 40.20% |
| 65-69 years old | 15 | 14.71% |
| 70-74 years old | 4 | 3.92% |
| **Total** | **102** | **100%** |
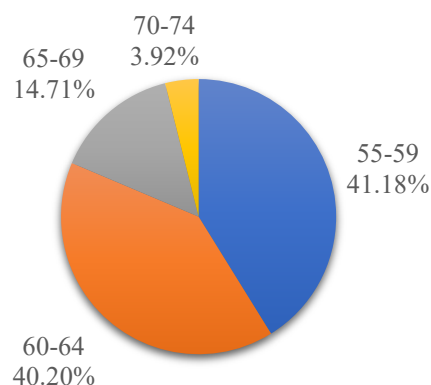


For the marital status of the respondents from Table 4.3, the majority of the respondents (66%) are 'Married with children'. The second group is 'Single' (19%) and the third group is 'Married without children' (10%). The rest are 'Divorced' and 'Widow' which are all together at 6.86%.

**Table 4.3 Marital status of respondents**

| Marital status | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
|---|---|---|
| Married with children | 66 | 64.71% |
| Single | 19 | 18.63% |
| Married without children | 10 | 9.80% |
| Divorced | 4 | 3.92% |
| Widow | 3 | 2.94% |
| **Total** | **102** | **100%** |
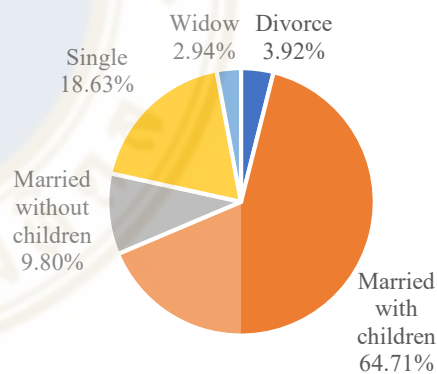


For the education of the respondents from Table 4.4, the majority of the respondents (53.92%) has 'Bachelor's degree'. The second group (31.37%) has 'Higher than Bachelor's degree'. There is only 14.71% with lower education than a bachelor's degree.

**Table 4.4 Education of respondents**

| Education | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
|---|---|---|
| Bachelor's degree | 55 | 53.92% |
| Higher than Bachelor's degree | 32 | 31.37% |
| Lower than Bachelor's degree | 15 | 14.71% |
| **Total** | **102** | **100%** |
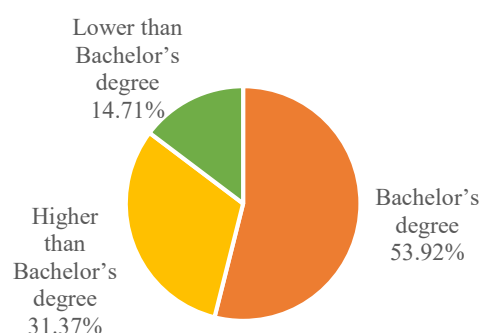


According to Table 4.5, the majority of the respondents are 'Entrepreneur / Business owner' (44.12%) and 'Retired' (36.27%). As Thai people will be retired at the age of 60 in the normal situation so only the few of the respondents are 'Employee / Full-time' (10.78%), 'Freelance / Part-time' (6.86%) and others (1.96%).

**Table 4.5 Career of respondents**

| Education | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
|---|---|---|
| Retired | 37 | 36.27% |
| Others | 2 | 1.96% |
| Freelance / Part-time | 7 | 6.86% |
| Employee / Full-time | 11 | 10.78% |
| Entrepreneur / Business owner | 45 | 44.12% |
| **Total** | **102** | **100%** |
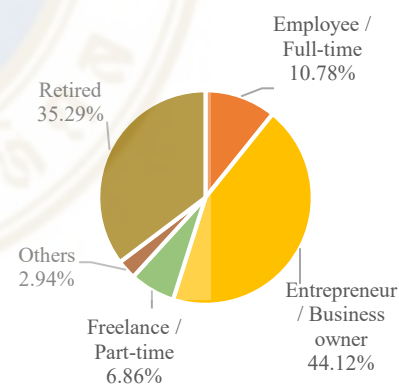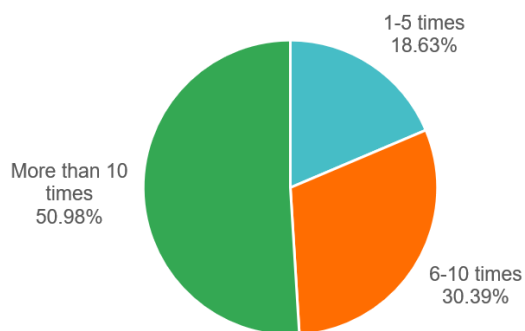
**Figure 4.1 Number of times travel abroad**
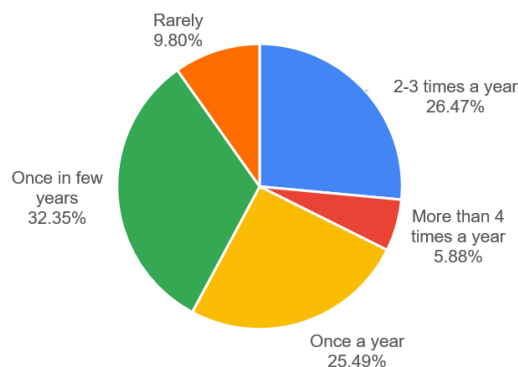


**Figure 4.2 Travel abroad frequency**
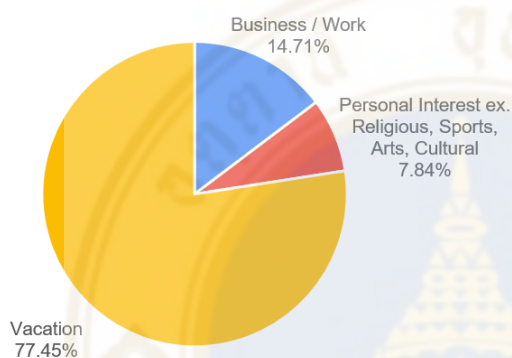


**Figure 4.3 Common purpose of travel**
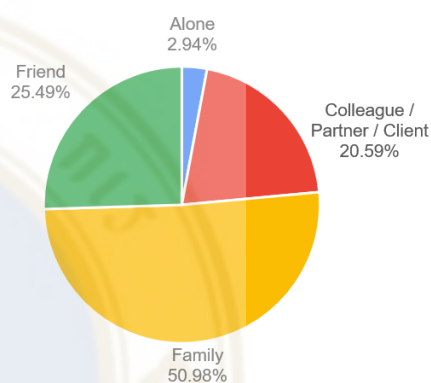


**Figure 4.4 Companions**
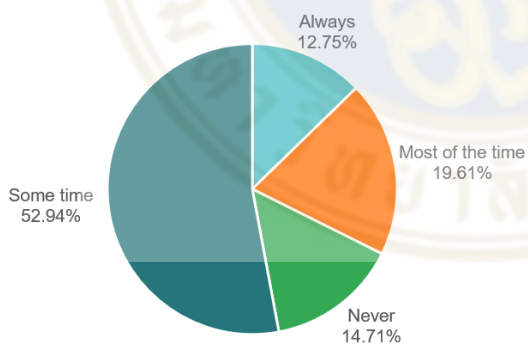


**Figure 4.5 Use travel agency / travel package**
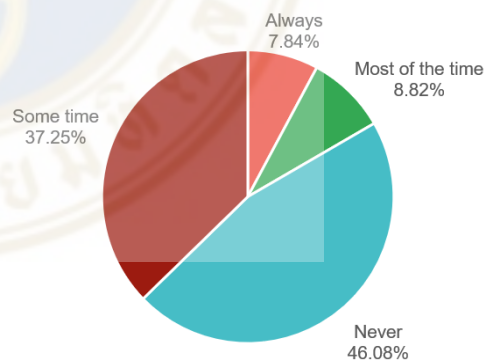


**Figure 4.6 Plan & Travel themselves**

According to above Figures, there are six charts generated from the questionnaire survey, after the demographic part. Figure 4.1 shows the number of times respondents travel abroad, more than 50% of the respondents travel abroad more than 10 times (50.98%). Figure 4.2 shows the frequency of travel abroad, the highest group

(32.35%) is travelling once in few years. The next groups are almost the same number of respondents which are '2-3 times per year' (26.47%) and 'Once a year' (25.49%).

Figure 4.3 represents the common purpose of travel, the highest is vacation (77.45%). Figure 4.4 represents companions, most common at 50.98% is to travel with family. Only 2.94% of senior Thai travel alone. Figure 4.5 represents the use of travel agency or buy travel package, 52.94% sometimes use a travel agency or buy a travel package. Figure 4.6 represents if the respondents have ever become Free Independent Tourists (FIT): the majority never plan or travel by themselves (48.08%) and some of the respondents some time plan and travel by themselves (37.25%).

## 4.2 Summated Scales

The descriptive statistics in Table 4.6 represent the mean of the questions for each factor. For the Budget factor, the highest mean is at 3.09, respondents agreed that they select the package that match their budget. Respondents agreed that it is convenient when an agent arranges the travel plan, transportation and accommodation for the Time factor (the highest mean is at 3.15). For the Information / Knowledge factor, the highest mean is at 3.02, the respondents agreed that they tend to buy travel packages for first-time visited places, as it is difficult to find information on local transportation, sights and accommodation. For Companion factor, the highest mean is at 3.16, the respondents prefer to travel with an agency if they need to travel alone. For External Factor, the highest mean is at 3.12, the respondents agree that internet reviews are important when planning a trip. For Internal Motivation Factor, the highest mean is at 3.05, the respondents agree that it is risky to arrange the trip without help of a professional agency.

**Table 4.6 Descriptive Statistics of Survey Questions**

| Factor | Question | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Budget | 2.1 I think using a travel package is cheaper than booking by myself | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.65 | .726 |
| | 2.4 I think using a travel package safes money | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.71 | .739 |
| | 2.7 I select the package that matches my budget | 102 | 1 | 4 | 3.09 | .733 |
| | 2.10 I think booking by myself is cheaper than using a travel package | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.52 | .841 |
| Time | 2.2 It consumes much time and effort to plan a trip by myself | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.97 | .814 |
| | 2.5 Using a travel agent saves time | 102 | 1 | 4 | 3.10 | .605 |
| | 2.8 I do not want to spend a lot of time on travel planning | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.23 | .922 |
| | 3.1 I enjoy spending time on planning for travelling | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.74 | .867 |
| | 3.4 It is convenient when an agent arranges the travel plans, transportation and accommodation | 102 | 1 | 4 | 3.15 | .737 |
| Information/ Knowledge | 2.3 Gathering information for planning a trip by myself is easy | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.43 | .827 |
| | 2.6 I tend to buy travel packages for first-time visited places, as it is difficult to find information on local transportation, sights and accommodation | 102 | 1 | 4 | 3.02 | .796 |
| | 2.9 It is easy to find travel information in the internet so I can plan the trip by myself | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.60 | .859 |
| | 3.2 I prefer to use travel packages, as they have better knowledge about local attractions, transportation and accommodations | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.98 | .731 |
| | 3.5 I do not need to use a travel package, because I can rely on my family or friends to plan and book a trip for me | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.50 | .865 |
| Companions | 3.3 I don't like to travel with other people that I don't know | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.32 | .903 |
| | 3.6 If I need to travel alone, I prefer to travel with an agency | 102 | 1 | 4 | 3.16 | .898 |
| | 3.9 I love travelling with new people | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.42 | .789 |
| | 4.2 Travelling is best done with a large group of people | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.24 | .632 |
| External Motivation | 3.7 I prefer travel package as the activities are interesting | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.76 | .798 |
| | 3.10 I select travel packages based on the promotion offered | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.84 | .714 |
| | 4.3 I select the travel packages which my family/friends recommend | 102 | 1 | 4 | 3.01 | .621 |
| | 4.5 I follow the advice from other travelers on Pantip and other websites | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.45 | .726 |
| | 4.10 Internet reviews are important when planning a trip | 102 | 1 | 4 | 3.12 | .762 |
| Internal Motivation | 3.8 I like to plan my own trip and select interesting activities | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.66 | .838 |
| | 4.1 It is risky to arrange the trip without help of a professional agency | 102 | 1 | 4 | 3.05 | .776 |
| | 4.4 Travelling with a group (package tour) is safer | 102 | 1 | 4 | 3.03 | .682 |
| | 4.6 I prefer a flexible schedule, so I don't like travel packages | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.84 | .817 |
| | 4.7 I don't want to use a travel package if I have experience visiting that place | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.02 | .796 |
| | 4.8 Travel packages do not provide sufficient time to fully explore a new destination, so I prefer to arrange the travel myself | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.92 | .805 |
| | 4.9 I believe I can travel by myself without using a travel agency | 102 | 1 | 4 | 2.52 | .864 |
| | Valid N (listwise) | 102 | | | | |

According to Table 4.7, the factor that have the highest means (2.84) are External Motivation and Time. So, the interpretation is that the respondents find that these two factors are the most important to support their decision. There are another three factors which have mean around 2.71-2.74 which are Budget, Internal Motivation and Information/Knowledge from high to low respectively. The last factor which has mean around 2.53 is Companions. This can interpret that the respondents may found that the Companions factor has less relevance when deciding for travelling.

**Table 4.7 Summated Scale by Factor**

|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| External Motivation | 102 | 1.80 | 3.80 | 2.8373 | .38561 |
| Time | 102 | 2.00 | 3.60 | 2.8353 | .29032 |
| Budget | 102 | 1.25 | 4.00 | 2.7402 | .45588 |
| Internal Motivation | 102 | 1.71 | 3.43 | 2.7199 | .34111 |
| Information/Knowledge | 102 | 1.40 | 3.60 | 2.7059 | .36009 |
| Companions | 102 | 1.50 | 3.75 | 2.5343 | .43663 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 102 |  |  |  |  |

## 4.3 Multiple Comparisons

There is significant difference in intention to spend time on travel planning among the marital status. This is under the Time factor. By analyzing from Bonferroni in Table 4.8, respondents who are single have more intention to spend a lot of time on travel planning compared to respondents who are married.

**Table 4.8 Post hoc multiple comparisons of Marital Status**

| Dependent Variable | (I) 3. Marital Status | (J) 3. Marital Status | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| I do not want to spend a lot of time on travel planning | Single | Married with children | .675* | .227 | .036 | .02 | 1.33 |
|  |  | Married without children | 1.242* | .340 | .004 | .27 | 2.22 |

There are significant differences in mean among career of the respondents toward three dependent variables. By analyzing from Table 4.9 for the first variable under Time factor, respondents who are retired think that using travel agent saves time compared to respondents who are employee/full-time or entrepreneur/business owner. For the second variable under Information/ Knowledge factor, respondents who are retired have higher intention to buy travel packages for first-time visited places more than respondents who are working as Freelance/Part-time. For the last variable under External Motivation factor, respondents who are entrepreneur/business owner or retired have higher preference on travel package in accord to interested activities compare to respondents who are working as employee/full-time.

**Table 4.9** Post hoc multiple comparisons of Career

| Dependent Variable | (I) 5. Career | (J) 5. Career | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Using a travel agent save time | Retired | Employee / Full-time | .651* | .196 | .013 | .09 | 1.22 |
| | | Entrepreneur / Business owner | .378* | .127 | .036 | .01 | .74 |
| I tend to buy travel packages for first-time visited places | Retired | Freelance / Part-time | .931* | .318 | .043 | .02 | 1.84 |
| I prefer travel package as the activities are interesting | Entrepreneur / Business owner | Employee / Full-time | .754* | .258 | .044 | .01 | 1.50 |
| | Retired | Employee / Full-time | .828* | .264 | .023 | .07 | 1.59 |

From Table 4.10, there is meaningful distinction in the selection of travel package based on the promotion which is under Budget factor across the number of times respondents have travelled abroad. The respondents who have travelled abroad 1-5 times have higher chance to select the package based on the promotion compare tod respondents who have travelled abroad more than 10 times.

**Table 4.10 Post hoc multiple comparisons of Number of times travelled abroad**

| Dependent Variable | (I) 6. Have you ever travelled abroad? | (J) 6. Have you ever travelled abroad? | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| I select travel packages based on the promotion offered | 1-5 times | More than 10 times | .504* | .185 | .023 | .05 | .96 |

There is significant diversity in the attitude of respondents toward the Free Independent Travelers (FIT) across the how much they have plan and travel by themselves. According to the result in Table 4.11, there are significant differences for eight dependent variables under 4 factors which are Time, Information/Knowledge, External Motivation and Internal Motivation. The respondents who plan and travel by themselves most of the time, will enjoy more to spend time on planning the trip, feel that gathering information is easy, follow reviews from internet, prefer to plan their trip in order to have the freedom of activities selection, flexible schedule and believe that they do not need travel agency compared to people who never plan and travel by themselves.

**Table 4.11 Post hoc multiple comparisons of Free Independent Travelers (FIT)**

| Dependent Variable | (I) 12. Have you ever plan the trip and travel abroad by yourself? | (J) 12. Have you ever plan the trip and travel abroad by yourself? | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| 3.1 I enjoy spending time on planning for travelling | Most of the time | Never | .887* | .299 | .023 | .08 | 1.69 |
| 2.3 Gathering information for planning a trip by myself is easy | Never | Some time | -.489* | .160 | .017 | -.92 | -.06 |
| | | Most of the time | -1.047* | .267 | .001 | -1.77 | -.33 |
| | | Always | -1.186* | .280 | .000 | -1.94 | -.43 |
| 2.9 It is easy to find travel information in the internet so I can plan the trip by myself | Never | Most of the time | -1.057* | .287 | .002 | -1.83 | -.28 |
| | | Always | -.973* | .302 | .010 | -1.79 | -.16 |

**Table 4.11 Post hoc multiple comparisons of Free Independent Travelers (FIT) (cont.)**

| Dependent Variable | (I) 12. Have you ever plan the trip and travel abroad by yourself? | (J) 12. Have you ever plan the trip and travel abroad by yourself? | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| 4.5 I follow the advice from other travelers on Pantip and other websites | Most of the time | Never | .924* | .251 | .002 | .25 | 1.60 |
| | | Some time | .801* | .255 | .014 | .11 | 1.49 |
| 3.8 I like to plan my own trip and select interesting activities | Most of the time | Never | 1.040* | .289 | .003 | .26 | 1.82 |
| 4.6 I prefer a flexible schedule, so I don't like travel packages | Most of the time | Never | .832* | .289 | .030 | .05 | 1.61 |
| 4.8 Travel packages do not provide sufficient time to fully explore a new destination, so I prefer to arrange the travel myself | Most of the time | Never | .858* | .279 | .016 | .11 | 1.61 |
| | | Some time | .877* | .284 | .016 | .11 | 1.64 |
| 4.9 I believe I can travel by myself without using a travel agency | Most of the time | Never | 1.428* | .273 | .000 | .69 | 2.16 |
| | | Some time | .924* | .278 | .008 | .17 | 1.67 |
| | Always | Never | .997* | .287 | .005 | .22 | 1.77 |

## 4.4 Correlation

The result in Table 4.12 shows the pairs of correlation coefficients among the six factors with total of twelve possible correlations. The '1' in this correlation matrix present that variables are perfectly correlated with themselves.

As a result, there is one moderate positive correlation which is the pair of External Motivation and Information/Knowledge (0.502). This means the higher External Motivation is, the higher the value of the Information/ Knowledge factor will be. In addition, there are eight weak positive correlations, range from the minimum of 0.224 between the pair of Internal Motivation and Time, to the maximum 0.348 between the pair of External Motivation and Budget. There are no significant negative correlations.

**Table 4.12 Coefficient correlation**

| | | Budget | Time | Information / Knowledge | Companions | External Motivation | Internal Motivation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Budget | Pearson Correlation | 1 | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | |
| | N | 102 | | | | | |
| Time | Pearson Correlation | .242* | 1 | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .014 | | | | | |
| | N | 102 | 102 | | | | |
| Information / Knowledge | Pearson Correlation | .275** | .263** | 1 | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .005 | .008 | | | | |
| | N | 102 | 102 | 102 | | | |
| Companions | Pearson Correlation | -.023 | .178 | .317** | 1 | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .817 | .074 | .001 | | | |
| | N | 102 | 102 | 102 | 102 | | |
| External Motivation | Pearson Correlation | .348** | .275** | .502** | .101 | 1 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .005 | .000 | .312 | | |
| | N | 102 | 102 | 102 | 102 | 102 | |
| Internal Motivation | Pearson Correlation | .107 | .224* | .145 | .025 | .284** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .283 | .024 | .146 | .804 | .004 | |
| | N | 102 | 102 | 102 | 102 | 102 | 102 |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 4.13 Linear Regression**

| Model Summary | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model | | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| 1 | | .364a | .132 | .078 | .842 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Internal Motivation, Companions, Budget, Time, Information Knowledge, External Motivation | | | | | |

**Table 4.13 Linear Regression (cont.)**

ANOVAᵇ

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 10.269 | 6 | 1.712 | 2.416 | .032ᵃ |
| | Residual | 67.309 | 95 | .709 | | |
| | Total | 77.578 | 101 | | | |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Internal Motivation, Companions, Budget, Time, Information Knowledge, External Motivation
b. Dependent Variable: 11. Have you ever use travel agency or buy travel package?

Coefficientsᵃ

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.439 | 1.099 | | 1.309 | .194 |
| | Budget | .474 | .201 | .246 | 2.352 | .021 |
| | Time | -.162 | .314 | -.053 | -.515 | .608 |
| | Information Knowledge | .113 | .287 | .046 | .392 | .696 |
| | Companions | .424 | .206 | .211 | 2.061 | .042 |
| | External Motivation | -.020 | .269 | -.009 | -.075 | .941 |
| | Internal Motivation | -.477 | .260 | -.186 | -1.839 | .069 |

a. Dependent Variable: 11. Have you ever use travel agency or buy travel package?

Next, we estimate a linear regression model for the dependent variable which is the decision to use a travel agency or travel package. From the Linear Regression results in Table 4.13, the model F-test significance is 0.032 which means there is the significant relation between the six independent factors toward the dependent variable which is the decision in travel agency or travel package selection. According to Table 4.13, there are two factors that best explain the decision to use travel agency or buy travel package, which are Budget and Companions. For the Budget factor, the respondents will select the travel agency if the price match their budget. For the Companions factor, they will select to travel with the travel agency if they love travelling with new people. Further, there is a marginally significant relation between internal motivation and using a travel agent/package, with negative sign (p-value = 0.069). Those with higher internal motivation are less likely to use a travel agent or package.

## 4.5 Short answers

The Questionnaire also had short answers part which are open-ended questions for respondents to think about the reasons that they use to select the travel agency and the reasons that they consider buying travel package instead of travel by themselves.

For the first question of this part, there are 253 reasons in total as the questionnaire allow them to answer more than one reason. According to Figure 3.7, the top rank has two reasons that Thai senior tourists use for selecting the travel agency are Service (25.32%) and Reliability (25%). The second rank also has two reasons which are Experience (19%) and Quality (19%). There are another 10 reasons for considering to select travel agency which are Price, Reference/Review, Fame, Convenience, Safety, Program, Transparency, Professional, Familiarity And Companion.
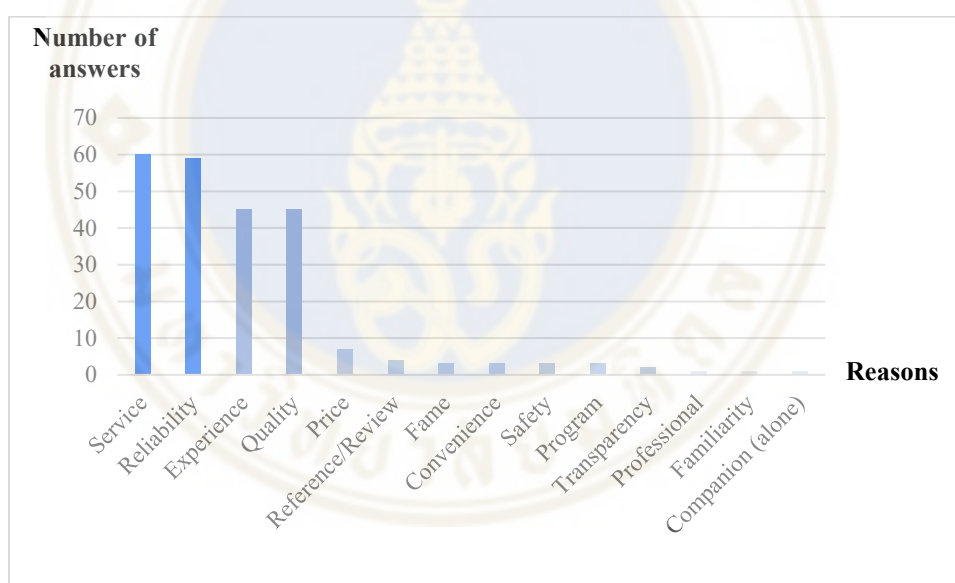


**Figure 4.7 Top 3 reasons to select the travel agency**

For the second question, there are 255 reasons in total. Thai senior tourists think that they will consider for buying travel package according to Destination (28%) and Price (21%) as the top two factors. Others, around 7% to 10% are considering Accommodation, Promotion, Airline, Agency and Program. The rest are Activity, Food/Restaurant, Period and Safety.

**Figure 4.8 Top 3 things considered to buy travel package**

# CHAPTER V
# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
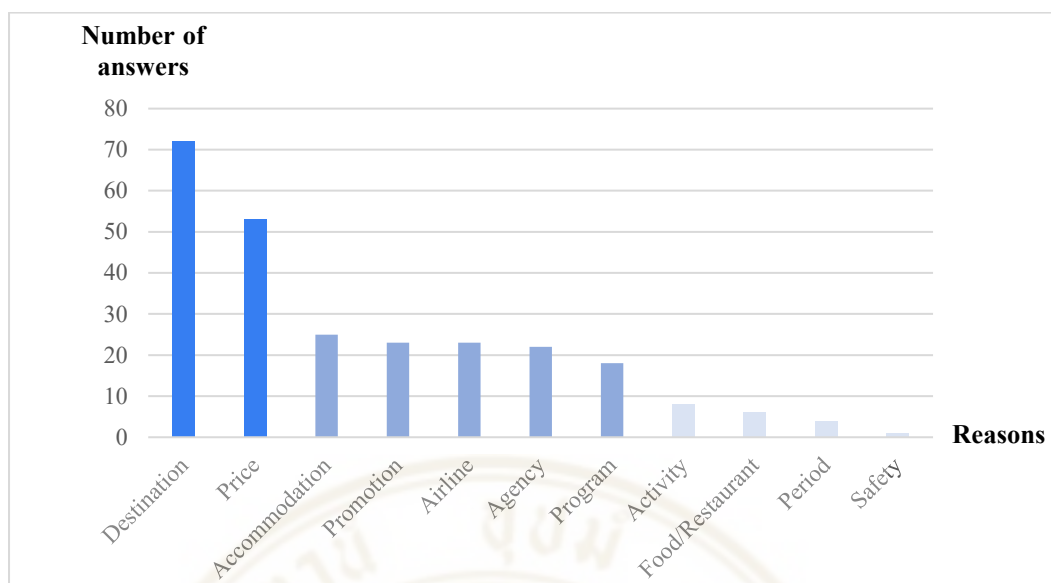
## 5.1 Conclusion

This study was conducted to find key factors influencing Thai senior tourists decision to use a travel agency or buy a travel package. The purpose is to identify the senior travelers' preferences, which could help formulating the strategic plans or effective marketing & communication activities to achieve further development of the tourism sector. Based on the Conceptual Framework for Travel Decisions (Figure 1) and SPSS analysis, the results show that there are four key factors influencing the decision for using a travel agent which are Budget, Time, Information/Knowledge and Internal Motivation. From the descriptive statistics of the questions (Table 7), the conclusions are that Thai senior tourists prefer a travel agency or travel package that matches their budget (Budget factor). They agree that using a travel agency is more convenient and saves their time (Time factor). They tend to buy travel packages for first-time visited places (Information/Knowledge factor). Finally, they think that it is risky to arrange the trip without a travel agency (Internal Motivation factor).

## 5.2 Research Limitations

The primary limitation of this study are time and sample size. According to the time constraint by the course duration, there are only 102 respondents. Moreover, we cannot do another Qualitative research to get deeper understanding about the target group. Second, as we had 6 key factors and tried to cover all factor with 3-4 questions in different orders which turn up to 30 linked scale questions, excluding the personal part and short answers part. The target respondents commented that it was too much. Also, most of the respondents are between age 55-64 years old and have skill in using online media and knowhow to fill in the questionnaire by using mobile phones or

computer. With all these aspects, it reflects that the respondents of this study probably cannot represent Thailand's senior population in general.

## 5.3  Recommendations

### 5.3.1  Business Recommendations

This study found that the Thai senior tourists are mostly married with children and frequently travel abroad with their families. Most of them still prefer using a travel agency or buying a travel package rather than being free independent travelers (FIT). Travel agencies or any businesses related to tourism can use the factors identified in this study (Time, Information/Knowledge, External Motivation and Internal Motivation) to support their marketing activities if they are focusing on this target market.

The part that can really represent the Thai senior tourists' viewpoints and decision factors are the short open answers from the questionnaire. The travel agencies or tourism businesses should focus on their service, reliability, experience and quality in order to improve their business and serve the target group well. These can be their core business values that support the business to be sustainable in the long term. The marketing activities should focus on the destinations and price to attract customers.

### 5.3.2  Future Research Recommendations

The current study only considers Thai senior tourists who have travelled abroad. Future research can use the framework in Figure 1 to study the key factors of different target markets, for example Thai tourists in Gen X and Gen Y, as they also have high purchasing power and high impact on the tourism industry. These two generations are the major groups who will drive the future growth of several businesses the including tourism sector.

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**APPENDICES**

# APPENDIX A

# Questionnaire survey used for collecting data in the quantitative research

## Questionnaire for Senior tourism

This survey questionnaire is to gain better understanding on senior tourism industry. This survey is for academic research. The survey is anonymous and confidential so please feel free to give the suitable answers and comments.

## Part I) General Information (Please select one answer)

1. Age
   - ☐ 55-59 years old
   - ☐ 60-64 years old
   - ☐ 65-69 years old
   - ☐ 70-74 years old
   - ☐ 75 years old up
2. Gender
   - ☐ Male
   - ☐ Female
3. Marital Status
   - ☐ Single
   - ☐ Married with children
   - ☐ Married without children
   - ☐ Divorce
   - ☐ Widow
   - ☐ Other …………………..
4. Education
   - ☐ Lower than Bachelor's degree
   - ☐ Bachelor's degree
   - ☐ Higher than Bachelor's degree
5. What is your career status?
   - ☐ Employee / Full-time
   - ☐ Freelance / Part-time
   - ☐ Entrepreneur / Business owner
   - ☐ Retired

    ☐ Other …………………..

6. Have you ever travelled abroad?
   - ☐ Never
   - ☐ 1-5 times
   - ☐ 6-10 times
   - ☐ More than 10 times

7. How often do you travel abroad?
   - ☐ Once in few years
   - ☐ Once a year
   - ☐ 2-3 times a year
   - ☐ More than 4 times a year
   - ☐ Rarely

8. What is the most common purpose of your travel?
   - ☐ Vacation
   - ☐ Business / Work
   - ☐ Personal Interest ex. Religious, Sports, Arts, Cultural
   - ☐ Other …………………..

9. With whom, do you travel most often?
   - ☐ Family
   - ☐ Friend
   - ☐ Colleague / Partner / Client
   - ☐ Alone

10. How do you plan your trip? (Please check all relevant)
    - ☐ By myself
    - ☐ By others: family / friends / colleagues
    - ☐ Travel Agency
    - ☐ Company

11. Have you ever use travel agency or buy travel package?
    - ☐ Never
    - ☐ Some time
    - ☐ Most of the time
    - ☐ Always

12. Have you ever plan the trip and travel abroad by yourself?
    - ☐ Never
    - ☐ Some time
    - ☐ Most of the time
    - ☐ Always

# Part II) Attitude towards the statement (Please select one)

| | Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1 I think using a travel package is cheaper than booking by myself | | | | |
| 2.2 It consumes much time and effort to plan a trip by myself | | | | |
| 2.3 Gathering information for planning a trip by myself is easy | | | | |
| 2.4 I think using a travel package safes money | | | | |
| 2.5 Using a travel agent saves time | | | | |
| 2.6 I tend to buy travel packages for first-time visited places, as it is difficult to find information on local transportation, sights and accommodation | | | | |
| 2.7 I select the package that matches my budget | | | | |
| 2.8 I do not want to spend a lot of time on travel planning | | | | |
| 2.9 It is easy to find travel information in the internet so I can plan the trip by myself | | | | |
| 2.10 I think booking by myself is cheaper than using a travel package | | | | |
| 3.1 I enjoy spending time on planning for travelling | | | | |
| 3.2 I prefer to use travel packages, as they have better knowledge about local attractions, transportation and accommodations | | | | |
| 3.3 I don't like to travel with other people that I don't know | | | | |
| 3.4 It is convenient when an agent arranges the travel plans, transportation and accommodation | | | | |

# Part II) Attitude towards the statement (Please select one) (cont.)

| | Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.5 I do not need to use a travel package, because I can rely on my family or friends to plan and book a trip for me | | | | |
| 3.6 If I need to travel alone, I prefer to travel with an agency | | | | |
| 3.7 I prefer travel package as the activities are interesting | | | | |
| 3.8 I like to plan my own trip and select interesting activities | | | | |
| 3.9 I love travelling with new people | | | | |
| 3.10 I select travel packages based on the promotion offered | | | | |
| 4.1 It is risky to arrange the trip without help of a professional agency | | | | |
| 4.2 Travelling is best done with a large group of people | | | | |
| 4.3 I select the travel packages which my family/friends recommend | | | | |
| 4.4 Travelling with a group (package tour) is safer | | | | |
| 4.5 I follow the advice from other travelers on Pantip and other websites | | | | |
| 4.6 I prefer a flexible schedule, so I don't like travel packages | | | | |
| 4.7 I don't want to use a travel package if I have experience visiting that place | | | | |
| 4.8 Travel packages do not provide sufficient time to fully explore a new destination, so I prefer to arrange the travel myself | | | | |
| 4.9 I believe I can travel by myself without using a travel agency | | | | |
| 4.10 Internet reviews are important when planning a trip | | | | |

**Part III) Please give short suggestions**

1. What are top 3 reasons for you to select the travel agency? (ex. Reliability, Transparency, Quality, Experience, Service, etc)

2. What are top 3 things that you consider to buy travel package? (ex. Price, Promotion, Destination, Activities, Schedule, Accommodation, Restaurants, Airline, Company, etc)

.