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The Impacts of Perceived Risk and Destination Image on Chinese Visitor’s Decision and Destination Loyalty for Visiting Thailand

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Abstract

The purposes of the quantitative research were: (1) to investigate the impacts of Chinese visitors’ perceived risk and destination image on their decisions and destination loyalty for visiting Thailand, and (2) to investigate the impact of Chinese visitors’ decisions on their destination loyalty as well. The 357 of 385 samples were selected from the Chinese tourists who had experiences in visiting Thailand, by using purposive sampling method. The administered questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect data. The Simple Regression and Multiple Regression Analysis were employed for hypothesis testing at 0.05 level of statistical significance. The research findings showed that Chinese tourists perceived risk and destination image affected their decisions and destination loyalty. In addition, Chinese tourists’ decisions also affected their destination loyalty.

Keywords: Perceived risk / Destination image / Visitor’s decision / Destination loyalty

Introduction

Thailand has become one of the most popular destinations for foreign visitors (Thailand public relations department, 2014). Regarding the report of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2016), visitors’ arrivals to Thailand from January to April 2016 were total 11,682, and 144, which are 14.12% over the same period of 2015. Importantly, it has found that 27.3% increase in arrivals was Chinese tourists. At present, Chinese tourists are now by far the largest source of tourists who visit Thailand.

Thailand has many attractive things that make the tourists enjoyable during visiting this country. Those of which include beautiful places, different cultural festivals, ancient architecture, large number of merit temples, social living and lifestyles, and various kinds of food and dessert (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2016b). In the previous years, Thailand encountered many crises, for instance, disease epidemics, world’s economic recession, political crisis and so forth. Those evidences can affect tourists’ perceived risk, Thailand’s



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destination image, decision making to visit Thailand, and their decision to revisit Thailand as destination loyalty. (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2016a). Surprisingly, the Chinese tourists have increasingly visit Thailand as reported by Tourism Authority of Thailand (2016a). Therefore, this study will focus on (1) how the Chinese tourists perceived about risk on Thailand and its destination image when making decision to visit and revisit Thailand; (2) what are the relationships between the Chinese tourist perceptions toward risk, destination image, visitor decision, and destination loyalty in context of Thailand.

The findings of this study will be illustrated to strengthen the strategic framework of tourism planning for Thailand tourism industry. Especially, not only the industry can maintain the growing demand of Chinese tourists, the majority group, but also it can strengthen a stability of Thai economy derived from growing numerous incomes from Chinese tourists that are growing now and in the near future.

Purposes of Study

The purposes of this study were as follows:

1. To investigate the impacts of Chinese visitors’ perceived risk and destination image on their decisions and destination loyalty for visiting Thailand.
2. To investigate the impact of Chinese visitors’ decision on their destinations loyalty for visiting Thailand.

Literature Review

There were many factors influencing the tourists’ decisions to visit and revisit the destinations they had experience. Perceived risk and destination were the interesting factors that the previous research discussed and concerned Chen and Chen (2010); Tasci and Gartner (2007); Mansfeld (2006); Kim & Richard (2003). This study focused on the impacts of Chinese tourists’ attitudes toward their perceived risk and destination image on their decisions and destination loyalty. The reviews of literature were as follows:

Perceived risk and visitor decision

Mansfeld (2006) defined that perceived risk was the chances that tourists could be exposed while travelling to the target destination. Many researchers found that there were many kinds of risks that could unexpectedly take place while the tourists were being enjoyable. Those of which included disease risk (Hall, 2006) Crime risk (Walker & Page, 2006), natural disaster (Wang, 2009), political risk. When the tourists recognize that such risk was too high, they can change their decision to visit at the planned destination (Mansfeld, 2006; Sasson, 2005), it was concluded that tourists’ perceived risk negatively affected their decisions to visit any destination where the tourists forecasted what could be exposed and how dangerous it was. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study in the context of the Chinese



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tourists would be:

Hypothesis 1: The Chinese tourists’ perceived risk negatively affected their decisions to visit Thailand.

Destination image and visitor decision

Assael (2004) explained that destination image was the overall perception of the expected destination. That perception was generated by informing information from various sources and experience over period of time. Kim and Richardson (2003) found that perception or impression of destination held by visitors would let them expect the benefits on values then they were travelling.

Chen and Tsai (2007) explained that the tourists perceived the destination image of each country in many characteristics which were: (1) physical images in terms of geographies areas, climate, transportation, food and accommodation; (2) cultural, social, and historical images; (3) financial and economics images in terms of living expense, coat of product and services, including tourism budget and expense; (4) architectural building; and (5) natural life and environment. Moreover, in the context of Thailand destination image, Tourism Authority of Thailand. (2016a) reported that Thailand has many categories of tourism positively generating tourists’ image. The various categories of tourism could generate tourists’ perception and encourage them to visit Thailand, those of tourism categories including adventure tourism; cultural tourism; natural tourism; recreational tourism.

Regarding the tourists or visitors decisions, Song, Veen and Chen (2012); Su and Fan (2011); Chen and Chen (2010); and Huang and Su (2010) found that visitors’ overall perception of particular destination image could positively affect their behavioral decision to visit or revisit that location in the near future. Therefore, the hypothesis for this concern would be:

Hypothesis 2: The Chinese tourists’ perceptions toward destination image positively affected their decisions to visit Thailand.

Perceived risk, destination image, and destination loyalty

According to the definition of brand loyalty, Zeithmal, Berry and Paeasuraman (1996) explained that customer loyalty could be represented in many actions including words of mouth, purchase intention, price acceptance and complaining avoidance. In addition, Oliver (1999) depleted that loyalty represented the relationship between customers and particular sellers, in terms of repurchase of product or service in the future according to customer satisfaction and impression on the products and services.

Applying the definitions of brand loyalty to destination loyalty, it was defined as repeat behavior of tourists’ intention to revisit the particular destination (Jenkins, 2007). However, Cavlex (2002); and Mawby (2010) explained that the tourists perceptions of loyalty to the particular destination would be increased when their perceived risk decreased according to gaining positive information and knowledge. The relationship between perceived risk and destination loyalty was proposed to support the hypothesis as follows:



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Hypothesis 3: The Chinese tourists’ perceived risk negatively affected their destination loyalty.

Baker and Crompton (2010); Chi and Qu (2008) explained when the tourists or visitors had impression about the destination they visited, they would perceive of positive image on the destination as well. So far the tourists had willingness to revisit and recommend other people to visit in the future. According to Jenkins (2007), this evidence could be explained that the tourists belonged the destination loyalty on their destination image. Therefore, the hypothesis for this study would be:

Hypothesis 4: The Chinese tourists’ perceptions toward destination image positively affected their destination loyalty.

Visitor decision and destination loyalty

Baker and Crompton (2010); Chen and Chen (2010); Huang and Su (2010); Lee (2005), and Yoon and Uysal (2005) stated that the tourists’ satisfaction from the first visit was positive and impressive; they were willing to revisit that particular destination. In other words, this was confirmed that satisfied tourists would like to visit the place again and also encouraged other tourists to revisit. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis was proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 5: The Chinese tourists’ decision affected their destination loyalty.

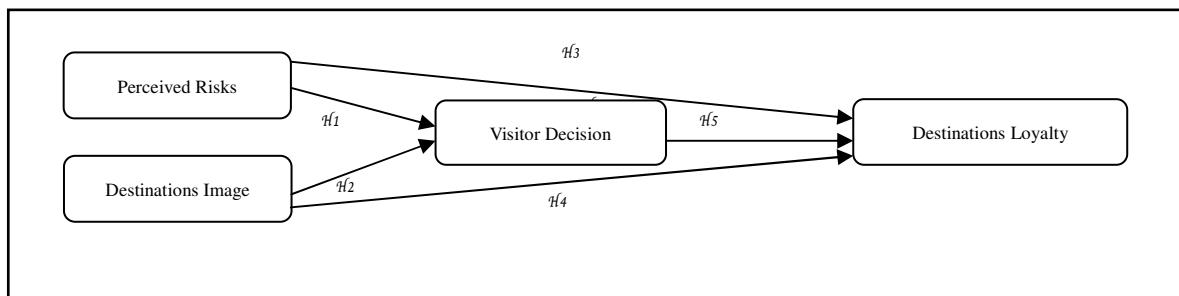


Figure 1: Represented the conceptual framework of this study

Research Methodology

Research Design

As this is a quantitative research, the survey method was used to collect data. Regarding a survey, the researcher used the closed ended questionnaire as administered instrument. The questionnaire was designed by using 5-point scale to investigate the Chinese visitors’ attitudes, including their perceived risk, destination image, decision to visit Thailand and destination loyalty.



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Sampling Method and Sampling Selection

The purposive random sampling method was conducted as follows:

1. The 385 samples calculated by applying an equation proposed by Yamane (1973), was selected out of the target population. Those populations represented the Chinese tourists who had experiences in visiting Thailand during the year of 2015-2016. The reason why the researcher considered this period of time because there were the political and economic circumstance in Thailand. Therefore, the samples would have their feelings before making decisions to visit Thailand.
2. The 385 target samples were living in China. The researcher used the networks of travel agencies in China to find out the lists of the Chinese tourists who came to visit Thailand during the year of 2015-2016.
3. The researcher contacted those target samples by using E-mail address and directly sends them the questionnaires by via online system. The total of 357 samples replied back to the researcher later.

Reliability and Content Validity Assessment

1. Reliability

The questionnaire was examined to ensure that all respondents had a common understanding to answer all questions in the questionnaire. The reliability was indicated by using the value of Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient.

The value of Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient of overall questionnaire was 0.930 as the result shown in Table 1, the value for perceived risk, destination image, visitor decision and destination loyalty were 0.863, 0.865, 0.853, and 0.926 respectively. According to (Cronbach, 1951), the acceptable value of Alpha must be 0.70 or upper. Therefore, the reliability of the questionnaire was acceptable to use for this study.

Table 1: The reliability of questionnaire.

Transactions	Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient	Items
Perceived Risk	0.863	8
Destination Image	0.865	12
Visitor Decision	0.853	10
Destination Loyalty	0.926	7
Overall	0.930	37

2. Content Validity

The researcher used three experts specialized in relative filed of this study with Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration. The index of Item Objective



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Congruence (IOC) was used to calculate the value of consistency between the objective of study and content of questions. The calculation of the value was conducted after receiving the assessment results from those three expects. The index value must be at least 0.5 or more; the content validity of the questionnaire would be acceptable. The total index value of this study was 0.860 that meant the questionnaire content validity was acceptable to use for this study (Cronbach, 1951).

Statistics and Data Analysis

1. Descriptive Statistics

Mean and Standard Deviation were applied to explain the respondents’ attitudes including perceived risk, destination image, visitor decision, and destination loyalty.

2. Inferential Statistics

The Simple Regression and Multiple Regression were applied to analysis the impact of independent variables on dependent variables which were as follows:

- The Multiple Regression Analysis was applied to investigate the impacts of perceived risk and destination image on visitor decision and destination loyalty. The test of impact was statistically significant at 0.05.

- The Simple Regression Analysis was applied to investigate the impacts of visitor decision on destination loyalty. The test of impact was statistically significant at 0.05.

Research Findings

1. Demographic Data

The majority of respondents were female. The age was in the range between 26-30years old. Most of them were single and each their living as the employees for private companies with monthly income less than 20,000 baht. Most respondents have education level in bachelor’s degree.

2. General Data about visiting Thailand

Many Chinese visitors had opportunities to visit Thailand at first time. However, many Chinese visitors had come to Thailand more than 4times. The most important reasons that let them make decision to visit Thailand because it has many attractive places to visit with cheapness. Moreover, it was found that many Chinese visitors have plan to come back to visit Thailand again in the future

3. Perceived Risk

In overall, Chinese visitors perceived that about the risk level in Thailand was moderate. Regarding each type of risk, disease risk and risk derived from unfriendliness of Thai people were less possible to happen. However, many kinds of risk may happen in moderate level including unexpected natural disasters, terrorist, unexpected crime, any kinds of danger, and traveling expense which could be increased, respectively.



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The research findings about perceived risk were illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of Chinese visitors’ perceived risk in Thailand (n=357)

Types of Perceived Risk	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Any Kinds of Danger	3.18	.944	Moderate to happen
2. Diseases Risk	3.47	.879	Less Possible to Happen
3. Unexpected Crimes Risk	3.24	.994	Moderate to happen
4. Unexpected Natural Disasters	3.40	.930	Moderate to happen
5. Terrorist Risk	3.35	.949	Moderate to happen
6. Unexpected Political Restrictions	3.08	1.00	Moderate to happen
7. Unfriendliness of Thai People	3.53	1.04	Less Possible to Happen
8. Increasing Traveling Expenses	3.17	1.10	Moderate to happen
Total	3.30	0.980	Moderate to happen

4. Destination Image

According to destination image related to its attraction, there were many attractive variables which the Chinese visitors strongly agreed about Thailand image. They included Thailand had many beautiful places, various food and accommodations, and price visiting which was reasonable, consecutively. In addition, the Chinese visitors rather agreed that Thailand had attractive social cultures which were different and marvelous than other countries. Finally, they also rather agreed that the transportation in Thailand was convenient to any places. In overall, the Chinese visitors strongly agreed that Thailand was very attractive to come. Table 3 illustrated the details of destination image as below.

When thinking of Thailand image in terms of categories of tourism, the Chinese visitors strongly agreed that natural tourism in Thailand was very beautiful and enjoyable. Moreover, they also strongly agreed that food and beverage tourism that had been existing was very exotic. However, the Chinese visitors rather agreed that sight-seeing tourism was very beautiful, social and cultural tourism are valuable to learn, entertainment and shopping are spectacular. In addition, they rather agreed Thailand had religion tourism which was very merit, and adventure tourism in Thailand was exiting. Table 3 illustrated the Chinese visitors’ attitudes toward the kinds of destination image that Thailand belonged.



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Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of Chinese visitors’ destination image in Thailand

Destination Image	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Attraction of Tourism Characteristics			
1. Beautiful Places	4.42	.681	Strongly Agree
2. Reasonable Price	4.26	.732	Strongly Agree
3. Attractive Social Cultures	4.23	.756	Rather Agree
4. Various Food and Accommodations	4.29	.744	Strongly Agree
5. Convenient Transportation	3.84	.965	Rather Agree
Categories of Tourism			
6. Adventure Tourism	3.68	.877	Rather Agree
7. Social and Cultural Tourism	4.10	.749	Rather Agree
8. Sight – Seeing Tourism	4.16	.749	Rather Agree
9. Entertainment and Shopping Tourism	3.94	.932	Rather Agree
10. Religion Tourism	3.77	.997	Rather Agree
11. Natural Tourism	4.32	.727	Strongly Agree
12. Food and Beverage Tourism	4.40	.723	Strongly Agree
Total	4.12	0.803	Rather Agree

5. Visitor Decision

The findings showed that the Chinese visitors rather agreed that their decisions to visit Thailand were based on many reasons, including plenties of interesting places, nice people in everywhere, various types of tourism, cheap expenses for visiting, convenient accommodation, lower budget comparing to visiting other countries, delicious food and beverage, availability of convenience transportation, and interesting information by tourist guide respectively. Moreover, the finding showed that the Chinese visitors strongly agreed that they came to visit Thailand and because Thailand had different society and culture to study. All findings were illustrated with the calculated mean and standard deviation in Table 4.



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Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of visitor decision

Visitor Decision	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Plenties of Interesting Places	4.14	.776	Rather Agree
2. The Expense of Visit is Cheap	4.01	.821	Rather Agree
3. Various Types of Tourism	4.02	.831	Rather Agree
4. Interesting Information Provided by Tourist Guides	3.39	1.12	Moderate
5. Spend Lower Expense Budgets	3.84	.903	Rather Agree
6. Different Society and Culture to Study	4.22	.717	Strongly Agree
7. People are Nice in Everywhere	4.11	.804	Rather Agree
8. Get Delicious Food and Beverage	3.80	.906	Rather Agree
9. Get Convenient Accommodation	3.92	.836	Rather Agree
10. Convenient Transportation is Available	3.67	.999	Rather Agree
Total	3.91	0.871	Rather Agree

Destination Loyalty

The findings showed that the Chinese visitors strongly agreed to visit Thailand again because they received the good memory. Moreover, they rather agreed to represent their loyalty to visit Thailand again in various ways respectively, which were to (1) recommend other people to visit Thailand, (2) surely visit Thailand again, (3) plan to visit Thailand again in the near future, (4) intend to visit Thailand again regarding their impressive travel experiences, (5) often visit Thailand regarding its attractive differences from other countries, and (6) think of Thailand first when thinking about travelling in Asia. Table 5 illustrated mean and standard deviation of Chinese visitors’ destination loyalty toward Thailand.



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Table 5: Mean and standard deviation of Chinese visitors’ destination loyalty toward Thailand

Destination Loyalty	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Traveling in Asia you think of Thailand first	3.84	.931	Rather Agree
2. Impressive travel experiences, you intend to visit Thailand again	4.15	.765	Rather Agree
3. Attractive differences from other countries	4.01	.831	Rather Agree
4. Plan to visit Thailand again in the near future	4.16	.781	Rather Agree
5. Recommend other people to visit Thailand	4.18	.842	Rather Agree
6. Always have good memory and experiences for surely revisiting	4.18	.748	Rather Agree
7. Good memory makes you decide to come back again	4.26	.759	Strongly Agree
Total	4.11	0.808	Rather Agree

Table 6: A summary of overall means and standard deviation of all variables

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Perceived Risk	3.30	0.980	Moderate to happen
Destination Image	4.12	0.803	Rather Agree
Visitor Decision	3.91	0.871	Rather Agree
Destination Loyalty	4.11	0.808	Rather Agree

Hypothesis Testing

Multiple Regression technique was applied to analysis the effects of perceived risk and destination image to visitor decision, the value of Adjusted R² could be explained that the model had rather moderate prediction power 44.60% of total visitor decision. Destination image positively affected visitor decision ($\beta=0.630$) while perceived risk negatively affected visitor decision ($\beta=0.113$) as shown in Table 7.

Therefore, H1 and H2 were accepted. It was statistically significant at 0.05.



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Table 7: Perceived risk and destination image affecting visitor decision

Independent Variables	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Perceived Risk	-.093	.113	2.748	.006*
Destination Image	.706	.630	15.337	.000*

Dependent variable: Visitor Decision.

Adjusted R²: .446 df: (2), (354) F= 144.456 P*≤0.05

Multiple Regressions technique was also applied to analysis the effects of perceived risk and destination image to destination loyalty, as shown in Table 8, the value of Adjusted R² could be explained that perceived risk and destination image had moderate prediction power 42% of total destination loyalty. Respectively, destination image positively affected destination loyalty ($\beta=0.619$) while and perceived risk negatively affected destination loyalty ($\beta=0.092$) as shown in Table 8.

Therefore, H3 and H4 were accepted. It was statistically significant at 0.05.

Table 8: Perceived risk and destination image affecting Destination Loyalty

Independent Variables	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Perceived Risk	-.088	.092	2.194	.029*
Destination Image	.812	.619	14.709	.000*

Dependent variable: Destination Loyalty.

Adjusted R²: .420 df: (2), (354) F= 129.753 P*≤0.05

Simple Regression technique was also applied to analysis the effects of visitor decision to destination loyalty. As shown in Table 9, the value of Adjusted R² represented the 34% moderate prediction power of visitor decision to destination loyalty. Moreover, the finding showed that visitor decision positively affected destination loyalty ($\beta=0.584$) as shown in Table 9. Regarding this finding s, it was concluded that H5was accepted. The acceptance was statistically significant at 0.05.

Table 9: Visitor decision affecting Destination Loyalty

Independent Variables	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Visitor decision	.684	.584	13.569	.000*

Dependent variable: Destination Loyalty.

Adjusted R²:.340 df: (1), (355) F= 184.112 P*≤0.05



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Table 10 Illustrated a summary of the results of hypothesis testing. The findings showed that all hypothesis of this study were accepted. All acceptances were statistically significant at 0.05.

Table 10: A summary of hypotheses testing results

Hypothesis	Results
H1: The Chinese tourists’ perceived risk negatively affected their decisions to visit Thailand.	Accepted
H2: The Chinese tourists’ perceptions toward destination image positively affected their decisions to visit Thailand.	Accepted
H3: The Chinese tourists’ perceived risk negatively affected their destination loyalty.	Accepted
H4: The Chinese tourists’ perceptions toward destination image positively affected their destination loyalty.	Accepted
H5: The Chinese tourists’ decision affected their destination loyalty.	Accepted

Discussion and Recommendation

Regarding the findings, Chinese tourists perceived risk negatively affected their decision to visit Thailand. This finding was explained that if the perceived risk has been still high, this led to the Chinese tourists’ decisions many change their decision to visit on postpone their decision to visit later. This finding was related to Kozak, Crofts, and Law (2007) who stated that tourists would prefer to visit destination with low potential risks and where the perceived magnitude to the threat of risks was low in the expected destination. Moreover, the find was confirmed by Tasci and Gartner (2007); and Mansfeld (2006) who explained that the perceived risks were major concerns in their decision-making progress.

The Chinese tourists have some concerns about some kinds of perceived risks including risks from any unexpected danger, crime risk, natural disasters, terrorist risk, political restriction, an increase of travelling expense. Therefore, the tourism organizations and entrepreneurs supported with government should set up the appropriate standard and policies to ensure the Chinese tourists that they will be safe and happily visit Thailand. In addition, the Thai government should establish the tourism campaign of public relation to inform the Chinese tourists via the channels that easily access to the Chinese tourists as proposed by Mawby (2000), proposed that tourists should be informed of the risks of visiting destination in order to reduce the fear of incidents while visiting.

Destination image was found that it positively affected the Chinese tourists’ decision to visit Thailand. The decisions were based on most related reasons which were the images of



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these following: beautiful places, reasonable price, various food and accommodations, and lots of tourism categories, especially, natural tourism, food and beverage tourism. This findings were related to the previous research of Kim and Richardson (2003), they explained the relationship of destination image and behavioral decision of Chinese tourists. The report was summarized that there was a relationship between both variables. As this concern, it meant that the high levels of tourists’ positive image of the destination could affect their positive decision to visit the destination. In order to create the positive Thailand destination image, the related organization could use the findings as a guideline such as maintain the environments of each beautiful places, find the new beautiful places, prepare various food and styles of accommodation, including consider price which was reasonable for the Chinese tourists budget. In the aspect of price, the tourism business should highly concern because cheapest price is the important reasons that motivate the Chinese tourists to visit Thailand. In addition, the categories of tourism in Thailand that could increase the positive image that satisfy the Chinese tourists would be a variety of natural tourism as well as food and beverage tourism.

The perceived risk was found that it negatively affected destination loyalty. The relationship could be explained that the more perceived risk by the Chinese tourists was high, the less destination loyalty was low. That meant the Chinese tourists were reluctant to visit Thailand again as long as their perceived risk has still existed. In summary, the finding of this issue was related to Glaesser (2003) who explained that perceived risk led to the negative consequences of tourists revisit. Moreover, the previous research conducted by Reichel, Fuchs, and Uriely (2007) also supported the present findings of this research. They summarized that tourists’ negative perception of risk affected traveller behavior of revisit that destination. In this concern, communication campaign channels play an important role in decreasing perceived risk (Cavlek, 2002).

As well, the Chinese tourists toward destination image affected destination loyalty. It was recognized that the Chinese tourists would not come back to visit Thailand again in the future as far as the negative image of destination have been still existing. In other words, they would not think of Thailand or recommend other familiar people to visit Thailand. This finding was related to the explanations by Chi and Qu (2008); and Chen and Tsai (2007). Moreover, Chen and Tsai (2007) suggested that positive image could result in tourists’ destination loyalty.

In this study, the tourists’ decision was accounted for destination loyalty. It could be said that the Chinese tourists who had negative experience of visiting Thailand would have unwillingness to make decision to revisit. This finding was related to the explanations by Baker and Crompton (2010); Chen and Chen (2010); and Huang and Su (2010).

In summary, the Chinese tourists’ decisions and their destination loyalty could be positive with the conditions of decreasing their perceived risk and improving destination image of Thailand. The government and related business should have closed corporation in



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establishing the tourism policies and strategies to maintain and develop tourism places and their physical environments, tourism budget and expenses, logistics and transportation, accommodation, including attractive tourism activities. Moreover, the communication campaign was also very important to make the Chinese tourists understand and recognize Thailand as the impressive destination to visit and revisit in the future.

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