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**Country Branding, Consumption Values, and Purchase  
Decision Confidence: A Case Study of Tourists to Thailand**

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A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Marketing

at  
Lincoln University  
by  
Sawaros Srisutto

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Abstract of a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
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Confidence: A Case Study of Tourists to Thailand**

by  
Sawaros Srisutto

The tourist's purchase decision process in travelling abroad is complex. With global competition, tourists have an opportunity to choose from many countries. There are many factors influencing tourists' travel destination choices, and affecting the confidence in their purchase decisions. These factors relate to consumption values, travel information sources, and country image. There is a lack of research simultaneously investigating these three factors together. Moreover, the research into how consumption values influence tourists' travel decisions is limited, and would benefit from deeper investigation.

This research seeks to examine the factors affecting tourists' travel destination choices, and the factors influencing their purchase decision confidence. Furthermore, the research investigates whether the pattern of consumption values and travel information sources used differ based on socio-economic characteristics and purposes of trip. To understand the importance of consumption values to tourists, the concept of consumption values theorised by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991) was adapted.

A quantitative approach was used with a self-administered survey questionnaire distributed to tourists arriving at Suvarnabhumi Airport, the International Airport of Thailand. The valid sample size was 1,707 respondents from seven world regions (East Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa).

The results showed that functional and emotional values were the main factors motivating tourists to travel abroad. They searched for travel information from various sources, mainly

from the internet, previous experience, word-of-mouth recommendations, and travel guidebooks. They also evaluated country image, and had few constraints on travelling to their selected country.

Furthermore, the results indicated that five consumption values (functional, emotional, social, conditional, and epistemic) had slight positive relationships with the usefulness of a variety of travel information sources. The findings also indicated that functional and emotional values positively related to tourists' purchase decision confidence. Images focusing on relaxation, infrastructure, convenience, and the attractions of a country also significantly influenced their confidence. In addition, five travel information sources (previous experience, brochures/pamphlets, the internet, friends/family/relatives, and travel guidebooks) were found to significantly affect confidence. Some socio-economic characteristics and purposes of trip had statistically significant differences in consumption values and the usefulness of information sources; however, there were only small mean differences.

This research contributes to the theoretical and practical implications of destination marketing by extending knowledge on the relationships between consumption values, travel information sources, country image, socio-economic characteristics, purposes of trip, and purchase decision confidence. It also provides an understanding of how consumption values relate to tourists making their travel decisions, and supports the idea of how a country could build an effective brand to attract tourists. The findings of this study provide useful information for destination and tourism marketers in planning an effective marketing strategy, and in promoting a country brand to attract tourists.

**Keywords:** Country branding, consumption values, travel information sources, country image, purchase decision confidence, socio-economic characteristics, purposes of trip, Thailand.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 World Tourism and Competition

Tourism is one of the world's most important industries. It generates substantial economic growth providing tourism businesses and related employment. The World Tourism Organization reported that international tourist arrivals worldwide were 924 million in 2008 (World Tourism Organization, 2009, January). This was growth of only 2.0% from the previous year because of an economic crisis (World Tourism Organization, 2009, January). However, the number of international arrivals continues to increase and is expected to reach 1.6 billion in 2020. Tourism revenue receipts, excluding transport, from international tourism will continue to grow every year, with an average of US\$5.0 billion a day and are expected to reach US\$2.0 trillion in 2020 (World Tourism Organization, 2001). Tourism is a key industry in the economic development strategy of many countries (Oh, Uysal, & Weaver, 1995). Governments in almost every country seek to support tourism and promote their countries in order to attract tourists.

Tourists have many destinations from which to choose. Every country presents its unique culture and offers a variety of attractions, accommodation, services, and facilities. Destination branding is therefore a potentially powerful marketing tool when facing strong competition. A country has to present its attributes and offer benefits that match customers' expectations (Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2003). In addition, to sustain a country's image over time, destination branding needs to truthfully present the positioning and attractions of that destination. Therefore, it is important to better understand tourists' related consumption values regarding travel abroad, before a country builds its brand to attract tourists to visit or revisit a country.

### 1.2 The Importance of Consumption Values

Planning effective marketing strategies and offering tourism products to meet tourists' desires is becoming increasingly sophisticated. Tourism marketers are often faced with the problems of discovering what tourists are thinking and how they make decisions (Smith,

1995). Some marketing literature argues that consumption values are determinants of consumer decision-making (Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Zeithaml, 1988; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000).

Tourism marketers need to examine how a destination is valued by tourists in order to utilise this information for segmentation and development of tourism products (Sánchez, Callarisa, Rodríguez, & Moliner, 2006), and determine other marketing mix elements to attract tourists. Hence, destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and other tourism stakeholders need to understand tourist behaviour and investigate consumption values that drive their decisions to travel to a country. Clearly, this is best done before they can build a country brand, devise a marketing plan, and implement effective marketing strategies in order to attract new tourists and enhance revisitation. It is necessary to explore the influence of consumption values on travelling abroad that have not been revealed in marketing and tourism research.

Sheth et al. (1991) have suggested five values that may influence market choice behaviour; functional, emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional. Their model of consumption values and market choices has only had limited application in tourism research as little tourism research has investigated consumer values. Most tourism research (Fall, 2000a, 2000b; Kahle, 1983, 1984; Watkins & Gnoth, 2005) has explored tourists' values in terms of psychology, rather than from a broader marketing perspective. These researchers have focused on individual values, or have used the list of values (LOVs) developed by Kahle (1983). These values relate to a sense of belonging, excitement, warm relationships with others, self-fulfilment, being well respected, fun and enjoyment of life, security, self-respect, and a sense of accomplishment.

Recently, perceived value in the marketing context has become a topic of interest in tourism studies. Sánchez et al. (2006) investigated functional, emotional, and social values on the purchasing of tourism products by tourists. Lee, Yoon, and Lee (2007) examined the influence of functional, emotional, and overall value on tourists' satisfaction with tour services. The variables used in the previous studies were not as inclusive as the model of consumption values and market choices theorised by Sheth et al. (1991). Not only functional, emotional, and social values, but also epistemic and conditional values may influence tourists' purchase decisions. Only two studies have applied the model of Sheth et

al. (1991) by using a qualitative approach, and did not focus on tourists' destination choices. Williams and Soutar (2000) investigated consumption values and the tourism experience. Tapachai and Waryszak (2000) also applied the model of Sheth et al. (1991), examining the beneficial images of Thailand and the USA as travel destinations. Multiple dimensions of consumption values are likely to play a role in tourists' decision-making.

### **1.3 Destination Choice and Purchase Decision Confidence**

Numerous tourism researchers have identified the factors, particularly the “push” and the “pull” factors, affecting travel destination choices (Crompton, 1992; Gnoth, 1997; Kim, Lee, & Klenosky, 2003; Sirakaya, McLellan, & Uysal, 1996; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). A “push” factor is an intrinsic motivator, including psychological motives (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994), personal characteristics, and values (Pearce, 2005). On the other hand, a “pull” factor is an extrinsic motivator relating to destination characteristics (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994) and information about a destination (Pearce, 2005). To better understand travel destination choice, it is argued that both motivators need to be considered together.

However, the “push” and “pull” factors in the tourism context are different from the “push” and “pull” factors used in marketing terms. In marketing terms, the “push” and “pull” factors relate to the promotional strategies that a marketer uses for promoting a product. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2008), the “push” strategy is a promotional strategy used for pushing the product through marketing channels to carry and promote it to consumers. This promotional tool relates to sales force and trade promotion given to marketing intermediaries (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008). The “pull” strategy is the marketing activities, such as advertising and consumer promotion; e.g. product samples, coupons, or discounted fares, aimed towards consumers to persuade them to buy the product (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008). If this strategy is effective, consumers will desire a product and buy it from marketing intermediaries (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008). In this study, the concept of the “push” and “pull” factors affecting travel destination choices are based on the tourism context. The “push” factor relates to a tourist' intrinsic motives, while the “pull” factor involves extrinsic motivators, as explained earlier.

Another aspect of this relates to what factors determine tourists' confidence in their decision, as tourists have almost unlimited destination choices. The concept of purchase

decision confidence was used initially in the consumer behaviour literature introduced by Howard and Sheth (1969). When consumers are faced with many alternative brands, they tended to purchase a brand which they felt confident towards (Howard & Sheth, 1969). Some researchers have explored the notion that brand image (Askarova, 2002; Bennett & Harrell, 1975) and brand familiarity (Laroche, Kim, & Zhou, 1996) are antecedents of brand confidence and lead to purchase intentions. There is a lack of research conducted on the concept of purchase decision confidence in the area of tourism.

## **1.4 Country Branding**

Brand is one factor impacting consumer choice sets. According to Kaplanidou and Vogt (2003), destination branding creates an image of a destination in tourists' minds and is a trigger of tourists' consideration sets. Thus, building a country brand is a mechanism used to attract tourists. Clarke (2000, p. 331) identified six benefits of tourism branding:

1. Assists in reducing the destination choice set.
2. Helps to reduce the impact of intangibility, because familiarity with the brand's physical attributes and symbolic meaning offsets intangibility.
3. Conveys consistency across multiple outlets through time to assure that the destination will be offered to meet tourists' expectations.
4. Is valuable as a risk-reducing mechanism; performance risk, social risk, psychological risk, and economic risk.
5. Facilitates precise segmentation.
6. Helps to provide an integration of tourism producers and teamwork to present the destination, towards the same outcome.

The concept of destination branding is a relatively new development (Gnoth, 1998). Many researchers have noted that the concept of destination branding is not widely used in academic study (Deslandes, 2003; Hankinson, 2004), nor in the tourism area (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005; Konecnik, 2006). To be useful, it is important to understand how a country brand can persuade tourists to choose a country as a travel destination, and to help build suitable country brands.



## 1.5 Problem Statement

Tourists have numerous choices and will travel to the country or countries that best meet their ideal needs and wants. On the other hand, business tourists may have no choice and they have to go where their businesses send them. A country with a positive image will attract new tourists and retain current tourists by having them revisit. In contrast, a country with negative elements to its image, such as pollution, filth, massive poverty, and an unsafe environment, mostly will be rejected by tourists as a place to visit. Negative word-of-mouth will no doubt also have an impact. This is especially true of less developed and developing countries. These places need to be repositioned and re-branded to change tourists' perceptions as well as be motivated to improve tourism services and infrastructure. Based on statistical data reported by the World Tourism Organization (2008, October), most less developed and developing countries have substantially fewer visitors than do developed countries. Although these countries invest heavily to appear attractive and develop marketing plans to attract tourists, the number of international tourist arrivals and tourism revenues remain relatively low, resulting in wasted tourism and marketing resources. Sheth et al. (1991) argued that marketing resources are usually wasted because marketers do not know what motivates customers and why customers desire a particular product or brand.

Clearly, destination and tourism marketers need to better understand tourists' destination choice behaviours before they set out to build a strong country brand and plan effective marketing strategies to promote tourism. They also need to know how tourists make their purchase decisions and what factors drive their decisions to travel to a country.

Consumption values, the knowledge about a destination, and country image may crucially influence tourists' destination choices, and affect their purchase decision confidence. The published research into purchase decision confidence is still limited in the marketing area and all but neglected in the tourism context. In addition, there is a lack of empirical research on country branding that investigates the possible relationships among consumption values, information sources, and country image. These factors seem to be fundamental in the study of country branding.

Segmentation is useful for planning marketing strategies. Middleton and Clarke (2001) noted that a tourism market can be segmented by (1) purpose of trip, (2) buyers' needs, motivations, and benefits sought, (3) buying and using characteristics, (4) demographic and economic profiles, (5) psychological segmentation, (6) geo-demographic, and (7) price. Tourists with different purposes for their trip presumably have different needs, wants, and travel behaviours (McIntosh & Goeldner, 1986). Some tourism studies have examined the relationships between socio-demographic characteristics and benefits sought (Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1990; Heung, Qu, & Chu, 2001; Suh, 2001), and travel information sources consulted (Fodness & Murray, 1999; Luo, Feng, & Cai, 2004; Suh, 2001). Most studies, however, have focused on age, gender, income level, educational level, and occupational classification. Fodness and Murray (1999) have also investigated the relationship between trip purposes and travel information sources used. Goodrich (1978) suggested that tourists from different regions valued attributes of vacation spots differently. Those previous studies have focused on limited variables relating to the benefits sought from travelling and travel information sources consulted. Tourists with different ages, genders, incomes, educational levels, occupational classifications, countries/regions of residence, and trip purposes, seem likely to seek different benefits of travelling. They may also be led to search different travel information sources. To explore these issues, this study utilises a comparative approach based on all of those socio-economic characteristics and purposes of trip, factoring in consumption values and travel information sources.

## **1.6 The Purpose of Research**

The purpose of this research is to examine the role of several factors in terms of how they affect tourists' purchase decisions in travelling to a country. Drawing on the literature, emphasis is given to consumption values, socio-economic characteristics, purposes of trip, travel information sources, country image, and purchase decision confidence. This study extends current understanding of tourist behaviour beyond the published research into "push" and "pull" factors. In particular, the study introduces to tourism marketing research some of the wider concepts from the general consumer marketing knowledge.

## **1.7 Significance of Research**

The findings of this study provide both theoretical and managerial contributions. First, this study closes some of the previous research gaps and develops a new model which integrates factors that influence tourists' destination choice and the confidence in resultant purchase decisions. This study also contributes to the marketing and tourism literature relating to consumption values and market choices, country branding, country image, travel destination choice, and tourists' purchase decision processes. Especially notable here is the potential contribution of consumption values, country branding, and purchase decision confidence, as research in these areas has previously been very limited. This study has applied the model of consumption values and market choices theorised by Sheth et al. (1991) to the tourism industry, and reviewed the concept of purchase decision confidence and country branding in order to more comprehensively understand and provide new direction to academic and applied research. Whether and how, and how much, these values contribute to an understanding of purchase decision confidence could be a useful contribution. Investigating the relationship between consumption values and purchase decision confidence would be also advantageous for tourism destination marketers and tourism stakeholders in effectively building country brand.

Evaluating country image is important in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a country from the tourist's perspective. There has been little tourism research on country image affecting travel destination choice, nor has there been much research investigating country image prior to tourists' experiences. This study explores the country images held by tourists after they consulted travel information sources and made a destination choice. Results will help build a better understanding of the potential concept and measurement of country image as it affects destination choice and thus its role as a potential determinant of tourists' purchase decisions.

Further, the study explores whether marketing plans should include consideration of consumption values and travel information sources. This could indicate whether information sources and content should be based on tourists' regions of residence or socio-economic characteristics, and trip purposes. This would be useful for planning marketing strategies to worldwide tourists that better utilises segmentation and targeting processes.

Finally, this study provides useful insights for destination marketers and other tourism stakeholders when building a country brand and planning effective marketing strategies. They should build a country brand based on customer orientation, and plan effective marketing strategies to reach their target market(s). Moreover, this study provides a clearer concept of a country image. This will help destination marketers in measuring country image and promoting a more positive image of a country in order to attract more tourists.

## **1.8 Structure of Thesis**

This research is organized into seven chapters. Chapter One introduces the background, the purpose, and the significance of study. Chapter Two reviews the marketing and tourism literature relating to tourism system, tourists' motivations, image formation, destination and country image, destination marketing strategies, destination and country branding, consumption values, travel destination choices, socio-economic characteristics, trip purposes, and purchase decision confidence. Chapter Three presents the conceptual model and hypotheses development. The conceptual model builds on the consumption values and market choices model of Sheth et al. (1991) which is well-known in marketing and applicable to this context. This model proposes relationships between a variety of constructs (socio-economic characteristics, purposes of trip, travel information sources, country image, and purchase decision confidence). Chapter Four addresses research design and method including the research approach, sampling, data collection, measurement, pre-test procedure, and data analysis techniques. In Chapter Five, results of descriptive analysis and discussion are reported. Statistical techniques are also presented. Chapter Six presents and discusses the results of hypotheses testing. Chapter Seven reports summary of findings and suggests the theoretical and managerial implications, states limitations, and proposes avenues for future research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

To better understand tourists' decisions regarding their travel destination choices so a country is better able to build a brand to attract tourists, the concepts of the tourism system and travel destination choices, which include socio-economic characteristics and purposes of trip, are introduced and discussed. The tourism system involves both demand and supply sides. The elements of demand particularly relate to tourists' motivations, image formation, and destination image. Destination marketing strategies and branding are related to the supply side. Other concepts, including the concepts of consumption values (particularly the model theorised by Sheth et al. (1991)), travel destination choices, and purchase decision confidence are also discussed. This information has been utilised in the operationalisation, conceptualising, and development of the method for this study.

#### **2.1 Tourism System**

Understanding the notion of a tourism system is useful for analysing the factors that influence tourists travelling abroad. At its most basic, the tourism system is the interaction between demand and supply factors operating in the marketplace (Hall, 2003; Hall & McArthur, 1993; Mill & Morrison, 1985; Murphy, 1985). Demand factors consist of tourists' motivations, perceptions, and expectations and images held, while supply factors comprise the tourism industry, government, and resources in a destination itself. However, Mill and Morrison (1985) argued that the tourism system is a cycle of market demand (tourists), travel, destination, and suppliers (marketing). A further element can be seen when tourists are visiting a destination and face cultural, social, and political environments which will impact their experiences (Hall & McArthur, 1993). Hall (2003) suggested that the tourism market system is better explained by combining the models of Murphy (1985), and Hall and McArthur (1993) (see Figure 2-1).

## **Figure 2-1 The tourism market system**

Source: Hall (2003, p. 18)

Both the demand and supply factors influence tourists' experiences of a destination. Tourists' experiences at a destination will also reflect their personal values and ideas (Hall, 2003). This leads to the argument that in order to plan better marketing strategies and design more effective tourism products and services, it is necessary to understand not only what is provided but also how tourists decide to make a vacation purchase. In other words, before planning marketing strategies, marketers should understand what factors are influencing tourists when making their travel decisions, so the marketers can offer a marketing mix to match tourists' needs and desires. In order to gain insight into tourists'

behaviours relating to their decision-making, and the role of destination marketers in developing tourism amenities and marketing plans to attract tourists, the factors relating to both the demand and supply sides need to be reviewed and discussed. These factors may have differing potential to influence destination decision.

### **2.1.1 Demand Side**

The key factors of the demand side are the motivations, perceptions, expectations, and images that tourists hold. Hall (2003) noted that tourists' perceptions are derived from information sources, past experiences, and preferences. Suh (2001) argued that information received and past travel experiences are reflected in tourists' preferences. The various aspects of tourists' motivations, image formation, and destination image are reviewed and discussed in the following sections.

#### **2.1.1.1 Tourists' Motivations**

Understanding tourists' motivations can help tourism marketers to develop tourism products and design promotional campaigns to better match tourists' needs. Based on the theory of motivation developed by Maslow (1943), Morrison's (1996) list was derived from the hospitality and tourism literature, which has applied the hierarchical needs theorised by Maslow (1943); (1) physiological needs (e.g. relaxation and escape from routine life), (2) safety needs (e.g. health), (3) love (social) needs (family and interpersonal relationship), (4) esteem needs (e.g. convince oneself of one's achievement, social recognition, and professional/business), and (5) needs for self-actualization (e.g. exploration and evaluation of self, and satisfaction of inner desires).

However, Dann (1977) argued that the Maslow hierarchy of needs measured "Why do people travel?" but failed to identify "What makes people travel?". He proposed that there are two factors effecting the travel decisions of tourists; the "push" and "pull" factors. The "push" factors are those elements that make people want to travel, while the "pull" factors are those that affect where people travel. Uysal and Jurowski (1994) found that some reasons as to why people travel to a country relate to destination image rather than the tourists' motives. Many researchers agree that "push" and "pull" factors together are the motivators that greatly affect tourists travelling to a destination (Dann, 1977; Gnoth, 1997;

Johnson & Thomas, 1992; Kim, Lee, & Klenosky, 2003; Oh et al., 1995; Orth & Tureckova, 2002; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Yuan & McDonald, 1990).

Gnoth (1997) suggested a refinement that tourists tend to choose a destination that has tourism activities and facilities fitting their personal motives and preferences. Tourists will evaluate their values and attitudes about the destinations based on their related cognition and emotion. That cognition is derived from the types and amount of information sources used by the tourist (Gartner, 1993). Travel information sources can contain both “push” and “pull” factors (Gnoth, 1997; Goossens, 2000). Tourists will search for travel information about destinations when they are motivated by their own “push” factors. On the other hand, the “pull” factors are generated by the knowledge about destination attributes (Gnoth, 1997) derived from information sources. The “pull” factors used by tourism marketers will be intended to play a role as marketing stimuli (advertisement, destinations, and services).

Consequently, tourists’ motivations relate to the “push” and “pull” factors which affect their decision-making. According to O'Regan (2000), a tourist’s decision-making process consists of the motivation, information searching, evaluation of alternatives, product choice, outcome, and post-evaluation. The effective outcome depends on the information processing resulting in mental imagery and emotions that mediate the evaluations and behavioural intentions (Goossens, 2000). The concept of tourists’ motivations provides a foundational understanding of the factors affecting tourists in their travel decisions.

#### **2.1.1.2 Image Formation**

Many studies have revealed that information sources do generate images of tourism destinations (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1993; Gunn, 1972; Hanlan & Kelly, 2005). According to Gunn (1972), such images can be categorised as two types; organic or induced images. Organic images are derived from non-touristic-directed communication such as documentaries, books, and reports, while induced images are received from promotional materials such as travel brochures, tour agents, and advertisements. Fakeye and Crompton (1991) suggested that tourists will develop organic images which are derived from indirect agents such as personal recommendations.



Once tourists desire to travel, they will search for more information from induced image sources such as tour operators and other advertising. From this information, they will evaluate destinations' benefits and images before they decide to travel to a destination. Tourists will of course still evaluate and have a positive or negative attitude to that destination after their experiences. While this post-travel perception will influence subsequent destination choices, it cannot inform the initial decision.

Fakeye and Crompton (1991) also argued that a destination image is evolved from a combination of "organic", "induced", and "complex" images. Complex images are based upon previous travel experiences. Such images provide a number of aspects for a destination marketer to promote informative, persuasive, and reminding messages, respectively.

However, Gartner (1993, p. 210) expanded this concept and described organic and induced formations as consisting of eight distinct image formations:

Overt Induced I	- information from advertising.
Overt Induced II	- information from tour operators or any organizations.
Covert Induced I	- information from recognisable spokespersons.
Covert Induced II	- information from newspapers or travel writers in articles.
Autonomous	- information from independent reports, documentaries, movies, or news.
Unsolicited Organic	- information from a person who has been to or knows that destination.
Solicited Organic	- information from friends and relatives.
Organic	- information from previous experience at a destination.

Some researchers (Hanlan & Kelly, 2005; Ngamsom, 2001; Suh, 2001) have applied Gartner's (1993) theory of eight image formations to explore destination and country image. They found that destination and country images emerged from various information sources. For example, Suh (2001) identified that organic images influenced travellers to Seoul, Korea more than did induced images. Moreover, travellers from different regions of residence were differentially influenced by different information sources. European travellers were more influenced by the information source of friends and relatives.

Japanese travellers were more influenced by prior visits. North Americans travellers were impacted by both prior visits and recommendations from friends and relatives. Hanlan and Kelly (2005) found that word-of-mouth and autonomous independent information sources (brochures and magazines in hostels) were the key sources in forming the images of Byron Bay in Australia as having beautiful beaches and being a “chilled-out laid back” environment. These results support the view of Morgan, Pritchard, and Pride (2004) who stated that a country’s image can derive from the communications about the prominent attributes of a country such as geography, history, proclamations, art, and music.

However, Baloglu and McCleary (1999) noted that there may be two other influences on image; stimulus and personal factors that influence destination image. Stimulus factors relate to the amount and types of information sources, previous experiences, and distribution. Personal factors involve psychological and social factors. Psychological factors include values, motivations and personality, while social factors involve age, education, and marital status. Further, they suggested that destination image is made up of cognitive, affective, and overall images. The knowledge or beliefs about a destination’s attributes that is received from a variety of information sources such as professional advice, word-of-mouth, advertising, books, movies, and news, will determine cognitive image. Affective image is the feeling towards those attributes. The overall image of a destination is derived from both the cognitive and affective evaluations/images.

Therefore, information sources are a crucial factor affecting tourists’ decision-making in choosing where to travel. They generate images of the destination, and are useful for making travel plans. Numerous studies have examined the influence of information sources used by tourists making their plans to travel to a country (Fall, 2000b; Ngamsom, 2001; Suh, 2001). Fall (2000b) identified that word-of-mouth, mass media, new media (the internet and CD-Roms), and travel/tourism specific sources were useful for pleasure travellers in making their travel plans. Ngamsom (2001) found that both informative (word-of-mouth from friends/family/relatives) and persuasive (travel agencies, tour guidebooks) information were the most important information sources for planning a trip to Thailand. Suh (2001) revealed that tourists from different regions of residence (Japan, Europe, and North America) and having different trip purposes (leisure and business) rated the influence of information sources differently before travelling to Seoul, Korea.

In a more integrated approach, Fodness and Murray (1999) developed a model of tourist information search behaviours. They investigated whether information search strategies related to tourist characteristics, search contingencies, and search outcomes. In terms of tourist characteristics, they focused on only income and family life cycle variables. They found that income was associated with information search strategies. In the case of search contingencies, information search strategies depended on the nature of decision-making, composition of travelling party, purposes of trip, and modes of travel. The outcomes of the information search were length of stay, number of destinations visited, number of attractions visited, and travel expenditure.

A number of researchers have pointed out that travel information sources can contribute to the image of a country or destination, and they are useful for tourists in making their travel decisions. In addition, socio-economic characteristics and the purposes of trip seem to influence tourist information search behaviours. The current study seeks to investigate which travel information sources contribute towards tourists' image, and which sources are useful for tourists in making their purchase decisions.

### ***2.1.1.3 Destination and Country Image***

Destination image is an important factor in the travel destination choice process (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Konecnik, 2004; Reisinger & Turner, 2000). Image will influence tourists in evaluating the attributes of many destinations in the evoked sets from which tourists will decide upon particular destinations. For example, tourists chose North America as a travel destination because it had the image of a new lifestyle, personal freedom, friendly locals, and outstanding scenery (Murphy, 1998). In another study, Turnbull and Uysal (1995) documented that the important factors for choosing the Caribbean as a travel destination were warm climate and opportunities for self-indulgence.

Many tourism studies (Konecnik, 2004; Morgan et al., 2003; Wanjiru, 2006) have suggested that destination image can be evaluated by tourists' perceptions of the destination attributes. Stabler (1988) stated that destination image can be assessed from a set of destination attributes related to the resources or attractions. According to Echtner and Ritchie (1991), the destination attributes usually used by previous researchers for measuring destination image were scenery/natural attractions, costs/price levels,

friendliness/hospitality/receptiveness, climate, tourist sites/activities, nightlife/entertainment, and sports facilities and activities. They proposed a conceptual framework for measuring destination image consisting of three continua; functional-psychological characteristics, attributes-holistic, and common-unique (see Figure 2-2).

**Figure 2-2 The components of destination image**

Source: Echtner and Ritchie (1991, p. 6)

The elements of destination image consist of functional and psychological characteristics. Functional characteristics include historical sites, accommodation, and climate, while psychological characteristics are relaxation, safety, and friendliness. Destination image can be measured as the perceptions of individual destination attributes through the holistic impression made by the destination. Furthermore, destination image can be arranged from unique traits (very few destinations) to common traits (all destinations).

Measuring destination image is complex because many attributes can have an impact on tourists' perceptions about a place. However, Beerli and Martín (2004a, 2004b), after reviewing previous studies, reclassified a variety of destination attributes into nine dimensions; natural resources, general infrastructure, tourist infrastructure, tourist leisure and recreation, culture/history and art, political and economic factors, natural environment, social environment, and atmosphere of the place (see Table 2-1). They suggested that a tourist's choices of attributes to measure a perceived image of a place will rely on the attractions that a place has, the positioning of the place, and on the objectives of assessment.

**Table 2-1 Dimensions and attributes of destination image**

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Attributes</b>
Natural resources	Weather, beaches, scenery, and variety and uniqueness of flora and fauna
General infrastructure	Quality of roads, airports and ports, transport facilities, health services, telecommunications, commercial infrastructure, and extent of building development
Tourist infrastructure	Hotel and accommodation, restaurants, bars and clubs, ease of access to destination, excursions at the destination, tourist centres, and network of tourist information
Tourist leisure and recreation	Parks, entertainment, and sport activities
Culture, history, and art	Museum, historical buildings, monuments, festival, gastronomy, folklore, religion, and customs and ways of life
Political and economic factors	Political stability, political tendencies, economic development, safety, and prices
Natural environment	Beauty of the scenery, beauty of cities and towns, cleanliness, overcrowding, air and noise pollution, and traffic congestion
Social environment	Hospitality and friendliness of the local residents, underprivileged and poverty, quality of life, and language barriers
Atmosphere of the place	Luxurious places, fashionable place, place with fame and reputation, place oriented toward families, exotic place, mystic place, relaxing place, stressful place, happy and enjoyable place, pleasant place, boring place, and attractive or interesting place

Source: Beerli and Martín (2004a, 2004b)

Other researchers (Deslandes, 2003; Ngamsom, 2001; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005; Pawitra & Tan, 2003; Suh, 2001) agree that the attributes used to measure destination image should be composed of functional and psychological attributes. Functional attributes are tourist sites/activities, national parks/wilderness activities, historic sites/museums, beaches, fairs, exhibits, festivals, scenery/natural attractions, nightlife and entertainment, shopping facilities, facilities for information and tours, local infrastructure, cities, architecture/buildings, costs/price levels, climate, etc. (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). Psychological attributes include friendliness, restful/relaxing, atmosphere, adventure, opportunity to increase knowledge, and family or adult oriented (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).

From these contributions to the literature, it can be seen that destination image attributes are the factors that influence tourists in choosing a travel destination. Moreover, those attributes which tourists perceived as having a positive image can be used in the positioning of a country to attract tourists to visit (Pawitra & Tan, 2003). Pawitra and Tan (2003) found that the strengths of Singapore in Indonesian travellers' perceptions were the uniqueness or local blend of multicultural heritages, plentiful nightlife, modern local lifestyle, and ease in finding world-class brand name products and services. In contrast, the

weaknesses of Singapore were expensive shopping, unfriendly people, non-unique tourist places of interest, not having long-lasting holiday experiences, uninteresting city tour package, inconvenient accommodation, and uninteresting international art exhibitions (Pawitra & Tan, 2003).

In the case of Thailand, Ngamsom (2001) noted that the positive images were beautiful architecture and buildings, interesting customs and culture, numerous cultural/historical attractions, value for money, overall affordability, friendly people, easy access, and scenic and natural beauty. On the other hand, the negative images included crowding in the big cities, numerous traffic jams, numerous massage parlours, bars, night clubs, and prostitution, and heavy pollution (Ngamsom, 2001). Ngamsom (2001) also suggested that destination marketers should promote a positive image of a country's attributes, and improve those attributes perceived as having a negative image. Logically, these are the major tasks of marketing organizations and governments of countries wanting to attract more tourists.

Numerous researchers agree that country image is an antecedent factor of travel decisions to a destination. Another aspect is that country image may influence tourists' purchase decision confidence. Therefore, this study seeks to identify the important country image attributes affecting tourists' purchase decision confidence in travelling to a country.

### **2.1.2 Supply Side**

The supply side involves non-commercial organizations such as destination marketing organizations (DMOs), businesses including agencies that provide tourism services (Smith, 1995), attractions, and tourism products to tourists (Hall, 2003). All these organizations have to develop marketing strategies that attract tourists to visit a country. The concept of supply side, in particular, destination marketing strategies and country/destination branding, is applied in this study to explain how DMOs and other tourism marketers might plan effective marketing strategies and build a strong brand to attract tourists.

### **2.1.2.1 Destination Marketing Strategies**

Tourism destination marketing is intended to create favourable impressions of the destination so as to attract tourists, and also to determine how best to develop its amenities (Laws, 1995). This statement is consistent with the place marketing concept proposed by Kotler, Haider, and Rein (1993), who argued that there are four strategies to place marketing; image, attractions, infrastructure, and people. Firstly, image marketing involves presenting a strong positive image of a place via advertising and public relations. Secondly, attraction marketing relates to promoting the country's attractions, such as Hawaii's natural attractions, Athens' historic buildings. Bangkok's temples and statuary, or famous constructions such as the Eiffel tower in Paris and the Taj Mahal in India. Thirdly, infrastructure marketing relates to providing convenient transportation, quality accommodation, and safety. The fourth concept, people marketing, deals with how local people in a country can be expected to behave in terms of being helpful and friendly. Both public and private organizations have roles in planning and adopting marketing strategies. These may differ from each other but have the common intention of attracting tourists to a country (Hall, 2004; Heath, 2000; Morgan et al., 2003).

A destination marketing strategy can be identified as the process of segmentation, targeting, positioning, and offering various products and services for a place (Nielsen, Murnion, & Mather, 2000). Nielsen et al. (2000) also noted that the tourist market can be segmented in many ways, including choice of destination or life style, travel method, demographic characteristics, purposes of visit, and benefits sought. Kolb (2006) noted that the tourist market can also be segmented by geographic, demographic, psychographic, usage, and cultural profiles. Segmentation is useful for marketers to plan more specific marketing strategies aimed at each group by designing products and advertisements for that specific segment (Smith, 1995). It is usually used in accommodation, transportation, and by tour agents in order to design appropriate products, promotional tools, and distribution channels for each market (Middleton & Clarke, 2001). For example, accommodation providers such as luxury hotels or backpackers segment the market by income, while tour agents can design package tours based on the benefits sought by each segment target.

Although market segmentation is often suggested for tourism marketing plans, there is still uncertainty as to whether it is a useful tool for using with destination marketing plans

(Theobald, 2005). This may be because tourists' needs and desires change over time and it is expensive to develop marketing products or services differentiated for individual markets (Kotler et al., 1993). In addition, a strategic marketing plan should be developed to ensure long term effectiveness (Faulkner, 2005). If a tourism market is fairly homogeneous in its needs and wants, an undifferentiated target market would be appropriate for a marketing plan (Nielsen et al., 2000). Therefore, tourists everywhere as a whole can be treated as the target market of a country.

Before destination marketers offer products or services and advertise to a target market, they need to establish the positioning of a country. Middleton and Clarke (2001) noted that positioning or branding a country is the designing of messages and symbols in tourists' minds, and needs to be different from other countries. For example, the positioning and slogan in building a strong country brand of New York is **I♥NY**. This slogan reflects on the brand and identifies it as a unique destination with a label that represents implied product values and attributes. Also, it is a sustained effort and communicates an easily understood message to potential customers (Middleton & Clarke, 2001). Positioning should be durable, relevant, communicable, and noticeable for stakeholders and potential tourists alike (Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2002; Morgan et al., 2003). The positioning should be based on the competitive advantages of a country and contemporary tourism consumer (Morgan et al., 2003).

Places can be viewed as products. They offer unique, desirable, and satisfying attributes to attract and retain tourists (Nielsen et al., 2000). Middleton and Clarke (2001) argued that the product of destination should be seen to include aspects such as destination attractions and environment, facilities and services, and accessibility of the destination. One can think of a destination as having three components; core, supporting, and augmented products (Kolb, 2006) (see Figure 2-3).



### **Figure 2-3 Product components of a city**

Source: Adapted from Kolb (2006)

According to Kolb (2006), the core product relates to tourist attractions, cultural attractions, historical sites or monuments, entertainment, sports, and shopping areas in a city, those things that define the essence of the offer. The supporting product relates to souvenirs, tours, restaurants, lodging, transportation, and other services such as car rental and visitor centres. The augmented product includes streets and sidewalks, living heritage, buildings, stores, safety, people, parks, and others such as restrooms and signage.

From these points comes the idea that the purpose of destination marketing is to design the right features and services, to develop the image to attract tourists, to deliver destination products and services in an effective and accessible way, and to promote a destination's values and image so that potential tourists become aware of the destination's distinct competitive advantages (Nielsen et al., 2000).

#### ***2.1.2.2 Destination and Country Branding***

Until now, the number of studies on country branding has been limited, especially those based on qualitative research methods. To more completely review the literature about country branding, the concepts of destination branding are introduced and reviewed here. Many writers have viewed a destination as a product. They suggested that a nation or country can be branded in the same way as a corporation or product (Gudjonsson, 2005; Wanjiru, 2006). Although a country can be treated as a product, it is a "mega-product" (Florek, 2005). Florek (2005) claimed that destination branding is more complex than other products and services branding. A country is a spatial product containing regions, cities,

districts, and functional areas, such as tourism, investments, sports, etc. It is necessary to present a brand in general rather than diversified by regions, cities, or specific areas. Aaker (1991) defined the brand as “the distinguishing name/or symbol (such as logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate those goods or services from those competitors” (p. 7).

Likewise, Ritchie and Ritchie (1998) defined destination brand as “a name, symbol, logo, word mark, or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience” (p. 103, as cited in Blain et al., 2005, p. 329). From this definition, Blain et al. (2005, p. 331) proposed the following strategies of destination branding:

1. Identify and differentiate a destination by creation of name, symbol, logo, word mark, or other graphic.
2. Convey the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination.
3. Consolidate and reinforce the pleasurable memories of the destination.

These three strategies are helpful for tourism marketers in building a country brand to attract and retain tourists because a country brand is an influential trigger in a consumer decision-making regarding the destination choice (Blain et al., 2005). Similarly, Allan (2004, February) suggested that place branding should be built by emphasising the positively memorable, attractive, unique, relevant, and sustainable qualities of a place, and communicating these qualities to people worldwide.

Some academic writers (Florek, 2005; Morgan et al., 2002, 2003) argued that the process of country branding involves four stages; (1) creating the core values or identity of a country, (2) positioning a country based on its identity so it is differentiated from competitors and relates to brand personality or the spirit of the people, (3) identifying a brand logo and slogan in a consistent way, and (4) using appropriate integrating marketing communications to promote the brand to the target market. It is acknowledged that the core values of a country should represent both functional and emotional values (Florek, 2005;

Hall, 2004; Morgan et al., 2002, 2003), and should be based on tourists' perceptions (Konecnik, 2004; Morgan et al., 2003; Wanjiru, 2006). However, country branding needs to not only employ marketing strategies to promote image (Anholt, 2003), but also has to be based on truth and emphasise its promise to the public that it will meet visitors' expectations (Gilmore, 2002). Tourism marketers have to do research before building a country brand, to understand what values tourists seek (Kotler & Gertner, 2002), what tourists' needs, motivations, and barriers to travel to a country are, in order to determine the appropriate symbols and images for the proposed brand (Morgan et al., 2002).

The concept of country branding as noted above is consistent with the concept of successful brand strategies suggested by de Chernatony and McDonald (1992), in the wider marketing literature. A successful brand is "an identifiable product, service, person, or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant unique added values which match their needs most closely. Furthermore its success results from being able to sustain these added values in the face of competition" (de Chernatony & McDonald, 1992, p. 18).

They also suggested that brand should represent the ability to satisfy both rational (relate to product benefits) and emotional needs of customers (relate to prestige or style). Marketers should understand these two needs before they develop a marketing programme and promote their brands. For example, Coca-Cola has been successful in building a brand because its positioning is clear as a refreshing, fun-type drink (de Chernatony & McDonald, 1992). It represents both rational and emotional needs to consumers. A nation's brand should similarly meet rational and emotional needs (Florek, 2005). The source of a brand's strength is not only sought after tangible resources, geographic location and attractiveness of nature, but also in the foundation of motivations, attitudes, and characteristics of its inhabitants (Florek, 2005).

Country brand is one important factor in the choice set of tourists' purchase decision process. Some researchers have noted that destination brands influence tourists' decision process regarding travel destination choices (Blain et al., 2005; Florek, 2005). When tourists choose to travel to a country, they do not solely evaluate country brand, but also consider other factors such as their consumption values, which travelling to that country will hopefully satisfy.

## 2.2 Consumption Values

Consumers' perceived value of products or services are determinants of their purchase intentions (Kashyap & Bojanic, 2000; Zeithaml, 1988; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000), market choice behaviour (Sheth et al., 1991), and satisfaction (Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000). In the tourism context, value also influences purchase decisions and destination choices (Pearce, 2005; Um & Crompton, 1990). Zeithaml (1988) defined perceived value as a "consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given" (p.14). Similar to the definition of Monroe (1990, as cited in Kashyap & Bojanic, 2000, p. 46), "buyers' perceptions of value represent a trade-off between the quality or benefits they perceive in the product relative to the sacrifice they perceive by paying the price".

However, Kashyap and Bojanic (2000) argued that value means more than what the consumer gives (price, sacrifice) and receives (utility, quality, and benefits). Consumers may judge benefits by evaluating the attributes of a product or service, especially in the choice process. In addition, what consumers give can include monetary and non-monetary things such as time, search costs, and convenience (Kashyap & Bojanic, 2000). Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) suggested that value should be defined by customers. From research into customers' views, they defined perceived value along four dimensions; low price, everything the customer wants, a trade off between quality and price, and another trade off between what is received and what is given. From these definitions, clearly, consumption value is not limited only to economic benefits (utility or quality vs. price). Customers' needs, wants, and preferences are the cause of their value perceptions (Smith & Colgate, 2007). Value judgments in the marketing context largely involve a subjective and cognitive evaluation given by the consumers (Oh, 2000). If consumers are faced with many products or brand choices, they will choose a product or a brand which matches their consumption values. In this case, consumption value is the perceived utility acquired by an alternative (Sheth et al., 1991).

Other perspectives regarding the concept of values come from tourism researchers who have studied personal values based on the theoretical framework of Pitts and Woodside (1983), the concept of value and lifestyle segmentation (VALs), and Kahle's (1983, 1984) list of values (LOVs). Pitts and Woodside (1983) divided value into four groups; need-

driven, outer-directed (social concern), inner-directed (personal concern), and integrated. Kahle (1983, 1984) classified the list of values more simply as either internal values or external values. The internal values include senses of accomplishment, self-fulfilment, self respect, fun and enjoyment, excitement, and warm relationships with others. The external values consist of a sense of belonging, security, and being well respected. However, these value concepts are viewed as personal or socio-psychological values rather than consumption values.

It is noteworthy that the concept of consumption values used in marketing is broader than has been used in tourism studies. The values tourists expressed by travelling are not limited only to individual values or social values, but there are a number of possible elements which tourists may expect from other values (e.g. functional and emotional values) when travelling abroad. The Sheth et al. (1991) model provides inclusive elements (values), which can be useful for applying in investigating which consumption values relate to tourists' travel destination choices. Sheth et al. (1991) have theorised that there are five consumption values influencing market choice behaviour: functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional values (see Figure 2-4). Awareness of these values is presumed to give some prior knowledge of which factors drive tourists to travel to a selected country. Each of these value constructs are explained in the following sections.

#### **Figure 2-4 The five values influencing market choice behaviour**

Source: Sheth et al. (1991, p. 7)

### **2.2.1 Functional Value**

Functional benefit is “a benefit based on a product attribute that provides functional utility to the customer” (Aaker, 1996, p. 95). In a similar view, Sheth et al. (1991) described functional value as “the perceived utility acquired by an alternative as the result of its ability to perform its functional, utilitarian, or physical purposes. Alternatives acquire functional value through the possession of salient functional, utilitarian, or physical attributes” (p. 18). Most marketing researchers agree that functional value is what consumers receive from the quality, utility, and related benefits of a product and service. From the tourism literature, Sánchez et al. (2006) noted that a functional dimension refers to the both rational and economic valuations, including the performance or quality of the product and service, and value for money.

### **2.2.2 Emotional Value**

Sheth et al. (1991) described emotional value as “the perceived utility acquired by an alternative as a result of its ability to arouse feelings or affective states. Alternatives acquire emotional value when associated with specific feelings or when they facilitate or perpetuate feelings” (p. 20). The feelings can perform as excitement, romance, self-image, or fear (Sheth et al., 1991). This is similar to the definition of Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000), who argued that an emotional benefit relates to the ability of the brand to make the buyer or user of that brand feel something during the purchase process or use experience. Many tourism researchers have noted that the motivations of tourists to travel are primarily for relaxation and enjoyment (Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1990; Morrison, 1996; Pearce, 2005), which are emotional concepts.

### **2.2.3 Conditional Value**

Conditional value can influence a choice maker to change his or her purchasing plan (Sheth et al., 1991). Sheth et al. (1991) described conditional value as “the perceived utility acquired by an alternative as a result of the specific situation or the context faced by the choice maker” (p. 22). Conditional value arises from extrinsic circumstances (e.g. festivals, climate, products on sale, availability of time and money). These circumstances can be either an anticipated or unpredicted situation (Sheth et al., 1991). In the tourism context, the circumstances that involve tourists in their decision-making can be special events in a

country (Williams & Soutar, 2000), proximity, or accessibility to another country, and the relative cheapness of travel (Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000).

#### **2.2.4 Social Value**

Social value is described as “the perceived utility acquired by an alternative as a result of its association with one or more specific social groups. Alternatives acquire social value through association with positively or negatively stereotyped demographic, socio-economic, and cultural-ethnic groups” (Sheth et al., 1991, p. 19). Social value relates to aspects such as social class, reference group, symbolic importance, conspicuous and compensatory consumption, opinion leadership and diffusion of innovation, and normative attitudes (Sheth et al., 1991). The symbolic component of social refers to consumers’ need for social approval, personal expression, or self-esteem (Hankinson, 2005; Keller, 1993). Sweeney, Soutar, and Johnson (1999) argued that social value relates to acceptability to other persons or a need to belong to groups and have a good reputation (Sánchez, 2006). The social value of a destination can also be composed from it being; (1) a good place to socialize with family and friends, (2) a good place to meet new people, and (3) a good place to talk to other people in the community (Snepenger, Snepenger, Dalbey, & Wessol, 2007).

#### **2.2.5 Epistemic Value**

Epistemic value is described as “the perceived utility acquired by an alternative as a result of its ability to arouse curiosity, provide novelty, and /or satisfy a desire for knowledge. Alternatives acquire epistemic value through the capacity to provide something new or different” (Sheth et al., 1991, p. 21). This value can function as a “push” factor with regard to seeking exploration and new experiences, which motivate tourists to travel to a destination (Heung et al., 2001; Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000; Williams & Soutar, 2000).

#### **2.2.6 Use of the Values Concept in Tourism Research**

Two previous studies (Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000; Williams & Soutar, 2000) focusing on tourist’s perceptions have included the theoretical framework of Sheth et al. (1991). They categorised consumption values in a similar manner, as illustrated in Table 2-2.

**Table 2-2 Consumption values on tourism literature**

<b>Consumption Values</b>	<b>Williams and Soutar (2000)</b>	<b>Tapachai and Waryszak (2000)</b>
Functional value	The quality of the tour, price, the tour vehicle, tour amenities, refreshments, tour guide commentary, and sightseeing in the natural environment	Fascinating shopping, famous natural, city, beautiful scenery, exotic food, friendliness, historical sites, and unspoiled countryside
Emotional value	Happy, feeling, and other pleasurable affective	Relaxation, calm, fun, and modern
Conditional value	Special events	Cheap travel, special events, accessibility to neighbouring countries, and no language barriers
Social value	Friends' recommendations and buying souvenirs for family	Suitable for all people
Epistemic value	Seeking novelty and doing something different	Cultural and climate experience, a variety of things to see and to do, and novel experience

Williams and Soutar (2000) identified functional value as an important element of tourists' perceived value in pre-tour perceptions, while emotional value was an important factor of post-tour perceptions. The findings of their research demonstrated that tourists perceived value differently in pre-consumption and post-consumption assessments. Tapachai and Waryszak (2000) reported that epistemic value was the highest beneficial characteristic in Thailand and the USA. The different culture and climate experiences of Thailand were the main beneficial images reported, whereas the variety of things to see and to do were the most identified beneficial images of the USA.

Another value construct utilised is that of perceived value. A measure of this, PERVAL, was developed by Sweeney and Soutar (2001). They proposed five value constructs; emotional, social, quality/performance, price/value for money, and versatility. These values are argued to be useful to assess a customer's perceived value of goods at a brand level (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Sánchez et al. (2006) applied PERVAL to measure tourists' perceived value in purchasing the tourism products of a tour operator. They expanded the constructs of value into six dimensions. Four of these dimensions arguably related to the functional value; installations, professionalism, quality of tourism product, and price. The other two dimensions were emotional and social values. They found that these six dimensions influenced tourists' purchase decisions when choosing a tour operator. Social value and price were the most important factors of perceived value. Further, they found that emotional value was the most significant in tourists' satisfaction



and loyalty to travel agencies, while the quality of tourism products was the most significant aspect of their satisfaction with their trips. However, Sánchez et al. (2006) did not include epistemic and conditional values, which arguably also influence tourist's purchase decisions.

Theobald (2005) proposed that values are the aspirations and motivations for the journey. For instance, tourists may be motivated to travel to a destination which is promoted by tourism marketers or tour agents, which offer tourism products with good value for money, or quality time. Values can be perceived in many attributes such as service quality, price, destination features, shopping, activities, safety, enjoyment, relaxation, event attractions, accessibility to travel, social interactions, novelty seeking, and exploration.

Tourists' purchase decisions appear to depend on economic, socio-psychological, and epistemic values. Sweeney and Soutar (2001) suggested that the framework of Sheth et al. (1991) provides a broader theoretical framework of perceived value including economics, social, and psychological concepts that can be applied in many fields. The dimensions of value from the previous literature are summarised in Table 2-3.

**Table 2-3 Dimensions of value**

<b>Values</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Elements</b>
Personal values	Pitts and Woodside (1983)	Need-driven, outer-directed (social concern), inner-directed (personal concern), and integrated
	Kahle (1983, 1984)	Internal value (sense of accomplishment, self fulfilment, self respect, fun and enjoyment, excitement, and warm relationships with others) External value (sense of belonging, security, and being well respected)
Consumer values	Zeithaml (1988)	The utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given.
	Monroe (1990, as cited in Kashyap & Bojanic, 2000)	Trade-off between quality or benefits and price
	Sheth et al. (1991)	Functional, emotional, conditional, social, and epistemic values
	Zeithaml and Bitner (2000)	Low price, everything customer wants in service, trade-off between quality/price, and trade-off between received/given
	Kashyap and Bojanic (2000)	(Trade-off) quality or benefits/monetary and non-monetary sacrifices
	Sweeney and Soutar (2001)	Quality, price, emotional value, social value, and versatility

## **2.3 Travel Destination Choices**

The destination decision-making process is complex, especially as tourists can evaluate and choose from many destinations. The destination choice process and the factors affecting travel destination choice are therefore arguably fundamental to understanding tourist behaviour and purchase decisions.

### **2.3.1 Travel Destination Choice Process**

Traditionally viewed, there are two stages of the tourist's destination choice process (Crompton, 1977). The first stage is when the tourist decides whether to have a holiday. The second stage is choosing where to go. Indeed, a tourist's decision for a holiday is a complex process. The original "consumer decision-making process" model proposed by Engel, Blackwell, and Kollat (1978) is widely used (Middleton, Fyall, & Morgan, 2009). There are five stages; (1) problem recognition, (2) information search, (3) evaluation of alternatives, (4) choice of purchase, and (5) evaluation of post-purchase experience (Engel et al., 1978; as cited in Middleton et al., 2009, p. 87). Middleton et al. (2009) noted that the first stage relates to tourists' needs for a holiday. Then, they will search for information on what is available. Because of many attractive tourism features offered, tourists will evaluate and make a choice which matches their needs. Lastly, they will evaluate their post-purchase experience. If their actual experiences do not meet their expectations, they will have a negative attitude towards that destination, and may offer a negative recommendation to friends, family, and relatives.

With a similar model, Um and Crompton (1990) developed a model of the pleasure travel decision choice process (see Figure 2-5). They suggested five stages in the travel destination choice process:

1. The formation of subjective beliefs about destination attributes from external inputs.
2. A decision to take a trip which includes situational constraints.
3. Evolution from awareness set to evoked set.
4. The formation of subjective beliefs about the destination attributes of each alternative destination in evoked set.
5. Selection of a specific destination (or destinations).

## Figure 2-5 Model of the pleasure travel decision choice process

Source: Um and Crompton (1990, p. 435)

These stages are argued to consist of three main constructs; external inputs, cognitive constructs, and internal inputs. External inputs involve significant, symbolic, and social stimuli. Significant stimuli derive from actually visiting the destination. Symbolic stimuli are the words, sentences, and pictures derived from the media. Social stimuli emerge from communicating with other people. This is similar to Howard and Sheth (1969) who proposed that input variables which influence buyer behaviour can be the significant (physical brands), symbolic (linguistic or pictorial representations, or social stimulus (social environment such as word-of-mouth communication)). In terms of internal inputs, Um and Crompton (1990) identified that personal characteristics (socio-demographics, lifestyle, personality, and situational factors), motives, values, and attitudes, influence evaluation in destinations. The cognition process is the evolution of awareness set, evoked set, and travel destination. However, Crompton (1992) suggested that in order to understand the reasons or criteria tourists used to evaluate alternative destinations at each stage, the awareness set should be divided into an initial consideration set and an excluded set.

Pearce's (2005) model is consistent with the Um and Crompton's (1990) model. Pearce (2005) pointed out that tourists consider a country choice in three stages (see Figure 2-6). The first stage is an "awareness set" that tourists will accumulate as an initial set of countries which are derived from internal inputs and external outputs. Internal inputs relate to social psychological factors such as personal characteristics, motives, activities desired, and special interests. These factors associate with tourists' travel styles. Tourists with different personal characteristics, motives, activities desired, and special interests preferred different travel styles. They will consider the countries where tourism attributes match their preferences. Personal characteristics including age, gender, nationality, marital status, and personality may lead to different travel behaviours. For instance, younger tourists prefer adventure tourism and are more likely to be backpackers than older tourists (Pearce, 2005). Javalgi, Thomas, and Rao (1992) found that tourists aged 55 years and over were likely to undertake cruises, go touring and visit relatives or friends, but were less likely to visit cities, theme parks and resorts. Australian female tourists preferred cultural experiences and family activities more than did Australian males, whilst males preferred sports and adventure tourism more than did females (McGehee, Loker-Murphy, & Uysal, 1996). Further, travel motives can be psychological or social motives; for example, travel for relaxation or for family relationships.

## **Figure 2-6 Model of the destination choice process**

Source: Pearce (2005, p. 105)

Tourists also have different activity preferences (Pearce, 2005). Some tourists prefer to travel to another country to enjoy entertainment or nightlife activities. Other tourists prefer to travel to another country to seek adventure activities. In terms of special interests, some tourists want to experience new cultures or sport events. In addition, external outputs relate to destination characteristics that are gleaned from information sources by experience, promotions and other information sources.

The second stage relates to the “evoked set”. Based on individual constraints, tourists discard some countries from the “awareness set” and consider only a few potential

countries that fit with their limitations. These limitations involve money, time, and social factors.

The last stage of choice is a “final set”. The destination is selected after tourists evaluate the information about tourism attributes, activities, infrastructure, and travel cost of each country from their evoked set. Before tourists travel to a destination(s), they will continue to search for travel information to make their travel plans.

The concept of the evoked set used in the tourism literature is similar to that introduced into the marketing literature by Howard (1963), and later elaborated by Howard and Sheth (1969). The evoked set is a smaller number of brands that become alternatives to the buyer’s choice decision (Howard & Sheth, 1969). Howard and Sheth (1969) claimed that a consumer’s intention to purchase a brand over other brands in an evoked set depends upon brand attitudes, confidence in the brand, and inhibitory situations. The inhibitory situations can be any case of high price of the brand, lack of availability of the brand, time pressure on the buyer, financial status, or social influence.

However, some researchers (Pearce, 2005; Um & Crompton, 1990) noted that destination choice is influenced by both external and internal inputs. One internal input is the individual’s values relevant to travelling abroad. This factor motivates tourists to seek travel information in order to gain more knowledge about the destination choices. Murray (1991) suggested that an individual will seek travel information in order to make “more informed” judgments regarding the possible payoff (benefits) of a product purchase. Generally, before tourists decide to purchase tourism products and services, they seek information about price, distinctive product alternatives, product importance, perceived risk, and situational determinants (Capella & Greco, 1987). They will decide to travel to a country that provides tourism products and services which most satisfy their values. Conversely, travel information from tourism suppliers are the external inputs. These include the marketing stimuli persuading tourists to travel to a country. Tourism bureaux promote their tourism features to target markets in other countries by various communication channels such as television and magazines. The airline industry also designs promotional campaigns and uses many channels such as television, radio, magazines, and newspapers to sell tickets to potential markets. Hsieh and O’Leary (1993) noted that a message from such communication channels can impart a belief, a cognition,

or an attitude in the target market. After tourists receive a message about destination attributes, their beliefs, including motives and perceived values, are formed into their awareness sets by cognitive processes (Um & Crompton, 1990). Howard and Sheth (1969) argued that information from commercial and social channels can be factors encouraging a consumer to purchase a product. From the buyers' perspectives, the information from commercial channels is considered to be both "significant" (a physical brand itself) and "symbolic" stimuli. Symbolic stimuli are the pictures or message representations about a brand's attributes. These attributes include quality, price, distinctiveness, service, and availability of a brand. Another input variable is the information from social channel which relates to WOM communication.

### **2.3.2 The Factors Affecting Travel Destination Choices**

There are many factors affecting travel destination choices. Tourists make these based on the benefits sought and what each destination offers, such as beautiful scenery, cultural and historical sites, shopping facilities, and the variety of things to see and do (Yannopoulos & Rotenberg, 2000). Many researchers have explored the factors that affect travel destination choices (Orth & Tureckova, 2002; Sirakaya, McLellan, & Uysal, 1996; Sirakaya, Sonmez, & Choi, 2001; Yuan & McDonald, 1990). Some researchers have highlighted the "push" and the "pull" factors affecting travel destination choice (Orth & Tureckova, 2002; Yuan & McDonald, 1990). Sirakaya et al. (1996) proposed that there are five factors affecting travel destination choices; physical attractions (pull factor), social-psychological attractions (push factor), exogenous factors, total travel cost, and available time. The physical attractions include man-made and natural tourist attractions. The social-psychological attractions relate to social, cultural interests, and psychological aspects such as novelty, tourist convenience, and accessibility. Exogenous factors are political and social environments, health, natural disasters, and terrorism.

#### **2.3.2.1 The "Push" and "Pull" Factors**

The "push" factors are intrinsic motivators relating to socio-psychological motivations such as the desire to relax, escape, have adventures, gain prestige, and have social interactions. In contrast, the "pull" factors are extrinsic motivators. These factors include destination attributes, cultural attractions, and tourists' expectations such as novelty,

benefits sought, and marketing image of the destination (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). Consistent with this view, Klenosky (2002) stated that the “push” factors relate to the specific forces in people (needs and wants, rest, adventure, prestige, and social interactions), which lead to the decision to take a vacation, whereas the “pull” factors relate to attractions or attributes of the destination that lead people to select one destination over other destinations. However, Sirakaya et al. (2001) noted that both psychological variables (motivations, attitudes, beliefs, and images) and non-psychological variables (time, destination attributes, perceived costs of tourism product, and buyer characteristics and benefits sought) are factors influencing tourists’ awareness and evoked sets. Expressing this somewhat differently, Hong, Kim, Jang, and Lee (2006) concluded that there are three factors that affect destination choice process; personal motivation (push factors), destination attributes (pull factors), and situational inhibitors (constraints).

Many researchers have concluded that there is a relationship between the “pull” and “push” factors (Kim & Lee, 2002; Oh et al., 1995; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). For example, Uysal and Jurowski (1994) identified that “escape” is a push factor related positively to “nature/outdoor” and “rural/inexpensive” pull factors. Also, a “cultural experience” motivator was positively associated with “heritage/culture” sites. Similarly, the study of Kim and Lee (2002) found that respondents who had motives for “appreciating natural resources and health” (push factor), strongly expected to have “easy access to national parks” (pull factor). The simultaneous examination of “push” and “pull” factors is useful for designing tourism promotional programmes (Kim & Lee, 2002; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). Orth and Tureckova (2002) argued that not only the “push” and “pull” factors, but also exogenous factors, such as total travel cost and available time, influence travel destination choices. From this argument, it seems that not only the “push” and “pull” factors, but also tourists’ constraints, influence destination choice.

#### **2.3.2.2 Tourists’ Constraints**

Constraints are factors that “limit the formation of leisure preferences and . . . inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment in leisure” (Jackson, 1991, p. 279). Um and Crompton (1990) found that inhibitors influenced the alternatives in both the late evoked set and the final set. According to McGuire (1984), constraints are classified into five types; (1) external resources (e.g. lack of information, too much planning, insufficient money, lack of



transportation), (2) time factors (e.g. no time to travel, the need to work, too busy doing other things), (3) approval (e.g. family and friends would not approve), (4) social factors (e.g. spouse dislikes travel, no companion), and (5) physical well being (e.g. poor health, too old, afraid to take certain modes of transportation).

Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991) argued the existence of a hierarchy of levels of constraints and that these exist on three levels; intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. Intrapersonal constraints are individual psychological states including anxiety, stress, depression, perceived self-skill, and subjective evaluations to an object (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). Interpersonal constraints involve the interaction between individuals such as family and friends (Crawford et al., 1991). Structural constraints relate to the availability of time, finance, lack of opportunity or access, and climate, which intervene between leisure preference and participation (Crawford et al., 1991).

Many tourism researchers have employed the theoretical framework of Crawford et al. (1991), including Pennington-Gray and Kerstetter (2002), McGuiggan (2004), and Hong et al. (2006). Pennington-Gray and Kerstetter (2002) found that the most influential constraints keeping tourists from participating in nature-based tourism were money, time, and weather. Conversely, the least influential constraints were friends, and the intrapersonal constraints such as safety, skill needed to participate, and skill in obtaining information. Hong et al. (2006) claimed that most researchers asserted constraints were inhibitors of participation, rather than constraints in destination choice behaviour. They found that respondents selected a park from eight national parks depending on their affective images and constraints. Respondents chose to visit a park which they held a more favourable image of and had fewer constraints than visiting other parks. Constraints have various intensities, and not all constraints inhibit participation in tourism activities. The participation will depend on the motivation and the ability of individuals to negotiate through them (Jackson & Rucks, 1995).

Thus, it is apparent that at some level tourists' constraints are a factor that influences their destination choice process. The investigation of tourists' constraints affecting destination decisions would be helpful for DMOs or other tourism stakeholders to plan their marketing strategies and create information to reduce the effect of such tourists' constraints. From the travel destination choice process, many researchers also noted that personal characteristics

influence the destination choice decision (Pearce, 2005; Sirakaya et al., 2001; Um & Crompton, 1990).

## **2.4 Socio-Economic Characteristics, Purposes of Trip, and Consumption Values**

Many tourism researchers have indicated that tourists' socio-economic characteristics influence the benefits they sought from travel. For example, Gitelson and Kerstetter (1990) found that tourists of different ages, incomes, genders, and types of party (couples without children, couples with children, and friends) sought different benefits from travel. Tourists with different ages sought different levels of relaxation, excitement, and social benefits. Tourists with different incomes had different levels of intensive exploration. Female tourists sought more relaxation, social, and exploration than did male tourists. Tourists with different types of party also sought different benefits from excitement, social, and exploration. Similarly, Heung et al. (2001) found that younger Japanese travellers preferred "exploration" more than did older travellers. They also found that females preferred "shopping" as compared to males. Yuan and McDonald (1990) identified that attractions for choosing a particular destination (pull factors) were different among countries of residence (Japan, France, West Germany, and the United Kingdom). Uysal, McDonald, and Martin (1994) found that Australians who had higher incomes and educational levels tended to visit natural areas rather than national parks in the USA. Heung et al. (2001) indicated that children influenced a family's decisions in travel. Tourists with children preferred to travel a shorter distance and to a safer destination.

Tourists, who travel for leisure, business, or visit friends and relatives (VFR), are likely to have different travel behaviour. Kashyap and Bojanic (2000) found that business and leisure travellers perceived differently the overall values of hotel attributes. Perceived price and quality of public areas at a hotel were the determinant of perceived values for business travellers, while perceived price and quality of hotel guestrooms were the determinants of the perceived values of leisure travellers. Suh (2001) argued that business travellers gave more attention to functional (tangible) attributes than pleasure travellers. These attributes included "traditional and modern market places" and "palaces" in Seoul. As such, it is reasonable to assume that different socio-economic characteristics and purposes of trip could also bring different consumption values to bear on travel decisions. This may well

lead them to search different travel information sources which contain information that matches their tourism preferences.

## **2.5 Socio-Economic Characteristics, Purposes of Trip, and Information Sources**

Numerous researchers have identified relationships between demographic characteristics and information search behaviour (Fall, 2000a; Fodness, 1994; Heung et al., 2001; Luo, Feng, & Cai, 2004; Suh, 2001). The usefulness of the information sources from the internet and CD-Roms had a positive relationship with income and residence (Fall, 2000a). In contrast, the usefulness of these sources had a negative relationship with age groups, as older travellers indicated that these sources were less useful for their travel plans (Fall, 2000a). Heung et al. (2001) found that tourists with children relied on information from tour agents. Suh (2001) found that Japanese travellers were more influenced by the sources of advertising from television, radio, and brochures than European and North American travellers. Luo et al. (2004) argued that demographic characteristics regarding gender, household incomes, and situational factors (purpose of trip and travel party composition) led to different information sources being used. Moreover, they suggested that information source preferences resulted in different trip outcomes (accommodation types and travel expenditure).

It has been also identified that there are relationships between purposes of trip and information sources used (Fodness & Murray, 1999; Luo et al., 2004; Suh, 2001). Fodness and Murray (1999) found that travellers whose purpose of trip was to vacation, used information from their previous experiences to plan their trips, while travellers whose purpose was to VFR relied on information from their friends or relatives. Suh (2001) also found that pleasure travellers were more influenced by information from travel agencies than business travellers. Luo et al. (2004) found that the use of the internet and other information sources (travel agencies, friends/relatives, and local convention and visitor bureaux) varied significantly among tourists with different purposes of their trips (pleasure, business, and personal purposes).

## **2.6 Purchase Decision Confidence**

Tourists may have many destination choices in their consideration set. They may be uncertain of their judgement regarding the best choice to purchase. The amount of information, brand attitudes, and confidence in brand evaluation, are critical factors of consumer purchase decisions (Askarova, 2002; Howard & Sheth, 1969). Numerous empirical researchers have found that buyers' confidence in brands is related to their intentions to purchase the brand (Askarova, 2002; Bennett & Harrell, 1975; Laroche & Howard, 1980; Laroche et al., 1996; Pereira, 1999).

There are many definitions of a consumer's or buyer's decision confidence. For example, Howard and Sheth (1969) defined consumer confidence as "the degree of certainty the buyer perceives towards a brand" (p. 35). The certainty relates to brand comprehension, attitude towards the brand, intention to buy the brand, and post purchase evaluation of the brand. Alternatively, confidence is "the ability of buyer to judge or evaluate attributes of the brands" (Howard & Sheth, 1969, p. 44). However, Laroche and Howard (1980) argued that confidence is "the consumer's faith in his/her own capacity to judge the quality of the brand in terms of needs" (p. 378). The level of confidence may reflect uncertainty or ambiguity about the accuracy of brand judgement (Day, 1970). Howard (1994) defined confidence as "the buyer's degree of certainty that his or her evaluative judgement of the brand, whether favourable or unfavourable, is correct" (p. 40). Decision confidence can be the level of certainty that a consumer has in their selection, that they have made the best alternative choice from the choice set (Pereira, 1999). Most of these definitions provide a similar perspective in that the confidence in purchasing a brand involves brand judgement.

### **2.6.1 The Antecedents of Purchase Decision Confidence**

Under the circumstance of brand choice decisions, there are many factors influencing consumers' purchase decision confidence. According to Howard and Sheth (1969), confidence relates to brand comprehension, attitude, intention, and satisfaction. Brand comprehension is an antecedent of the confidence in that brand. Also, confidence is an intervening variable between brand attitude and intention to purchase that brand. After a consumer experiences the brand, he or she will evaluate whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied with it. This satisfaction will feed back to brand comprehension.

In addition, Howard and Sheth (1969) suggested that consumers will seek more information and be less likely to purchase a brand or product in which they have low confidence. Consumers tended to search for information to reduce the levels of uncertainty and risk in their purchase decisions (Shiffman & Kanuk, 1994). Consumers who are unfamiliar with the brands, will have a low degree of confidence in choosing a brand (Laroche et al., 1996). Familiarity derives from knowledge received from information or experience. In other words, the more consumers know about a brand, the higher their confidence in purchasing that brand (Askarova, 2002). Dodd (1998) noted that a person's previous experience and memory are an internal source, whilst advertisements are an external source. Consistent with this view, Pereira (1999) found that the greater the amount of relevant information decision makers had, the greater the confidence in their judgement about cars. Laroche et al. (1996) also found that consumers' confidence towards a brand was because he or she was familiar with that brand.

Consumers' attitudes and confidence toward a brand influence the consumers' intentions to select that brand from their brand choice set (Laroche et al., 1996). Askarova (2002) revealed that confidence in a selected brand of beer was an intermediate variable between brand attitude and purchase intention. These two researchers agree that the more consumers have a positive image of a brand, the more they are confident in purchasing that brand.

Moreover, Howard and Sheth (1969) noted that confidence is the degree to which the buyer believes that he/she can estimate the net payoff (value) or the reward from buying a given brand. Laroche and Howard (1980) suggested that confidence is the ability of a consumer to judge the quality of the brand in terms of his/her needs. In a similar perspective, consumers tended to purchase a brand from a choice set which they considered to have high price-quality value (Askarova, 2002). Consumers have confidence in purchasing a brand if they perceive a high level of benefits or satisfying values of that brand.

To date, purchase decision confidence has not been examined in the tourism context with regard to country brand. To add this dimension, the concept of brand choice decision confidence is used in this study.

## **2.7 Chapter Summary**

The literature has contradictions in some research areas and gaps in terms of the dimensions of consumption values, determinants of purchase decision confidence, as well as socio-economic characteristics and trip purposes relating to consumption values and travel information sources, as explained in the previous sections. This study attempts to close these gaps by developing a conceptual model and testing hypotheses derived from it. The model of Sheth et al. (1991) is appropriate to include in this study because it provides inclusive factors of the consumption values. The model is linked with the constructs of socio-economic characteristics, purposes of trip, travel information sources, country image, and purchase decision confidence. The conceptual model and hypotheses development based on the theoretical framework of the study are presented and discussed in Chapter Three.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Conceptual Model and Hypotheses Development**

The areas of research that have not been explored in the literature are identified in this chapter. With global competitors in the tourism industry, tourists have many destination choices. It is necessary to understand what factors affect tourists' purchase decision confidence in choosing a destination. In addition, it is important to examine whether socio-economic characteristics and trip purposes relate to the pattern of consumption values and travel information sources used. A conceptual model is developed to identify the important variables which may influence tourists' purchase decision confidence, and examine the relationships among consumption values, travel information sources, country image, socio-economic characteristics, and purposes of trip. Then, hypotheses are formulated to test the relationships between the variables as identified in the conceptual model.

#### **3.1 The Research Gaps**

The literature review shows that tourist destination choice behaviour is complex. There are many factors affecting tourists when making their destination choices. These factors include consumption values, travel information sources, country image, socio-economic characteristics, purposes of trip, and constraints on travel. In addition, some of these factors can influence purchase decision confidence, including consumption values, information sources, and country image. The review of the literature identified five gaps, which are described below.

Firstly, there is a lack of research that has examined the integrated factors affecting travel destination choices. Most previous researchers have examined the elements of the "push" and "pull" factors affecting a specific destination. They have predominantly focused on the relationship between motivations (push factor) and tourism attributes (pull factor), while largely ignoring consumption values, travel information sources, country image, and constraints on travel, which are factors also influencing tourists' destination decisions. These integrated factors have been used in the general marketing literature but have mostly been neglected in the tourism context. This gap is important because tourists' decisions to travel to a country are not determined solely by just one factor, but are also influenced by

others. In order to better understand other factors affecting destination choice the roles of such as consumption values, the usefulness of travel information sources, and country image also need to be examined in terms of identifying any possible relationships. Constraints should also be considered to examine their roles in tourists' decisions to travel.

Secondly, there are only a limited number of studies about country branding in a tourism context. It has been argued from the "pull" perspective that country branding can be based on the identity of a country as well as image. However, personal information sources also influence country brand. This study examines which information sources are useful for building a country brand and the prominent country image attributes that persuade tourists to visit a country.

Thirdly, there is a lack of research examining the relationship between trip purposes and consumption values. Furthermore, a limited number of studies have examined the relationship between trip purposes and information sources used. Understanding the relationships between trip purposes and consumption values, and the usefulness of travel information sources are important in order to plan an appropriate marketing strategy to fit the market. This study attempts to examine whether there are differences in the pattern of consumption values and the usefulness of information sources among trip purposes.

A fourth aspect, which a few researchers have examined, relates to tourists' socio-economic characteristics and their motivations for travel, the benefits sought from travel, travel information sources, and travel patterns. However, the relationships between socio-economic characteristics and the consumption values, and the usefulness of travel information sources, have been neglected in previous studies. This study seeks to close this gap by examining those relationships.

Lastly, there is a lack of research that has studied tourists' purchase decision confidence. Given that there are many competing country choices, tourists will choose a country, or countries in the case of travel to multiple destinations, which match most of their preferences. In the case of business tourists, who have no choice due to having to transact their business in a specific country, decision confidence has little relevance. Other tourists' confidence in their travel decisions may depend on their consumption values, country image, and having enough information. It is important to explore what factors influence



tourists' decision confidence in order to better understand what the dominant factors are, especially when there are many destination choices.

### **3.2 Research Objectives**

In order to close these research gaps, five general objectives are established for this research:

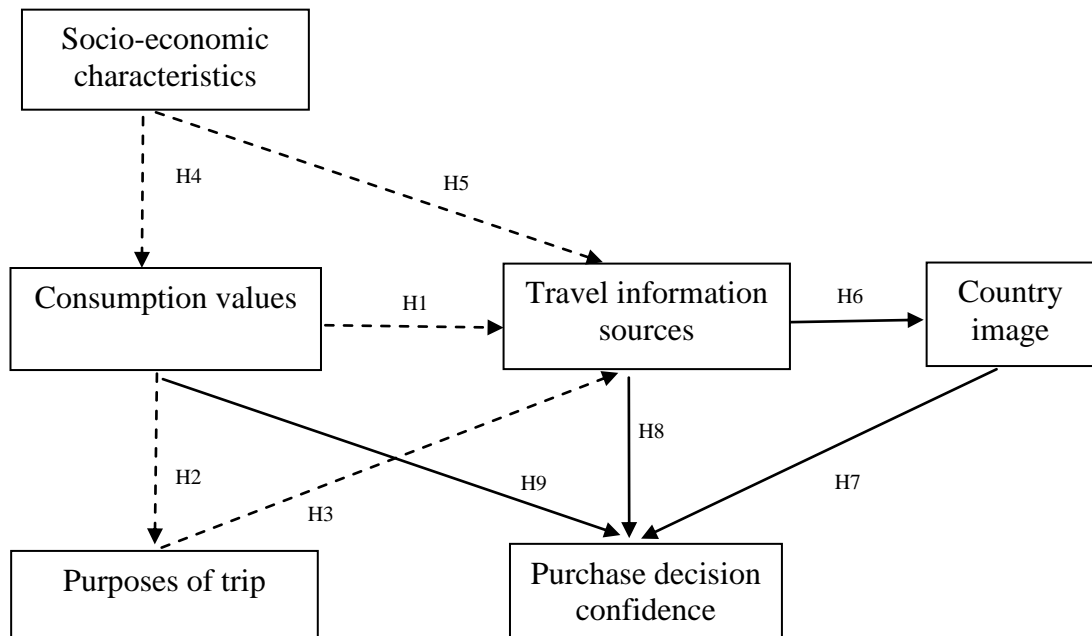
- 1 To better understand the factors influencing tourists' choices of travel destination.
2. To investigate the relationship between consumption values and the reported usefulness of travel information sources.
3. To examine the effects of purpose of trip on consumption values and the reported usefulness of travel information sources.
4. To examine the effects of socio-economic characteristics on consumption values and the reported usefulness of travel information sources.
5. To examine the factors influencing tourists' purchase decision confidence.

These general objectives were conceptualised in a new tourist's purchase decision confidence model and tested by means of a number of hypotheses.

### **3.3 Conceptual Model**

From the literature review, it seems that consumption values, travel information sources, and country image, affect tourists' purchase decision confidence. In addition, it would be expected that socio-economic characteristics and trip purposes may relate to consumption values and travel information sources. A model of consumption values and market choice behaviour theorised by Sheth et al. (1991) was modified and applied in this study. The complete conceptual model as proposed is shown, which the hypothesised linkages indicated, in Figure 3-1.

**Figure 3-1 A proposed model of tourist's purchase decision confidence**



### 3.4 Hypotheses Development

The hypotheses to be tested are based on the literature and the proposed theoretical framework. The literature indicated that consumption values can influence tourists' decisions to travel abroad. In addition, promotional campaigns in the media can be a persuading factor affecting tourists' desires to travel to other countries. Since tourists may have many alternative countries in their consideration sets, they will search for and evaluate information about each country before making decisions. It is likely that they may feel confident in travelling to a country if they hold a positive image of that country and see visiting there as an expression of that positive image. Moreover, tourists with different socio-economic characteristics and purposes of trip are expected to have different consumption values, and consider the information sources as differentially useful for making their travel plans. In order to confirm these statements several hypotheses regarding the relationships between each of the constructs were developed.

#### 3.4.1 The Relationships between Consumption Values and Information Source Usefulness

Both internal and external inputs are factors influencing tourists travelling abroad (Howard & Sheth, 1969; Pearce, 2005; Um & Crompton, 1990). The internal inputs are “push”

factors such as socio-psychological motivators, values, or benefits sought from travel. In contrast, the “pull” factors are the extrinsic motivators relating to the attractiveness of a destination’s attributes including its natural, social-culture and man-made attractions (Orth & Tureckova, 2002). These attributes are presented by many information sources, including both the media and the personal experience of others (Pearce, 2005). Accordingly, tourists making decisions to travel to a country may be influenced by internal inputs (socio-psychological factors) and external inputs (marketing communications and word of mouth).

Values are the conditions of aspirations and motivations for the journey (Theobald, 2005). Sheth et al. (1991) suggested that there are five values which a consumer considers before purchasing a product, service, or brand; functional, emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional values. When the values drive tourists to travel abroad, they will search travel information for the attractive features of a country from various information sources to evaluate and plan their trips. Sheth et al. (1991) also suggested that a marketer should promote a product to target consumers in an appropriate approach. Advertising can persuade consumers to associate products with desirable emotions and with positively regarded social groups (Sheth et al., 1991). In the case of functional and epistemic values, a marketer may use promotional tools such as product samples, coupons, or discounted price for reinforcing consumers to experience a product. These promotional tools may appeal to the curiosity of consumers to try a product. After they use a product, they will know how the functional utility of a product performed (Sheth et al., 1991). According to Howard and Sheth (1969), buyers’ purchase decisions can be affected by commercial or social stimuli. Commercial stimuli relate to physical brands themselves (significant stimuli), and linguistic or pictorial representations (symbolic stimuli). Social stimuli are the information that the social environment provides regarding purchase decisions, particularly, word-of-mouth communication. In addition, active seeking of information occurs when there is ambiguity among brands and a buyer cannot decide which brand is best (Howard & Sheth, 1969). They will search for more information to gain brand comprehension and make a decision. Thus, it is premised that five consumption values (functional, emotional, social, conditional, and epistemic values) may be related to information sources. To evaluate this statement, hypothesis 1 is proposed that there will be positive relationships between consumption values and the usefulness of information

sources. Due to five consumption values under consideration in this study, hypothesis 1 is divided into five sub-hypotheses:

*H1a: There will be positive relationships between tourists' functional value and the usefulness of various information sources.*

*H1b: There will be positive relationships between tourists' emotional value and the usefulness of various information sources.*

*H1c: There will be positive relationships between tourists' social value and the usefulness of various information sources.*

*H1d: There will be positive relationships between tourists' conditional value and the usefulness of various travel information sources.*

*H1e: There will be positive relationships between tourists' epistemic value and the usefulness of various information sources.*

### **3.4.2 The Relationships between Purposes of Trip, Consumption Values, and Information Source Usefulness**

The literature noted that tourists with different trip purposes have different needs, wants, and travel behaviour (McIntosh & Goeldner, 1986), and use different travel information sources (Fodness & Murray, 1999; Lo, Cheung, & Law, 2002; Luo et al., 2004). Leisure travellers tended to participate in tourism activities more than did business travellers (Cai, Lehto, & O'Leary, 2001). Fodness and Murray (1999) revealed that vacationers relied more on information from tourist bureaux and personal experience, while VFR visitors used information from friends or relatives and clubs more than did vacationers. Lo et al. (2002) noted that trip purpose relates to tourists' choices of information sources. They found that leisure travellers searched information from travel agency/tour company, travel guidebooks, friends or relatives recommendations, and personal experience, whilst business travellers relied on information from travel agency/tour company, airlines, and the internet.

It would seem likely that tourists with different purposes for their trip may be influenced by different consumption values in deciding where to travel. Subsequently, they are likely to search for information from different sources to make their travel plans that they expect to receive specific information from the sources. Tourists visiting friends and relatives commonly have a particular purpose for travelling, and they may know where to travel and stay. In these cases, they seem to rely more on information from friends and relatives, or their previous experiences. Leisure tourists want to relax, have fun and find excitement, explore the natural and cultural environments of other countries, or spend quality time with family. It seems that they have many tourism options and search for more information to compare before making their travel decisions. They may search for information from various sources such as the internet, tour agents, tourism bureaux, WOM, or their experiences.

Hence, it is premised that tourists who have different purposes for their trip will be driven by different configurations of consumption values (functional, emotional, social, conditional, and epistemic values), and will evaluate differently the usefulness of travel information sources. To support these statements, hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 are proposed as:

*H2: Tourists with different purposes for their trip will have different patterns in the consumption values.*

*H3: Tourists with different purposes for their trip will have differences with regard to the reported usefulness of travel information sources.*

### **3.4.3 The Relationships between Socio-Economic Characteristics, Consumption Values, and Information Source Usefulness**

The literature indicated that tourists with different socio-economic characteristics seek different benefits when making travel decisions. They will prefer different travel styles and be lead to search information from different sources to plan their trips. Weaver, McCleary, Lapisto, and Damonte (1994) found that travellers under 45 years old tended to seek the novelty of a destination. Heung et al. (2001) found that younger tourists considered the vacation factors of “exploration” more than did older tourists. They also found that female

tourists considered “benefits sought” from travel more than did males. The benefits in their study related to “taking advantage of discounted fares and tour packages”, “travelling to a destination that people appreciate”, “enjoying holidays”, “shopping”, “travelling to a safe destination”, and “enjoying a great variety of food”. However, they found that there were no significant differences in vacation factors (exploration, dream fulfilment, benefits sought, cosmopolitan city, and attractions and climate) among occupation groups and income levels. Fodness and Murray (1999) found that travellers who had higher incomes used information from government offices including welcome centres, local tourist offices, and state travel guides. In contrast, travellers who had lower income relied more on information from their friends or relatives. Luo et al. (2004) revealed that tourists with different ages, educations, and occupations, had no difference on their usage of information sources, including the internet. But they found that tourists with different genders and income levels used the internet, travel agencies, and friends/relatives recommendations differently. Males tended to use the internet and travel agents more than did females, whilst females were more likely to search for information from friends/relatives. Tourists with higher income levels (US\$40,000 or over) tended to use the internet and local source including visiting bureaux more than did the lowest income level (under US\$40,000). On the other hand, the lowest income group tended to rely on information from travel agents more than did the middle income level (US\$40,000-80,000), and friends/relatives more than did the highest income level (over US\$80,000). Suh (2001) found that European and North American travellers were influenced by the internet more than Japanese travellers.

According to those aforementioned studies, there is evidence that socio-economic characteristics are related to the benefits sought of taking a vacation and the travel information sources used. It would be expected that socio-economic characteristics may relate to consumption values and to the reported usefulness of travel information sources. For instance, younger tourists may be driven by the emotional value to travel abroad more than are older tourists. The younger tourists may expect to have many types of experiences in a destination such as relaxation, cultural interests, and adventure tourism, so they may report a greater variety of travel information sources being useful than do older tourists. In this study, socio-economic characteristics will be tested in groups by gender, region of residence, age, income, education, and occupation, as they are commonly used in many studies. Hypothesis 4 and hypothesis 5 are proposed as:

*H4: There will be relationships between the pattern of consumption values and socio-economic characteristics (gender, region of residence, age group, household income level, educational qualification, and occupational classification).*

*H5: There will be differences in the usefulness of travel information sources among different socio-economic groups (gender, region of residence, age group, household income level, educational qualification, and occupational classification).*

#### **3.4.4 Information Sources Influencing Country Image**

Country image is the perception that an individual has about a country (Nebenzahl, Jaffe, & Lampert, 1997). These perceptions may be derived from many information sources, including travel agents, brochures and pamphlets, family/relatives, friends, newspapers and magazines, books and articles, radio and television advertisements, government tourism offices and embassies, previous travel experiences, and the internet. Similarly, Gunn (1972) stated that destination image is influenced by information sources. These can be conceptualised as two main types of sources; organic (non-marketing efforts) and induced (marketing efforts such as brochures and promotional campaigns). There are various results from research about information sources influencing destination and country image. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) found that word-of-mouth and advertising significantly affected destination image. Hanlan and Kelly (2005) found that destination brands were strongly influenced by word-of-mouth, brochures and magazines in hotels, and agents and intermediaries. Kokosalakis, Bagnall, Selby, and Burns (2006) also agreed that the media influence place image. Molina and Esteban (2006) demonstrated that different information sources had varying degrees of effect on perceptual evaluations. They suggested that brochures, travel guidebooks, friends and relatives, were the most important sources in forming tourists' perceptions. Thus, to investigate travel information sources impacting on country image, hypothesis 6 is proposed as:

*H6: Travel information sources will positively relate to tourists' perceptions toward image attributes of a country.*

### **3.4.5 Country Image Affecting Purchase Decision Confidence**

Country image is a critical element in tourists' destination choices (Kokosalakis et al., 2006), and a determinant of purchase intentions (Baloglu, 2000). Logically, a country with a positive image will attract tourists, more so than a country with a negative image. A number of researchers found that the more positive an image tourists had towards a country, the more they intended to revisit that country (Alampay, 2003; Ngamsom, 2001). Howard and Sheth (1969) noted that confidence is an intervening variable between attitude and purchase intention. Some consumer behaviour researchers (Askarova, 2002; Bennett & Harrell, 1975; Laroche & Howard, 1980) found that the more positive an image consumers had towards a brand, the higher their confidence held in that brand, and the more they were likely to purchase that brand. When comparing the tourism industry to the goods industry, a country name may act as a brand name. In parallel, therefore, country image can enhance tourists' confidence in making decisions to travel to that country. To investigate this relationship, hypothesis 7 is:

*H7: Country image attributes will positively relate to tourists' purchase decision confidence.*

### **3.4.6 Information Source Usefulness Affecting Purchase Decision Confidence**

In the consumer behaviour literature, some researchers have noted that brand comprehension or brand knowledge has a positive relationship with consumers' purchase decision confidence (Askarova, 2002; Howard & Sheth, 1969; Laroche & Howard, 1980; Laroche et al., 1996). The more brand comprehension and brand knowledge consumers have, the greater is their confidence in making decisions towards that brand. Howard and Sheth (1969) noted that confidence is the inverse of brand ambiguity. When consumers are faced with uncertainty in their judgement on each brand in an evoked set, they likely will search for more information. Laroche and Howard (1980) found that brand comprehension influenced consumers' confidence in their judgement on the quality of the brand, and intentions to purchase that brand. Laroche et al. (1996) revealed that brand familiarity influenced consumers' confidence towards a focal brand.



Brand familiarity relates to consumers having enough information to make their purchasing decision. It can also emerge from consumers' previous experiences in using that brand. Brand comprehension or brand knowledge is a cognitive process. It is derived from many information sources, including consumers' previous experiences. It seems that the more consumers have information about a brand, the more they are confident in buying that brand. Similarly, in the tourism marketing literature, Vogt, Fesenmaier, and MacKay (1993) found that the core of information acquisition was destination selection, followed by product knowledge, imagery, and trip planning. Therefore, to test the relationship between travel information sources and tourists' confidence in their making decisions, hypothesis 8 is proposed as:

*H8: There will be positive relationships between the usefulness of information sources and tourists' purchase decision confidence.*

### **3.4.7 Consumption Values Affecting Purchase Decision Confidence**

Confidence is the extent to which a buyer believes that he or she expects to get the benefits or the net payoff from a product or a brand (Howard & Sheth, 1969). The benefit, or the net payoff, is the value that a consumer receives from a product. Bennett and Harrell (1975) suggested that a buyer's confidence in judgement about brand attributes is a moderator between brand attitudes and behaviour intentions. However, little research has examined the relationship between consumption values and confidence in the purchase decision. Some researchers have examined the relationships among brand's attributes, quality, confidence, and purchase intentions. Askarova (2002) found that consumers evaluated the quality of a brand in their evoked set and tended to purchase the best brand. The confidence in a focal brand positively influenced purchase intentions regarding that brand (Askarova, 2002; Laroche et al., 1996). Ngamsom (2001), in a tourism-focused study, found that the factors "good value food", "shopping", "and a variety of things to do", and "novelty seeking" had positive impacts on the likelihood of revisiting Thailand. As "quality of product", "value for money", "a variety of things to do", and "novelty seeking" are expressions of consumption values, it can be expected that consumption values may affect tourists' confidence in choosing that country as a destination. To test this idea, hypothesis 9 is proposed as:

*H9: There will be positive relationships among tourists' five consumption values (functional, emotional, social, conditional, and epistemic values) and their purchase decision confidence.*

### **3.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter reviewed the research gaps identified in the literature. Specifically, the gaps were the lack of studies on the relationships between consumption values and factors affecting travel destination choice, in addition to purchase decision confidence. Then, based on the research objectives and conceptual model, thirteen hypotheses were developed. A model proposed by Sheth et al. (1991) was applied by linkage with the other factors affecting travel destination choice (travel information sources, country image, socio-economic characteristics, and purposes of trip), and leading to purchase decision confidence. The results of testing the hypotheses will be presented and discussed in Chapter Six.

# Chapter 4

## Research Design and Method

### 4.1 Research Approach

A quantitative approach was used with a self-administered survey of international tourists arriving in Bangkok, Thailand. The structured questionnaire used close-ended items which measured consumption values, used and perceived value of travel information sources, country images, socio-economic characteristics, purposes of trip, constraints on travelling abroad, and purchase decision confidence. Open-ended items were also included to allow respondents to comment beyond the closed items used, and to identify their demographic background and touristic preferences.

### 4.2 Sampling

The research targeted international tourists arriving in Thailand from seven regions of residence worldwide (East Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa). These regional categories were modified from those used by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). The TAT groups Canada, the USA, Argentina, Brazil, and others in one region as the Americas. However, the numbers of international tourist arrivals from North America and South America are substantially different. In 2005 there were 585,476 tourists from the USA, and 125,310 tourists from Canada, while only 6,609 tourists came from Brazil, and 2,690 tourists from Argentina (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2005). The monthly average of tourists from South America accounted for only 0.25% of total international tourists. Given the time, budget and data availability constraints, an adequate sample of tourist arrivals from South America could not be made, and therefore to avoid distorted results from the data analysis regarding this region, this study excluded South America. Instead, it focuses on North America rather than the collective Americas as defined by the TAT. It was reasoned that the exclusion of this sub-sample group will have a negligible impact on the data analysis and resulting conclusions, given that very few tourists from South America visit Thailand.

There were two stages of sampling. The first stage used convenience sampling of international tourists, who aged 18 or older, and were able to communicate in the English

language. The second stage was a non-proportional quota sampling approach which focused on regions of residence in order to reach the target of sample size in each region. This second stage was introduced about half way through the period of collection, after it became clear that the first stage would not result in adequately balanced coverage.

### **4.3 Sample Size**

In order to analyse the seven regional sub-samples reliably, the number from each region should be approximately equal. According to Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham (2006), to ensure statistical power, for example at a significance level of 0.01, the required minimum sample size is 200 respondents. Given the time and financial constraints in completing the survey, a minimum of 200 respondents from each of the regions of residence was set with a consequential minimum total sample size of 1,400 respondents.

### **4.4 Questionnaire Design**

The questionnaire was developed from the constructs of the conceptual model explained in Chapter Three. Questionnaire items were created by adapting items identified in the literature review or based on the theoretical framework. The questionnaire was designed to take advantage of the high likelihood that international travellers arriving in Thailand would likely be competent in English. There were six parts into the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) as described in the following sections. The measurement scales used were rating scales and five-point Likerts. A five-point Likert scale is suitable to measure attitudes (Ryan, 1995) and often used in tourism research (Smith, 1995). In addition, a five-point scale was assumed less taxing than a seven-point or a nine-point scale, which might be too long for travellers who are tired after a long flight.

Before designing the Likert scale sections of the questionnaire, four issues identified by Brace (2004) were considered. These were; order effect, acquiescence, pattern answering, and central tendency. To avoid biased answers occurring from the order effect and acquiescent respondents tending to answer optimistically, the questionnaire was designed to use a negative first-end scale rather than a positive first-end scale. Biased central tendency can occur as respondents tend to avoid extreme values (Brace, 2004) by choosing the mid-point “3 = Neutral” effectively (Ryan, 1995). The problem of using “neutral” in

the scale is still being debated, as it can present either a genuine mid-point response or a “don’t know” answer. In part, this can be avoided with a “don’t know” or “not applicable” column being provided separately. However, this also has the problem of allowing respondents to not answer (Brace, 2004; Ryan, 1995) representing a loss of data. In contrast, Bradley (2007) noted that having a “3 = Neutral” value allows respondents to report an undecided position by their answers. This is preferred over forcing respondents to answer only in either the disagree or agree direction by providing only even numbered scales (Bradburn, Wansink, & Sudman, 2004). On the basis of this argument, a five-point Likert scale was chosen as appropriate for this study.

#### **4.4.1 Consumption Values**

The questionnaire began with an open-ended question designed to explore the factors that tourists consider when travelling abroad. In line with Sheth et al. (1991), the second section was designed to measure the five consumption values with regard to travelling abroad by using close-ended items. This section contained 20 items measuring equally the dimensions of consumption values; functional (4 items), emotional (4 items), social (4 items), epistemic (4 items), and conditional (4 items) values. These 20 items had construct validity, as they were taken from the literature and were operationalised from the concepts theorised by Sheth et al. (1991). Thirteen of these items were modified from Simmons (1997), Tapachai and Waryszak (2000), Williams and Soutar (2000), Long and Schiffman (2000), Sweeney and Soutar (2001), Shen (2003), and Sánchez et al. (2006). These researchers investigated a variety of topics. Simmons (1997) and Shen (2003) looked at college choices. Tapachai and Waryszak (2000), and Williams and Soutar (2000) investigated tourism topics. Long and Schiffman (2000) studied aspects of the airline frequent flyer programme. All these researchers applied the Sheth et al. (1991) model in their studies, while Sánchez et al. (2006), who also studied tourism, applied the concept of PERVAL developed by Sweeney and Soutar (2001). After reviewing previous research, no other items were identified as appropriate for inclusion in this study. However, to more completely cover the concepts elemental to the five dimensions of consumption values suggested by Sheth et al. (1991), seven new items were created by the researcher and subjected to standard development practices. These included assessment of face, content, and construct validities via expert opinion. Table 4-1 reports the respective source of each item used.

**Table 4-1 Constructs and items of consumption values**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Items Used</b>	<b>Main Sources</b>
Functional value	A destination with a great reputation for tourism appeals to me. When choosing a destination, I seek a wide variety of activity choices. Value for money is a critical aspect of my travel decision. Beautiful scenery is an essential requirement when choosing my travel destination.	Shen, 2003; Simmons, 1997 Researcher Lee et al., 2007 Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000; Williams & Soutar, 2000
Emotional value	I travel because it is an important source of relaxation. My primary reason for travel is to find excitement. Travel makes me happy. I only travel to places where I feel safe.	Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000; Williams & Soutar, 2000 Shen, 2003; Simmons, 1997; Williams & Soutar, 2000 Shen, 2003; Simmons, 1997 Researcher
Social value	International travel enhances my social status. I prefer activities with my family and friends. I travel to meet new people and socialize. I chose this destination because my friends and relatives recommended it to me.	Sánchez et al., 2006; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001 Researcher Williams & Soutar, 2000 Researcher
Epistemic value	I am usually interested in something new and different. I am curious about this destination because I saw an interesting advertisement. My travel decision was because I wondered what this destination would be like. Travel is an opportunity to enhance my knowledge (e.g. to study, language, etc.).	Shen, 2003; Simmons, 1997; Williams & Soutar, 2000 Researcher Shen, 2003; Simmons, 1997 Researcher
Conditional value	I travel to see special events (e.g. festival, etc.). Travel to a place with a different climate is important to my travel decision. Discounted fares were an important part of my decision to travel. Finding enough time to travel to a faraway place is difficult.	Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000 Researcher Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000 Long & Schiffman, 2000

A five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree) was used to measure respondents' values. This is the same approach used by Lee et al. (2007) and similar to the approaches of Simmons (1997) and Shen (2003).

#### **4.4.2 Travel Information Sources**

Respondents were asked to indicate which travel information sources they used and how useful these were for making their travel plans. Sixteen items were presented to respondents, including fifteen possible information sources and one other (please specify) item. These were modified from various tourism studies (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Fall,

2000a, 2000b; Fodness & Murray, 1999; Hui & Wan, 2003; Ngamsom, 2001; Suh, 2001). Thirteen travel information sources frequently used in these previous studies were the internet, family/friends/relatives, travel agents, television, brochures, travel guidebooks, personal experience, newspapers, radio, magazines, tourism bureaux, clubs, and other (please specify). In practical terms, both travel agents and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) use brochures, the internet, television, and radio advertisements to attract tourists. Therefore, these four information sources were included in the travel agent and the TAT sections. One more information source, “road show/trade show”, was adapted from Fall (2000a, 2000b) and added to the questionnaire, as it is a medium used by the TAT.

Thus, sixteen information sources were presented in three categories; (1) travel agent/tour operator; (brochures/pamphlets, internet, travel guidebook, television advertisements, and radio advertisements), (2) the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) (brochures/pamphlets, internet, road show/trade show, television advertisements, and radio advertisements), and (3) other sources including friends/family/relatives, clubs/associations, newspaper advertisements, magazine advertisements, my own experience, and other (please specify) (see Section 3 of the questionnaire in Appendix 1).

Measurement was used by a six-point rating scale (0 = Did not use, 1= Not at all useful to 5 = Extremely useful), adapted from Fall (2000b), whose study identified which information sources were useful in making travel plans; this is similar to the intention of this study. However, no previous researchers have provided a scale choice of “0”, whereby respondents could indicate that they did not use a particular travel information source. Fall (2000b) used a five-point rating scale (1= Not at all useful to 5 = Extremely useful). Further, Fall (2000b) also asked respondents to indicate the one information source which was the most useful. Ngamsom (2001), and Hui and Wan (2003) used check-list measures of the information sources that respondents used in making their travel plans.

Thus, combining a check list and five-point rating scales were appropriate in this study because respondents might not consult all travel information sources listed in the questionnaire. Respondents could indicate those sources which they did not use by entering a “0” value. Also, they could rate how useful the information sources that they used were in making their travel plans.

#### **4.4.3 Country Image**

Tourists were asked to identify their perceptions of the characteristics of Thailand. There were 29 attributes listed, including an “other (please specify)” item (see Table 4-2). The 28 listed attributes of country image were either adopted or adapted from previous destination image studies (Choi, Chan, & Wu, 1999; Deslandes, 2003; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Hankinson, 2005; Hui & Wan, 2003; Konecnik, 2005; Ngamsom, 2001; O’Leary & Deegan, 2003, 2005). One new attribute, “quality health services (e.g. hospital, spa, etc.)”, was created for this study. Although health tourism has become popular in recent years, the research in this area is still limited. After reviewing the literature, no useful item measuring health tourism was identified. In order to appropriately measure the image of Thailand regarding health services, the item of “quality health services (e.g. hospital, spa, etc.)” was developed.



**Table 4-2 Attributes of country image**

<b>Attributes Used</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Main Sources</b>
Beautiful beaches and scenery, plentiful nightlife and entertainments, and pleasant climate	3	Choi et al., 1999; Deslandes, 2003; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Hui & Wan, 2003; Konecnik, 2005; Ngamsom, 2001; O'Leary & Deegan, 2003, 2005
Personal safety, exciting adventures, and friendly people	3	Choi et al., 1999; Deslandes, 2003; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Hui & Wan, 2003; Konecnik, 2005; Ngamsom, 2001
Attractive rural areas, inexpensive internal travel	2	Deslandes, 2003
Appealing cities, fascinating traditional events	2	Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Hui & Wan, 2003; Konecnik, 2005
A variety of restaurants and exotic food	1	Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Hui & Wan, 2003; Konecnik, 2005; Ngamsom, 2001
Political stability	1	Hui & Wan, 2003; Ngamsom, 2001
An opportunity for family activities	1	Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Ngamsom, 2001
High quality of life	1	Choi et al., 1999; Deslandes, 2003
Cleanliness and unpolluted environments	1	Deslandes, 2003; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Hui & Wan, 2003; Konecnik, 2005; Ngamsom, 2001; O'Leary & Deegan, 2003, 2005
Wonderful shopping	1	Choi et al., 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Hui & Wan, 2003; Ngamsom, 2001
Restful and relaxing places	1	Choi et al., 1999; Deslandes, 2003; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Hui & Wan, 2003; Ngamsom, 2001; O'Leary & Deegan, 2003, 2005
Quality infrastructure	1	Choi et al., 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Hui & Wan, 2003; Konecnik, 2005; Ngamsom, 2001
Few language barriers	1	Choi et al., 1999; Hui & Wan, 2003; Ngamsom, 2001
Uncrowded cities	1	Choi et al., 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Ngamsom, 2001
Interesting cultural attractions	1	Deslandes, 2003; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Konecnik, 2005; Ngamsom, 2001; O'Leary & Deegan, 2003, 2005
Suitable accommodations	1	Deslandes, 2003; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Konecnik, 2005; Ngamsom, 2001
Attractive architecture and monuments	1	Deslandes, 2003; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Ngamsom, 2001
Accessibility to neighbouring countries	1	Echtner & Ritchie, 1991
A variety of things to see and to do	1	Choi et al., 1999; Hui & Wan, 2003
Quality health services	1	Researcher
Convenient business, meeting, or conference facilities	1	Hankinson, 2005
Low traffic congestion	1	Choi et al., 1999; Ngamsom, 2001
Other (please specify)	1	O'Leary & Deegan, 2005
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	

A number of country image researchers (Choi et al., 1999; Hui & Wan, 2003; Konecnik, 2005; Ngamsom, 2001; O'Leary & Deegan, 2003, 2005) developed their measures based on the research of Echtner and Ritchie (1991). Echtner and Ritchie (1991) explored three

dimensions of destination image; attribute-holistic, functional-psychological, and common-unique images, using Nepal as a case study. They listed 34 attributes of destination image taken from fourteen previous tourism studies. Additionally, some of the attributes used in the current research were based on studies other than Echtner and Ritchie (1991) about country image of travel destinations. These studies measured the image of Hong Kong (Choi et al., 1999), Thailand (Ngamsom, 2001), Ireland (O'Leary & Deegan, 2003, 2005), Jamaica (Deslandes, 2003), Singapore (Hui & Wan, 2003), and Slovenia (Konecnik, 2005). Only one researcher (Hankinson, 2005), focused on destination brand image from a business tourism perspective.

In order to seek respondents' perceptions toward the image attributes of Thailand after they consulted travel information sources, a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree) was used to measure their attitudes on the 29 image attributes. This measurement is similar to the approaches of Ngamsom (2001), and Hui and Wan (2003).

Further, to explore the positioning of Thailand, respondents were also asked to identify the three most important factors from the 29 items they considered in their decisions to travel to Thailand.

#### **4.4.4 Tourists' Constraints**

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent of constraint each potentially limiting factor had on their plans to travel abroad. After a comprehensive review of the tourism literature, nine items were developed underlying the constructs of constraints (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints) theorised by Crawford and Godbey (1987), and Crawford et al. (1991) (see Table 4-3). Eight items were adapted from the conceptual framework of Crawford and Godbey (1987), Crawford et al. (1991), and McGuiggan (2004), and the tourism study of Pennington-Gray and Kerstetter (2002), Lee and Tideswell (2005), and Hong et al. (2006). One additional item, "available vacation time", was created from the conceptualisation of Crawford and Godbey (1987), and McGuiggan (2004). They noted that "availability of time" is a structural constraint on participating in tourism activities.

Several researchers have applied the concept of constraints as inhibitors to participation in tourism activities (Lee & Tideswell, 2005) and destination choice (Hong et al., 2006; Pennington-Gray & Kerstetter, 2002). Lee and Tideswell (2005) focused on seniors' constraints on travel. Pennington-Gray and Kerstetter (2002) studied a constraints model within the context of nature-based tourism. Hong et al. (2006) studied the roles of categorisation, affective image, and constraints on destination choice by using the NMNL (Nested Multinomial Logit) model. Items were adopted for the present study to represent each of the three categories of constraints previously reported; namely interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural (see Table 4-3).

**Table 4-3 Constructs and items of tourists' constraints**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Items Used</b>	<b>Main Sources</b>
Intrapersonal constraints	Own personal health/physical condition	Hong et al., 2006; Lee & Tideswell, 2005
	Interesting activities at destination	Hong et al., 2006
Interpersonal constraints	The interest of family and friends in this trip	Pennington-Gray & Kerstetter, 2002
	Having to travel with someone else	Pennington-Gray & Kerstetter, 2002
	Tour package/tour agent services	Lee & Tideswell, 2005
Structural constraints	Amount of travel information	Lee & Tideswell, 2005
	Available vacation time	McGuiggan, 2004
	Money/budget	Lee & Tideswell, 2005; Pennington-Gray & Kerstetter, 2002
	Travelling time to destination	Hong et al., 2006

The measurement scale used was a five-point rating scale (1 = No limitation to 5 = Great limitation), in a similar approach to that adopted by Pennington-Gray and Kerstetter (2002), and Hong et al. (2006). Pennington-Gray and Kerstetter (2002) used a five-point rating scale to determine which constraints influenced the respondents against participating in the nature-based tourism in Michigan. Hong et al. (2006) also used a five-point Likert scale to measure constraints on participation in visit to eight national parks.

#### **4.4.5 Purchase Decision Confidence**

There are no tourism related studies and only a few consumer behaviour studies that have focused on purchase decision confidence. Respondents were asked to identify how confident they were in their decision-making and choice of Thailand as a destination. The statements used to measure the confidence construct in the current study had to be created from operationalisation of the theory of buyer behaviour by Howard and Sheth (1969). They originally proposed the confidence construct in the buyer behaviour process under

brand choice set. Similar to the concept of Laroche et al. (1996), they noted that choice confidence reflects the certainty of consumers regarding which brand to choose. According to Howard and Sheth (1969), confidence refers to the degree of certainty that buyers perceive in the brand. This certainty relates to brand comprehension, information-seeking effort, and the value (net-payoff) of a product. Therefore, six statements were designed for this construct. Four statements were created from relying on the construct proposed by Howard and Sheth (1969). The other statements were adapted from Pereira (1999), O’Cass (2004), and Heitmann, Lehmann, and Herrmann (2007) (see Table 4-4).

**Table 4-4 Construct and items of purchase decision confidence**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Items Used</b>	<b>Main Sources</b>
Purchase decision confidence	The information you used to make this decision was accurate?	Researcher
	There was enough information available to you?	Researcher
	This visit is a strong expression of your values?	Researcher
	Your wants and needs will be fulfilled by this visit?	Heitmann et al., 2007; Pereira, 1999
	Your decision process was as thorough as it could have been?	Researcher
	All things considered, this was your best choice?	O’Cass, 2004

The measurement of purchase decision confidence used a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree) modified from Pereira (1999) and Heitmann et al. (2007). However, Pereira (1999) used a seven-point Likert scale, and Heitmann et al. (2007) used a nine-point Likert scale in their studies. In this study, a five-point Likert scale was used as it was consistent with other scales in the questionnaire.

#### **4.4.6 Socio-Economic Characteristics and Travel Patterns**

This section of the questionnaire sought information regarding tourists’ personal backgrounds and their travel plans. Tourists were asked about their demographic and socio-economic characteristics; gender, age, nationality, country of residence, income, education, and occupation. These questions are commonly used in the marketing and tourism literature, and the statistical reports of the World Tourism Organization (1995) and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2005). All of these variables are important in examining whether respondents with different socio-economic characteristics possess differing consumption values, or evaluate travel information source usefulness differently from others.

In the case of travel plans, tourists were asked about their travel party, their frequency of travelling abroad and of visiting Thailand, who was involved in the decision, purpose of trip, travel style, accommodation type, length of stay, travel expenditures, tourism interests, and destination(s)/region(s) to be visited in Thailand. These dimensions were compiled from the tourism research of Fodness and Murray (1999), Ngamsom (2001), and Suh (2001), and the statistical reports of the World Tourism Organization (1995) and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2005). In this section, socio-economic characteristics and travel patterns, respondents were asked to either tick an applicable box or fill in the blanks.

#### **4.5 Construct Operationalisation**

As described above, the constructs were operationalised after an extensive review of the literature, as presented in Chapter Two. Table 4-5 presents a summary of these constructs, the number of items and their descriptions, and the principal sources as appropriate.

**Table 4-5 Construct operationalisation**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Descriptions of Items</b>	<b>References</b>
Socio-economic characteristics	7	Gender, age, nationality, country of residence, income, education, and occupation	Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2005; World Tourism Organization, 1995
<b><u>Consumption values</u></b>	20	Tourists considered five values of travelling abroad.	Long & Schiffman, 2000; Sheth et al., 1991; Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000; Williams & Soutar, 2000
Functional	4	The utilitarian of travelling abroad and attributes of destination.	
Emotional	4	Tourists' feelings were aroused by travelling abroad.	
Social	4	Social status, family and friends urged tourists to travel abroad.	
Epistemic	4	Curiosity or seeking novelty in destination.	
Conditional	4	Tourists travelled abroad because of certain circumstances.	
Purpose of trip	1	The primary purpose of tourists travelling in this trip.	Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2005; World Tourism Organization, 1995
Travel information source usefulness	16	The usefulness of each travel information source that tourists used for planning their trips.	Fall, 2000b; Ngamsom, 2001
Country image	29	The sum of beliefs and impression tourists hold about Thailand after they received travel information.	Deslandes, 2003; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Ngamsom, 2001
<b><u>Constraints</u></b>	9	The factors that limit tourists in travelling to a destination.	Crawford et al., 1991; Hong et al., 2006; Pennington-Gray & Kerstetter, 2002
Intrapersonal	2	Individual attributes which influence tourists travel to a country.	
Interpersonal	3	The interaction between individuals and other persons discourages tourists to travel to a country.	
Structural	4	The constraints intervene between preference and travelling to a country.	
Purchase decision confidence	6	Tourists feel confident that they made the right decision in travelling to a selected country.	Howard & Sheth, 1969; Laroche et al., 1996; O'Cass, 2004; Pereira, 1999

## 4.6 Pre-test Procedure

As the questionnaire was developed, a pre-test procedure was used to assure readability and to improve the reliability and validity of the instrument. A number of customers dining at Thai restaurants in Christchurch, New Zealand, were asked to participate in this process by completing the questionnaire and commenting on any ambiguous statements. The number of respondents in the pre-test was 32, out of 45 asked, representing a 71.1%

response rate. Based on this process, some minor wording changes and reformatting of the questionnaire were adopted. The final version of the questionnaire is in Appendix 1.

## **4.7 Data Collection**

Each self-administered questionnaire also included a one page cover letter (see Appendix 1) was used to collect the data. Five Master of Business Administration students from Assumption University, Thailand, were recruited and trained as research assistants. The researcher and the assistants distributed the questionnaires to potential respondents, requesting their participation. All questionnaires were distributed at the International Arrival Hall in Suvarnabhumi Airport, the International Airport of Thailand, over the nine weeks from 1st October to 7th December, 2007. Once participants had completed the questionnaires they returned them to either the research assistants or the researcher. Alternatively, participants could post the completed questionnaire using a pre-paid postage addressed envelope.

A total of 2,500 questionnaires were distributed, with 2,125 questionnaires collected, including 126 questionnaires returned by mail. Of these 407 (19.2%) questionnaires were rejected as unusable because of substantially incomplete responses over the entire questionnaire. Hair, Money, Page, and Samouel (2007) suggested that if missing data exceeds 10.0% of the total responses, the incomplete questionnaire should be eliminated from the database. As a group, the incomplete responses were so inadequate that further analysis and comparison with appropriately completed questionnaires could not be accomplished with any confidence that results of the comparison would be meaningful. The overall usable response rate was 68.7% (1,718) of questionnaires distributed. This response rate was considered appropriate as it was in accord with Grover and Vriens (2006) who suggested that the optimum population probability sample proportion should be a bit over 60.0%.

## **4.8 Data Analysis Techniques**

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 15.00 for Windows) was used for data analysis. Although a total of 1,718 respondents completed the questionnaire, the Boxplot test indicated that eleven respondents should be considered outliers (see

Appendix 2), because their answers appeared as extreme values, and were thus not likely to be representative of the population. To avoid distorted results in the analyses, these eleven respondents were excluded from the data set. This exclusion resulted in a final sample size of 1,707 (68.3%).

## **4.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined the research plan and method used in this study. A predominantly quantitative approach was utilised. There were two techniques used for sampling; convenience and non-proportional quota. Data collection was conducted over nine weeks at the International Arrival Hall in Suvarnabhumi Airport, the International Airport of Thailand. Questionnaire design was based on the research objectives and literature review. In the process of questionnaire development, pre-test procedures were used to ensure reliability and validity of the instrument. Following in Chapter Five are the results and discussion of the data.



# Chapter 5

## Descriptive Results and Statistical Techniques

### 5.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics

The socio-economic characteristics of respondents, including country of residence, region of residence, gender, age, income, education, and occupation are reported and discussed in this section. These variables allow testing of intra-group differences to determine whether the respondents can be treated as a homogeneous group or behavioural and attitudinal differences between respondents needs to be recognised.

#### 5.1.1 Country of Residence

Respondents were asked to identify their country of residence. The respondents were from 68 different countries (see Appendix 3). The largest national groups were from the USA (11.3%), followed by Australia (9.8%) and India (7.8%) (see Table 5-1).

**Table 5-1 Country of residence**

Country Name	<i>f</i>	%
USA	193	11.3
Australia	167	9.8
India	133	7.8
Singapore	76	4.5
Israel	73	4.3
New Zealand	70	4.1
Kenya	64	3.7
Iran	64	3.7
United of Kingdom	64	3.7
Malaysia	57	3.3
Hong Kong	57	3.3
Canada	51	3.0
Germany	44	2.6
Sri Lanka	41	2.4
Philippines	39	2.3
South Africa	35	2.1
UAE	34	2.0
France	30	1.8
Bangladesh	28	1.6
Pakistan	26	1.5
Ethiopia	25	1.5
Zambia	25	1.5
Japan	25	1.5
Oman	19	1.1
Others (44 countries)	267	15.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: Country of residence presented by descending frequency > 1.0% of total. Full list is in Appendix 3.

### 5.1.2 Region of Residence

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) has grouped international tourists into six regions; the Americas, Europe, East Asia and the Pacific including Oceania, South Asia, Middle East, and Africa. However, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has divided the world tourism market into seven regions by separating East Asia and Oceania. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (2005) has reported that tourists from these regions had different travel behaviours. Given that the research was located in Thailand, the seven demographic regions defined by the TAT were modified for grouping the respondents. Details of the countries included in each region are shown in Appendix 4.

However, the numbers of respondents from the seven regions ranged from 221 to 292 which were considered to be both large enough sub-sample sizes, and of reasonable equivalence to allow reliable comparative analyses. Although the proportion of respondents in the sample from each region did not match the proportions of international tourists reported by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2007a), the order of countries by frequency was the same (see Table 5-2). The largest group of respondents was from East Asia (17.1%), followed by Europe (14.8%). In contrast, the smallest group was from Africa (13.0%).

**Table 5-2 Number of respondents vs. tourists in Thailand by regions**

Regions	Respondents		TAT	
	<i>f</i>	%	Number of tourists	%
East Asia	292	17.1	7,981,205	55.2
Europe	253	14.8	3,689,770	25.5
North America	244	14.3	773,401	5.3
Oceania	236	13.8	731,283	5.1
Middle East	232	13.6	453,891	3.2
South Asia	229	13.4	685,574	4.7
Africa	221	13.0	104,941	0.7
South America	-	0.0	44,163	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>14,464,228</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: 1) South Americans were excluded in sampling, as mentioned in section 4.2  
 2) The TAT combined the North America and South America as the Americas

### 5.1.3 Gender

As illustrated in Table 5-3, there were more male respondents (61.2%) than female respondents (38.8%). This apparent imbalance of gender is equivalent to the reported statistical data from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2007b) which shows the

proportion of male tourists compared to females were 65.2% and 34.8% (see Appendix 5). The sample is therefore considered to be representative of visitors to Thailand in terms of gender.

**Table 5-3 Socio-economic profiles**

	East Asia	Europe	North America <sup>1</sup>	Oceania <sup>2</sup>	Middle East	South Asia	Africa	Total	%
<b>Age</b>									
Mean (years old)	37.13	37.13	40.56	38.34	37.53	38.01	37.72	38.0	
Standard Deviation	10.51	11.85	13.00	11.42	11.18	11.37	10.23	11.4	
<b>GDP per capita (2006)*</b> (Unit: International Geary-Khamis dollars) <sup>3</sup>	6,997	17,909	30,448	23,326	6,334	2,373	1,662		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	<i>f</i>	
<b>Gender</b>									
Male	61.3	74.7	59.4	50.4	65.1	74.7	57.9	1,045	61.2
Female	38.7	25.3	40.6	49.6	34.9	25.3	42.1	662	38.8
<b>Age</b>									
18-24 years old	8.9	11.9	9.9	11.9	11.2	11.4	10.4	183	10.7
25-34 years old	36.0	37.5	26.7	28.4	32.8	31.6	33.0	553	32.4
35-44 years old	29.1	24.1	24.7	27.1	26.3	27.2	26.2	451	26.5
45-54 years old	18.8	15.8	24.3	24.1	22.8	19.3	24.5	362	21.2
> 54 years old	7.2	10.7	14.4	8.5	6.9	10.5	5.9	156	9.1
Missing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2	0.1
<b>Household Income</b>									
≤ US\$20,000	25.0	13.8	10.2	9.3	27.6	26.6	29.9	346	20.3
US\$20,001-40,000	24.7	26.1	16.4	12.7	26.7	31.4	16.7	379	22.2
US\$40,001-60,000	19.9	13.5	11.9	23.7	13.0	17.9	17.6	287	16.8
US\$60,001-80,000	6.8	10.3	12.3	11.9	7.3	6.6	12.2	163	9.5
US\$80,001-100,000	5.1	5.9	9.0	12.3	4.3	3.5	2.7	105	6.1
US\$100,001-120,000	3.8	6.3	6.6	8.5	1.3	2.2	1.8	75	4.4
US\$120,001-140,000	1.7	5.5	5.7	4.7	2.6	1.7	2.3	59	3.5
US\$140,001-160,000	2.0	2.0	3.3	5.1	3.0	2.6	3.2	51	3.0
> US\$160,000	4.5	7.1	15.2	7.6	8.6	1.8	3.2	117	6.9
Missing	6.5	9.5	9.4	4.2	5.6	5.7	10.4	125	7.3
<b>Education</b>									
Tertiary	48.7	32.8	40.6	50.9	38.4	34.0	52.9	728	42.7
Postgraduate	36.3	46.6	44.7	25.4	40.9	47.6	34.4	673	39.4
Secondary school	11.3	11.1	10.7	21.2	11.6	9.2	7.7	202	11.8
Primary school	1.0	3.2	2.4	0.0	4.7	2.2	1.4	36	2.1
Others	1.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.9	1.3	0.9	12	0.7
Missing	1.7	5.9	1.6	2.1	3.5	5.7	2.7	56	3.3
<b>Occupation</b>									
Professionals	26.0	28.9	24.2	21.6	31.5	19.2	24.9	431	25.2
Administrative & Managerial	23.6	17.8	13.9	15.7	14.7	32.8	29.4	359	21.0
Clerical & Commercial	21.6	14.2	16.8	14.4	19.0	14.4	14.5	283	16.6
Technicians & Associate Prof.	7.2	7.9	15.2	12.3	11.2	6.5	12.2	175	10.3
Labourers and Service	3.4	4.4	4.5	13.1	3.0	10.9	4.1	104	6.1
Student	5.8	9.5	3.7	5.1	7.3	3.5	3.6	95	5.6
Unemployed	3.8	4.7	9.0	5.9	2.2	4.4	2.3	79	4.6
Government and Military	0.7	3.5	2.5	1.7	0.4	3.5	4.1	39	2.3
Others	1.0	0.8	2.0	5.1	0.4	0.9	0.9	27	1.6
Missing	6.9	8.3	8.2	5.1	10.3	3.9	4.0	115	6.7

Source:\* Modified from Maddison (2009, March)

Note: <sup>1</sup> North America refers to the United State of Americas and Canada.

<sup>2</sup> Oceania refers to Australia and New Zealand.

<sup>3</sup> "International Geary-Khamis dollars are purchasing power parities (PPPs) used to evaluate output which are calculated based on a specific method devised to define internationally comparable prices" (Ocampo & Vos, 2008, p. 6).

#### **5.1.4 Age**

The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 80 years, with a mean age of 38 years and standard deviation of 11.40. To facilitate analysis, respondents were grouped into five age categories modified from those used by the TAT. While, the TAT categorised age into seven levels with a ten year interval range (younger than 15 years to older than 65 years), the categories used for this research were a little different because only those aged 18 or older were invited to take part in this survey. In addition, there were only 30 respondents (1.9%) aged 65 years and older. Given this, the TAT second category was adjusted to 18-24 years instead of 15-24 years, and the fifth category became “older than 54 years”.

As shown in Table 5-3, the modal category (32.4%) was 25 to 34 years, while the smallest group of respondents was comprised of people older than 54 years (9.1%). This was because there were a small number of older tourists visiting Thailand (15.6%) as shown in the report of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2007b). The percentage of respondents in each age category of the sample is reasonably similar to the percentages reported by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2007b, see Appendix 5). The sample is therefore similar enough to the TAT reported visitor age profile to again be seen as reasonably representative of all visitors to Thailand.

#### **5.1.5 Household Income**

As the US\$ is a universal currency, it is suitable for worldwide respondents to indicate their income in equivalent currency. However, some respondents might have guessed the relevant exchange rate upon arrival; thus the exchange rate may not be accurate as income reported equivalent to the US\$ currency. As expected, their reported income levels ranged widely, reflecting the differences in GDP (Gross Domestic Product) for their regions of origin. The questionnaire sought annual household gross income categorised equally into nine levels, ranging from under or equal to US\$20,000 to over US\$160,000. The largest group of respondents (22.2%) reported their income to be US\$20,001-40,000 per year, and the second largest group (20.3%) earned less than or equal to US\$20,000. The frequency of respondents' income in the three levels ranging from US\$100,001 to US\$160,000 was small (each below 5.0%). Therefore, to meaningfully analyse the relationships between income and other variables such as consumption values and travel information sources, income levels were collapsed down to five income groups;  $\leq$  US\$20,000, US\$20,001-

40,000, US\$40,001-60,000, US\$60,001-80,000, and > US\$80,000. However, almost half of respondents (42.5%) earned income less than US\$40,000. This reflects that most of them were from East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa which have lower income per capita, as shown in Table 5-3. In contrast, most respondents from Europe, North America, and Oceania earned the highest levels of income. These descriptive results are similar to the statistics of the world economy comparing GDP per capita among countries calculated by Maddison (2009, March).

### **5.1.6 Education**

In line with the tourism and marketing literature, respondents were categorised in terms of their educational attainments into five groups. As illustrated in Table 5-3, the largest group of respondents held tertiary qualifications (42.7%), followed by postgraduate (39.4%), secondary school (11.8%), primary school (2.1%), and others (e.g. diploma and professional certificate) (0.7%). This is in accord with previous research indicating that most tourists at least graduated from college or held advanced degrees (Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1990; Ngamsom, 2001). According to the World Bank (n.d.), tertiary enrolments have been increasing in all regions, with the present study appearing to confirm this.

### **5.1.7 Occupation**

Respondents were asked to identify their occupations with an open-ended format item. Completed questionnaires generated a wide variety of occupations, which were then classified into nine categories adapted from the statistical reports of World Tourism Organization (1995), Department of Statistics (1999) of New Zealand, and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2007b). The categories used are shown in Table 5-3. The largest group of respondents were categorised into the professionals category (25.2%), followed by administrative and managerial personnel (21.0%). The smallest group (1.6%) was other occupations which include the titles of the self employed and farmers. These proportions fit well with the statistics reported by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2007b) (see Appendix 5).

## 5.2 Item Descriptions

This section reports the responses to items and data distribution relating to consumption values, the usefulness of information sources, country image, tourists' constraints, and purchase decision confidence. Before using inferential statistics to analyse the data, the normality of data needs to be tested. If data is normally distributed, a parametric technique can be applied in statistical analysis such as *t*-test and ANOVA (Pallant, 2007). Normality can be assessed to some degree by skewness and kurtosis values (Morgan, Leech, Gloenckner, & Barrett, 2007; Pallant, 2007). Huck (2008) suggested that the data distribution is normal if the skewness and kurtosis values are between -1.00 and 1.00. Thus, to test for normal distribution of the data, skewness and kurtosis values were considered. These are explained in the following sections.

### 5.2.1 Consumption Values

Sheth et al. (1991) theorised that consumption values can be classified into five elements; functional, emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional values. In the conceptualisation of these values, questions were developed in the form of 20 statements. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree).

The results shown in Table 5-4 illustrated that thirteen statements had mean scores approximately 4.00 with standard deviations ranging from 0.742 to 1.041. This shows that respondents positively agreed with the items; "Travel makes me happy", "I am usually interested in something new and different", "Beautiful scenery is an essential requirement when choosing my travel destination", "Travel is an opportunity to enhance my knowledge. (e.g. to study, language, etc.)", "I travel because it is an important source of relaxation", "A destination with a great reputation for tourism appeals to me", "Value for money is a critical aspect of my travel decision", "I only travel to places where I will feel safe", "I travel to meet new people and socialize", "I prefer activities with my family and friends", "When choosing a destination, I seek a wide variety of activity of activity choices", "My primary reason for travel is to find excitement", and "My travel decision was because I wondered what this destination would be like", respectively.

All the other statements had mean scores approximately 3.50 except for the items “I am curious about this destination because I saw an interesting advertisement” and “I travel to see special events (e.g. festivals, etc.)”. These had mean scores close to 3.00. Arguably respondents had only neutral levels of agreement with these two items and thus they might not be important reasons for them to travel abroad. Overall, the results showed that respondents had mainly positive levels of agreement.

**Table 5-4 Consumption values**

Items	<i>f</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Skewness Statistic	Kurtosis Statistic
Travel makes me happy.	1,707	4.37	.742	-1.175	1.633
I am usually interested in something new and different.	1,679	4.23	.831	-1.112	1.352
Beautiful scenery is an essential requirement when choosing my travel destination.	1,699	4.04	.814	-.718	.552
Travel is an opportunity to enhance my knowledge. (e.g. to study, language, etc.)	1,704	3.99	.887	-.785	.461
I travel because it is an important source of relaxation.	1,697	3.97	.882	-.696	.279
A destination with a great reputation for tourism appeals to me.	1,689	3.96	.875	-.769	.585
Value for money is a critical aspect of my travel decision.	1,690	3.89	.971	-.665	-.042
I only travel to places where I will feel safe.	1,696	3.82	1.041	-.647	-.296
I travel to meet new people and socialize.	1,692	3.80	.927	-.565	.124
I prefer activities with my family and friends.	1,672	3.77	.964	-.592	-.025
When choosing a destination, I seek a wide variety of activity choices.	1,672	3.77	.837	-.448	.090
My primary reason for travel is to find excitement.	1,681	3.58	.959	-.438	-.191
My travel decision was because I wondered what this destination would be like.	1,688	3.57	.972	-.577	.014
Finding enough time to travel to a faraway place is difficult.	1,699	3.53	1.060	-.489	-.374
I chose this destination because my friends and relatives recommended it to me.	1,695	3.42	1.127	-.420	-.558
Discounted fares were an important part of my decision to travel.	1,689	3.35	1.100	-.215	-.670
Travel to a place with a different climate is important to my travel decision.	1,692	3.32	1.069	-.315	-.420
International travel enhances my social status.	1,690	3.32	1.045	-.261	-.476
I travel to see special events. (e.g. festivals, etc.)	1,678	3.18	1.012	-.059	-.527
I am curious about this destination because I saw an interesting advertisement.	1,683	3.00	1.059	-.019	-.649

Note: Rating scores based on a five-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree

As illustrated in Table 5-4, the data distribution was arguably normal, given that the skewness and kurtosis values were between -1.00 and 1.00 (Huck, 2008), except for two items that had a skewness value slightly less than -1.00. These two items were “Travel makes me happy” and “I am usually interested in something new and different”. Overall,

the means showed that respondents' scores were concentrated between four and five on the level of agreement.

## 5.2.2 Travel Information Sources

To identify which information sources tourists used and the level of usefulness of each in making travel plans, respondents were asked to rate various sources using the scale (0 = Did not use, 1 = Not at all useful, 2 = Less useful, 3 = Useful, 4 = More useful, 5 = Extremely useful). When considering the proportion of respondents who used travel information, the results showed that most respondents (84.5%) searched travel information on the internet (websites) of tour agents (see Table 5-5). The majority of tourists were independent travellers who searched for information about hotels and tourism features when making their travel plans. The second largest group of respondents (81.4%) relied on travel information from friends/family/relatives recommendations. The smallest group of respondents (35.0%) used travel information from radio advertisements (TAT).

**Table 5-5 Information sources**

Information Sources	<i>f</i> *	%*	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Skewness Statistic	Kurtosis Statistic
Others (company, hospital)	30	1.8	4.23	.728	-.396	-.957
Internet (Tour agent)	1,443	84.5	4.00	.991	-.738	-.025
My own experience	1,188	69.6	3.86	1.081	-.783	.014
Friends/family/relatives	1,390	81.4	3.84	1.051	-.610	-.239
Internet (TAT)	1,095	64.1	3.73	1.098	-.510	-.465
Travel guidebook (Tour agent)	1,209	70.8	3.52	1.052	-.349	-.339
Brochures/pamphlets (TAT)	845	49.5	3.17	1.047	-.134	-.307
Brochures/pamphlets (Tour agent)	1,058	62.0	3.16	1.060	-.038	-.260
Magazine advertisements	864	50.6	3.05	1.046	-.082	-.446
Clubs/associations	823	48.2	2.94	1.080	.034	-.482
Road show/trade show (TAT)	707	41.4	2.91	1.067	.046	-.506
Newspaper advertisements	819	48.0	2.91	1.045	.000	-.499
Television advertisements (TAT)	711	41.7	2.89	1.097	.044	-.590
Television advertisements (Tour agent)	850	49.8	2.77	1.089	.179	-.557
Radio advertisements (TAT)	597	35.0	2.57	1.092	.264	-.579
Radio advertisements (Tour agent)	657	38.5	2.33	1.049	.545	-.209

Note: 1) Using a six-point rating scale where 0 = Did not use, 1 = Not at all useful, 2 = Less useful, 3 = Useful, 4 = More useful, 5 = Extremely useful.

2) The data set excludes "0 = Did not use".

3) \* = Multiple responses

Regarding the information sources from the TAT, it appears that most respondents (64.1%) searched the internet rather than utilising other sources. This is similar to the result



provided by tour agents. It seems that the internet has become a major travel information source for tourists.

To determine the usefulness of the information sources, response ratings of “0” (did not use) were excluded. As illustrated in Table 5-5, six information sources were rated as more useful (mean > 3.50) for respondents planning their trip. These were “other sources” (company and hospital), followed by the internet from tour agents, previous travel experience, friends/family/relatives, the internet from the TAT, and travel guidebook from tour agents, respectively. However, regarding “other sources”, only 30 respondents specified that the information sources from company and hospital were useful for their trips. This is likely because they travelled abroad for specific reasons, such as conferences, or medical treatment. The sources from brochures/pamphlets (TAT), brochures/pamphlets (Tour agent), magazine advertisements, clubs/associations, road show/trade show (TAT), newspaper advertisements, television advertisements (TAT), television advertisements (Tour agent), radio advertisements (TAT) tended to be rated as useful with mean scores approximately 3.00, while radio advertisements from tour agents were likely to be rated as less useful (mean scores approximately 2.00).

As illustrated in Table 5-5, normality testing yielded skewness and kurtosis values between -1.00 and 1.00. It therefore could be assumed that the distributions of these information sources were approximately normal. The scores on each item were clustered around the mean in relatively symmetrical patterns indicating that the results of the statistical tests ( $F$  and  $t$  statistics) could be considered valid (Hair et al., 2006).

To compare the usefulness among travel information sources based by communication channels as hypothesised in H3 and H5, the same sources provided from tour agents and the TAT were combined. These sources were brochures/pamphlets, the internet, television, and radio advertisements. Fifteen of the travel information sources were collapsed into eleven categories of travel information sources; the internet, travel experience, travel guidebooks, friends/family/relatives, brochures/pamphlets, magazine advertisements, newspaper advertisements, road show/trade show, clubs/associations, television advertisements, and radio advertisements. The remaining category of others (with specific responses such as company and hospital) will not be used to test hypotheses as the frequency of occurrence was very small and thus not useful for testing data.

### 5.2.3 Country Image

One of the key objectives of the research was to explore the country image of Thailand after tourists received travel information from various sources. Respondents were asked the question “Since receiving travel information, what do you think about Thailand?”. The construct of country image consisted of 29 items including an “other (please specify)” item. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree). The results showed that most country image items had a positive image, except the items “uncrowded city” and “low traffic congestion” (see Table 5-6). There were nine items with mean scores equal to or over 4.00, and 17 items with mean scores over 3.00, while only two items (uncrowded city and low traffic congestion) had mean scores under 3.00. From these outcomes it is evident that respondents who decided to travel to Thailand held a positive image about Thailand. This is not surprising, given that they have decided to travel to Thailand and had just arrived.

**Table 5-6 Country image**

Items	<i>f</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Skewness Statistic	Kurtosis Statistic
Friendly people	1,692	4.22	.802	-.902	.758
Beautiful beaches and scenery	1,694	4.20	.794	-.809	.464
A variety of restaurants and exotic foods	1,701	4.17	.819	-1.125	1.816
Wonderful shopping	1,701	4.15	.814	-.775	.473
Suitable accommodations	1,701	4.11	.752	-.575	.252
Interesting cultural attractions	1,705	4.10	.726	-.750	1.280
Restful and relaxing places	1,698	4.08	.746	-.633	.602
A variety of things to see and do	1,697	4.03	.769	-.680	.875
Plentiful nightlife and entertainment	1,699	4.00	.848	-.596	.187
Attractive architecture and monuments	1,693	3.94	.828	-.507	.052
Exciting adventures (e.g. diving, rafting, etc.)	1,689	3.89	.821	-.413	.039
Appealing cities	1,696	3.85	.784	-.503	.511
Attractive rural areas	1,683	3.82	.812	-.206	-.311
Inexpensive internal travel	1,695	3.77	.850	-.401	.121
Pleasant climate	1,696	3.75	.890	-.537	.044
Fascinating traditional events (e.g. festival, sport, etc.)	1,690	3.72	.792	-.098	-.242
Quality infrastructure	1,689	3.70	.823	-.268	-.131
Accessibility to neighbouring countries	1,681	3.68	.818	-.328	.268
Personal safety	1,703	3.64	.863	-.256	-.176
Quality health services (e.g. hospital, spa, etc.)	1,677	3.58	.859	-.011	-.269
An opportunity for family activities	1,693	3.57	.899	-.358	.218
Convenient business, meeting or conference facilities	1,671	3.45	.853	-.234	.492
Political stability	1,690	3.38	.959	-.205	-.095
Few language barriers	1,692	3.29	.999	-.298	-.339
Cleanliness and unpolluted environments	1,693	3.20	1.020	-.154	-.478
High quality of life	1,697	3.20	.879	-.066	-.003
Uncrowded cities	1,686	2.66	1.024	.225	-.453
Low traffic congestion	1,697	2.64	1.100	.173	-.669

Note: Using a five-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree

As illustrated in Table 5-6, most country image items had a negative skew, with skewness scores from -1.125 to -0.011, except for the items “uncrowded cities” and “low traffic congestion” that had positive skews with 0.225 and 0.173, respectively. However, the skewness and kurtosis of all items, except for “a variety of restaurant and exotic foods”, fell within  $\pm 1.00$ , indicating that the data of 27 items had normal distributions. The item “a variety of restaurants and exotic foods” had slightly negative skewness and a flatter curve. This indicates a less than normal, but uniform, distribution.

#### 5.2.4 Tourists’ Constraints

Nine items were used to measure tourists’ constraints regarding travel abroad. Respondents were asked to indicate the level of their limitations in each of these items using a five-point rating scale (1 = No limitation to 5 = Great limitation). The mean scores of all items were under 3.00 as shown in Table 5-7. The least constraint was the item “own personal health/physical condition”, with a mean of only 2.17. It should be noted that all respondents reported low levels of constraint with regard to travel.

**Table 5-7 Constraints on travel**

Items	<i>f</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Skewness Statistic	Kurtosis Statistic
Available vacation time	1,694	2.97	1.353	-.114	-1.179
Money/budget	1,697	2.93	1.282	-.035	-.996
Travel time to destination	1,699	2.72	1.264	.081	-1.048
Interesting activities at destination	1,700	2.43	1.403	.402	-1.246
Having to travel with someone else	1,692	2.32	1.364	.505	-1.100
The interest of family and friends in this trip	1,701	2.31	1.338	.497	-1.092
Amount of travel information	1,695	2.21	1.232	.573	-.821
Tour package/tour agent services	1,687	2.20	1.318	.620	-.961
Own personal health/physical condition	1,702	2.17	1.340	.681	-.907

Note: Using a five-point rating scale where 1 = No limitation to 5 = Great limitation

The skewness values ranged from -0.114 to 0.681 (see Table 5-7), showing that the data had generally normal distributions. The kurtosis values were negative and close to -1.00. It seems that these distributions were somewhat flatter than normal. The standard deviations were all more than 1.00, indicating that these distributions were all widely dispersed. Observed values were widely spread from the means, with standard deviations between 1.232 and 1.403.

### 5.2.5 Purchase Decision Confidence

To measure how confident tourists were that they had made the right decision, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to a series of statements using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree). The mean scores of all items ranged from 3.68 to 3.93. The standard deviations of data set clustered around 0.80 as shown in Table 5-8.

**Table 5-8 Purchase decision confidence**

Items	<i>f</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Skewness Statistic	Kurtosis Statistic
All things considered, this was your best choice?	1,704	3.93	.795	-.531	.514
The information you used to make this decision was accurate?	1,697	3.86	.817	-.685	.986
Your wants and needs will be fulfilled by this visit?	1,701	3.84	.805	-.554	.554
There was enough information available to you?	1,703	3.84	.803	-.661	.744
Your decision process was as thorough as it could have been?	1,699	3.68	.853	-.533	.459
This visit is a strong expression of your values?	1,697	3.68	.836	-.319	.196

Note: Using a five-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree

The skewness values ranged from -0.685 to -0.319 and the kurtosis value ranged from 0.196 to 0.986 (see Table 5-8). Skewness coefficients thus indicated that the data was relatively normal in their respective distributions. The results demonstrated that all respondents rated scores mostly between three (neutral) and five (strongly agree). These results strongly indicated that respondents were confident in their purchase decisions.

### 5.3 Motives Driving Tourists to Travel Abroad

To investigate the factors motivating foreign travel, respondents were asked “What were the factors that drove you to travel to abroad?”. Content analysis was used to group the factors from the answers. A four-stage approach was used in this analysis. Firstly, the content from each answer was interpreted as a keyword. Seventy five keywords were resulted from this procedure. Secondly, these keywords were represented by cards. Thirdly, three PhD students independently sorted those cards in order to classify them as a group. Groups were then named. The outcomes of classification and named groups by those students were compared and formed to be similar. The 75 factors were then classified into nine groups. Neuendorf (2002) recommended that to ensure reliability of the measurement, the results of classification by two or more coders should be the same. Thus, this approach met the criteria of inter-scorer reliability as there were consistent categories

with similar outcomes sorted by the three researchers. In addition, these groups appeared to have content validity as they were similar to factors classified in previous studies (Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1990; Heung et al., 2001; Pearce, 2005; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007) relating to the motivations and benefits sought by tourists travelling abroad. Finally, the nine groups were numerically coded for SPSS analysis.

As shown in Table 5-9, the three highest ranking factors for respondents were sightseeing/attractions (16.9%), holiday/vacation (14.1%), and relaxation (11.8%) respectively. In terms of business tourists, there were 198 (11.6%) and 111 (6.5%) respondents who travelled to Thailand for business reasons and conferences, respectively.

**Table 5-9 Number and percentage of motives for travel**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Factors</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Sightseeing/attractions	sightseeing, scenery, climate, beaches, beautiful country, see Asia, tourism, travelling, visit, see culture, learn culture, interesting place, exotic place, see country, see world, tropical fish, and see elephants	288	16.9
Holiday/vacation	holiday and vacation	240	14.1
Relaxation	relax, rest, away from routine, break from job, pleasure, leisure, release of stress, retirement, school break, and lifestyle	202	11.8
Business	business	198	11.6
Exploration	discover, explore, see new things, experience, curiosity, see new place, see wonderful place, heard about it, and famous place	178	10.4
Exciting and adventure	adventure, fun, nightlife, entertainment, excitement, enjoyment, love travel, and like Thailand	130	7.6
Social	honeymoon, visit friends, visit family, family wants, wedding party, see new people, lovely people, and travel with girlfriend	124	7.3
Specific reasons	shopping, study, take course, medical, sports, education, religious, cheap airfare, free ticket, good value, adoption, and easy to access	114	6.7
Conference	conference, official, meeting, congress, convention, exhibition, workshop, and company assign	111	6.5
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>1,585</b>	<b>92.9</b>
Missing		122	7.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## 5.4 Most Important Attributes of Country Image

In order to identify the positioning of Thailand, respondents were asked to list their top three most important factors from the country image items that they had rated as having

influenced their decision to travel to Thailand. For the first most important factor, the top ten ranked in items of country image are shown in Table 5-10. The first image attribute of respondents deciding to travel to Thailand was “wonderful shopping” (16.7%). The second ranked was “beautiful beaches and scenery” (15.1%), while the third ranked was “interesting cultural attractions” (11.1%). These results are consistent with the findings of Rittichainuwat, Qu, and Brown (2001) who revealed that tourists travelled to Thailand because it had a positive image about beautiful beaches, cultural and historical attractions, numerous world-class hotels and resorts, gourmet restaurants, and low prices.

**Table 5-10 The first most important attribute**

<b>Items</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Wonderful shopping	285	16.7
Beautiful beaches and scenery	257	15.1
Interesting cultural attractions	190	11.1
Suitable accommodations	99	5.8
Friendly people	99	5.8
Pleasant climate	70	4.1
A variety of restaurants and foods	67	3.9
Restful and relaxing places	60	3.5
Plentiful nightlife and entertainment	56	3.3
Convenience business, meeting or conference facilities	51	3.0
Others (18 items)	297	17.4
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1,531</b>	<b>89.7</b>
Missing	176	10.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## 5.5 Tourists’ Consideration of Other Countries

To investigate whether tourists considered other countries against Thailand, respondents were asked the question “Before you decided on Thailand, did you consider other countries?”. The result indicated that more than half the respondents (58.9%) did not consider travelling to any other country, while 37.3% did consider travel to other countries. One possible contributing factor for the dominance of a single destination was that those respondents who travelled for business/conference, VFR, and other purposes, possibly had no other destination options. This was supported by the cross-tabulation analysis:

- 70.9% of business/conference respondents did not consider other countries.
- 71.9% of VFR respondents also did not consider other countries.
- Neither did 61.2% of specific purpose travellers.

- 43.5% of people who travel for leisure chose one particular country.

The remaining percentages in each case did consider other countries. A Chi-square test indicated that there was significant association between trip purposes and consideration of other countries ( $\chi^2 = 30.215, p < 0.01$ ). However, there was a low association as the value of Cramer's *V* was 0.136.

## 5.6 Country Name as Tourists' Consideration

Respondents were asked to specify the name of another country, apart from Thailand, to which they had considered travelling. There were various countries in the responses (see Appendix 6). Malaysia (7.1%) and Singapore (7.1%) were the most commonly reported country choices that respondents had considered (see Table 5-11). This result supports the statistical data from the WTO. When comparing across the South-East Asia region, Malaysia gets the biggest number of tourist arrivals, followed by Thailand, and Singapore (World Tourism Organization, 2008, October).

**Table 5-11 The top ten country choices considered**

Country Name	<i>f</i>	%
Malaysia	45	7.1
Singapore	45	7.1
China	40	6.3
Hong Kong	36	5.7
Vietnam	34	5.3
India	29	4.6
Europe	24	3.8
Australia	19	3.0
Indonesia	18	2.8
The United Arab Emirates	18	2.8

Note: The full table is presented in Appendix 6

## 5.7 Reasons for Choosing Thailand

To understand the reasons of respondents choosing Thailand rather than other countries, an open-ended item was used to ask the reasons why they chose Thailand as a destination. Content analysis was used to interpret the answers. Results of this were then grouped as categories. The same four-stage approach was used as described in the section 5.3. Firstly, the "reasons" given were defined into keywords. Seventy different keywords were defined using this method. Secondly, those 70 words were typed onto individual index cards.

Thirdly, three PhD students sorted those 70 cards into groupings of similar keywords, and these groups were then named. Two of three students classified those 70 cards into nine categories and named them in a similar way to each other. The third PhD student's grouping was not substantially different, however she grouped those 70 cards into ten categories, with eight categories sorted similar to the grouping of the other two PhD students. Six cards (variety, beaches, more activities, nightlife, boxing, and beautiful scenery) were sorted separately from the "advantage" category, and named them as "excitement". Lastly, those nine categories were numerically coded to use for frequency analysis. Table 5-12 shows the relative frequency of nine categories of responses. The most popular reason given by respondents was the "value" factor (21.9%). The "value" factor related to cost, time, and convenience. The second factor (18.9%) noted that Thailand had more advantageous and superior attributes than other countries, while only 1.3% of respondents replied that they travelled for business reasons, and thus would not travel to other countries.

**Table 5-12 Reasons for choosing Thailand**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Reasons</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Value	cost, time, visa, convenience, nearer, distance, budget, cheaper, value for money, and cheap airfare	140	21.9
Advantage	less shopping, less interesting, others have no challenge, others lack exploration, less attractions, less information, less appearance, less travel infrastructure, good hospitality in Thailand, hospitality technology, good clothes, get everything in Thailand, Thailand has quality goods, nightlife, variety, curios in Thailand, boxing, friendly people, climate, beaches, culture, beautiful scenery, quality infrastructure, more activities, and less western	120	18.9
Discover	visit others also, see something new, see Asia, discover Thailand, new experience, exotic, never been to Thailand, and change country to visit	96	15.0
Social	friend chose Thailand, friends recommend, children, family wants to go to Thailand, family is in Thailand, and visit friends in Thailand	50	7.8
Information	familiar in Thailand, revisit Thailand, promotions, heard about Thailand, and the internet	44	6.9
Barrier	no flight, inappropriate course, tour is unavailable, others limited experience, tour programme, language problem, and difficult to go	28	4.4
No specific reason	prefer Thailand, go other countries next time, no choice, and no idea	26	4.1
Safety	politically unstable, others are dangerous, and safety reasons	22	3.4
Business	conference in Thailand and business in Thailand	8	1.3
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>534</b>	<b>83.7</b>
Missing		104	16.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>638</b>	<b>100.0</b>



## 5.8 Number of Persons Involved in Decision

With regard to how many people were involved in respondents travel decisions, the most common reply was that the decision was made by the visitors alone (39.1%) (see Table 5-13). This result is in line with the research of Ngamsom (2001), who found that more than half of travellers made their own decision visiting Thailand. Approximately a quarter of respondents (24.7%) made their decisions together with another person. A small percentage of respondents (1.4%) did not identify the number of persons involved in their decisions. Most of these respondents travelled for a specific purpose (e.g. study, or medical treatment).

**Table 5-13 Number of persons involved in decision**

Categories	Regions							Purposes of Trip				Total %
	East Asia	Europe	North America	Oceania	Middle East	South Asia	Africa	Leisure	Business/ conference	VFR	Others	
Alone	38.4	42.7	49.2	42.8	34.9	32.3	32.6	39.8	38.7	43.7	22.4	39.1
1 person	25.3	27.3	22.5	29.2	25.9	22.3	19.5	27.3	17.9	24.6	23.9	24.7
2 persons	8.9	8.3	8.6	11.0	11.2	11.8	12.7	10.5	9.1	11.9	10.4	10.3
3 persons	4.1	4.0	6.1	3.8	4.7	7.9	6.3	5.3	5.2	3.2	7.5	5.2
4 persons	3.8	1.6	4.5	3.0	5.2	3.1	8.1	3.8	4.7	4.0	7.5	4.1
≥ 5 persons	12.0	3.6	3.7	4.2	6.9	9.2	7.2	5.9	8.6	4.0	13.4	6.8
Many persons	1.0	0.8	1.2	0.4	1.7	0.9	4.1	1.1	2.1	1.6	3.0	1.4
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>93.5</b>	<b>88.3</b>	<b>95.8</b>	<b>94.4</b>	<b>90.5</b>	<b>87.5</b>	<b>90.5</b>	<b>93.7</b>	<b>86.3</b>	<b>93.0</b>	<b>88.1</b>	<b>91.6</b>
Missing	6.5	11.7	4.2	5.6	9.5	12.5	9.5	6.3	13.7	7.0	11.9	8.4
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## 5.9 Travel Behaviour

To investigate aspects of travel behaviour, respondents were asked to report their purpose of trip, travel arrangement, accommodation type, length of stay, travel expenditures, and interest in tourism features and destinations in Thailand. Other questionnaire items related to travel behaviour asked about travel experience abroad and to Thailand, in addition to the number of children and adults travelling with them.

### 5.9.1 Purpose of Trip

Most respondents, travelled to Thailand for the purpose of leisure (65.2%), followed by business/conference attendance (22.6%) and visiting friends or relatives (VFR) (7.4%) (see Table 5-14). Some respondents travelled to Thailand for specific purposes such as medical treatment (1.8%), and study (1.3%). However, there were very few respondents, less than 1.0% of the total, who were primarily there for shopping, honeymooning, adoption, or sports.

These proportions were quite different from those reported by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2007b), which indicated that 83.1% of tourists were visiting Thailand for leisure, 8.8% for business, and only 3.8% for conventions and official purpose. The remaining 4.1% were visiting for other purposes. The proportion of business/conference respondents in the current sample was larger than that of the TAT report. One possible reason for this was that most respondents from the Middle East, East Asia, South Asia, and Africa who were able to communicate the English language and participate in the survey were business tourists. Another possibility was that a greater proportion of African respondents visited Thailand for business/conference purposes (52.9%), rather than for leisure (35.7%). Approximately 10.0% of African respondents identified that they travelled to Thailand for conferences, when considering their responses in the question “What were the factors that drove you to travel to abroad?”.

**Table 5-14 Purposes of trip**

Categories	Regions							Total
	East Asia	Europe	North America	Oceania	Middle East	South Asia	Africa	%
Leisure	65.4	79.8	70.9	73.0	66.8	61.6	35.7	65.2
Business/Conference	29.1	7.5	9.4	14.0	18.5	28.4	52.9	22.6
Visit friends or relatives	3.4	10.3	15.6	11.4	4.3	3.5	3.2	7.4
Study	0.7	0.4	1.6	0.8	1.3	0.4	4.5	1.3
Others (e.g. medical treatment, honeymoon, sports, etc.)	0.7	1.2	1.3	0.8	8.2	3.4	3.2	2.6
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>99.3</b>	<b>99.2</b>	<b>98.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>99.1</b>	<b>97.3</b>	<b>99.5</b>	<b>99.1</b>
Missing	0.7	0.8	1.2	0.0	0.9	2.7	0.5	0.9
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 5.9.2 Travel Arrangement

Three categories were provided for respondents to indicate their choices of travel arrangement; independent travel (non-packaged tour), organized tour (packaged tour), and mixed between independent travel and organized tour (Pearce, 2005). The organized tour category refers to those sold by a travel agent, which include transportation, accommodation, and food (Pearce, 2005). However, the statistical report from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2007b) classified travel arrangements into only two categories; non package tours and package tours. As illustrated in Table 5-15, almost three quarters of total respondents (71.3%) were independent travellers. This was slightly larger than the data presented from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2007b) (66.2%). The remaining balance of respondents were utilising organized tours (15.9%) or a mix of independent travel and organized tours (11.7%). It is surprising that most respondents from all seven regions of residence and all trip purposes were independent travellers.

**Table 5-15 Travel arrangement**

Categories	Regions							Purposes of Trip				Total
	East Asia	Europe	North America	Oceania	Middle East	South Asia	Africa	Leisure	Business/ conference	VFR	Others	%
Independent travellers	72.3	73.6	79.9	75.8	64.2	62.9	69.2	72.3	68.6	77.0	62.7	71.3
Organized tours	15.8	12.6	11.5	8.1	25.0	24.5	14.9	16.4	17.1	7.1	19.4	15.9
Mixed	11.3	13.8	7.8	14.8	9.1	11.4	13.6	11.0	11.7	13.5	14.9	11.7
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>99.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>99.2</b>	<b>98.7</b>	<b>98.3</b>	<b>98.8</b>	<b>97.7</b>	<b>99.7</b>	<b>97.4</b>	<b>97.6</b>	<b>97.0</b>	<b>98.9</b>
Missing	0.6	0.0	0.8	1.3	1.7	1.2	2.3	0.3	2.6	2.4	3.0	1.1
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 5.9.3 Accommodation in Thailand

Respondents were asked to report the accommodation type in which they expected to stay while visiting Thailand. As shown in Table 5-16, most respondents (81.4%) planned to stay in hotels. Only 8.6% planned to stay in guest houses and 3.8% in private residences. Hotel stays are similar to the Tourism Authority of Thailand's (2005) figure of 90.0% but the other categories are different as the TAT reported only 2.5% and 2.4% of tourists' planned stays in guest houses or friends' homes, respectively. It appears that respondents' choice of accommodation type depended on the purpose of their trip and income. For example, respondents visiting friends or relatives were likely to stay in private residences.

Respondents who earned income less than or equal to US\$20,000 preferred to stay in guest houses, which could reasonably be expected to be cheaper than hotels.

**Table 5-16 Accommodation in Thailand**

Categories	Regions							Purposes of Trip				Total %
	East Asia	Europe	North America	Oceania	Middle East	South Asia	Africa	Leisure	Business/ conference	VFR	Others	
Hotel	91.4	70.0	70.1	73.3	86.6	89.1	88.7	80.8	91.9	52.4	83.6	81.4
Guest houses	4.5	15.4	13.1	10.6	7.3	3.5	5.4	9.7	3.6	14.3	7.5	8.6
Private residence	1.4	5.1	9.0	4.2	1.7	2.2	3.2	1.8	2.1	26.2	4.5	3.8
Resort	1.0	4.3	6.6	7.6	2.2	3.1	1.4	4.9	0.8	3.2	1.5	3.7
Motel	1.7	3.2	0.8	2.5	1.3	0.4	0.9	1.8	1.0	2.4	0.0	1.6
Others (yacht, hospital)	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>98.4</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>98.6</b>	<b>99.1</b>	<b>98.3</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>99.1</b>	<b>99.4</b>	<b>98.5</b>	<b>97.1</b>	<b>99.3</b>
Missing	0.0	1.6	0.4	1.4	0.9	1.7	0.4	0.9	0.6	1.5	2.9	0.7
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### 5.9.4 Travel Experience Abroad

Respondents were asked the question “How many times have you travelled abroad, including this trip?”. Most respondents (89.7%) had previous travel experiences abroad, which ranged from two to 200 times. Of these respondents, the average number of experiences abroad was approximately 19 times, with a standard deviation of 27.87. Based on the frequency of respondents’ experiences, the levels of experience were classified into five categories (see Table 5-17). The predominant group of respondents (36.2%) had travel experiences abroad of between two and nine times. The smallest group of respondents (6.3%) reported this to be their first time travelling. The second smallest group of respondents (8.1%) indicated that they travelled abroad “many times”, as they did not provide a numerical response in the fill-in question.

**Table 5-17 Experience of travel abroad**

Categories	Regions							Purposes of Trip				Total
	East Asia	Europe	North America	Oceania	Middle East	South Asia	Africa	Leisure	Business/ conference	VFR	Others	%
First time	6.2	4.0	4.9	5.1	7.8	11.8	5.0	6.6	4.9	4.0	11.9	6.3
2 – 9 times	31.5	19.4	34.0	50.4	37.1	45.9	38.0	40.8	23.9	34.1	29.9	36.2
10 – 19 times	22.9	24.9	22.5	15.7	20.3	14.8	20.8	19.4	22.9	23.0	22.4	20.4
20 – 29 times	10.3	15.8	11.9	12.7	7.3	6.6	9.0	9.5	13.0	11.1	13.4	10.6
≥30 times	13.0	22.5	18.4	10.2	16.4	10.5	9.0	13.1	18.2	19.0	9.0	14.4
Many times	11.3	9.1	5.3	3.4	6.0	7.9	13.6	7.1	12.7	4.8	6.0	8.1
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>95.2</b>	<b>95.7</b>	<b>97.0</b>	<b>97.5</b>	<b>94.9</b>	<b>97.5</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>96.5</b>	<b>95.6</b>	<b>96.0</b>	<b>92.6</b>	<b>96.0</b>
Missing	4.8	4.3	3.0	2.5	5.1	2.5	4.6	3.5	4.4	4.0	7.4	4.0
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 5.9.5 First versus Repeat Visits

The proportion of respondents (48.3 %) who had previously visited Thailand was nearly equal to first time visitors (46.9%). This result was a little different from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2007b) data, where 59.2% of tourists were revisiting, and 40.8% were visiting for the first time. The result illustrated that almost two-thirds of respondents (62.0%) from East Asia had previously travelled to Thailand compared to other regions. In addition, most VFR tourists (64.4%), followed by business/conference tourists (56.9%), had previous travel experiences in Thailand. In contrast, more than half of the leisure tourists (52.4%) were first time visitors.

Respondents were also asked “How many times have you visited Thailand?”. Responses ranged from one to 50 times, with a mean of 5.49 and a standard deviation of 6.19. The number of times respondents visited was grouped into seven categories (see Table 5-18). Most respondents revisited from one to three times (24.8%), followed by four to six times (10.5%). A small number of respondents (1.3%) indicated that they visited Thailand “many times”, and so could not be categorised.

**Table 5-18 Experience in Thailand**

Categories	Regions							Purposes of Trip				Total
	East Asia	Europe	North America	Oceania	Middle East	South Asia	Africa	Leisure	Business/ conference	VFR	Others	%
0 time	28.8	50.2	59.5	44.1	50.0	49.3	50.7	52.4	34.8	31.6	52.2	46.9
1-3 times	24.3	24.1	20.9	33.1	28.4	23.6	19.0	25.5	22.3	23.8	26.9	24.8
4-6 times	15.1	9.9	5.8	10.2	8.2	10.9	12.7	9.8	12.5	13.5	7.5	10.5
7-9 times	4.5	3.6	3.3	3.0	3.0	0.9	2.3	2.5	4.2	4.0	1.5	3.0
10-12 times	8.9	5.1	4.9	2.5	3.4	2.6	4.1	2.8	7.5	15.1	1.5	4.7
> 12 times	6.8	4.3	1.6	2.5	3.4	4.4	4.1	2.6	7.8	5.6	4.5	4.0
Many times	2.4	0.0	2.0	0.4	0.4	1.7	1.8	0.6	2.6	2.4	3.0	1.3
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>90.8</b>	<b>97.2</b>	<b>98.0</b>	<b>95.8</b>	<b>96.8</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>94.7</b>	<b>96.2</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>96.0</b>	<b>97.1</b>	<b>95.2</b>
Missing	9.2	2.8	2.0	4.2	3.2	6.6	5.3	3.8	8.3	4.0	2.9	4.8
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 5.9.6 Length of Stay

In terms of length of stay in Thailand, respondents indicated that they planned to remain in Thailand from two to 180 days. On average they planned to stay approximately twelve days, with a standard deviation of 16.33, whereas the TAT reports the average length of stay of tourists as nine days (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2007c). The number of days was grouped into five categories, modified from the tourism statistics of the World Tourism Organization (1995) (see Table 5-19). The largest group of respondents (39.7%) planned to stay in Thailand between nine and 31 days. The next largest group (32.6%) planned to stay from five to eight days. Generally, those respondents whose home region was a long distance from Thailand intended to stay longer. Clearly, those respondents from Europe, North America, and the Middle East planned to stay longer than respondents from East Asia and South Asia.

**Table 5-19 Length of stay**

Categories	Regions							Purposes of Trip			Total	
	East Asia	Europe	North America	Oceania	Middle East	South Asia	Africa	Leisure	Business/ conference	VFR	Others	%
1-4 days	50.0	6.7	15.2	18.2	12.1	34.1	19.5	21.4	32.2	12.7	11.9	23.0
5-8 days	37.7	13.0	24.6	30.9	34.9	45.9	43.0	29.2	41.0	31.7	46.3	32.6
9-31 days	11.6	66.8	50.4	47.9	50.0	18.8	36.1	44.7	24.7	44.5	38.8	39.7
32-92 days	0.3	11.1	5.7	2.1	1.3	0.9	1.4	3.2	1.3	8.7	1.5	3.3
> 92 days	0.0	2.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.6
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>97.9</b>	<b>99.1</b>	<b>98.3</b>	<b>99.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>99.1</b>	<b>99.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>98.5</b>	<b>99.2</b>
Missing	0.4	0.4	2.1	0.9	1.7	0.3	0.0	0.9	0.8	0.0	1.5	0.8
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 5.9.7 Travel Expenditures in Thailand

Respondents were asked to estimate how much they expected to spend during their trips, excluding airfares. Planned spending ranged from US\$100 to US\$20,000. The mode was US\$1,000, while mean spending was US\$2,057.41 per trip, with the standard deviation of 2,494.59. To facilitate analysis, travel expenditures were grouped based on the frequency of respondents. These were grouped into seven categories as shown in Table 5-20. The largest group of respondents (25.3%) planned to spend in the range of US\$501-1,000. The next largest group of respondents (19.3%) planned to spend less than or equal to US\$500. It was common that respondents planning to spend more than US\$5,000 were travelling for other purposes (e.g. study and medical treatments), making interpretation of budget expenditure more complicated.

**Table 5-20 Travel expenditures in Thailand**

Categories	Regions							Purposes of Trip				Total %
	East Asia	Europe	North America	Oceania	Middle East	South Asia	Africa	Leisure	Business/ conference	VFR	Others	
≤ US\$ 500	49.0	9.9	14.3	14.4	8.2	21.0	11.3	19.4	21.0	19.0	6.0	19.3
US\$501-1,000	26.4	28.5	21.7	22.9	26.7	31.0	19.5	26.3	24.7	26.2	10.4	25.3
US\$1,001-1,500	4.1	10.3	9.0	11.9	6.9	6.6	4.5	8.4	6.2	8.7	1.5	7.6
US\$1,501-2,000	5.8	12.6	13.5	14.8	20.7	14.0	15.4	14.4	11.9	10.3	13.4	13.5
US\$2,001-2,500	0.0	2.8	2.0	6.4	1.7	2.6	4.1	2.5	3.6	1.6	3.0	2.7
US\$2,501-3,000	2.1	5.1	7.8	7.2	6.0	3.1	7.7	5.0	5.2	7.1	10.4	5.4
US\$3,001-3,500	0.0	1.6	1.6	0.0	0.9	0.4	1.4	0.7	0.8	0.0	4.5	0.8
US\$3,501-4,000	1.4	2.2	2.9	2.5	5.2	3.9	4.5	2.4	3.4	0.8	14.9	3.0
US\$4,001-4,500	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.2
US\$4,501-5,000	1.0	2.4	4.5	4.2	5.6	3.5	7.7	3.4	4.2	8.7	4.5	4.0
> US\$5,000	1.7	6.3	7.4	3.8	6.9	1.7	10.9	4.3	6.0	7.1	16.4	5.4
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>91.5</b>	<b>81.7</b>	<b>85.9</b>	<b>88.1</b>	<b>88.8</b>	<b>87.8</b>	<b>87.5</b>	<b>87.1</b>	<b>87.0</b>	<b>89.5</b>	<b>86.5</b>	<b>87.2</b>
Missing	8.5	18.3	14.1	11.9	11.2	12.2	12.5	12.9	13.0	10.5	13.5	12.8
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 5.9.8 Number of Children Travelling with Respondents

More than four-fifths of respondents (84.9%) visited Thailand without children, as illustrated in Table 5-21. When they visited with children, it was most commonly with one child (5.4%). Given the infrequency of travelling with more than one child, respondents were categorised as travelling with or without children so as to provide a more meaningful analysis. Hence, 9.4% of respondents were identified as travelling with children. When comparing respondents with children in their party, there is no clear difference between respondent groups based on region of residence or purpose of trip.

**Table 5-21 Number of children travelling with respondents**

Categories	Regions							Purposes of Trip				Total %
	East Asia	Europe	North America	Oceania	Middle East	South Asia	Africa	Leisure	Business/ conference	VFR	Others	
None	87.0	88.5	89.8	84.7	79.7	74.2	89.6	84.4	87.5	87.3	82.1	84.9
1 child	5.8	4.3	2.0	4.2	7.8	10.0	3.6	6.6	2.3	4.0	6.0	5.4
2 children	1.4	3.2	1.2	5.5	4.3	7.0	1.4	4.0	1.0	3.2	4.5	3.3
≥ 3 children	1.4	0.0	1.6	0.4	2.2	2.6	0.5	1.3	0.8	0.0	3.0	0.7
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>95.6</b>	<b>96.0</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>94.8</b>	<b>94.0</b>	<b>93.8</b>	<b>95.1</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>94.5</b>	<b>95.6</b>	<b>94.3</b>
Missing	4.4	4.0	5.4	5.2	6.0	6.2	4.9	3.7	8.4	5.5	4.4	5.7
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>



### 5.9.9 Number of Adults Travelling with Respondents

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of other adults travelling with them. Responses ranged from none to 60 adults. As illustrated in Table 5-22, most respondents (40.4%) travelled to Thailand with another adult. The second largest group (27.1%) travelled to Thailand alone. Almost half the respondents whose purposes were to visit friends and relatives (46.8%) or business/conference (45.5%) travelled alone, while approximately one quarter of leisure tourists (18.2%) travelled alone. There were a small number of tourists (6.9%) who travelled with more than four persons. These were leisure tourists who were on organized tours, mixed tours, or business/conference tourists.

**Table 5-22 Number of adults travelling with respondents**

Categories	Regions							Purposes of Trip			Total	
	East Asia	Europe	North America	Oceania	Middle East	South Asia	Africa	Leisure	Business/conference	VFR	Others	%
None	20.2	28.9	35.7	22.0	14.2	24.5	46.2	18.2	45.5	46.8	32.3	27.1
1 person	36.3	53.8	44.3	50.0	35.8	32.3	29.0	48.3	23.1	32.5	25.8	40.4
2 persons	10.3	8.3	5.7	6.8	20.3	19.7	6.8	11.9	9.4	6.3	16.1	11.0
3 persons	6.8	3.6	4.5	8.5	9.9	8.3	6.3	7.7	4.7	4.0	9.7	6.8
4 persons	3.4	0.4	1.6	2.1	4.7	3.1	3.6	2.8	3.1	0.8	3.2	2.7
≥5 persons	16.4	3.2	3.3	4.7	5.6	8.7	4.5	7.2	6.8	3.2	12.9	6.9
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>98.2</b>	<b>95.1</b>	<b>94.1</b>	<b>90.5</b>	<b>96.6</b>	<b>96.4</b>	<b>96.1</b>	<b>92.6</b>	<b>93.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>94.9</b>
Missing	6.6	1.8	4.9	5.9	9.5	3.4	3.6	3.9	7.4	6.4	0.0	5.1
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 5.9.10 Interest in Tourism Features

In order to explore the most interesting tourism activities offered by Thailand, the questionnaire asked the respondents to rank their top three most preferred tourism activities. The result indicated that the most interesting tourism activity from a list of nine activities was “nature-based and beach” (30.9%), followed by “cultural” (21.0%), and then “shopping” (19.2%) (see Appendix 7). It appears that “nature-based and beach” was of more interest to leisure tourists, whereas, as might be expected business/conference tourists chose “meeting and conventions” as the activity of most interest, though clearly this might simply reflect the fact that their visit could not be leisure-focused.

Very few respondents specified medical treatment (1.2%), food (1.0%), massage (0.3%), and nightlife (0.3%) as having high interest. The higher response from medical treatment probably reflects the fact that hospitals in Thailand have promoted health tourism abroad. It is surprising that few respondents specified visiting Thailand for its nightlife, given that there are many popular nightlife areas in Thailand with bars, restaurants and food stalls, and shops. Arguably the most well-known places are Patpong in Bangkok and Pattaya in Choburi province.

### **5.9.11 Tourist Destinations in Thailand**

In order to explore which destination or region is the most popular with tourists, the following open-ended question was included; “Which destination(s)/region(s) will you visit in Thailand?”. Some intended to visit a specific destination, or more than one destination in different regions. In order to facilitate analysis, the data on destination was coded into six regions; Northern, Bangkok, Central (excluding Bangkok), Eastern, North-eastern, and Southern followed by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (n.d.) (see Appendix 8).

As illustrated in Table 5-23, Bangkok is the most popular destination with 42.7% of respondents reporting that they planned to visit there as their main destination. It was possible that these respondents chose Bangkok as their destination because it is the capital of Thailand and it is a good place for shopping and entertainment. Also, it was possible that some of these respondents identified Bangkok as their main destination because they were arriving at the airport which is near Bangkok. The second most popular location was the Southern region, famous for beautiful islands and beaches, with 18.1% of respondents intending to visit. In contrast, the North-eastern region of Thailand had the lowest rating of interest for respondents with only 1.4% of respondents intending to visit there. Perhaps this was because it is the poorest region, and the least well developed. It is also the least publicised to tourists.

**Table 5-23 Regions of Thailand**

<b>Regions</b>	<b><i>f</i></b>	<b>%</b>
Bangkok	941	42.7
Southern (e.g. Koh Samui, Krabi, Phuket, etc.)	400	18.1
Eastern (e.g. Koh Chang, Koh Samet, Pattaya, etc.)	291	13.2
Northern (e.g. Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Sukhothai, etc.)	209	9.5
Central (excluding Bangkok) (e.g. Ayutthaya, Hua Hin, Kanchanaburi, etc.)	66	3.0
North-eastern (e.g. Khon Kaen, Nong Khai, Ubon Ratchatani, etc.)	30	1.4
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1,937</b>	<b>87.9</b>
Missing	269	12.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,206</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: 1) Total number more than 1,707 respondents according to some respondents tended to visit multi destinations/regions.

2) Cluster analysis was undertaken, but results were un-interpretable.

## **5.10 Statistical Techniques**

The statistical techniques used in this study are factor analysis, Pearson correlation, independent-samples *t*-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and multiple regression analysis. This section also reports some assumptions before conducting the analyses. The evaluation of measurement, including testing the reliability and validity, are also discussed.

### **5.10.1 Factor Analysis**

Factor analysis was used to identify underlying structures for the items relating to the constructs of consumption value and country image. These items could be grouped to allow scores to be produced for otherwise unobservable constructs. This also allowed for a clearer understanding and discussion of what would otherwise involve much larger numbers of variables. The assumptions required to be met for factor analysis were assessed before conducting this analysis.

#### **5.10.1.1 Assumptions for Factor Analysis**

In accord with Pallant (2007), the correlation matrix, Bartlett's test of sphericity, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of sampling adequacy were utilised to test the appropriateness of using factor analysis. Firstly, a correlation matrix was employed to test the collinearity among all pairs of items. If there are at least some items having a correlation coefficient equal or above 0.30, factor analysis is suitable (Pallant, 2007). The correlation matrix showed that there were five out of 190 pairs of consumption value items

and 59 out of 378 pairs of country image items having correlation coefficient above 0.30 (see Appendix 9). Secondly, the significance for the Bartlett's test of sphericity needs to be a value equal to 0.05 or less. The result of Bartlett's test of sphericity for consumption value and country image yielded a Chi-Square value of 4470.62 and 12973.90, respectively, with a significance level of 0.00. Thirdly, factor analysis is appropriate if the KMO value is 0.60 or above (Pallant, 2007). The KMO values for consumption value and country image were over 0.80. All three assumptions were met the criteria suggested by Pallant (2007), therefore, the items of consumption value and country image were suitable for using factor analysis.

#### **5.10.1.2 Factor Rotation and Extraction**

Factor analysis with varimax orthogonal rotation was used to assess the underlying structures of the 20 items measuring consumption values and the 28 items measuring country image. Varimax orthogonal rotation was used as it is simpler to interpret (Field, 2005), and presents clearer separation of factors (Hair et al., 2006). An eigenvalue greater than 1.00 and the increment in the percentage of variance were used as the criteria to determine the number of factors. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), the more factors extracted, the better the fit, and the higher the percentage of variance explained by the factor solution. As numerous tourism studies (Choi et al., 1999; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005; Pearce, 2005) utilised factor loadings of  $\pm 0.40$ , this was considered a suitable criterion for interpretation as suggested by Hair et al. (2006). Items with factor loadings below  $\pm 0.40$  were dropped.

#### **5.10.1.3 Scree Plot Test**

For both consumption values and country image, scree plots suggest that in each case there were six factors before the curve becomes approximately a straight line (see Appendix 10). This suggests that first six factors explain much more variance than the remaining sectors and are appropriate for representing the data in accordance with the recommendation by Pallant (2007).

#### **5.10.1.4 Factor Rotation of Consumption Values**

The factor loadings grouped the 20 consumption value items into six factors (see Appendix 11). There were seven items in factor one. Three items were grouped into each of factors two, three, and four, respectively. Two items loaded on each of factors five and six. The first five factors generally fit with the concepts of consumption values as theorised by Sheth et al. (1991); namely emotional, social, epistemic, conditional, and functional values. However, the two items in factor six did not fit this conceptualisation and appeared to be unrelated to each other, as they seemed to measure different concepts. These particular items were “Travel is an opportunity to enhance my knowledge (e.g. to study, language, etc.)” and “Finding enough time to travel to a faraway place is difficult”. These items were un-interpretable as a factor relating to the consumption values. These items were therefore eliminated from subsequent analyses.

Items in each of the factors were reviewed as to whether they appear to logically fit in terms of their original conceptualisation and for face validity. The items “Travel to meet new people and socialize” and “My travel decision was because I wondered what this destination would be like” in factor one seemed to be unrelated to the concept of emotional value. Based on operationalisation and previous studies, the item “Travel to meet new people and socialize”, adapted from the study of Williams and Soutar (2000), related to the social value. The item “My travel decision was because I wondered what this destination would be like”, which was adapted from Simmons (1997) and Shen (2003), referred to the concept of epistemic value rather than emotional value. After deleting these two items, the inter-item correlations value increased from 0.235 to 0.241, which, while only a slight improvement in the coefficient, demonstrated that the correlation of the remaining items in emotional value (factor one) was stronger. Thus, these two items were deleted from factor one.

Similarly in factor three, identified as epistemic value, the item “International travel enhances social status” represented a different concept. The item was developed from the studies of Sweeney and Soutar (2001) and Sánchez et al. (2006) as a social value item rather than as an epistemic value. Moreover, the inter-item correlation was improved after deleting this item, rising from 0.251 to be 0.282. Therefore, this item was deleted from factor three.

After those five items were deleted, the second iteration with varimax orthogonal rotation and factor loading coefficients with a  $\pm 0.40$  minimum was re-performed. The factor loading grouped fifteen items into four factors (see Appendix 12). However, the items in each of the four factors were grouped illogically and were unable to represent the five consumption values theorised by Sheth et al. (1991). For instance, factor one was composed of five items; “A destination with a great reputation for tourism appeals to me”, “I only travel to places where I will feel safe”, “Beautiful scenery is an essential requirement when choosing my travel destination”, “I prefer activities with my family and friends”, and “I chose this destination because my friends and relatives recommended it to me”. From the concepts of Sheth et al. (1991), the first three items seemed to measure functional value, and last two items related to social value. Thus, these four factors were inappropriate to use in further analysis.

The five factors resulting from the first rotation where those five items were deleted by logic from factor one, three, and six, were more reliable and valid than the second rotation result. Thus, these fifteen items which were grouped into five factors were used in this study (see Table 5-24).

**Table 5-24 Factors of consumption values**

Attributes	Factor Loadings				
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
<b>Factor 1: Emotional Value</b>					
Travel makes me happy.	.649				
My primary reason for travel is to find excitement.	.557				
I am usually interested in something new and different.	.547				
When choosing a destination, I seek a wide variety of activity choices.	.513				
I travel because it is an important source of relaxation.	.505				
<b>Factor 2: Social Value</b>					
I chose this destination because my friends and relatives recommended it to me.		.682			
I only travel to places where I will feel safe.		.617			
I prefer activities with my family and friends.		.532			
<b>Factor 3: Epistemic Value</b>					
I travel to see special events (e.g. festivals, etc.)			.659		
I am curious about this destination because I saw an interesting advertisement.			.609		
<b>Factor 4: Conditional Value</b>					
Value for money is a critical aspect of my travel decision.				.779	
Travel to a place with a different climate is important to my travel decision.				.647	
Discounted fares were an important part of my decision to travel.				.489	
<b>Factor 5: Functional Value</b>					
A destination with a great reputation for tourism appeals to me.					.748
Beautiful scenery is an essential requirement when choosing my travel destination.					.616
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	0.609	0.484	0.439	0.502	0.470
<b>Inter-Item Correlations</b>	0.241	0.238	0.282	0.256	0.308
<b>Number of items (15 items)</b>	5	3	2	3	2
<b>Number of valid cases</b>	1,610	1,652	1,656	1,655	1,681

Note: 1) Using principal component analysis method with varimax orthogonal rotation

2) Suppress absolute values less than 0.40

3) The percentage of variance explained, eigenvalue, and communalities are presented in Appendix 11

With regard to the fifteen items, result from the first rotation led to reclassify five items from the concepts suggested by Sheth et al. (1991) (see Table 4-1 in Chapter 4). These five items were “I am usually interested in something new and different”, “When choosing a destination, I seek a wide variety of activity choices”, “I only travel to places where I feel safe”, “I travel to see special events (e.g. festivals, etc.)”, and “Value for money is a critical aspect of my travel decision”. When considering these items as grouped by the factor analysis, they made logical sense as fitting into separate consumption value categories, and they were similar to the categories used from previous studies.

The first two items above could be justified as being related to emotional value. This supports the view of Tapachai and Waryszak (2000) who noted that a consumer driven by emotional value will choose the alternatives that can appeal to feelings. Their study revealed that the beneficial images regarding emotional value of the United States related to “diverse”, “fun”, “dynamic”, and “modern”. This can mean that tourists’ feelings are

aroused when considering travel abroad because they are interested in something new and different, and seek a wide variety of activity choices.

Furthermore, factor analysis grouped the item “Value for money is a critical aspect of my travel decision” as a conditional value. Tapachai and Waryszak (2000) indicated that “cheap travel” was a conditional value, and found that it was beneficial to the image of Thailand. Value for money can thus be viewed as a conditional to the value affecting tourists in choosing destination.

The item “I travel to see special events (e.g. festivals, etc.)” can be grouped as an epistemic value, which relates to knowledge or exploration. The last item “I only travel to places where I feel safe”, which factor analysis grouped as a social value, can also be reinterpreted. It is consistent with the study of Pearce (2005) which identified “feeling personally safe and secure” as a travel motivation involving relationship. This factor thus possibly related to the secured relationships or interaction with other people. Therefore, this item can be related to a social aspect of tourists’ value judgment.

Consequently, the fifteen items loaded onto the five factors represent the consumption values, as illustrated in Table 5-24. These five factors are named emotional, social, epistemic, conditional, and functional values. After making the changes discussed above, the items defining the consumption values are arguably more reliable and suitable to use for further analysis. The reliability and validity of these factors will be discussed in the next sections.

Confirmatory factor analysis could not be used to appropriately assess the factors of consumption values. The reliability, inter-item correlations, and the number of items, did not meet the criteria for confirmatory testing suggested by Hair et al. (2006). Four factors (social, epistemic, conditional, and functional values) had low reliability (< 0.60). Moreover, the inter-item correlations of four factors (emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional values) were less than 0.30. There were two items in the constructs of epistemic and functional values. Thus, the confirmatory factor analysis could not be used in this study.



### 5.10.1.5 Factor Rotation of Country Image

Factor analysis clearly sorted the 28 country image attributes into six factors, which all appear as logical groupings. These six factors explained 51.901% of the variation in the data. Each factor is named according to the construct represented as; environment, attraction, relaxation, infrastructure, convenience, and entertainment loadings are reported in Table 5-25. The reliability and validity of these variables will be discussed in the following sections.

**Table 5-25 Factors of country image attributes**

Attributes	Factor Loadings						Communalities
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	
<b>Factor 1: Environment</b>							
Uncrowded cities	.796						.666
Low traffic congestion	.777						.624
Cleanliness and unpolluted environments	.706						.586
High quality of life	.616						.484
Personal safety	.485						.533
Political stability	.484						.478
<b>Factor 2: Attraction</b>							
Attractive rural areas		.710					.594
Fascinating traditional events (e.g. festival, sport, etc.)		.679					.535
Interesting cultural attractions		.644					.549
Attractive architecture and monuments		.588					.467
<b>Factor 3: Relaxation</b>							
Restful and relaxing places			.618				.553
Friendly people		.407	.534				.510
Beautiful beaches and scenery			.526				.474
A variety of things to see and do			.516				.506
Pleasant climate			.480				.412
<b>Factor 4: Infrastructure</b>							
Quality infrastructure				.672			.605
Quality health services (e.g. hospital, spa, etc.)				.651			.533
Wonderful shopping				.602			.510
Suitable accommodations			.416	.533			.551
A variety of restaurants and exotic foods				.477			.513
<b>Factor 5: Convenience</b>							
Accessibility to neighbouring countries					.661		.496
Convention business, meeting or conference facilities					.584		.577
Inexpensive internal travel					.550		.468
An opportunity for family activities					.459		.418
Few language barriers					.423		.277
<b>Factor 6: Entertainment</b>							
Plentiful nightlife and entertainment						.711	.593
Exciting adventures (e.g. diving, rafting, etc.)						.481	.497
Appealing cities		.433				.459	.522
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	6.775	2.912	1.428	1.275	1.076	1.066	
<b>Variance (%)</b>	24.197	10.400	5.102	4.552	3.844	3.806	
<b>Cumulative Variance (%)</b>	24.197	34.597	39.698	44.251	48.095	51.901	
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	0.788	0.705	0.631	0.715	0.583	0.664	
<b>Inter-Item Correlations</b>	0.380	0.375	0.305	0.337	0.224	0.396	
<b>Number of items (N=28)</b>	6	4	5	5	5	3	
<b>Number of valid cases</b>	1,642	1,649	1,654	1,651	1,627	1,671	

Note: 1) Using principal component analysis method with varimax orthogonal rotation  
2) Suppress absolute values less than 0.40

## 5.10.2 Evaluation of Measures

Before summation of the items, the reliability and validity of the scales were assessed.

Cronbach's alpha was used to test reliability, in order to assess internal consistency for the items of the five factors defining the consumption values, the six factors of country image, and purchase decision confidence. Further, sub-types of validity were examined to ensure the instruments accurately measured each concept in the conceptual model.

### 5.10.2.1 Reliability

In general, Cronbach's alpha value of 0.60 is an acceptable lower limit for reliability, with over 0.70 indicating sound reliability (Hair et al., 2006). The results of the reliability tests are illustrated in Table 5-26.

**Table 5-26 Reliability**

Variables	<i>f</i>	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Inter-Item Correlations
<u>Consumption Values</u>				
Emotional Value	1,610	5	0.609	0.241
Social Value	1,652	3	0.484	0.238
Epistemic Value	1,656	2	0.439	0.282
Conditional Value	1,655	3	0.502	0.256
Functional Value	1,681	2	0.470	0.308
<u>Country Image Attributes</u>				
Environment	1,642	6	0.788	0.380
Attraction	1,649	4	0.705	0.375
Relaxation	1,654	5	0.631	0.305
Infrastructure	1,651	5	0.715	0.337
Convenience	1,627	5	0.583	0.224
Entertainment	1,671	3	0.664	0.396
Purchase decision confidence	1,668	6	0.841	0.470

Note: From a total of 1,707 cases

Regarding the consumption values constructs, Cronbach's alpha values for the five factors ranged from 0.439 to 0.609. Inter-item correlation values varied from 0.238 to 0.308. Four out of five variables, apart from the emotional value factor, yielded Cronbach's alpha values of less than 0.60. However, Kerlinger and Lee (2000) argued that in some cases a reliability value of 0.50 can be acceptable. Pallant (2007) noted that in situations where there are only a few items in a construct, the Cronbach's alpha value is likely to be low ( $\alpha = 0.50$ ). In such cases, Briggs and Cheek (1986; as cited in Pallant, 2007, p. 95) suggested that inter-item correlation values ranging from 0.20 to 0.40 can be considered as indicating adequate reliability. Therefore, the values of inter-item correlations were also

used to test the reliability of consumption value construct in this study. As inter-item correlation values of all five variables met the criteria, these five variables were considered to be reliable.

The six factors defining country image were also tested for reliability. The alpha coefficients of these six factors ranged from 0.583 to 0.788. Five of the factors defining country image had alpha values over 0.60. The “convenience” factor had somewhat lower reliability, with an alpha value of 0.583. The mean of inter-item correlations was 0.224, which indicates acceptable reliability. From the results of the reliability tests, all six factors measuring country image were considered reliable.

Cronbach’s alpha value for the construct of purchase decision confidence was over 0.80, indicating that the grouped items have consistent internal reliability and represent the construct effectively.

#### **5.10.2.2 Validity**

To test construct validity, the study verified content, convergent, and discriminant validity. Convergent and discriminant validity were assessed by factor analysis in accord with Zikmund and Babin (2007). These utilised the reduced item set resulting from the processes detailed above.

##### **Content validity**

The instrument used in this study possessed a reasonable degree of content validity as all items in the constructs were based on previous studies relevant to this research, and were assessed subjectively by experienced researchers.

##### **Convergent Validity**

Factor analysis was used to ensure that all measurements had convergent validity. The high loading on a factor would indicate that the items in a construct converge on some common point. As statistically significant, factor loadings should be 0.40 or higher (Hair et al., 2006). In this study, factor loadings of 0.40 or above were used to group the items of consumption values and country image. The factor analysis which grouped together the

items indicated that there was a relationship between the scores of those items which measure in the same construct. Thus, the conditions of convergent validity were satisfactorily met.

### **Discriminant Validity**

The correlation matrix from factor analysis of the 15 items measuring consumption value and the 28 items for country image were low. The correlation coefficients of consumption value items were under 0.338, and for country image items under 0.516 (see Appendix 9). In other words, all items in these two constructs had discriminant validity as two items were correlated under 0.75 (Zikmund & Babin, 2007). It is argued that a measure did not correlate very highly with other measures as the correlation coefficients of all items were less than 0.75, in line with the suggestion of Zikmund and Babin (2007). The item measure was unique and not simply a reflection of other items. Thus, the items measuring consumption and country image had discriminant validity.

### **5.10.3 Summated Scales**

The items measuring the concepts of emotional, social, epistemic, conditional, and functional values resulting from factor analysis were summed and averaged, to represent each of the value types. Similarly the individual component items of country image were also summed and averaged into six relevant variables of country image; environment, attraction, relaxation, infrastructure, convenience, and entertainment. The individual items regarding tourists' purchase decision confidence were also summed and averaged to represent the variable.

### **5.10.4 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) was used to test four hypotheses. H2 compares each dimension of consumption values (functional, emotional, social, conditional, and epistemic values) in relation to purposes of trip. Testing H3 compares the usefulness of each travel information source in relation to purposes of trip. A test of H4 compares the dimension of each consumption value relative to the socio-economic characteristics of respondents (age group, region of residence, household income level, educational level, and occupational classification). For H5, ANOVA compares the

usefulness of each travel information source relative to the reported socio-economic characteristics.

#### **5.10.4.1 Assumptions for ANOVA**

The conditions required for utilisation of ANOVA were assessed. First, the observations were independent. There were no repeated or within-subjects measures used in this sampling. Second, Levene's test was employed to check the homogeneity of variance. Black (1999) noted that heterogeneity of variance might increase the likelihood of Type I error. However, Scheffé post hoc test is the most conservative technique and the most likely to prevent Type I error (Bryman & Cramer, 2005), and this produces more reliable results. Third, the dependent variables were normally distributed. The skewness and kurtosis of all dependent variables in each group were close to  $\pm 1.00$ . As the ANOVA assumptions were satisfied, testing these four hypotheses using this approach was reasonable.

#### **5.10.5 Independent-samples *t*-test**

The independent-samples *t*-test (2-tailed test,  $p \leq 0.05$ ) was used to investigate differences in consumption values and the usefulness of travel information sources between genders. Also, it was used to investigate differences in purchase decision confidence between first time visitors versus revisiting travellers.

#### **5.10.6 Multiple Regression Analysis**

Given the interval scale measurements of the independent and dependent variables, multiple regression analysis with simultaneous entry, using pairwise exclusion of cases for missing values, was used to test H7, H8, and H9. Further,  $R^2$  coefficients and *F*-ratios were used to assess the model fit. Before presenting the results of this analysis, the conditions to be met that support regression analysis were examined.

##### **5.10.6.1 Assumptions for Multiple Regression Analysis**

Six assumptions or conditions were considered before using regression analysis; normality, homoscedasticity, independence of the error terms, linearity (Hair et al., 2006), non-

multicollinearity, and elimination of outliers (Pallant, 2007). The data were subjected to examination for each of these assumptions to judge their suitability for regression analysis.

### **Normality**

Normal probability plots were used to test the shape of the distribution of the data. The plotted residual line between observed and expected values of the three regression models showed a straight line that closely followed the diagonal (see Appendix 13). From this observation, it was clear that the assumption of normal distribution was satisfied.

### **Homoscedasticity**

The null plots of the three models indicated the residuals falling randomly, with relatively equal dispersion about zero (see Appendix 14). As no pattern was found for greater or lesser values of the independent variables, the assumption for homoscedasticity was considered as having been met.

### **Independence of the error terms**

If the residuals are independent, the scatter plots of residuals should appear as random and similar to the null plot of residuals (Hair et al., 2006). This assumption was tested by the Durbin-Watson test. As the values can range from 0.00 to 4.00, a value of 2.00 means that the residuals are uncorrelated (Field, 2005). As illustrated in Table 5-27, the results of Durbin-Watson tests presented values close to 2.00. Therefore, residuals were independent.

**Table 5-27 Durbin-Watson test statistics**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Independent variables</b>	<b>Dependent variable</b>	<b>Durbin-Watson test statistic</b>
1	Environment, attraction, relaxation, infrastructure, convenience, and entertainment	Purchase decision confidence	1.926
2	The internet, travel experience, friends/family/relatives, travel guidebooks, brochures/pamphlets, magazine advertisements, road show/trade show, clubs/associations, television advertisements, and radio advertisements	Purchase decision confidence	1.981
3	Functional, emotional, social, conditional, and epistemic values	Purchase decision confidence	1.865

## Linearity

Linearity was examined through residual plots in accord with the suggestion of Hair et al. (2006). The scatter plots of standardized residuals versus the fitted values for regression models were inspected. The scatter plots of observed data showed that some points did not lie close to the line of linear relationship (see Appendix 15). While the assumption of linearity was not fully satisfied, a general linear trend was observed that was taken to justify utilising regression analysis.

## Non-multicollinearity

Non-multicollinearity was assessed for each regression equation. To test this assumption, collinearity statistics were calculated for all of the regression models. As illustrated in Table 5-28, the results showed that tolerance values were above 0.10 and VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) values were less than 10. Thus, there were no instances of high collinearity or multicollinearity among the independent variables (Hair et al., 2006). In addition, the correlations between the independent variables were all less than 0.69 (see Appendix 16), which was less than the critical value of 0.80 suggested by Hair et al. (2006). Therefore, there was no multicollinearity in any of the regression models.

**Table 5-28 Collinearity statistics**

<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>Tolerance</b>	<b>VIF</b>
<b><u>Country image</u></b>		
Environment	0.823	1.215
Attraction	0.587	1.705
Relaxation	0.518	1.929
Infrastructure	0.641	1.561
Convenience	0.678	1.476
Entertainment	0.601	1.664
<b><u>Information source usefulness</u></b>		
Internet	0.728	1.374
Travel experience	0.787	1.270
Friends/family/relatives	0.761	1.315
Travel guidebooks	0.758	1.319
Brochures/pamphlets	0.624	1.603
Magazine advertisements	0.447	2.236
Newspaper advertisements	0.384	2.607
Road show/trade show	0.491	2.038
Clubs/associations	0.623	1.604
TV advertisements	0.456	2.191
Radio advertisements	0.454	2.202
<b><u>Consumption values</u></b>		
Emotional	0.787	1.270
Functional	0.854	1.171
Social	0.822	1.217
Conditional	0.809	1.236
Epistemic	0.846	1.182

## **Outliers**

Outliers can be defined as the observations with standardized residuals greater than 3.30 or less than -3.30 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Pallant (2007) noted that it is common to find a number of outlying residuals with large samples and suggested that a few outliers do not seriously impact regression solutions. In this study, less than 1.00% of the total sample exhibited standardized residual values beyond  $\pm 3.30$ . From this observation, it was taken that outliers would not distort the regression analyses.

Given that the data set met the criteria, multiple regression analysis was considered to be appropriate for analysis in this study.

## **5.11 Chapter Summary**

This chapter reported the data results from 1,707 respondents in the different sections of the questionnaire. These reports included the descriptions of sample group in terms of their socio-economic characteristics, sample description of items in each construct, and travel behaviour. Regarding item descriptions, each item was reported its mean, standard deviation, and normal distribution. This chapter also presented and discussed the results of factor analysis, reliability and validity testing. The measurements of each construct were reliable and had validity. The assumptions according to factor analysis, ANOVA, and regression analysis were also explained in this chapter, and all assumptions met the criteria.



## **Chapter 6**

### **Analysis and Discussion**

A range of statistical techniques were used to analyse the data, including Pearson correlation, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), independent-samples *t*-tests, and multiple regression analyses, in order to test the relationships between the variables in a proposed model developed in Chapter Three. The results of thirteen hypotheses are reported and discussed below.

#### **6.1 Consumption Values and Information Source Usefulness (H1)**

Consumption values may drive the information choices tourists make in searching for travel information. It could be expected that consumption values relate to the usefulness of travel information sources when making travel plans. As there were five consumption values, H1 was divided into five sub-hypotheses (H1a, H1b, H1c, H1d, and H1e). The relationship of one variable to another was examined using simple correlation analysis as the appropriate technique (Zikmund & Babin, 2007). Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to investigate whether there were significant relationships between each of the five consumption values and the usefulness of each of the eleven travel information sources. To evaluate the strength of these relationships, the recommendations of Green and Salkind (2005) were adopted. They argued that correlation coefficients ranging from 0.10 to 0.29 should be considered as small, between 0.30 and 0.49 as medium, and from 0.50 to 1.00 as large associations. The results relating to each of the five sub-hypotheses are presented and discussed in the following sections.

##### **6.1.1 Functional Value and Information Source Usefulness (H1a)**

H1a hypothesized that there will be positive relationships between tourists' functional value and the usefulness of various information sources. The Pearson correlation results indicated that there were positive statistically significant relationships between functional value and the usefulness of ten travel information sources ( $p < 0.05$ ), with the exception of radio advertisements (see Table 6-1), meaning that H1a was strongly supported. It appears that respondents with high reported functional value tended to rate usefulness to higher levels for brochures/pamphlets, friends/family/relatives, the internet, road show/trade

show, the advertisements from magazines, newspapers, and television, travel guidebooks, experience, and clubs/associations. However, these produced low associations, with the correlation coefficient being less than 0.30.

**Table 6-1 Functional value and information source usefulness**

	Internet	Experience	Friends/ family/relatives	Travel guidebook	Brochures/ pamphlets	Magazine Ad.	Newspaper Ad.	Road show/ trade show	Clubs/ associations	Television Ad.	Radio Ad.
Pearson correlation coefficient	0.153	0.091	0.157	0.131	0.187	0.157	0.132	0.130	0.079	0.100	0.008
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.024	0.003	0.831

### 6.1.2 Emotional Value and Information Source Usefulness (H1b)

H1b hypothesized that there will be positive relationships between tourists' emotional value and the usefulness of various information sources. The results of analysis, as illustrated in Table 6-2, showed that there were statistically significant positive relationships between emotional value and the usefulness of all eleven travel information sources ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H1b was strongly supported. This indicates that respondents with higher emotional value tended to report higher levels of usefulness of all the travel information sources when making their travel plans. However, these associations were deemed low, as the Pearson correlation coefficients were less than 0.30.

**Table 6-2 Emotional value and information source usefulness**

	Internet	Experience	Friends/ family/relatives	Travel guidebook	Brochures/ pamphlets	Magazine Ad.	Newspaper Ad.	Road show/ trade show	Clubs/ associations	Television Ad.	Radio Ad.
Pearson correlation coefficient	0.210	0.172	0.139	0.193	0.189	0.216	0.211	0.159	0.143	0.156	0.087
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.019

### 6.1.3 Social Value and Information Source Usefulness (H1c)

Whether there will be positive relationships between tourists' social value and the usefulness of various information sources were also investigated. The Pearson correlations, as indicated in Table 6-3, showed that there were positive statistically significant correlations between social value and the usefulness of nine out of the eleven travel information sources ( $p < 0.05$ ), except for the sources of previous travel experiences and travel guidebooks. These nine sources were friends/family/relatives recommendations, the advertisements from newspapers, television, magazines, and radio, in addition to the sources from clubs/associations, brochures/pamphlets, road show/trade show, and the internet. Although there were significant associations, the Pearson correlation coefficient was less than 0.30 indicating low relationships. These results indicate that respondents, who had high levels of social value, tended to also report higher levels of usefulness of those nine sources when planning their trips. Thus, H1c was strongly supported.

**Table 6-3 Social value and information source usefulness**

	Internet	Experience	Friends/ family/relatives	Travel guidebooks	Brochures/ pamphlets	Magazine Ad.	Newspaper Ad.	Road show/ trade show	Clubs/ associations	Television Ad.	Radio Ad.
Pearson correlation coefficient	0.061	-0.021	0.210	0.022	0.151	0.168	0.209	0.103	0.163	0.194	0.081
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.019	0.474	0.000	0.450	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.000	0.029

### 6.1.4 Conditional Value and Information Source Usefulness (H1d)

H1d stated that there will be positive relationships between tourists' conditional value and the usefulness of various information sources. The Pearson correlation results showed that there were statistically significant positive relationships between respondents' conditional value and the usefulness of nine information sources ( $p < 0.05$ ), but not for the recommendations of friends/family/relatives and clubs/associations (see Table 6-4).

However, these associations were also found to be low because the correlation coefficients were under 0.30. These sources were road show/trade show, brochures/pamphlets, advertisements from television, newspapers, magazines, radio, and the sources from travel guidebooks, the internet, and previous travel experiences. H1d was also strongly supported.

**Table 6-4 Conditional value and information source usefulness**

	<b>Internet</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Friends/ family/relatives</b>	<b>Travel guidebooks</b>	<b>Brochures/ pamphlets</b>	<b>Magazine Ad.</b>	<b>Newspaper Ad.</b>	<b>Road show/ trade show</b>	<b>Clubs/ associations</b>	<b>Television Ad.</b>	<b>Radio Ad.</b>
Pearson correlation coefficient	0.084	0.065	0.024	0.125	0.134	0.125	0.126	0.135	0.065	0.132	0.120
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.025	0.373	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.064	0.000	0.000

### 6.1.5 Epistemic Value and Information Source Usefulness (H1e)

As hypothesized in H1e, there will be positive relationships between tourists' epistemic value and the usefulness of various information sources. The Pearson correlation results reported in Table 6-5 indicated statistically significant positive relationships between epistemic value and the usefulness of seven of the eleven information sources. However, there were no statistically significant correlations between the epistemic value and the usefulness of information sources from the internet, travel previous experience, friends/family/relatives, and travel guidebooks. It is noted that all seven Pearson correlation coefficients were less than 0.30 indicating low associations. The results imply that respondents who were high on epistemic value reported the sources of television, newspapers, radio, magazines advertisements, brochures/pamphlets, road show/trade show, and clubs/associations as having higher usefulness for them in making their travel plans. Therefore, H1e was moderately supported.

**Table 6-5 Epistemic value and information source usefulness**

	<b>Internet</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Friends/ family/relatives</b>	<b>Travel guidebooks</b>	<b>Brochures/ pamphlets</b>	<b>Magazine Ad.</b>	<b>Newspaper Ad.</b>	<b>Road show/ trade show</b>	<b>Clubs/ associations</b>	<b>Television Ad.</b>	<b>Radio Ad.</b>
Pearson correlation coefficient	0.012	-0.011	-0.013	0.052	0.117	0.180	0.191	0.166	0.098	0.254	0.182
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.650	0.718	0.636	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.000	0.000

### 6.1.6 Summary of Testing Hypothesis One

Pearson correlation ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) identified that there were statistically significant positive relationships among the five consumption values and travel information sources (see Table 6-6). The higher the functional value was, the greater usefulness were ten information sources reported by respondents. Similarly, the higher the emotional value was, the more useful were all eleven travel information sources. Thirdly, the greater the social value was, the more useful were nine information sources. Fourthly, the higher the conditional value was, the more useful were nine information sources. Lastly, respondents with higher epistemic value rated seven out of eleven information sources as having greater usefulness.

**Table 6-6 Consumption values and information source usefulness**

	<b>Internet</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Friends/ family/relatives</b>	<b>Travel guidebooks</b>	<b>Brochures/ pamphlets</b>	<b>Magazine Ad.</b>	<b>Newspaper Ad.</b>	<b>Road show/ trade show</b>	<b>Clubs/ associations</b>	<b>Television Ad.</b>	<b>Radio Ad.</b>
<b>Functional value</b>	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	*	**	
<b>Emotional value</b>	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	*
<b>Social value</b>	*		**		**	**	**	**	**	**	*
<b>Conditional value</b>	**	*		**	**	**	**	**		**	**
<b>Epistemic value</b>					**	**	**	**	**	**	**

Note: \*\* Significant at 0.01 level, \* Significant at 0.05 level

Although the above results had statistically significant strong associations, it is acknowledged that the Pearson correlation coefficients were all below 0.30, indicating weak relationships (Green & Salkind, 2005) between the variables (consumption values versus usefulness of travel information sources).

Of interest in these results was that all five consumption values had statistically significant relationships in positive directions with the usefulness of five out of eleven information sources. These sources were brochures/pamphlets, road show/trade show, and advertisements from magazines, newspapers, and television. This suggests that all consumption values could be represented to appeal to tourists when promoting a country via these five information sources.

There is no direct similarity of this finding to previous marketing studies. Nevertheless, with a similar context, this finding adds support to the tourism study by Hsieh and O'Leary (1993), which revealed that travellers who sought different benefits from travel consulted different travel information sources. Travellers who sought the benefit of a getaway from routine life were likely to search for information from brochures/pamphlets, while social safety travellers consulted travel agents. Travellers who travelled seeking the benefits of adventure, or exciting tourism, tended to search for information from many channels including travel agents, brochures/pamphlets, tour operators, advertisements, clubs/association, government tourism office, books, and airline. Similarly, Fall (2000a) found that hedonic value (fun, enjoyment, and excitement) was positively related to interpersonal sources (friends, trade shows, and travel agents), new media (CD-Rom and the internet), and organizational sources. The results also support the general consumer literature. Punj and Staelin (1983) noted that consumers undertake information search to enhance the quality of purchase outcomes. They will seek information to enhance their product and brand knowledge before purchasing. Kathleen and Caldwell (1994) reported that visitors' motives influenced information seeking behaviours. Visitors search for information about prices, tourism attributes, and situational determinants. Their study found that people, who had high levels of a variety of motivations, for visiting the North Carolina Zoological Park, rated all information sources higher. Tourists gathered information from many sources before making their travel decisions.

The results of this study also showed that the five consumption values were associated with the usefulness of travel information sources. Tourists, who held different consumption values, evaluated the usefulness of travel information sources differently. However, Sheth et al. (1991) noted that market choice is a multidimensional phenomenon involving consumption values. When facing many options, consumers will seek more information about a product and brand before making their purchase decisions (Sheth et al., 1991). They noted that advertising from marketers can appeal to emotional and social values. It seems therefore that information sources are intermediate factors between consumption values and tourists' travel decisions, as is the case with other consumer products.

## 6.2 Consumption Values and Purposes of Trip (H2)

Given the limited, if any, choice open to business people when travelling to a country as compared to leisure travellers who could choose anywhere, it was expected that the purposes of trip would relate variously with consumption values of respondents. To examine the possible relationship between purposes of trip and consumption values, H2 proposed that tourists with different purposes for their trip will have different patterns in the consumption values. The values were compared among those travelling for leisure, business/conference, VFR, and other purposes (study, medical treatment, etc.).

As illustrated in Table 6-7, ANOVA results showed that purposes of trip yielded significant mean differences in the cases of functional, emotional ( $p < 0.01$ ), and epistemic values ( $p < 0.05$ ). Regarding functional value, a Scheffé post hoc test indicated that those respondents whose purpose was for leisure or for business/conference scored higher on functional value than respondents whose purpose was to VFR. When considering the two individual items that were comprised of functional value, the leisure group rated the item “Beautiful scenery is an essential requirement when choosing my travel destination” higher as the main reason for travelling abroad as compared to the VFR group. The business and conference group indicated a higher mean score on the item “A destination with a great reputation for tourism appeals to me” than did VFR group.

**Table 6-7 ANOVA of consumption values by purposes of trip**

	Group	<i>f</i>	Functional	Emotional	Social	Conditional	Epistemic
Leisure	1	1,113	<b>4.02</b>	<b>4.05</b>	3.65	3.54	3.05
Business/conference	2	385	<b>4.05</b>	<b>3.82</b>	3.70	3.51	3.18
VFR	3	126	<b>3.83</b>	<b>3.87</b>	3.69	3.43	3.10
Others (e.g. study, medical treatment, etc.)	4	67	3.90	3.95	3.74	3.49	3.28
Total		1,691	4.00	3.98	3.67	3.52	3.09
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.513	0.081	0.178	0.131	0.462
<b><i>F-value</i></b>			4.071	21.195	0.605	0.859	3.552
<b><i>p-value</i></b>			0.007	0.000	0.612	0.462	0.014
<b><i>Scheffé post hoc test</i></b>			<b>1,2&gt;3</b>	<b>1&gt;2,3</b>			

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree

2) Mean differences indicated by Scheffé post hoc test are in **bold**.

The Scheffé post hoc test also indicated that leisure respondents reported higher emotional value than those whose purposes were business/conference, or VFR. When considering individual items, leisure respondents indicated higher scores on “I travel because it is an important source of relaxation”, “Travel makes me happy”, “A primary reason for travel is

to find excitement”, and “When choosing a destination, I seek a variety of activity choices”, than did the other groups. This fits the idea that leisure travellers were more interested in stress relief and getting away from the routine of their lives.

In the case of epistemic value, the Scheffé post hoc test did not identify significant differences between these groups, despite indicating the test as statistically significant overall ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). There were no statistically significant differences for social and conditional values among the trip purposes reported by ANOVA and Scheffé post hoc test. All respondent groups reported that social and conditional values were somewhat important factors driving them to travel abroad. When considering the combined items that comprised social value; personal safety and activities with family and friends were the most influential reasons for all groups, while recommendations from friends and relatives moderately influenced them in their travel decisions. With regard to conditional value, only one factor; value for money, was an important factor influencing all purposes of trip, while a destination with different climate and discounted fares were somewhat important in their travel decisions.

These results moderately supported H2. Tourists with different purposes for their trip have differences in only two values of consumption; functional and emotional values. Although there were statistically significant differences between the means of these two consumption values among respondents' purposes of trip, they were all arithmetically small differences. The interesting finding was that all respondent groups, based on purposes of trip, reported similar patterns of consumption values. Emotional value was the most important factor for all groups except the business and conference group, followed by functional value, in influencing their travel abroad (mean scores approximately 4.00). On the other hand, business and conference respondents identified functional value more than emotional value when travelling. This fits the idea that these respondents are travelling out of practical necessity rather than personal gratification.

Three similar studies compared purposes of trip with the values or benefits sought from travel. Kaynak and Yavas (1981) found that travellers with all purposes of trip; leisure, business, and visiting relatives, reported low cost and good weather conditions as the important factors in choosing a vacation spot. In the current study, these two factors were grouped as a conditional value, and there were no significant differences in the conditional



value associated with the purpose of trip (leisure, business/conference, VFR, and other purposes).

Another study, Cai et al. (2001) found that Chinese leisure travellers tended to participate in various tourism activities, including shopping, sightseeing, visiting historical places and parks, and touring in cruises in the USA more than did Chinese business travellers. With similarity to the current study, leisure travellers indicated higher levels of emotional value, specifically seeking a wider variety of activity choices than did business/conference and VFR travellers. In terms of functional value, one aspect relates to the utility of tourism attributes. This finding is consistent with the research result by Suh and Gartner (2004), who revealed that both pleasure and business travellers from Japan, North America, and Europe preferred similarly urban tourism activities on a trip package in Korea. Japanese leisure and business travellers preferred shopping, while North American and European leisure and business travellers preferred local culture for urban activities.

In the current study, statistical significant differences were found, but these were arithmetically small. The differences therefore do not seem to indicate anything useable in determining marketing activities to promote a country with regard to different trip purposes. For example, there is no evidence that different promotional approaches for distinctive groups would be suitable marketing strategies. This suggests that tourism marketers should take into consideration the consumption values related to travelling abroad when promoting tourism attributes to tourists as a mass market, regardless of the purposes of trip. Additionally, from the ranking of consumption values, tourism marketers should design tourism messages with emphasis on functional, emotional, and social values if they wish appeal to meet tourists' expectations and more effectively influence their purchase decisions.

### **6.3 Purposes of Trip and Information Source Usefulness (H3)**

Tourists are likely to use different information sources when investigating the particular attractions of interest when planning their trips (Dodd, 1998). The number of information sources used differs between leisure and business tourists (Lo et al., 2002). From these two observations it could be expected that tourists with different trip purposes might use travel information sources differently when making decisions. In order to better understand

tourist information search behaviours and to guide tourism marketers, it is important to investigate whether tourists with different trip purposes evaluate the usefulness of various travel information sources differently. Thus, H3 postulated that tourists with different purposes for their trip will have differences with regard to the reported usefulness of travel information sources. ANOVA was employed to test this hypothesis.

As illustrated in Table 6-8, ANOVA results showed that there were significant differences between the mean ratings as to the usefulness of travel information sources among five out of eleven sources for respondents with different purposes of trip. These sources were travel guidebooks, WOM from friends/family/relatives, television advertisements, and the internet ( $p < 0.01$ ), and previous travel experience ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H3 was weakly supported.

**Table 6-8 ANOVA of information source usefulness by purposes of trip**

	Group	Internet		Experience		Friends/family/relatives		Travel guidebooks		TV Ad.	
		<i>f</i>	Mean	<i>f</i>	Mean	<i>f</i>	Mean	<i>f</i>	Mean	<i>f</i>	Mean
Leisure	1	1,003	<b>3.93</b>	750	3.88	934	<b>3.87</b>	826	<b>3.62</b>	578	<b>2.69</b>
Business/conference	2	319	<b>3.73</b>	285	<b>3.72</b>	279	<b>3.61</b>	248	<b>3.21</b>	227	<b>2.92</b>
VFR	3	95	3.81	93	<b>4.13</b>	108	<b>4.01</b>	77	3.49	57	2.54
Others (e.g. study, medical treatment, etc.)	4	56	3.90	45	3.91	54	<b>4.19</b>	45	3.40	38	2.99
Total		1,473	3.88	1,173	3.86	1,375	3.84	1,196	3.52	900	2.75
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			<i>0.397</i>		<i>0.113</i>		<i>0.200</i>		<i>0.007</i>		<i>0.912</i>
<b><i>F-value</i></b>			<b>3.936</b>		<b>3.70</b>		<b>7.782</b>		<b>10.126</b>		<b>4.073</b>
<b><i>p-value</i></b>			<b>0.008</b>		<b>0.012</b>		<b>0.000</b>		<b>0.000</b>		<b>0.007</b>
<b><i>Scheffé post hoc test</i></b>			<b>1&gt;2</b>		<b>3&gt;2</b>		<b>1,3,4&gt;2</b>		<b>1&gt;2</b>		<b>2&gt;1</b>

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Not at all useful to 5 = Extremely useful, 0 = Did not use was excluded

2) Mean differences indicated by Scheffé post hoc test are in **bold**.

3) For a full list of travel information sources see Appendix 17

A Scheffé post hoc test indicated that information from friends/family/relatives was more useful to respondents travelling for other purposes, followed by VFR, and leisure, respectively, than to business/conference respondents. Leisure respondents rated travel guidebooks and the internet as more useful than did business/conference group when making their travel plans. One reason might have been that part of the benefit of travel for leisure respondents comes from the acquiring of travel guidebooks from tour agents and searching for information about attractive destinations, interesting tourism features, and accommodation on the internet when planning their trips. In contrast, business/conference

respondents may be more pragmatic, reading information simply to book a flight and accommodation as a necessity of business. They also indicated that the information received from those sources was useful for making their travel plans.

Respondents whose purpose was VFR rated their previous travel experiences as being more useful in formulating their travel plans as compared to the business/conference group. This probably reflects the finding that they had more experience with Thailand than other groups (see Table 5-18 in Chapter 5). For television advertisements, ANOVA and Scheffé post hoc test results indicated that business/conference respondents rated these sources as more useful than did leisure respondents. This reflects the balance of respondents from East Asia, South Asia, and Africa, who travelled to Thailand for business/conference, who indicated that television advertisements were useful for making their travel plans, in contrast to respondents from other regions. Respondents mainly travelled for leisure, excluding African respondents, rated television advertisements as less useful (see Appendix 18). In other words, a more regionally focussed television promotion campaign was relatively useful to South East Asian and African business travellers.

These results are consistent with those reported by Fodness and Murray (1999), indicating that leisure tourists used travel information sources differently from VFR tourists. Specifically, they used information from tourist bureaux and their previous travel experience more than did VFR tourists. VFR tourists more commonly used sources such as friends/relatives and clubs than did leisure tourists. This is similar to the study of Suh (2001) who found that information from news, movies, and television advertisements influenced business tourists more than pleasure tourists in travelling to Seoul, Korea, whilst pleasure tourists were more influenced by information from travel agencies than business tourists. The findings of the current study also support those of Luo et al. (2004), who found that use of the internet and other information sources varied among tourists by purpose (pleasure, business, and personal). Their results, however, differed a little from the results of this current research. Their results showed that pleasure travellers used information sources from friends/relatives more than did other groups, while business, or personal travellers searched information sources from travel agents more than did pleasure travellers. In contrast, the results of the present study showed that not only leisure travellers but also VFR travellers and those with other purposes rated the usefulness of information from friends/family/relatives higher than did the business/conference group.

Overall, when comparing the mean differences found in the current study, it should be noted that in practical terms, the differences were small. All respondent groups indicated travel information sources from the internet, previous travel experience, and friends/family/relatives, as more useful for them when they made their travel plans (mean scores approximately 4.00), while travel information from travel guidebooks was somewhat useful (mean scores approximately 3.50).

It is of interest that the three most useful travel information sources for leisure and business/conference respondents were the internet, previous travel experience, and friends/family/relatives, respectively. On the other hand, the three most useful travel information sources for VFR respondents were their previous travel experience, friends/family/relatives, and the internet, respectively.

These results implied that the main information sources influencing tourists regardless of the purposes of their trip were the internet, previous travel experience, and friends/family/relatives. In the view of Gronflaten (2005), the internet becomes a convenient and cheap information source for travellers, and it is a major selling point for a travel destination. To attract tourists, tourism marketers should invest resources in the internet. They should create websites and update information so that tourists can access them and arrange their bookings easily. Personal information such as previous travel experience and recommendations from friends/family/relatives are also an important source of persuading all potential tourists.

#### **6.4 Socio-Economic Characteristics and Consumption Values (H4)**

The previous section documented that respondents with different purposes for travelling had significant mean differences in functional, emotional, and epistemic values. The differences in the pattern of consumption values could be related to respondents' socio-economic characteristics. For example, respondents with higher income level may be expected to have different consumption values with regard to travel as compared to other groups. H4 postulated that there will be relationships between the pattern of consumption values and socio-economic characteristics relating to gender, region of residence, age group, household annual income level, educational qualification, and occupational

classification. The independent-samples *t*-test (2-tailed test,  $p \leq 0.05$ ) was used to test mean differences between genders, while one-way ANOVA and the Scheffé post hoc test ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) were employed to test the other variables relevant to this hypothesis. The results are discussed in the following sections.

#### 6.4.1 Gender

There were statistically significant differences between the means based on gender for two consumption values; emotional and social values ( $p < 0.01$ ). As illustrated in Table 6-9, females had higher mean ratings for those both values. When considering the individual items making up the emotional value construct, females scored notably higher than males on the items “Travelling abroad makes me happy” and “I am usually interested in something new and different”. Regarding social value, females scored higher than males on the items “I chose this destination because my friends and relatives recommended it to me”, “I prefer activities with my family and friends”, and “I travel to places where I will feel safe”.

**Table 6-9 Comparing means of consumption values by gender**

	Group	<i>f</i>	Functional	Emotional	Social	Conditional	Epistemic
Male	1	1,045	3.98	<b>3.96</b>	<b>3.63</b>	3.52	3.12
Female	2	662	4.03	<b>4.03</b>	<b>3.74</b>	3.52	3.06
Total		1,707	4.00	3.98	3.67	3.52	3.09
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.055	0.249	0.208	0.768	0.356
<i>t-value</i>			-1.444	-2.615	-3.114	-0.049	1.341
<i>p-value</i>			0.149	0.009	0.002	0.961	0.180

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree  
 2) Mean differences are in **bold**

These findings are similar to the results of Gitelson and Kerstetter (1990) who found that females and males sought different benefits for taking vacations in terms of relaxation, socialising, and exploration. Females expected those three factors more than did males. Heung et al. (2001) also found that females sought travel benefits more than did males. The benefits sought in their study were tour packages, people appreciation, shopping, enjoyment, safety destination, and a variety of foods. These factors relate to emotional and social values. The findings of the current study contradict the findings of Shanka and Phau (2008) who reported that there were no mean differences between genders in epistemic/emotional and social values with regard to travelling to Mauritius, but they did have mean differences in the conditional value. Females rated the conditional value higher

than did males. The conditional value used in their study included good value for money, good quality of life, personal safety, and friendliness of locals.

#### 6.4.2 Region of Residence

Seven regions of residence were compared for mean differences in the five consumption values. ANOVA found that respondents from different regions of residence had significant differences between the means for all five consumption values (functional, social, conditional, epistemic ( $p < 0.01$ ), and emotional values ( $p < 0.05$ )) (see Table 6-10).

A Scheffé post hoc test revealed that respondents from Africa scored higher on functional value than did respondents from Europe. When considering the individual items, African respondents scored the item “destination with a great reputation in tourism” as the main reason for them travelling abroad more so than did Europeans.

**Table 6-10 ANOVA of consumption values by regions of residence**

	Group	<i>f</i>	Functional	Emotional	Social	Conditional	Epistemic
East Asia	1	292	4.04	3.98	<b>3.77</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>3.22</b>
Europe	2	253	<b>3.86</b>	3.93	<b>3.48</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>2.85</b>
North America	3	244	4.08	4.03	<b>3.52</b>	3.52	<b>2.89</b>
Oceania	4	236	3.93	3.98	<b>3.46</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>2.95</b>
Middle East	5	232	3.96	4.05	<b>3.83</b>	3.47	<b>3.31</b>
South Asia	6	229	4.05	4.03	<b>3.86</b>	3.61	<b>3.18</b>
Africa	7	221	<b>4.09</b>	3.90	<b>3.78</b>	3.54	<b>3.27</b>
Total		1,707	4.00	3.98	3.67	3.52	3.09
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.001	0.000	0.292	0.075	0.018
<i>F-value</i>			3.838	2.393	14.684	4.833	13.407
<i>p-value</i>			0.001	0.026	0.000	0.000	0.000
<i>Scheffé post hoc test</i>			7>2	-	1,5,6,7>2,3,4	1>2,4	1,7>2,3,4 5,6>2,3

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree  
2) Mean differences indicated by Scheffé post hoc test are in **bold**.

Respondents from South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia rated scores on social value higher than did other groups. This appeared due to safety concerns as they indicated that they were likely to travel to places where they felt safe more than did other groups.

East Asian respondents had higher mean scores on conditional value than did European and Oceanian respondents. Most East Asian respondents gave higher scores to the item

“Discounted fares were an important part of my decision to travel” than those two regions scored. This was because there were low cost airlines frequently flying to Thailand from many countries in the East Asia region.

Middle Eastern respondents, followed by African, East Asian, and South Asian respondents, rated epistemic value higher than did those from other regions. Respondents from those four regions gave a higher score to “I am curious about this destination because I saw an interesting advertisement” than did those from other regions.

Some researchers have also suggested that country of origin relates to the value for taking vacations (Shanka & Phau, 2008; Suh, 2001; Suh & Gartner, 2004). The study by Suh (2001) and by Suh and Gartner (2004) found that North American travellers reported that having fun and excitement drove them to travel to Seoul, Korea more than did Japanese travellers. Japanese leisure travellers considered shopping as a more important factor for taking international trips than did North American and European leisure travellers, whereas these two groups were more likely to explore the natural environment and culture of their travel destinations. On the other hand, there were no mean differences with regard to spending “quality time” with family among those three regions. Another study, Shanka and Phau (2008) revealed that there were mean differences in social and functional values relevant to travelling to Mauritius among university student travellers from Australia, Asia, and “other”. Respondents from other countries grouped had higher means of social and functional values than did respondents from Asia and Australia (Shanka & Phau, 2008).

The findings in this study contradict the findings of Suh (2001) and Suh and Gardner (2004), who found that North American travellers expressed emotional value (fun and excitement) more than Japanese, while there were no differences in social value among North American, European, and Japanese travellers. But the current findings lend support to the findings by Shanka and Phau (2008) indicating that respondents from different regions of residence tended to have differences in social and functional values. However, this current study found not merely social and function values, but also conditional and epistemic values were related by regions of residence.

### 6.4.3 Age

Five age groups (18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, and > 54 years) were used to compare mean differences in consumption values. ANOVA yielded significant differences for only two consumption values against age levels (see Table 6-11). These factors were emotional value ( $p < 0.01$ ) and epistemic value ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 6-11 ANOVA of consumption values by age groups**

	Group	<i>f</i>	Functional	Emotional	Social	Conditional	Epistemic
18-24 years old	1	183	4.01	<b>4.10</b>	3.68	3.42	3.08
25-34 years old	2	553	4.00	<b>4.07</b>	3.69	3.55	3.08
35-44 years old	3	451	3.98	<b>3.96</b>	3.68	3.54	3.11
45-54 years old	4	362	4.01	<b>3.90</b>	3.67	3.51	<b>3.17</b>
> 54 years old	5	156	4.00	<b>3.79</b>	3.60	3.48	<b>2.92</b>
Total		1,705	4.00	3.98	3.67	3.52	3.09
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.849	0.001	0.422	0.094	0.383
<b><i>F-value</i></b>			0.140	14.237	0.478	1.351	2.522
<b><i>p-value</i></b>			0.967	0.000	0.752	0.249	0.039
<b><i>Scheffé post hoc test</i></b>				<b>1&gt;4,5</b> <b>2&gt;3,4,5</b> <b>1,2,3&gt;5</b>			<b>4&gt;5</b>

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree

2) Mean differences indicated by Scheffé post hoc test are in **bold**.

Younger respondents (< 34 years) scored higher on emotional value than did older groups ( $\geq 35$  years). Most of the younger respondents indicated that their primary reason for travelling abroad was to find excitement, as compared to the older groups. In terms of epistemic value, respondents who were 45 to 54 years rated higher on epistemic value than did the oldest group (> 54 years). When considering the individual items regarding the epistemic value, respondents aged between 45 and 54 years scored higher on the items "I travel to see special events" and "I am curious about this destination because I saw an interesting advertisement" than did respondents over 54 years of age.

These findings are consistent with the study by Gitelson and Kerstetter (1990), Heung et al. (2001), and Shanka and Phau (2008). Gitelson and Kerstetter (1990) found that age groups had sought different benefits, citing relaxation, excitement, and social, when taking vacations. A younger group (20-39 years) sought these benefits more than did an older group (50-69 years). Heung et al. (2001) also found that Japanese travellers aged 18 to 24, 35 to 44, and 45 to 54 years, rated the exploration factor for taking vacation higher than did the group of 55 to 64 years. Shanka and Phau (2008) argued that age groups had mean



differences not only on emotional/epistemic values, but also on conditional value. Younger student travellers ( $\leq 21$  years) rated those values higher than did older student travellers (22-24 years).

#### 6.4.4 Household Income

Five household annual income levels ( $\leq$  US\$20,000, US\$20,001-40,000, US\$40,001-60,000, US\$60,001-80,000, and  $>$  US\$80,000) were used to compare mean differences in the pattern of consumption values. Although ANOVA indicated that there were statistically significant mean differences in epistemic value across these groups ( $p < 0.05$ ), the Scheffé post hoc test did not find mean differences between groups (see Table 6-12). It could be that the means were not substantially different. Respondents at all income levels viewed functional and emotional values as their main reasons for travelling abroad, whereas, social and conditional values seemed to be somewhat influential factors. Epistemic value did not appear to have an impact on travelling abroad.

**Table 6-12 ANOVA of consumption values by income levels**

	Group	<i>f</i>	Functional	Emotional	Social	Conditional	Epistemic
$\leq$ US\$20,000	1	346	3.95	3.95	3.68	3.51	3.07
US\$20,001-40,000	2	379	4.04	4.02	3.74	3.57	3.16
US\$40,001-60,000	3	287	3.96	3.96	3.61	3.57	3.16
US\$60,001-80,000	4	163	4.08	3.98	3.64	3.53	2.97
$>$ US\$80,000	5	407	3.99	3.98	3.60	3.46	3.02
Total		1,582	4.00	3.98	3.66	3.52	3.09
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.266	0.027	0.726	0.673	0.311
<b><i>F-value</i></b>			1.475	1.030	2.281	1.367	2.663
<b><i>p-value</i></b>			0.207	0.391	0.059	0.243	0.031
<b><i>Scheffé post hoc test</i></b>							-

Note: Respondents rated items where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree

The findings of the current study generally fit with the results of the study by Gitelson and Kerstetter (1990), and Heung et al. (2001). Gitelson and Kerstetter (1990) argued that controlling for income levels yielded no significant mean differences in the benefits sought of social factors, relaxation, and excitement, but that there were mean differences in the exploration factor. Travellers who earned incomes in the middle level (US\$25,000-34,999) sought exploration of taking vacations more than did travellers earning lower income level

(< US\$15,000). Heung et al. (2001) also found no significant mean differences in vacation factors (exploration, dream fulfilment, benefits sought, cosmopolitan city, and attractions and climate) among income levels.

From those results, it seems that there were no significant mean differences in the five consumption values among income levels. This evidence could provide guidance to marketers in planning strategies to represent the values motivating tourists to travel to a destination, regardless of income levels. It suggests that the consumption values impact tourists' decisions, regardless of income. When considering the mean scores, functional and emotional values were the main factors motivating them to travel abroad, marketers should take these two factors into account to promote marketing themes focusing mainly on functional and emotional values.

#### **6.4.5 Education**

With regard to the levels of education, the number of respondents who only had primary education ( $f = 36$ ) was too small to provide a useable sub-sample. It is most likely that people with low education have low incomes and cannot afford to travel abroad. Due to the small number of respondents from those with only a primary education, this group was combined with the secondary school group to allow a more useful statistical analysis. Additionally, twelve respondents reported other educational qualifications such as diploma and professional qualifications. These educational qualifications were grouped into the tertiary group as they implied that they graduated with tertiary qualifications. The educational levels were thus classified into three groups (primary plus secondary school, tertiary, and postgraduate). ANOVA indicated that there were no significant mean differences in any consumption values among educational levels ( $p > 0.05$ ) (see Table 6-13). Respondents from all educational qualifications viewed each variable defining consumption values similarly. Functional and emotional values seemed to be the main reasons for all groups travelling abroad, followed by social, conditional, and epistemic values. This was the same ranking as found when income levels were considered.

**Table 6-13 ANOVA of consumption values by educational levels**

	Group	<i>f</i>	Functional	Emotional	Social	Conditional	Epistemic
Primary & Secondary school	1	238	3.98	3.99	3.73	3.56	3.17
Tertiary	2	740	4.00	4.00	3.65	3.55	3.07
Postgraduate	3	673	4.02	3.97	3.66	3.49	3.10
Total		1,651	4.00	3.98	3.66	3.52	3.09
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.235	0.504	0.794	0.029	0.602
<i>F-value</i>			0.260	0.708	1.155	1.262	1.235
<i>p-value</i>			0.771	0.493	0.315	0.283	0.291

Note: Respondents rated items where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree

These findings, however, contradict the results of the Shanka and Phau's (2008) study. They found that educational levels yielded significant mean differences in the emotional/epistemic value. Travellers with undergraduate degree reported stronger emotional/epistemic value driving them to travel than did those also holding postgraduate qualifications (Shanka & Phau, 2008). However, the results of the current study are consistent with the results of Gitelson and Kerstetter's (1990) study. They also found that there were no significant mean differences in benefits sought of social, relaxation, excitement, and exploration factors among educational levels. This would therefore suggest that tourists' educational levels did not play an important role in the different pattern of consumption values relative to travel destination choice.

#### 6.4.6 Occupation

The five consumption values were compared among professional, administrative and managerial, clerical and commercial, technician and associated professions, labourers and service, and other occupations (e.g. student, unemployed, farmer, etc.). ANOVA results (see Table 6-14) found that there were significant mean differences for all consumption values among those six occupational classifications. However, Scheffé post hoc tests found mean differences only on conditional value among those groups. Thus, there were no significant mean differences across the other four consumption values based on occupation groups. Respondents with administrative and managerial occupations, as well as clerical and commercial occupations, scored significantly higher on conditional value than did professionals. It could be that those two groups rated value for money and discounted fares higher than did professionals. When considering the cross-tabulation analysis, most respondents, who were professionals, earned higher income than those two groups, thus

they might have less concern for the monetary factor when travelling abroad than those two groups mentioned above.

**Table 6-14 ANOVA of consumption values by occupation groups**

	Group	<i>f</i>	Functional	Emotional	Social	Conditional	Epistemic
Professionals	1	431	3.94	3.95	3.59	<b>3.39</b>	3.04
Adm. & Managerial	2	359	4.08	3.99	3.75	<b>3.60</b>	3.20
Clerical & Commercial	3	283	4.03	4.01	3.75	<b>3.60</b>	3.12
Tech. & Associate Prof.	4	175	4.06	4.08	3.57	3.49	3.10
Labourers & Service	5	104	3.99	4.01	3.59	3.54	3.13
Others (e.g. student, government, unemployed, etc.)	6	240	3.94	3.93	3.66	3.53	2.97
Total		1,592	4.00	3.98	3.66	3.52	3.09
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.568	0.402	0.376	0.223	0.195
<b><i>F-value</i></b>			2.465	2.237	3.483	4.075	2.693
<b><i>p-value</i></b>			0.031	0.048	0.004	0.001	0.020
<b><i>Scheffé post hoc test</i></b>			-	-	-	<b>2,3&gt;1</b>	-

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree

2) Mean differences indicated by Scheffé post hoc test are in **bold**.

The findings lend little support to those of the study by Heung et al. (2001), who found that there were no significant mean differences in vacation factors (exploration, dream fulfilment, benefits sought, cosmopolitan city, and attractions and climate) among occupation groups. In contrast, Smith (1995) revealed that students or skilled workers were likely to be adventure travellers.

#### **6.4.7 Summary of Testing Hypothesis Four**

In conclusion, H4 was moderately supported. As illustrated in Table 6-15, statistically significant differences were found in some factors and different dimensions of consumption values for travelling abroad among genders, regions of residence, age groups, household annual income levels, and occupational classifications. In contrast, educational qualifications had no statistically significant impact on any of the consumption values. Interestingly, ANOVA and Scheffé post hoc test results found that travellers from different regions had more mean differences in consumption values than identified by considering other socio-economic characteristics. Four of the consumption values had different importance ratings among respondents based on region of residence. These were functional, social, conditional, and epistemic values. Only two values, emotional and social, were driving factors for females more than males. Emotional and epistemic values

were differently important by age group. Only conditional value varied by occupation group.

When considering each consumption value, results indicated that respondents who were female and of a young age were highly concerned with emotional value when travelling. African respondents were driven by functional value more than were other regions. In terms of social value, females and respondents from South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia reported high social value. For conditional value, respondents with administrative and managerial occupations, as well as clerical and commercial occupations, were highly motivated by this value. Lastly, the results found that the oldest group (> 54 years) scored lower on epistemic value for travelling abroad. North American, European, and Oceanian respondents were influenced by epistemic value less than were those from the Middle East, Africa, East Asia, and South Asia.

**Table 6-15 Summary results of testing H4**

	<b>Functional</b>	<b>Emotional</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Conditional</b>	<b>Epistemic</b>
<b>Gender</b>		**	**		
<b>Region</b>	**	* (-)	**	**	**
<b>Age</b>		**			*
<b>Income</b>					* (-)
<b>Education</b>					
<b>Occupation</b>	* (-)	* (-)	** (-)	**	* (-)

Note: 1) \*\* Significant at 0.01 level, \* Significant at 0.05 level  
 2) (-) Scheffé post hoc tests did not find mean difference.

Although significant mean differences in the consumption values structure were found when considering the socio-economic characteristics of gender, region of residence, age group, income level, and occupational classification, these differences were arithmetically small, and of no clear practical use. Arguably these differences could have occurred because the sample size was large (Pallant, 2007).

As discussed earlier in the previous sections, a number of researchers have identified various differences between travellers, based on socio-economic characteristics. Gitelson and Kerstetter (1990) found that genders, age groups, and income levels tended to seek the benefits of taking vacations differently. Smith (1995) also revealed that travellers, who were male, younger, single, a student or skilled worker, and university-educated, were likely to be adventure travellers. Whilst travellers who were older, less educated, and had

lower income, were concerned with social safety more than did other groups. Heung et al. (2001) reported mean differences between the genders in the benefits sought for taking vacations, while age groups had mean differences in the goal of exploration when taking vacations. Conversely, there were no significant mean differences between vacation factors and occupations and income levels (Heung et al., 2001). Suh (2001) and Suh and Gartner (2004) revealed that travellers from Japan, North America, and Europe, had different reasons for taking vacations. In another study, Shanka and Phau (2008) investigated students' consumption values and their perceptions of Mauritius as a travel destination. These students had a higher education and were visiting for the first time. They found that travellers of different genders, age groups, educational levels, and from different regions of residence, had different patterns of consumption values of travelling to Mauritius.

The findings of the current study partially support the findings of those studies mentioned above. That is tourists with different genders, regions of residence, age groups, and occupational classifications seek different benefits and have different consumption values of travel abroad. Females tended to seek the benefits of relaxation, socialising, exploration (Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1990), people appreciation, shopping, enjoyments, and a safe destination (Heung et al., 2001). Likewise, the current study found that females considered emotional and social outcomes more than did males. Younger travellers sought relaxation, excitement (Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1990), exploration (Heung et al., 2001), and adventure (Smith, 1995) when travelling, which is similar to the findings of the current study; younger travellers scored emotional value higher than did older travellers. In the case of regions of residence, Shanka and Phau (2008) found that respondents from "other countries" grouped rated social and functional values higher than did respondents from Asia and Australia. With results similar to the current study, the results showed that travellers from South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia rated higher on social value than did other groups. In terms of functional value, the current study found that African travellers scored higher than did Europeans. Moreover, the current study also found that conditional and epistemic values were scored differently based on region of residence. In the case of occupational classification, there were various results found, as discussed in section 6.4.6.

In a parallel context, some studies in the service industry have found that some socio-economic characteristics are related to the consumption values of the purchasing decision.

For instance, Shen (2003) has examined the relationships between gender, family income level, and the factors influencing students in their college choices. Female students considered courses offered, quality of facilities, safety of campus, and cost of tuition to a greater degree than did males. Based on the consumption values concept, it seems that females tended to be more concerned with functional, social, and conditional values in making their college choices. Students from higher income families rated cost of tuition as a less influential factor than did students from lower income families. By contrast, they indicated the parental factor influenced their aspirations to attend college more than students from lower income families did. In a study focusing on gender, Andrews, Kiel, Drennan, Boyle, and Weerawardena (2007) investigated differences in consumption values between males and females when making purchases online. They reported that female purchasers gave greater importance to social value than did males. The current results partially support the previous studies in that females placed more emphasis on social value in purchasing decisions than did males.

In another study, Patterson (2007) reported that older clients tended to seek social benefits from hairdressers and travel agents more than did younger clients. However, there were no mean differences between age groups when seeking these benefits for dental services. In contrast, the current study found that there were mean differences in emotional and epistemic values among age groups.

In a service industry study focusing on country of origin, Gnepa and Petrosky (2002) found that the values for using mass transit differed among respondents from the USA, Ivory Coast, and France. Respondents from the USA indicated that family, a factor of social value, influenced them to use mass transit more than it did respondents from the other two regions. Respondents from the Ivory Coast were influenced by emotional value more than those of other regions. They rated that using mass transit could change their mood more than did the other two groups.

Many marketing and tourism researchers have found that socio-economic characteristics, especially gender, region of residence, age group, income level, and educational qualification, lead to mean differences in the benefits sought for taking vacations, as well as the pattern of consumption values when purchasing services. However, the results of the current study found small mean differences in consumption values among the socio-

economic characteristics of gender, region of residence, age group, and occupational classification. Respondents' consumption values varied in a similar pattern. They scored functional and emotional values highly, apparently motivating them to travel abroad (mean scores approximately 4.00), whereas social and conditional values seemed to be less influential factors (mean scores around 3.50). The least influential value was epistemic (mean scores around 3.00).

From these results, DMOs and other tourism stakeholders should plan marketing strategies that target a mass market rather than regional or sub-segmented markets in order to cover worldwide tourists. This fits with the argument of Nielsen et al. (2000) that as the target market is quite homogeneous in its needs and desires, an undifferentiated marketing strategy would be more appropriate. Furthermore, the results suggest that DMOs and other tourism stakeholders should prioritise marketing strategies focusing on functional, emotional, social, and conditional values respectively, in order to persuade tourists to choose a particular country as a destination.

## **6.5 Socio-Economic Characteristics and Information Source Usefulness (H5)**

Travel information sources are useful for tourists in making their travel plans. They need to obtain information about destinations, accommodation, and products before they make their travel decisions. Tourists with different socio-economic characteristics are likely to participate in tourism activities differently. Consequently, they might search for information from different sources for more knowledge about their preferred activities before choosing a travel destination. To examine this relationship, H5 proposed that there will be differences in the usefulness of travel information sources among different socio-economic groups (gender, region of residence, age group, household annual income level, educational qualification, and occupational classification).

The usefulness of eleven travel information sources was tested to compare across these six socio-economic characteristics. The independent-samples *t*-test (2-tailed test,  $p \leq 0.05$ ) was used to test mean differences in information source usefulness between the genders. One-way ANOVA ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) was conducted to identify differences between the means relating



to the usefulness of information sources across respondent groups based on region of residence, age group, household annual income level, educational qualification, and occupational classification. Further, the Scheffé post hoc test ( $p \leq 0.05$ ), was again employed to identify significant differences. The full results of ANOVA and Scheffé post hoc tests are presented in Appendix 19, and discussed in the following sections.

### 6.5.1 Gender

As illustrated in Table 6-16, the results of *t*-testing demonstrated that there were only three statistically significant differences between the genders as to the usefulness of travel information sources. Females reported higher mean scores on the usefulness of friends/family/relatives, travel guidebooks, and brochures/pamphlets as compared to males. It is possible that as females found these sources to be more useful, they may have placed greater reliance on them in their decision-making. However, the actual differences are arithmetically quite small.

**Table 6-16 Comparing Means of information source usefulness by gender**

	Friends/family/ relatives		Travel guidebooks		Brochures/ pamphlets	
	<i>f</i>	Mean	<i>f</i>	Mean	<i>f</i>	Mean
Male	829	<b>3.75</b>	740	<b>3.39</b>	707	<b>3.10</b>
Female	561	<b>3.97</b>	469	<b>3.73</b>	439	<b>3.24</b>
Total	1,390	3.84	1,209	3.52	1,146	3.15
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>		0.009		0.770		0.793
<i>t-value</i>		-4.000		-5.546		-2.358
<i>p-value</i>		0.000		0.000		0.019

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Not at all useful to 5 = Extremely useful, 0 = Did not use was excluded

2) Mean differences are in **bold**.

3) For a full list of constructs see Appendix 19

These results are contradictory to some previous results. Hsieh and O'Leary (1993), and Lo et al. (2002) argued that there were no significant differences in information sources used between genders. Hsieh and O'Leary (1993) studied communication channels to segment British pleasure travellers. Their study compared four clusters of information sources; WOM, brochures/pamphlets, travel agents, and combination channels (travel agents, brochures/pamphlets, airline, tour operator, auto, association, book/library, newspaper/magazines/articles, government tourism office, embassy/consulate, clubs/association, and advertisements). Lo et al.'s (2002) study of inbound travellers to

Hong Kong also revealed no significant difference between genders on the influence of information sources. The information sources used in their study were personal experience, media, retailer (e.g. travel agency, hotels, corporate travel department, and airlines), interpersonal (friends/relatives), and neutral sources (e.g. travel guidebooks, tourism office/ tourist association).

However, the results of the current study are consistent with the findings of the study by Dodd (1998) who found that females reported more importance on WOM as an information source. Another study, Luo et al. (2004) revealed that female travellers used information from the internet combined with other sources (local convention and visitor bureaux, travel agents, and friends and relatives) more than did males. Overall this suggests that females are possibly more likely to search for more information than males before making their travel decisions, especially from travel guidebooks, brochures/pamphlets, and by WOM.

### **6.5.2 Region of Residence**

ANOVA results showed that respondents from different regions reported significant differences as to the mean ratings of the usefulness of ten travel information sources ( $p < 0.01$ ) (see Table 6-17). These sources where differences were found were the internet, friends/family/relatives, travel guidebooks, brochures/pamphlets, newspaper advertisements, clubs/associations, television advertisements, radio advertisements, road show/trade show, and magazine advertisements. Information from previous travel experiences had no significant differences as to the level of usefulness between respondents from different regions of residence. Respondents from all regions generally rated information from their previous experience among the most useful for making their travel plans.

**Table 6-17 ANOVA of information source usefulness by regions of residence**

	Group	Internet	Friends/ family/ relatives	Travel guidebooks	Brochures/ pamphlets	Magazine Ad.	Newspaper Ad.	Road show/ trade show	Clubs/ associations	TV Ad.	Radio Ad.
East Asia	1	<b>3.66</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>3.35</b>	3.03	3.13	2.92	2.89	2.97	<b>2.79</b>	2.37
Europe	2	<b>3.98</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>2.82</b>	2.84	<b>2.58</b>	<b>2.61</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>2.39</b>	<b>2.03</b>
North America	3	<b>4.06</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>3.78</b>	3.17	2.80	2.73	2.64	2.94	<b>2.43</b>	2.28
Oceania	4	3.86	3.88	3.68	<b>3.28</b>	2.93	2.83	2.75	2.66	<b>2.37</b>	<b>2.21</b>
Middle East	5	3.76	<b>3.97</b>	<b>3.29</b>	3.20	3.04	2.87	3.07	<b>3.07</b>	<b>2.87</b>	2.51
South Asia	6	3.86	<b>3.74</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>3.29</b>	3.26	<b>3.20</b>	3.05	3.03	<b>2.96</b>	2.44
Africa	7	3.97	<b>3.99</b>	3.48	<b>3.17</b>	3.20	<b>3.15</b>	<b>3.20</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>3.20</b>	<b>2.81</b>
Total		3.87	3.84	3.52	3.15	3.05	2.91	2.91	2.94	2.75	2.39
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>		0.972	0.020	0.249	0.001	0.003	0.001	0.050	0.014	0.022	0.012
<i>F-value</i>		4.880	7.567	7.742	6.069	3.335	4.924	3.961	4.699	12.127	5.526
<i>p-value</i>		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000
<i>Scheffé post hoc test</i>		<b>2,3&gt;1</b>	<b>3&gt;1,2,6</b> <b>5,7&gt;1</b>	<b>2,3&gt;</b> <b>1,5,6</b>	<b>4,6,7&gt;2</b>	-	<b>6,7&gt;2</b>	<b>7&gt;2</b>	<b>5,7&gt;2</b>	<b>7&gt;1</b>	<b>7&gt;2,4</b> <b>6,7&gt;3</b>

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Not at all useful to 5 = Extremely useful, 0 = Did not use was excluded

2) Mean differences indicated by Scheffé post hoc test are in **bold**.

3) For a full list of constructs see Appendix 19

Scheffé post hoc testing indicated that North American and European respondents found the internet as more useful than did East Asian respondents. These two groups also indicated that travel guidebooks were more useful than respondents from East Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia. It was possible that these two information sources were more easily accessed by North Americans and Europeans. In terms of WOM from friends/family/relatives, North American, African, and the Middle Eastern respondents indicated usefulness scores on this source higher than did other regions. For brochures/pamphlets, respondents from South Asia, followed by Oceania and Africa, indicated this source was more useful than did respondents from Europe. South Asian and African respondents also rated newspaper advertisements were useful rather than did European respondents. Of the four other sources, African respondents rated road show/trade show, clubs/associations, television advertisements, and radio advertisements, as more useful for them when they made their travel plans, than reported by respondents from other regions. It might be that Africans were more familiar with accessing information via the traditional information channels (e.g. clubs, television, and radio). Because the African continent is composed of developing economies and therefore some countries in this continent has less developed information infrastructure. It is likely that

those countries are behind in the information and communication technologies (Britz, Lor, Coetzee, & Bester, 2006).

Although ANOVA results indicated that the usefulness of magazine advertisements was significantly different among regions of residence, Scheffé post hoc testing did not indicate statistically significant differences between the groups. Scheffé post hoc testing identified that nine travel information sources were significantly different as to usefulness for tourists depending on their region of residence, with the exception of the usefulness of their previous travel experiences and magazine advertisements. Respondents of all regions indicated that their previous travel experiences were very useful for them in making travel plans, whereas magazine advertisements were moderately useful when making plans.

These findings are consistent with previous studies (Lo et al., 2002; Suh, 2001; Uysal, McDonald, & Reid, 1990), in that country and region of residence relate to sources of travel information. Tourists from different countries and regions of residence tended to rely on different travel information sources. Uysal et al. (1990) revealed that respondents from four countries (United Kingdom, France, West Germany, and Japan) ranked the information used differently when they planned to go to U.S. National Parks and Forests. Respondents from the United Kingdom mainly used travel agents followed by WOM, while French and West Germans ranked WOM first, and tour agents second, followed by other sources. Japanese respondents used books/library as their first source and brochures/pamphlets as their second source of information. Suh (2001) found that Japanese travellers were more influenced by television, radio, books/library, experiences, and brochures as compared to European and North American travellers in travelling to Seoul, Korea. European and North American travellers tended to rate the influence of the internet, travel agencies, and friends and relatives higher than did Japanese travellers. Another study, Lo et al. (2002) illustrated that Canadian travellers perceived travel agents as more important than did Singaporean travellers. The current study supported the findings from those previous studies in that North Americans and Europeans rated travel information from guidebooks and the internet as more useful than did East Asians. However, there were some contradictory findings regarding information sources from WOM and tourists' previous experiences. The current study found that North Americans indicated WOM as more useful greater than did Europeans, East Asians, and South Asians. For the source from travel previous experiences, the current study found that there were no statistically

significant differences in the usefulness of this source among the seven regions of residence.

Overall, it seems that respondent's region of residence does influence their information search behaviour. For example, East Asian travellers rated the usefulness of many information sources lower than did other regions. This might be because they lived closer to Thailand, so that they had more experience with Thailand than did other regions (see Table 5-18 in Chapter 5). Therefore they were familiar with Thailand, and sought less information from many sources to plan their trips. Travellers are more likely to search external information sources if they have a lack of familiarity with new destinations as argued by Gitelson and Crompton (1983). Likewise, the current study found that North American, Middle Eastern, and African travellers tended to trust WOM from friends/family/relatives somewhat more than did other regions. Moreover, travel information from the media, road show/trade show, and clubs/association were likely to be used by African travellers more than travellers from other regions.

### **6.5.3 Age**

There were statistically significant mean differences among the various age categories as to the usefulness of four out of eleven travel information sources (see Table 6-18). These sources were friends/family/relatives, travel guidebooks, brochures/pamphlets ( $p < 0.01$ ), and the internet ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The youngest respondent group (18-24 years) indicated travel information sources from the internet and travel guidebooks as more useful for making their travel plans than did the older groups (35-44 years and 45-54 years). The youngest group also rated the source from friends/family/relatives recommendations as more useful for making their plans than did the older groups (35-44 years and  $> 54$  years). Whilst the oldest respondent group ( $> 54$  years) rated brochures/pamphlets as more useful to them than did the 25 to 34 years group.

**Table 6-18 ANOVA of information source usefulness by age groups**

	Group	Internet		Friends/family/relatives		Travel guidebooks		Brochures/pamphlets	
		<i>f</i>	Mean	<i>f</i>	Mean	<i>f</i>	Mean	<i>f</i>	Mean
18-24 years old	1	162	<b>4.06</b>	167	<b>4.16</b>	130	<b>3.76</b>	109	3.08
25-34 years old	2	500	3.90	478	3.85	411	3.62	383	<b>3.03</b>
35-44 years old	3	389	<b>3.83</b>	354	<b>3.70</b>	301	<b>3.41</b>	289	3.19
45-54 years old	4	311	<b>3.77</b>	275	3.85	259	<b>3.39</b>	247	3.17
> 54 years old	5	124	3.87	114	<b>3.69</b>	107	3.48	116	<b>3.47</b>
Total		1,486	3.87	1,388	3.84	1,208	3.52	1,144	3.15
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.066		0.062		0.289		0.616
<i>F-value</i>			2.657		5.977		4.447		4.842
<i>p-value</i>			0.032		0.000		0.001		0.001
<i>Scheffé post hoc test</i>			<b>1&gt;3,4</b>		<b>1&gt;3,5</b>		<b>1&gt;3,4</b>		<b>5&gt;2</b>

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Not at all useful to 5 = Extremely useful, 0 = Did not use was excluded

2) Mean differences indicated by Scheffé post hoc test are in **bold**.

3) For a full list of constructs see Appendix 19

These findings are similar to the research results of Fesenmaier and Vogt's (1993) and Fall's (2000a) study. Brochures from tour agents were found more useful by visitors aged 35 to 50 (Fesenmaier & Vogt, 1993). Fall (2000a) found that there was a negative relationship between age and the usefulness of new media (the internet, CD-Roms); as ages increased, the usefulness of new media decreased (Fall, 2000a). Contrary to the results of the current study, some previous studies found that respondents from different age groups did not significantly differ as to the perceived influence levels of information sources (Lo et al., 2002), and were not significantly different in their information search behaviour (Hsieh & O'Leary, 1993; Luo et al., 2004).

However, it appears that younger travellers are more likely to rate a number of information sources as more useful than older travellers. It is likely that younger travellers have less travel experience than older travellers, and would thus seek more and varied information. They may also have more familiarity in using the internet, and a greater reliance on WOM from friends/family/relatives, and travel guidebooks as compared to older groups. Instead, older travellers tend to plan their trips based on brochures/pamphlets.

#### **6.5.4 Household Income**

When comparing respondents on the basis of annual household income levels, ANOVA results (see Table 6-19) showed that four out of eleven travel information sources were significantly different in terms of usefulness. These were radio advertisements ( $p < 0.01$ ), television advertisements, the internet, and previous travel experience ( $p < 0.05$ ). However,

Scheffé post hoc test identified only two sources; radio advertisements and previous travel experience as having inter-group differences.

Respondents who earned the highest income level (> US\$80,000), compared to respondents with the lowest income level (≤ US\$20,000), agreed more strongly that travel experience was more useful for making their travel plans. It might be that respondents with higher incomes had more travel experience than groups of lower incomes, as they also tended to be older and were thus more likely to have previous travel experience. Moreover, respondents who earned higher incomes (≥ US\$60,001) rated radio advertisements as less useful than those at lower income levels. This suggests that they were perhaps exposed less to radio advertisements.

**Table 6-19 ANOVA of information source usefulness by income levels**

	Group	Internet		Experience		TV Ad.		Radio Ad.	
		f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean
≤ US\$20,000	1	302	3.78	240	<b>3.73</b>	202	2.85	149	<b>2.61</b>
US\$20,001-40,000	2	334	3.90	261	3.84	209	2.88	165	2.44
US\$40,001-60,000	3	252	3.76	202	3.79	160	2.77	137	2.41
US\$60,001-80,000	4	141	3.91	116	3.88	87	2.60	61	<b>2.09</b>
> US\$80,000	5	357	3.99	289	<b>4.03</b>	199	2.57	170	<b>2.20</b>
Total		1,386	3.87	1,108	3.86	857	2.75	682	2.38
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.031		0.159		0.052		0.033
<b>F-value</b>			2.990		2.863		3.246		4.550
<b>p-value</b>			0.018		0.022		0.012		0.001
<b>Scheffé post hoc test</b>			-		<b>5&gt;1</b>		-		<b>1&gt;4,5</b>

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Not at all useful to 5 = Extremely useful, 0 = Did not use was excluded

2) Mean differences indicated by Scheffé post hoc test are in **bold**.

3) For a full list of constructs see Appendix 19

There have been inconsistent results with regard to income levels and use of travel information sources. Hsieh and O'Leary (1993) reported that there were no differences regarding searching information sources between different income levels. Similarly, Fesenmaier and Vogt (1993) found that there was no difference in evaluating the usefulness of information sources among income levels. Dodd (1998) argued that travellers having lower income levels reported a greater importance for brochures than did travellers who had higher income levels. Fodness and Murray (1999) revealed that tourists with lower incomes (≤ US\$40,000) relied on information from friends or relatives more than did higher income tourists (> US\$40,000). Those with higher incomes used information from government sources such as tourist centres more than did those with

lower incomes. Conversely, they found that previous experience did not significantly differ between income levels. Another study, Luo et al. (2004) reported that tourists with higher incomes used information from the internet including local convention and visitor bureaux, travel agents, and friends and relatives, more than did tourists with lower income levels. The results of the current study are consistent with the findings of Lo et al. (2002), who found that respondents with lower incomes relied on travel experience less than did higher income level respondents.

However, overall the current study found only a few statistically significant differences in the usefulness of information sources based on income. The differences found were only relatively small, so income does not appear to have a substantial market impact on the influence of the various information sources.

#### **6.5.5 Education**

ANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences between the mean ratings on the usefulness of travel information sources among respondents when compared on the basis of educational levels (see Appendix 19). Respondents of all educational levels agreed that travel information sources from the internet, previous travel experience, friends/family/relatives, and travel guidebooks, were the most useful when they made their travel plans (mean scores all approximately 4.00). Brochures/pamphlets and magazine advertisements were somewhat useful (mean scores around 3.00). Newspaper advertisements, clubs/association, television advertisements, and radio advertisements, respectively, tended to be less useful (mean scores < 3.00).

These findings support the results of previous studies that respondents with different levels of education did not differ on the perceived influence of information sources (Fesenmaier & Vogt, 1993; Hsieh & O'Leary, 1993; Lo et al., 2002; Luo et al., 2004). However, these findings contradict the findings of the study by Dodd (1998), who revealed that those with lower educational qualification trusted media sources more, while those with higher educational qualification relied more on their experience when making their tourism decisions.



### 6.5.6 Occupation

Analysis using ANOVA yielded no statistically significant differences of the ratings as to the usefulness of travel information sources by occupation. Respondents of all occupation groups indicated the usefulness of travel information from the eleven sources in the same manner as discussed in earlier sections.

The results of the current study confirm the results from previous studies by Hsieh and O'Leary (1993) and Luo et al. (2004). They also found that occupational classifications did not influence tourists in using different travel information sources.

### 6.5.7 Summary of Testing Hypothesis Five

Table 6-20 illustrates the results of testing H5 demonstrating moderate support for H5. An independent sample *t*-test ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) identified three information sources (friends/family/relatives, travel guidebooks, and brochures/pamphlets) as predominantly important to females. Additionally, ANOVA ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) results indicated that there were statistically significant mean differences in the usefulness of some travel information sources among respondent groups related to region of residence, age group, and household annual income level. Educational level and occupational classification did not show statistically significant differences in the usefulness of travel information sources

**Table 6-20 Summary results of testing H5**

	Internet	Experience	Friends/ family/ relatives	Travel guidebooks	Brochures/ pamphlets	Magazine Ad.	Newspaper Ad.	Road show/ trade show	Clubs/ associations	TV Ad.	Radio Ad.
<b>Gender</b>			**	**	*						
<b>Region</b>	**		**	**	**	** (-)	**	**	**	**	**
<b>Age</b>	*		**	**	**						
<b>Income</b>	* (-)	*								* (-)	**
<b>Education</b>											
<b>Occupation</b>											

Note: 1) \*\* Significant at 0.01 level, \* Significant at 0.05 level

2) (-) Scheffé post hoc tests did not find mean difference.

The findings of the current study are consistent with the previous studies reporting that there were relationships between some of the socio-economic characteristics and travel

information sources used (Chen, 2000; Fall, 2000a, 2000b; Fodness & Murray, 1999; Hsieh & O'Leary, 1993; Luo et al., 2004). Even though the outcomes from previous studies were not entirely consistent, most of them revealed that genders, countries of residence, age groups, income levels, and educational qualifications related to some differences in information source use, except for occupation groups. However, the findings of the current study did not find differences among educational qualifications nor among occupational classifications. It can be argued that there is a connection between educational levels and occupational classifications. For instance, respondents who worked as a professional mostly had a high level of education. Thus, they were likely to rate the usefulness of information sources to a similar degree.

Although the current study found that there were statistically significant mean differences in the usefulness of some travel information sources based on gender, region of residence, age level, and income level, the practical mean differences were very small. It appears the internet, previous travel experience, and friends/family/relatives, were more useful, whilst television and radio advertisements tended to be less useful for respondents in making their travel plans. Additionally, travellers do not depend upon only one type of information source (Fodness & Murray, 1999). The results also suggest that travellers are more likely to search for information from various sources before making their travel decisions, irrespective of socio-economic characteristics.

## **6.6 Information Source Usefulness Affecting Country Image (H6)**

Travel information and destination image play a major role in the process of destination choice and decision-making. Some researchers have suggested that destination image is formed by information sources (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004a; Gartner, 1993; Hanlan & Kelly, 2005). It certainly seems logical that tourists might have their perceptions about country image produced or influenced by the information sources they use. Accordingly, travel information sources may positively relate to tourists' perceptions toward image attributes of a country, as hypothesised in H6. However, the way in which the question regarding the usefulness of travel information was asked means that H6 cannot be reliably tested, as it presents an illogical relationship between the usefulness of information sources and country image.

The question relating to this construct asked respondents to indicate the level of usefulness of each information source by means of five-point rating scales. This question was intended to investigate the relationship between usefulness and purchase decision confidence (H8) as presented in the conceptual model, a main purpose of this study. But there is not necessarily any logical connection between the use made of and the usefulness of travel information sources. The usefulness of each source did not necessarily relate to the positive or negative information which respondents received from the source.

Another reason to doubt any apparent statistical association is that some tourists probably hold images of a place before they began their search for information. Of course, there may well be other plausible factors influencing country image. Malhotra (2002) argued that a causal relationship can be satisfied if there is concomitant variation of two variables, time order in the occurrence of variables, and the absence of other possible causal factors. As these variables do not meet these criteria, the postulated hypothesis has subsequently been seen as inappropriate to test the relationship.

## **6.7 Comparing Means of Purchase Decision Confidence on Purposes of Trip**

Before deciding to use either whole sample or sub-groups regarding trip purposes to test H7, H8, and H9 in predicting the purchase decision confidence, the differences in purchase decision confidence of tourists with different purposes of trip were tested. As illustrated in Table 6-21, ANOVA result indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the purchase decision confidence ( $F = 0.699, p > 0.05$ ) among trip purposes. Respondents with purposes leisure, business/conference, VFR, and other (study, medical treatment, etc), reported that they were confident in their travel decisions to Thailand (mean scores approximately 4.00). Perhaps this was because these respondents might have a specific purpose to visit Thailand, so they might hold confidence in their purchase decisions. In terms of leisure respondents, they might have confidence in their purchase decisions as making the right choice because they already evaluated the possible destinations from travel information sources. Another reason is that they travelled to a destination to fulfil their needs.

**Table 6-21 ANOVA of purchase decision confidence by purposes of trip**

	<i>f</i>	Mean
Leisure	1,113	3.80
Business/conference	385	3.79
VFR	126	3.80
Others (e.g. study, medical treatment, etc.)	67	3.91
Total	1,691	3.81
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>		0.370
<i>F-value</i>		0.699
<i>p-value</i>		0.553

Note: Respondents rated items where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree

## 6.8 Comparing Means of Purchase Decision Confidence between First Time and Re-visitors

Out of interest, whether there were mean differences in the purchase decision confidence between first time visitors and re-visitors, independent-sample *t*-test (2-tailed test,  $p \leq 0.05$ ) was tested. As illustrated in Table 6-22, the result showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the purchase decision confidence regarding choosing Thailand as a travel destination between first time and re-visit groups ( $t = -1.957$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Both groups reported that they had confidence in their purchase decisions (mean scores approximately 4.00). It is possible that respondents undertook a thorough purchase decision process before they made their decisions. For example, first-visit respondents might search for information about tourism features, infrastructure, and environment that match their preferences before deciding where to go. With regard to respondents who had previously visited Thailand, they might feel confident travelling to the same destination because they were satisfied with their previous experience. Consequently, respondents had confidence in their purchase decisions regardless of trip purposes, and of first visit versus revisit.

**Table 6-22 Comparing means of purchase decision confidence between first time and re-visitors**

	<i>f</i>	Mean
First time visitors	801	3.77
Re-visitors	886	3.83
Total	1,687	3.81
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>		0.870
<i>t-value</i>		-1.957
<i>p-value</i>		0.051

Note: Respondents rated items where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree

## 6.9 Country Images Predicting Purchase Decision Confidence (H7)

Tourists have many destination choices. They are thus likely to compare the image of each country and will be more confident in travelling to a country which has a good image. To investigate this concept, H7 posited that country image attributes will positively relate to tourists' purchase decision confidence. Multiple regression analysis with simultaneous entry was conducted to explore the factors of country image which impact tourists' confidence.

As illustrated in Table 6-23, multiple regression analysis identified four characteristics of country image that influenced tourists' confidence in their purchase decisions, and with a positive direction. Specifically, relaxation ( $t = 7.101, p < 0.01$ ), infrastructure ( $t = 5.706, p < 0.01$ ), convenience ( $t = 2.719, p < 0.01$ ), and attraction ( $t = 2.252, p < 0.05$ ) contributed to the confidence in tourists' purchase decisions. Moreover, relationships found were all positive, implying that the more positive tourists' images toward a country were relating to relaxation, infrastructure, convenience, and attraction, the greater was the confidence in the purchase decisions. However, the environment and entertainment did not affect the confidence in purchase decisions at a statistically significant level. Therefore, H7 was moderately supported, in that four out of six elements of country image were related to tourists' purchase decision confidence.

**Table 6-23 Regression of country image towards purchase decision confidence**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.369	0.123		11.168	0.000
Relaxation	0.246	0.035	0.215	7.101	0.000
Infrastructure	0.170	0.030	0.155	5.706	0.000
Convenience	0.080	0.030	0.072	2.719	0.007
Attraction	0.067	0.030	0.064	2.252	0.024
Entertainment	0.037	0.027	0.039	1.384	0.166
Environment	0.023	0.022	0.026	1.086	0.278

The explanatory power of the model, as reported by  $R^2$  value, was 0.194 (see Table 6-24), documenting that the six predictor variables (environment, attraction, relaxation, infrastructure, convenience, and entertainment) regarding country image were able to explain only about one-fifth of the variation in tourists' confidence in their purchase

decisions. However, the overall  $F$ -test for the regression model ( $F = 68.399, p < 0.01$ ) indicated a significant relationship between these independent variables and the dependent variable, confidence in purchase decision.

**Table 6-24 ANOVA of country image towards purchase decision confidence**

	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Regression	123.188	6	0.194	20.531	68.399	0.000
Residual	510.286	1700		0.300		
Total	633.474	1706				

To examine how much of the overall variance is explained by the four significant variables (relaxation, infrastructure, convenience, and attraction), the  $R^2$  value of these four variables are considered. After deleting the entertainment and environment variables, the  $R^2$  value of those four variables was 0.193, which did not change much from the  $R^2$  value of the original six variables. There was no difference in the proportions of the variability of tourists' purchase decision confidence, which are explained by these two regression models. However,  $F$  value ( $p < 0.01$ ) increased to be 101.773.

The finding of the current study generally fits with Ngamsom's (2001) finding which indicated that the attributes influencing tourists in their intentions to revisit Thailand were its cultural/historical sites, natural scenery, friendly people, and cost of travel. Likewise, tourists travelled to Slovenia because it had a good image, with friendly people, beautiful scenery, and interesting attractions (Konecnik, 2004). Hui and Wan (2003) found that tourists chose Singapore as a travel destination because it had a good image in terms of shopping, easy transit to neighbouring countries, personal safety, and as a modern place.

Factor analysis suggested that the component parts of country image in this study were relaxation ("natural beauty" and "friendly people"), infrastructure ("shopping"), convenience ("easy transit to neighbouring countries"), and attraction ("cultural/historical sites"). These factors correspond to those of the three studies cited above, inferring that these four factors were the main components of country image which affected tourists' travel decisions. The more a destination had a positive image, the greater tourists were likely to choose that destination (Goodrich, 1978).

This has a parallel in the literature with regard to branding. Based on consumer behaviour studies, the more consumers had a positive image of a brand, the more they were confident in that brand, and the more likely they were to purchase that brand (Askarova, 2002; Howard & Sheth, 1969; Laroche et al., 1996). Brand image and level of satisfaction after the experience can also lead to purchase decision confidence (Howard & Sheth, 1969).

The result of the current study fits with those general arguments and suggests that tourists will feel confident travelling to a country that has the image of a good place for relaxation, quality infrastructure, convenience, and attractive tourism features. The relaxation factor resulting from the factor analysis included restfulness and relaxing, friendly people, beautiful beaches and scenery, a variety of things to see and do, and a pleasant climate. The infrastructure factor involved quality health services, wonderful shopping, suitable accommodation, and a variety of restaurants and exotic food. The convenience factor related to accessibility to neighbouring countries, convention business, meeting or conference facilities, inexpensive internal travel, an opportunity for family activities, and few language barriers. The factor named attraction included attractive rural areas, fascinating traditional events, interesting cultural attractions, and attractive architecture and monuments. Tourism marketers need to pay attention to these items of four country image dimensions in order to plan effective marketing strategies to attract tourists.

However, the environment and entertainment factors seemingly had no significant influence on tourists' purchase decision confidence. It implies that tourists' confidence in their purchase decisions do not mainly depend on the environments of that country such as un-crowded cities, low traffic congestion, cleanliness and unpolluted environments, high quality of life, personal safety, and political stability. Similarly the entertainment factor (e.g. plentiful nightlife and entertainment, exciting adventures, and appealing cities) did not impact on tourists' confidence in their decisions.

Regarding the "environment" factor, it is surprising that this variable was not a contributing factor influencing tourists' purchase decision confidence. This may be because respondents had a neutral image about the "environment" of Thailand (mean scores = 3.12). This factor included the elements of; uncrowded city, low traffic congestion, cleanliness and unpolluted environment, high quality of life, personal safety, and political stability. In general, tourists would not visit a country which was unsafe and

was politically unstable. During the data collection period, there were no critical issues about lack of safety or political instability in Thailand publicised in information sources. From travel information received, respondents had a pre-image that Thailand was a safe destination (mean scores = 3.64) and was politically stable (mean scores =3.38). Thus, these two items were not rated as negative, and did not influence respondents' decisions to travel to Thailand.

## **6.10 Information Source Usefulness Predicting Purchase Decision Confidence (H8)**

It makes intuitive sense that more travel information can enhance tourists' confidence in their purchase decisions, especially if they lack prior knowledge about the tourism attributes of a country. In the face of various country choices, they will search for more travel information about each country to enable comparisons. The usefulness of information from many sources may create tourists' confidence in their decisions. To explore something of this expected relationship, H8 proposed that there will be positive relationships between the usefulness of information sources and tourists' purchase decision confidence. Multiple regression analysis was used to test for these possible relationships.

The result, as illustrated in Table 6-25, revealed that in terms of usefulness only five travel information sources positively influenced tourists' purchase decision confidence. The sources from previous travel experience ( $t = 3.241, p < 0.01$ ), followed by brochures/pamphlets ( $t = 2.852, p < 0.01$ ), the internet ( $t = 2.346, p < 0.05$ ), friends/family/relatives ( $t = 2.331, p < 0.05$ ), and travel guidebooks ( $t = 2.128, p < 0.05$ ) were influential. In contrast, the usefulness of travel information from newspaper advertisements, magazine advertisements, road show/trade show, clubs/associations, television advertisements, and radio advertisements, were not significantly related to tourists' confidence in their purchase decisions. Moreover, the usefulness of travel information from magazine advertisements, clubs/associations, and radio advertisements had a slightly negative beta coefficient against tourists' purchase decision confidence. However, H8 was weakly supported, in that only five out of eleven information sources were related to tourists' purchase decision confidence.



**Table 6-25 Regression of information source usefulness towards purchase decision confidence**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.526	0.131		19.318	0.000
Travel experience	0.078	0.024	0.138	3.241	0.001
Brochures/pamphlets	0.085	0.030	0.137	2.852	0.004
Internet	0.066	0.028	0.104	2.346	0.019
Friends/family/relatives	0.059	0.025	0.101	2.331	0.020
Travel guidebooks	0.054	0.025	0.093	2.128	0.034
Newspaper advertisements	0.052	0.036	0.088	1.446	0.149
Road show/trade show	0.015	0.031	0.025	0.472	0.637
TV advertisements	0.005	0.033	0.009	0.159	0.874
Magazine advertisements	-0.008	0.033	-0.013	-0.238	0.812
Clubs/associations	-0.020	0.027	-0.036	-0.757	0.450
Radio advertisements	-0.035	0.033	-0.058	-1.036	0.301

The explanatory power of the model, with a reported  $R^2$  value of 0.161 (see Table 6-26), documents that the usefulness of the eleven travel information sources explained only a modest proportion of the variation in tourists' purchase decision confidence. However, the overall  $F$ -test for the regression model ( $F = 10.231, p < 0.01$ ) indicated that there was sufficient evidence to substantiate that the model can predict something of tourists' purchase decision confidence.

**Table 6-26 ANOVA of information source usefulness towards purchase decision confidence**

	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	R Square	Mean Square	$F$	Sig.
Regression	35.707	11	0.161	3.246	10.231	0.000
Residual	185.600	585		0.317		
Total	221.307	596				

To find out how much of the overall variance is explained by the five variables of interest (travel experience, brochures/pamphlets, the internet, friends/family/relatives, and travel guidebooks), six information sources which were not statistically significant relating to the purchase decision confidence were deleted. These six sources were newspaper advertisements, road show/trade show, television advertisements, magazine advertisements, clubs/associations, and radio advertisements. The  $R^2$  value of the five remaining sources was 0.156, which was similar to  $R^2$  value of the eleven information sources ( $R^2 = 0.161$ ). This indicates that there was no difference in the proportions of the

variability of tourists' purchase decision confidence, which are explained by these two regression models. However, the  $F$  value increased to be 31.951 ( $p < 0.01$ ).

There is a lack of tourism research investigating the relationship between information sources and travel decision confidence. The current study applied the concept of choice confidence drawn from the marketing literature. A review of the literature has shown that consumers' purchase decision confidence in a brand depends on their having information about that brand. A number of marketing researchers have documented that brand comprehension (Howard & Sheth, 1969), brand knowledge, brand familiarity, and previous experience are positively related to purchase decision confidence in a brand (Askarova, 2002; Laroche et al., 1996; Teng & Laroche, 2007). The more consumers know about a brand, the higher will be their confidence in purchasing that brand (Askarova, 2002). Brand knowledge and brand familiarity are formed by receiving information or having previous experience with the brand. Laroche et al. (1996) found that that consumers had confidence towards a brand because they were familiar with that brand. A consumer may receive information from advertising which then builds the consumer's brand cognition (Teng & Laroche, 2007). Teng and Laroche (2007) found that consumers' brand cognition influenced their confidence in evaluating a brand in their decision-making process. It has been thoroughly established that information can be a source of learning and knowledge towards the brand, and enhance consumers' confidence in their purchase decisions.

The finding of the current study supports those previous researchers in that information can enhance tourists' confidence in their purchase decisions. In the tourism context, not only past experience influences tourists' confidence in their purchase decisions, but other sources of information including brochures/pamphlets, the internet, travel guidebooks, and friends/family/relatives also influence the confidence. These five sources can enhance tourists' knowledge about a country's tourism attributes and create confidence in their purchase decisions. The result implies that these five sources provide travel information which tourists consider when choosing a travel destination, and in making other travel related decisions.

## 6.11 Consumption Values Predicting Purchase Decision Confidence (H9)

Several researchers have noted that consumption values are a critical element influencing consumer behavioural intentions (Cronin et al., 2000; Gale & Wood, 1994; Oh, 2000; Sheth et al., 1991). Many researchers also agree that confidence is an antecedent of purchase intention (Askarova, 2002; Bennett & Harrell, 1975; Howard, 1994; Howard & Sheth, 1969; Laroche & Howard, 1980; Laroche et al., 1996; Pereira, 1999). In a parallel aspect, consumption values might be an influential factor affecting tourists' confidence in their purchase decisions. Before tourists decide where to travel, they may become aware of the benefits which they expect to gain from travelling to a country. They may feel confident in their purchase decisions if they perceive that the decision complements their values. In order to test this argument, H9 posited that there will be positive relationships among tourists' five consumption values and their purchase decision confidence. Multiple regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis.

The result of the analysis, illustrated in Table 6-27, indicated that only two consumption values positively and significantly influenced tourists' confidence in their purchase decisions. Specifically, functional value ( $t = 7.047, p < 0.01$ ) and emotional value ( $t = 5.924, p < 0.01$ ) contributed. In contrast, social, conditional, and epistemic values did not significantly influence their confidence. Therefore, H9 was somewhat less supported. Two of the five consumption values affected tourists' purchase decision confidence, and in these instances the relationship was positive.

**Table 6-27 Regression of consumption values towards purchase decision confidence**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.392	0.126		18.963	0.000
Functional	0.158	0.022	0.178	7.047	0.000
Emotional	0.178	0.030	0.156	5.924	0.000
Social	0.016	0.021	0.019	0.756	0.450
Conditional	0.014	0.021	0.017	0.659	0.510
Epistemic	-0.013	0.018	-0.018	-0.694	0.488

As illustrated in Table 6-28, the overall  $F$ -test for the regression model ( $F = 28.706$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a significant relationship between the independent variables (functional, emotional, social, conditional, and epistemic values) and the dependent variable (purchase decision confidence). The explanatory power of the model, as reported by  $R^2$  value was 0.078, shows that these five predictor variables explained less than a tenth of the variation in the tourists' purchase decision confidence.

**Table 6-28 ANOVA of consumption values towards purchase decision confidence**

	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>R square</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Regression	49.288	5	0.078	9.858	28.706	0.000
Residual	583.443	1699		0.343		
Total	632.731	1704				

This finding is similar to the research result of Williams and Soutar (2000) who applied the model of consumption values and market choice behaviours of Sheth et al. (1991) in the tourism context. Williams and Soutar (2000) found that functional value was the main factor of tourists choosing a tour, while emotional, epistemic, social, and conditional values did not affect tourists' purchase decisions. Contrarily, Simmons (1997) found that emotional and epistemic values were the main factors of students choosing Marquette University. These elements related to enjoyment, fear (emotional), curiosity, and novelty (epistemic) in their anticipated experience of the university. On the other hand, the result of a study by Shen (2003) found that students rated the five consumption values as having a neutral effect in making their college choices in Taiwan. Instead of consumption values, the two main factors influencing students in making their college choices were academic concerns and employment prospects.

This finding partially supports the result from consumer behaviour researchers (Askarova, 2002; Bennett & Harrell, 1975) who focused only on functional value relating to consumers' purchase decision confidence. Bennett and Harrell (1975) found that consumers had confidence in purchasing a particular brand after they compared brand attributes. Askarova (2002) found that consumers tended to purchase the brand which would provide the highest net value (price-quality). In terms of functional value, the current study result suggests that tourists felt confident to travel to a country because its reputation as a tourism destination and having beautiful scenery appealed to them. However, the current study revealed that emotional value influenced tourists' purchase

decision confidence as well. In the case of emotional value, tourists had confidence in their travel decisions because they believed that they would get happiness, relaxation, and excitement in that country.

The importance of consumption values to confidence, documented in the present study, is mirrored in the results of studies outside the tourism context. For instance, Sweeney and Soutar (2001) revealed that emotional value, rather than quality, price, and social value, was the most important factor predicting the willingness to buy a particular product such as clothes, cars, furniture, and sporting goods in a store pre-purchase situation. It appears that emotional value assessed by a consumer is important in the purchase decision for many products.

In the tourism context, Sánchez et al. (2006) found that emotional value was the most significant in tourists' satisfactions and loyalties to travel agencies, while the quality of tourism products was the most significant aspect of their satisfaction with their trips. Functional, emotional, and overall values which include worthiness of purchasing a DMZ (The Korean demilitarized zone) tour had a significant influence on tourist satisfaction (Lee et al., 2007). Williams and Soutar (2009) found that value for money, emotional value, and novelty value of adventure tourism experience positively influenced tourist satisfactions and future intentions.

Although there were varied results from the previous studies, most found that functional and emotional values influenced consumers' and tourists' purchase decisions. These outcomes are reflected in the current result. The current study also found that both functional and emotional values significantly influenced purchase decision confidence. The five consumption values cannot be universally applied to explain all markets or industries (Sheth et al., 1991). Customers may rely on their values differently, depending on the type of product or service, personal characteristics (Zeithaml, 1988), and the situations (Williams & Soutar, 2000).

## **6.12 Additional Interest**

Some researchers have recommended that there are different perceptions about destination image attributes between socio-economic categories after tourists have experienced a

destination. For example, Beerli and Martín (2004b) revealed that female first time visitors had a more positive image of tourist infrastructure and natural/cultural resources than did males. They also found that older tourists assessed social environment as having a more positive image than did younger tourists. Furthermore, they found that first time visitors with different social classes differently assessed the cognitive images of natural/cultural resources and atmosphere. The tourist's country of origin influenced the cognitive and affective images of the travel destination (Beerli & Martín, 2004b). In another study, Rittichainuwat, Qu, and Brown (2001) found that younger and single travellers viewed Thailand as being less safe and as having a lower value of cuisine and hotels than did older and married travellers. Conversely, the younger and single travellers perceived Thailand's adventure activities and beautiful scenery more positively than did older and married travellers. They also found that travellers with higher educational levels had a higher positive image of good-value cuisine and hotels in Thailand. Asian travellers, as compared to travellers from other regions, had a less favourable image of social and environmental factors, safety, rich culture, good-value cuisine and hotels, and good shopping attributes (Rittichainuwat et al., 2001).

As found in the studies reported above, it is of interest as to whether there are differences between socio-economic characteristics, purposes of trip, and country image attributes formed after tourists consulted travel information sources. This study tested those relationships to compare the results from previous studies that surveyed tourists after experiencing the destination. The results are discussed in the following sections.

### **6.12.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics and Country Image**

As illustrated in Appendix 20, ANOVA results showed that respondents with different genders, regions of residence, age groups, and income levels had statistically significant differences in perceptions about image attributes of Thailand. The differences for educational levels and occupational classifications were not statistically significant. Females rated relaxation and attraction slightly higher than did males. European and North American respondents reported Thailand as being a good place for relaxation more than did respondents from other regions. African respondents had a more positive image of infrastructure than did Europeans and the Middle Easterners. Respondents from North America and Oceania viewed Thailand's tourist attractions more positively than did other

respondents. Oceanian respondents tended to have a slightly poorer image of the environment than did other respondents. In terms of age groups, the youngest group (18-24 years) perceived Thailand as an entertainment destination more than did the oldest group (> 54 years). The older group (35-54 years) was more likely to agree that Thailand had convenient facilities than did the younger group (18-34 years). Respondents with the highest income level (> US\$80,000) also rated Thailand as having a good image of convenience as compared to respondents with the lowest incomes ( $\leq$  US\$20,000). Conversely, the lowest income group had a slightly more positive image of environment than the richer group (> US\$60,000).

Although the results indicated there were statistically significant differences among socio-economic groups, there were very tiny mean differences. It appears that respondents of all groups had a positive image of Thailand as a good place for relaxation, good infrastructure, great entertainment, attractive tourism features, and convenient facilities. The environment in Thailand tended to be perceived as having a neutral image. Because practical mean differences rarely exist, the results could not provide substantial evidence for suggesting marketers to plan marketing strategies based on sub-groups; e.g. gender, region of residence, age group, income level. Moreover, the findings in this study could not strongly confirm that there are relationships between socio-economic characteristics and country image attributes as the previous studies found. One reason might be that the previous studies tested those relationships with tourists after experiencing a destination, but this study measured country image attributes based on their perceptions after they gathered information sources before visiting Thailand. It appears that country image attributes in a tourist's imagination were not significantly related to socio-economic characteristics. Thus, this relationship will not be addressed in this study.

### **6.12.2 Purposes of Trip and Country Image**

With regard to purposes of trip, ANOVA indicated that respondents with different trip purposes had statistically significant differences in their perceptions of the image attributes of Thailand (see Table 6-29). Respondents who travelled for leisure rated Thailand's image of relaxation higher than did respondents who travelled for business/conference.

Conversely, respondents whose purpose of visit was business/conference indicated that Thailand had a good image of convenient facilities, (for example convention business,

meeting or conference facilities, inexpensive internal travel, and few language barriers), higher than did leisure respondents. However, small mean differences were found. The results could not suggest marketers to present country image attributes based on of trip purposes. The relationship between purposes of trip and country image attributes seemed to be less meaningful, and was considered irrelevant in this study.

**Table 6-29 ANOVA of country image by purposes of trip**

	Group	f	Relaxation	Infrastructure	Entertainment	Attraction	Convenience	Environment
Leisure	1	1,113	<b>4.08</b>	3.93	3.93	3.90	<b>3.52</b>	3.10
Business/conference	2	385	<b>3.97</b>	3.95	3.84	3.86	<b>3.65</b>	3.17
VFR	3	126	4.10	3.98	3.97	4.02	3.54	3.05
Others (e.g. study, medical treatment, etc.)	4	67	4.04	4.02	3.89	3.94	3.53	3.23
Total		1,691	4.06	3.94	3.91	3.90	3.55	3.12
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.310	0.593	0.066	0.186	0.493	0.323
<i>F-value</i>			4.683	0.820	2.543	2.600	5.037	2.252
<i>p-value</i>			0.003	0.483	0.055	0.051	0.002	0.080
<i>Scheffé post hoc test</i>			<b>1&gt;2</b>				<b>2&gt;1</b>	

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree

2) Mean differences indicated by Scheffé post hoc test are in **bold**.

## 6.13 Chapter Summary

The results of testing the hypotheses are presented and discussed as follows:

The five H1 sub-hypotheses were tested by Pearson correlation. The analyses indicated that there were positive relationships among the five consumption values and the reported usefulness of information sources, but had weak association.

H2, H3, H4, and H5 were examined by one-way ANOVA ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) in order to explore the differences in each dimension of consumption values, and the usefulness of different travel information sources among respondent groups. These were based on their purpose of trip (leisure, business/conference, VFR, and others), and socio-economic characteristics relating to region of residence, age group, income level, educational level, and occupational classification. Independent-samples *t*-tests (2-tailed test,  $p \leq 0.05$ ) were also used to compare mean differences between genders in those same dimensions as



hypothesized in H2, H3, H4, and H5. The outcomes of testing moderately supported H2, H4, and H5, but weakly supported H3. However, it was acknowledged that only small arithmetical differences were found in some groups and such differences were not of particular practical use. These small differences were likely to be due to the large sample size, and these were seen as anomalous rather than as evidence of practically useful differences.

Due to the way the question regarding the usefulness of travel information sources was constructed, the hypothesis that there was a causal relationship between this variable and country image was not testable. This will be further discussed and recommendations made for future research in the next chapter.

Multiple regression analysis was employed to test H7, H8, and H9. Results indicated that H7 was moderately supported. H8 and H9 were weakly supported. All results and implications for each hypothesis are presented in Table 6-30.

**Table 6-30 Results of hypotheses testing**

<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Results</b>
H1a	There were positive relationships between <b>functional value</b> and the reported usefulness of <b>ten information sources</b> . These sources were brochures/pamphlets, WOM from friends/family/relatives, the internet, road show/trade show, advertisements from magazines, newspapers, and television, travel guidebooks, experience, and clubs/associations.	Strongly supported
H1b	There were positive relationships between <b>emotional value</b> and the reported usefulness of all <b>eleven information sources</b> .	Strongly supported
H1c	There were positive relationships between <b>social value</b> and the reported usefulness of <b>nine information sources</b> . These sources were friends/family/relatives recommendations, the advertisements from newspapers, television, magazines, and radio, in addition to the sources from clubs/associations, brochures/pamphlets, road show/trade show, and the internet.	Strongly supported
H1d	There were positive relationships between <b>conditional value</b> and the reported usefulness of <b>nine information sources</b> . These sources were road show/trade show, brochures/pamphlets, the advertisements from television, newspapers, magazines, radio, and the sources from travel guidebooks, the internet, and previous travel experience.	Strongly supported
H1e	There were positive relationships between <b>epistemic value</b> and the reported usefulness of <b>seven information sources</b> . These sources were television, newspapers, radio, magazines advertisements, brochures/pamphlets, road show/trade show, and clubs/associations.	Moderately supported
H2	Tourists with different <b>trip purposes</b> had significant differences only <b>emotional and functional values</b> , but not for social, conditional, and epistemic values.	Moderately supported
H3	Only <b>five information sources</b> significantly differed in the usefulness based on <b>trip purposes</b> . These sources were travel guidebooks, friends/family/relatives recommendations, television advertisements, the internet, and previous experience.	Weakly supported
H4	<b>Some consumption values</b> of travelling abroad significantly differed according to tourists' <b>socio-economic characteristics</b> relating to gender, region of residence, age group, and occupational classification, but not for educational level and income level.	Moderately supported
H5	<b>The usefulness of information sources</b> significantly differed according to tourists' <b>socio-economic characteristics</b> only gender, region of residence, age group, household annual income level, but not for educational level and occupational classification.	Moderately supported
H6	Un-testable	-
H7	Four out of the six elements of <b>country image</b> significantly related to tourists' <b>purchase decision confidence</b> . These elements were relaxation, infrastructure, convenience, and attraction.	Moderately supported
H8	Only five out of the eleven <b>information sources</b> significantly related to tourists' <b>purchase decision confidence</b> . These sources were previous experience, brochures/pamphlets, the internet, friends/family/relatives, and travel guidebooks.	Weakly supported
H9	Only <b>functional and emotional values</b> significantly related to tourists' <b>purchase decision confidence</b> .	Weakly supported

All twelve hypotheses were supported. Most findings of the current study are consistent with the previous studies discussed earlier. The strength of these findings will contribute to the theoretical and managerial implications that will be presented in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusions and Implications**

The importance and the conclusions from the overall study are summarised in this chapter. Further, theoretical and managerial implications are presented. Limitations of the study and possible directions for future research are also addressed.

#### **7.1 Importance of Study**

Some marketing researchers have identified that consumption values (Cronin et al., 2000; Kashyap & Bojanic, 2000; Sheth et al., 1991; Zeithaml, 1988; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000) and brand image (Abe & Tanaka, 1989; Powpaka, 1993) are antecedent motivators of purchase intentions. These two factors also influence consumers' purchase decision confidence (Askarova, 2002; Howard & Sheth, 1969). In the tourism context, there are limited studies as to how consumption values and country image might relate to tourists' purchase decisions. Additionally, there is a lack of research examining the factors influencing tourists' purchase decision confidence. Most previous tourism studies have focused on the "push" and "pull" factors affecting travel destination choice. Mostly these factors have been investigated separately. This study attempts to close these gaps by examining the inclusive factors affecting tourists' travel destination choices, and purchase decision confidence as a framework for building a country brand to attract tourists.

The framework developed for this study was based on the fundamental model of consumption values and market choices theorised by Sheth et al. (1991), adding linkages with socio-economic characteristics, purposes of trip, travel information sources, and country image. This study also applied the concept of purchase decision confidence from the buyer behaviour model suggested by Howard and Sheth (1969). The outcomes of the study provide valuable contributions to an improved understanding of tourists' decisions and decision confidence through the use of multiple variables within the single more inclusive model than seen in any previous study.

## 7.2 Summary of Thesis

The research provides knowledge about the factors affecting tourists' purchase decisions in selecting a country to visit, and the factors influencing their purchase decision confidence. This research also closed some gaps in the literature and developed a new model, which is valuable for both academics and practitioners in marketing and tourism. This study used a quantitative approach with a self-administered questionnaire. A large sample of 1,707 respondents from seven regions of residence was used for analysing data. All twelve hypotheses were supported to a varying degree as aforementioned in Chapter Six, section 6.13. The five research objectives of the study described in Chapter Three (p. 45) were all achieved.

The first objective of the study was to better understand the factors influencing travel destination choices. The findings support the literature and provide evidence that tourists acted on their consumption values, searched for information from various sources, evaluated country image, and had few constraints on travelling to their selected country. Descriptive statistical results of these four factors relating to their decision-making are explained. They provided evidence of high levels of functional and emotional values, followed by social, conditional, and epistemic values, as being the main factors driving them to travel. In addition, tourists highly rated the usefulness of travel information sources to plan their trips, mainly the internet, previous experience, WOM, and travel guidebooks. Regarding country image, tourists had a positive image of Thailand relating to relaxation, infrastructure, entertainment, attraction, convenience, and the environment, respectively. They also had few constraints on travelling to Thailand. These constraints involved intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural factors. The least constraint was an intrapersonal factor relating to their personal health and physical conditions, and their interest in activities at a destination. These findings contribute to the literature that investigate not only "push" factors (the five consumption values) and "pull" factors (travel information sources and six country image attributes), but also tourists' constraints that can affect their travel destination choices.

The second objective was to investigate the relationship between consumption values and the usefulness of travel information sources. There were positive relationships between each of the five consumption values and the reported usefulness of travel information

sources in a varying degree, but with only low associations. Tourists with higher emotional value rated all of the eleven information sources as having higher levels of usefulness. In declining order of importance, these were the advertisements from magazines and newspapers, the internet, travel guidebooks, brochures/pamphlets, previous experience, road show/trade show, advertisements from television, clubs/associations, WOM, and radio advertisements. Furthermore, the higher the respondents' functional value, the greater the usefulness of ten information sources (excluding radio advertisements). The other three consumption values (social, conditional, and epistemic) were positively related to some of the information sources. The sources associated with these three consumption values were brochures/pamphlets, road show/trade show, and advertising on magazines, newspapers, television, and radio.

These findings confirm that there are positive relationships between consumption values and the usefulness of travel information sources. This is in accord with the theoretical framework that consumption values can drive a consumer to desire a product or service, causing them to search for information to evaluate each alternative before making a purchase decision. In a tourism context, consumption values may drive tourists to travel abroad, lead them to search for more information to evaluate each potential destination, and then decide to travel to a particular destination which matches their needs or desires.

The third objective involved examining the effects of purposes of trip on consumption values and the reported usefulness of travel information sources. Analysis identified that only functional and emotional values were different between tourists having different trip purposes. Tourists whose purpose was leisure, or business/conference, tended to score higher on functional value than did VFR. Leisure tourists tended to hold higher emotional value of travel than did business/conference, and VFR tourists. In addition, the usefulness of the internet, previous experience, friends/family/relatives, travel guidebooks, and television advertisements were also rated as useful differently based on trip purposes. Leisure tourists reported that travel information from the internet, friends/family/relatives, and travel guidebooks was more useful than other groups. VFR tourists were likely to be more reliant on their previous experiences and recommendations from friends/family/relatives than were business/conference tourists. Television advertisements tended to be less useful for all groups, but particularly leisure tourists, who reported this source as less useful than did business/conference tourists.

The fourth objective was to examine the effects of socio-economic characteristics relative to consumption values and the reported usefulness of travel information sources. Some socio-economic characteristics such as gender, region of residence, age group, and occupational classification yielded statistically significant differences when examining the pattern of tourists' consumption values relevant to travelling abroad. The findings with regard to values and these characteristics are summarised as follows:

- Females gave more concern to the emotional and social values of travel than did males.
- Tourists from East Asia, the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa gave more consideration to the social and epistemic values than did tourists from Europe, North America, and Oceania. African tourists reported higher functional value than did Europeans. East Asian tourists were likely to be influenced by conditional value to a greater degree than European and Oceanian tourists.
- Younger tourists tended to hold higher emotional value of travel than did older groups. Tourists aged between 45-54 years had higher expectations on the epistemic value of travel than did the oldest group (> 54 years).
- Only conditional value relative to travel was reported differently among occupational classifications. Tourists whose jobs were administrative and managerial, as well as clerical and commercial occupations, reported higher conditional value than did professionals.

Regarding the usefulness of travel information sources, tourists with different genders, regions of residence, age groups, and household income levels, had statistically significant differences in evaluations of the usefulness of some information sources. The results are summarised as follows:

- Females tended to rely on travel information sources from friends/family/relatives, travel guidebooks, and brochures/pamphlets more than did males.
- Tourists from different regions of residence reported differently the usefulness of many information sources. For instance, European and North American tourists rated the internet as useful higher than did East Asian tourists. Travel guidebooks also were likely to be more useful for Europeans and North

Americans as compared to East Asians, the Middle Easterners, and South Asians. Tourists from North America, Africa, and the Middle East reported travel information from friends/family/relatives as more useful than did tourists from East Asia, Europe, and South Asia. The sources from road show/trade show, including advertisements from newspapers, television, and radio appeared to be more useful for Africans, while Europeans reported those sources as less useful. South Asians, Oceanians, and Africans rated brochures/pamphlets as more useful than did Europeans. Africans and the Middle Easterners reported higher reliance on clubs/associations as compared to Europeans.

- Younger tourists (18-24 years) reported that travel information from the internet, friends/family/relatives, and travel guidebooks were of greater use than did older tourists. The oldest tourists (> 54 years) evaluated brochures/pamphlets as more useful than younger tourists (25-34 years).
- Tourists who had the highest income level (> US\$80,000) were more likely to rely on their previous travel experiences as compared to tourists who had the lowest income level ( $\leq$  US\$20,000). The richest (> US\$80,000) and richer (US\$60,001-80,000) groups rated radio advertisements as less useful than did tourists with lowest income level.

Although the results found statistically significant differences in the pattern of consumption values and the usefulness of travel information sources across some socio-economic characteristics and among trip purposes, they were very small mean differences and there were no consistent patterns of use to rely upon. It seems that there is no substantial evidence to confirm the theoretical standpoint that socio-economic characteristics and trip purposes can be used as a technique of segmentation for planning marketing strategies to differentiate market in order to attract worldwide tourists travel to a country. It is apparent that tourists consider their consumption values relevant to travelling and report the usefulness of each of the eleven information sources in a similar manner. From the results of this study, functional and emotional values were the main factors driving tourists to travel abroad. Social and conditional values were the moderate factors, while the least influential factor was epistemic value. In terms of information sources, the internet, previous experience, WOM recommendations, and travel guidebooks, appeared to be the most useful for making travel plans. The sources from brochures/pamphlets,

clubs/associations, road show/trade show, and advertisements from magazines, newspapers, television, tended to be moderately useful, while radio advertisements were likely to be less useful.

The last objective was to examine the factors influencing tourists' purchase decision confidence. It was discovered that some elements of consumption values, information sources, and country image, did influence tourists' purchase decision confidence. In terms of consumption values, tourists had confidence in their purchase decisions positively and significantly associated with functional and emotional values toward a destination. In terms of functional value, tourists had confidence when they travelled to a destination with a good tourism reputation and attributes such as beautiful scenery. With regard to emotional value, tourists were confident because they expected to have travel experiences of happiness, relaxation, excitement of travel, and having a variety of activity choices in a destination. Furthermore, information sources from previous experience, brochures/pamphlets, the internet, friends/family/relatives, and travel guidebooks were also found to significantly enhance tourists' purchase decision confidence. When considering country image, the perception of a country as offering relaxation, infrastructure, convenience, and attraction, significantly influenced tourists' purchase decision confidence.

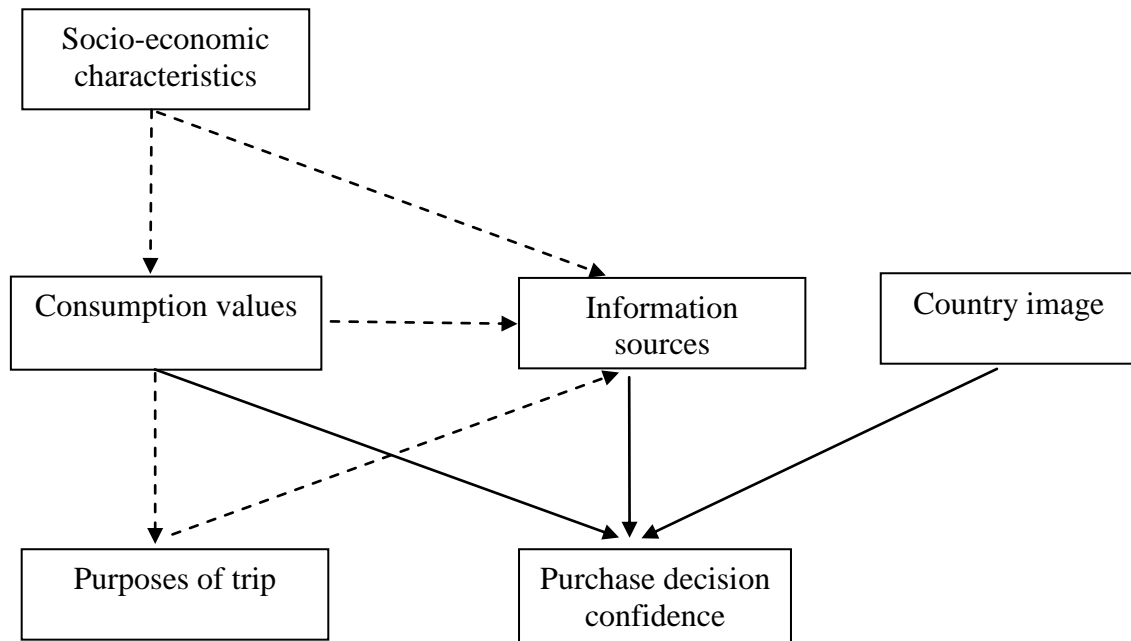
These results provide a framework for understanding many of the determinant factors of purchase decision confidence. These determinant factors involve consumption values, information sources, and country image, with several variables in each factor influencing the purchase decision confidence. The significant variables found in this study include functional and emotional values, five travel information sources, and four dimensions of country image, as discussed earlier.

Consequently, it appears that there are positive relationships between all five consumption values and the usefulness of travel information sources to a varying degree. Also, there are relationships between consumption values, information sources, country image, and tourist' purchase decision confidence. Some dimensions of consumption values, information sources, and country image are the antecedents of the confidence. Additionally, trip purposes and some socio-economic characteristics are related at a statistically significant level to the pattern of consumption values and the reported



usefulness of information sources. As illustrated in Figure 7-1, the resultant explanatory model was refined slightly from the conceptual model originally proposed in Chapter Three (p. 46). This model indicates potential topics for future researchers and marketers investigating tourist purchase decision confidence.

**Figure 7-1 Model of tourist's purchase decision confidence**



### 7.3 Theoretical Implications

The results of this study suggest several contributions to improve the theoretical understanding of what factors affect destination choice, how consumption values influence tourists' purchase decisions, what factors influence their purchase decision confidence, and how to build an effective country brand to attract tourists.

This study simultaneously examined several more factors that potentially affected travel destination choice as compared to previous research, which has usually focused only a limited number of specific factors. Likewise, the recommendation of Oh et al. (1995) who suggested that not merely considered the push (motivations) and the pull factors (tourism attributes) but also the situational constraints should be considered when tourists make decisions. The present study has included several possible factors as influences of tourists' travel destination choice. These factors include consumption values, travel information

sources, country image attributes, and travel constraints. The consumption values are viewed as the “push” factor, while travel information sources and country image attributes play a role as a “pull” factor affecting tourists making their travel destination choices.

Although previous studies have suggested that some socio-economic characteristics and trip purposes relate to the benefits sought from taking a vacation and travel information sources used, the results of this study found very small mean differences among genders, regions of residence, age groups, occupation classifications, and trip purposes in the pattern of consumption values, as well as, small mean differences among genders, regions of residence, age groups, income levels, and trip purposes in the reported usefulness of travel information sources. It seems that the consumption values pattern and the usefulness of travel information sources could not be distinguished either among socio-economic characteristics, or across trip purposes. Segmentation based on such grouping might be effectively used in some tourism areas such as tour agents, accommodation providers, or airlines, but it might not be as applicable in tourism marketing strategies promoting a country to all tourists worldwide as a huge target market. For example, tour agents may design a tour package of adventure tourism for younger tourists, or a golf tour for business tourists. Types of accommodation or airline chosen may vary depending on income levels. But the country as a whole is seen universally as a single entity, albeit with many facets.

A large number of researchers have applied the concept of consumption values to the products and services context, but there is little research in the tourism area. Moreover, the dimensions used to measure consumption values in previous research were mostly limited to the functional (Askarova, 2002; Bennett & Harrell, 1975), emotional (Lee et al., 2007), and social values (Sánchez et al., 2006; Sweeney et al., 1999). The findings of this study confirm that there are multiple dimensions of consumption values influencing tourists’ purchase decisions. They provide the evidence that functional and emotional values are the main factors driving tourists to travel abroad, followed to a lesser extent by social, conditional, and epistemic values. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the functional and emotional values positively related to tourists’ purchase decision confidence. The stronger the tourists’ functional and emotional values were, the greater the confidence they had in their purchase decisions.

Only two of five consumption values (functional and emotional) contributed tourists' purchase decision confidence. It seems that a theory focused initially and primarily on fast moving consumer goods may not work so well in a service marketing situation where many consumers are experienced and capable of acting as proactive discrimination decision makers.

However, the five consumption values (functional, emotional, social, conditional, and epistemic values) provide a comprehensive explanation of the important factors involved when tourists made their travel decisions. When considering the mean scores of each value, the results showed that functional, emotional, social, and conditional values, respectively, were important factors motivating tourists to travel, while epistemic value was the least important factor. Additionally, the statistical results found that socio-economic characteristics and trip purposes related to different consumption values. The findings of this study support the contributions of the Sheth et al. (1991) model which provides the five factors for enhancing the knowledge of consumption values involved in travel decision-making.

Purchase decision confidence is an area of consumer behaviour theory initially developed by Howard and Sheth (1969). This theory is a valuable contribution to enhance our understanding of the factors influencing tourists' confidence in their decisions to travel to a country. The present results modestly confirm the theoretical framework of Howard and Sheth (1969), in that tourists' confidence in their purchase decisions relate to the values, their comprehensions about a country, and favourable attitudes toward that country. Additionally, the results extend the theoretical standpoint that there are multiple dimensions relating to values, information sources, and image attributes.

The results in this study suggest that tourists' confidence in their decisions is determined by the functional and emotional values relative to travelling to a country. The results also suggest that the more information about a country that tourists have, the more they are confident in their travel decisions. The findings identify that five information sources enhance confidence in their decisions. These sources are previous travel experience, brochures/pamphlets, the internet, friends/family/relatives, and travel guidebooks. Furthermore, the more favourable image tourists hold of a country, the greater the purchase decision confidence they have. Analysis suggests that four country image factors

contribute to predicting this confidence; relaxation, infrastructure, convenience, and attraction.

This study also provides a fundamental base for academics and practitioners to develop how a country can build a strong brand to attract tourists. Morgan et al. (2003) suggest that to build a country brand effectively, the public and private sectors have to cooperate in identifying the brands' salient attributes, then communicating them to the target market. The core values of a country should then be represented, appealing to both functional and emotional values (Florek, 2005; Hall, 2004; Morgan et al., 2002, 2003) of tourists, and should be based on their perceptions (Konecnik, 2004; Morgan et al., 2003; Wanjiru, 2006). The results of this study support these theoretical viewpoints in that the consumption values, information sources, and country image need to be incorporated, as they are all related to country brand. The results also verify that the attributes of a country can be promoted by appealing to functional and emotional values, as they are the main factors driving tourist travel abroad and are influential in increasing tourists' purchase decision confidence. Additionally, the positioning of a country can be measured based on tourists' perceptions. The country image construct as designed for this study provides a means for measuring the image attributes of a country. Regarding information sources, the results found that tourists mainly used the internet, previous experience, friends/family/relatives, and travel guidebooks for planning their trips. It appears that the internet became a popular source of acquired travel information. The internet is a crucial source for information delivery and acquisition because it provides opportunities to reduce dependency on traditional intermediaries for remote, and peripheral destinations (Luo et al., 2004). The findings of this study also suggest that not only do the information sources from public and private sectors, but individual persons (previous experience and WOM), influence a country brand as well.

## **7.4 Managerial Implications**

Tourists can select from many places, and choose to travel to a country that they will believe best satisfy their needs and wants. The findings of this study provide useful guidance and support for tourism marketers to plan marketing strategies in order to attract tourists in a competitive global market.

To create effective marketing strategies, DMOs and other tourism stakeholders need to better understand what factors affect tourists' purchase decisions. This study found that consumption values, travel information sources, country image, and constraints related to tourists' destination choices and purchase decisions. The results suggest that DMOs and other tourism stakeholders (e.g. tour agents, hotels, and airlines) should promote tourism by emphasising functional and emotional values, and image attributes of a country. These details should be transmitted by many information sources, but best returns may come from using the internet, travel guidebooks, and brochures. Those three sources were found as being very useful for tourists making their travel plans, and also significantly influenced tourists' purchase decision confidence. Additionally, marketers should promote not only a positive image, but also should assure tourists that their expectations will be met, because previous experiences and WOM were also found as the main sources influencing tourists' confidence. In addition, in order to persuade tourists, travel information should be presented in a manner that attempts to minimise travel constraints to that particular country.

Another implication of this study is that marketers should design advertising messages via the appropriate information sources that suitably represent the values tourists will receive when travelling to a country. The results found that emotional value was positively associated with the usefulness of all the eleven travel information sources, while the other four consumption values (functional, social, conditional, and epistemic values) were positively associated with the usefulness of some of the travel information sources. In addition, the results found five consumption values (functional, emotional, social, conditional, and epistemic values) positively related to the information sources from brochures/pamphlets, road show/trade show, and advertisements from magazines, newspapers, and television. One suggestion to take from this is that marketers should design advertising messages to highlight the five consumption values via those five information sources but also recognise that each source has a different level of usefulness. The advertising messages and images should present the destination as having a great reputation, beautiful scenery, offering relaxation, a wide variety of activity choices, opportunities to explore something new and different, with festival, and activities for family and friends. The messages should also present information that suggests the destination provides a happy and exciting experience, personal safety, pleasant climate, and good value for money. Additionally, the results illustrated that the internet was one of

the most useful sources for tourists in making their travel plans, and was associated with the four consumption values (functional, emotional, social, and conditional factors). Thus, another suggestion is that when communicating travel information via the internet to the target market, marketers should promote country or tourism features by emphasising these four consumption values.

Furthermore, to promote a country to attract tourists, DMOs should plan marketing strategies for their target market as a mass market, rather than regional or sub-segmented market based on socio-economic profiles or trip purposes. The study found that there were very small mean differences in consumption values among socio-economic profiles and purposes of trip. These mean differences did not indicate any substantial patterns. It does appear that tourists tend to apply the five consumption values. However, functional and emotional values are more motivating for travel abroad than are social and conditional values. Epistemic value is the least influential.

In addition, the statistically significant differences in the pattern of consumption values varied among the groups of gender, region of residence, age group, occupation group, and trip purpose. For example, the contribution of emotional and social values leading to travel varied by gender. Functional, social, conditional, and epistemic values varied across regions of residence. Different age groups applied both emotional and epistemic values differently, while the impact of conditional value was different among occupation groups. The variation among the demographic profiles in travel pattern is so large that demographic characteristics are poor predictors of the variation in travel patterns (Smith, 1995). Hence, it may be inappropriate for DMOs to design a marketing plan to promote a country that differentiates the market based on socio-economic characteristics or trip purposes. From the current study's results, DMOs should pay attention to functional and emotional values, followed by social, conditional, and epistemic values, to promote a country.

In the case of travel information sources, although some information sources were found statistically significant differences in the usefulness level, based on trip purpose, gender, region of residence, age group, and income level, the practical mean differences rarely exist. Tourists tended to rate the usefulness of eleven information sources to the same degree. The most useful sources were the internet, previous experience, WOM, and travel

guidebooks. The sources from brochures/pamphlets, clubs/associations, road show/trade show, and advertisements from magazines, newspapers, and television tended to be moderately useful, while radio advertisements were likely to be less useful for making travel plans. Marketers should be attentive to communicating travel information via the internet and travel guidebooks. In addition, they should update photographs and advertising messages to be more attractive to all potential target markets regardless of the sub-segments they wish to attract. The internet web-site should be easily accessed and provide convenient functions for customers to simplify search for information and make their purchasing transactions. Furthermore, marketers and tourism providers should insure tourism products and facilities are as promised to tourists. This is because previous travel experiences and WOM were found to be most useful for tourists making travel plans. A satisfactory travel experience can lead to a favourable WOM recommendation and perhaps a revisit to a country (Heung et al., 2001).

Further, the findings identified that only functional and emotional values significantly influenced tourists' confidence in their purchase decisions. Thus, DMOs and tourism stakeholders should build a country brand and develop tourism products and services emphasising those two factors. For example, in the case of functional value, tourism marketers should promote a country for its beautiful scenery and reputation in tourism emphasising such as sightseeing, natural parks, and local culture, sporting activities such as golf tours and scuba diving, and great value for shopping. In addition, to represent emotional value, tourism marketers should impress upon tourists' expectations of happiness, relaxation, finding adventure, and experiencing a variety of tourism activities. The results also indicated that some country image attributes significantly determined tourists' confidence in their purchase decisions. These attributes include potential for relaxation, supportive infrastructure, convenience, and public attractions. On the other hand, the environment and entertainment did not appear to significantly influence confidence.

Thus, DMOs and other tourism stakeholders should promote country image emphasising these four elements. Firstly, destination and tourism marketers should design messages which highlight a destination as a restful and relaxing place, with friendly people, beautiful beaches and scenery, a variety of things to see and do, and with a pleasant climate for relaxation. Secondly, a country should be promoted as having a good infrastructure which

offers suitable accommodation, a variety of restaurants and exotic food, wonderful shopping, and quality health services. Thirdly, a country should be promoted as having convenient facilities, for example, inexpensive internal travel, an opportunity for family activities, business conventions and conference facilities, few language barriers, and accessibility to neighbouring countries. Fourthly, a country which has many tourism attractions such as attractive rural areas, fascinating traditional events, interesting cultural attractions, and attractive architecture and monuments should be proactive in promoting them.

The findings also suggest that destination and tourism marketers should plan marketing strategies based on customer orientation. This means that DMOs and tourism marketers should anticipate what tourists need, and then develop products and services to meet these (Pike, 2004). Kotler et al. (1993) also suggested that location marketers need to understand the needs, perceptions, preferences, and resources of target buyers before developing their strategic marketing plan. In addition, Heath (2000, p. 123) indicated that most successful destination marketing strategies have been employed the following approaches:

- (1) Increasing utilisation of appropriate tourism intelligence and market research as a base for strategy formulation and implementation.
- (2) Increasing the involvement of all key stakeholders in destination marketing strategy formulation.
- (3) Developing and getting “buy-in” into a shared vision.
- (4) Responding to the needs of the “new” tourist.
- (5) Moving from broad-based marketing to targeting and customisation.
- (6) Placing strategic emphasising on destination branding and competitive positioning.
- (7) Diversifying and enhancing the product offering and selling experiences rather than products.
- (8) Capitalising on the collective attractiveness of destinations.
- (9) Increasingly utilising new technology-based communication and promotional vehicles.
- (10) Forging strategic public and private sectors destination marketing partnerships.



Therefore, DMOs and other tourism stakeholders should plan marketing strategies that focus on customer-oriented marketing that will satisfy customers. To be more effective, they also should co-operate with each other in building a strong brand as a marketing tool to increase overall tourist demand for their destinations. Many of the above suggestions can be construed as common practice currently. However, the suggestions increased emphasis on destination features relevant to consumption values is worth noting.

## **7.5 Limitations of the Research**

Although this study provides a number of contributions to tourism and marketing theory and to tourism management, there are limitations that should be considered when evaluating the results.

Firstly, the quantitative approach taken in this study limits understanding of what other possible factors affect tourists in selecting a destination, what additional travel constraints tourists have, and what other elements influence their purchase decision confidence.

Because a structured questionnaire was used, its predetermined responses may have limited options in addressing the questions. Respondents could not explain their main reasons for choosing the destination, the travel constraints to other countries compared with their selected country (Thailand), and other possible inputs that may have affected their purchase decision confidence. In addition, this approach may not have gained enough in-depth information from respondents to develop measurement items relevant to each construct (e.g. consumption values, travel constraints, and purchase decision confidence), and to design a model of purchase decision confidence.

Additionally, due to the constraints of time and monetary resources, questionnaires could not be provided in different languages for worldwide tourists. Thus, it was necessary to design a questionnaire using only the English language. Consequently, some tourists from East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa, who were unable to communicate in English had to be excluded. The perceptions and attitudes of non-English speakers might be different from English speakers. Accordingly, data results of the sample (English speakers) may not be generalised to represent the results of all tourists from those five regions.

Another limitation arose from the data collection that was conducted at the arrival hall in the International Airport of Thailand, Bangkok. Some tourists might have been fatigued on arrival, or they might have been in a hurry to leave the airport, which would have an impact on the quality of their responses to the questionnaires. This might lead to missing data in some sections or skipping some items. When a whole section of the questionnaire was not filled in, the entire questionnaire was regarded as unusable. There were 407 unusable questionnaires. Overall, 1,707 questionnaires were usable for analysis. From this group, there were still some missing data. However, for any particular item, commonly less than 10.0% of the total sample group had not answered that question. Owing to missing data from items, and to discarded questionnaires, the results might have been different between respondents who completed the whole questionnaires and respondents who only partially completed their questionnaires.

In addition, data collection was carried out from 1st October to 7th December, 2007. The findings may not reflect tourists' consumption values of travelling, travel information sources used, and perceptions about a country at other times of the year. For instance, tourists might desire consumption values of travelling to find warm weather, or enjoy festivals in Thailand at a particular time. The marketing promotional tools might be differently used depending on a period. In that period, some travel information sources, such as road shows, television, and radio advertisements, might not have been arranged to promote Thailand showing in some countries. Furthermore, unpredictable situations such as terrorism, economic crises, political instability, or natural disasters, might occur at different time. Tourists might have a negative image towards Thailand due to such situations having been publicised. Therefore, the results may vary according to the period of data collection and the circumstances.

Another concern is that there appears to be a positive bias in respondents' ratings on the items relating to purchase decision confidence. Six items asked respondents to rate the level of agreement (using a five-point Likert scale) on how confident they were. These items comprised "The information you used to make this decision was accurate?", "There was enough information available to you?", "This visit is a strong expression of your values?", "Your wants and needs will be fulfilled by this visit?", "Your decision process was as thorough as it could have been?", and "All things considered, this was your best choice?". Most respondents rated these items from three (neutral) to five (strongly agree).

They generally did not use the ratings of one (strongly disagree) and two (disagree). This apparent positive bias possibly occurred because they had already decided upon travel to Thailand, after they had searched for travel information. Subsequently, they might believe that this decision was the right choice and expected to fulfil their needs. In addition, they were confident that their perceived values for travel would be met. Another reason might be that some respondents had no choice of where they could go. For instance, business/conference tourists, or leisure tourists who specified Thailand as a travel destination. These circumstances indicated that they would feel confident in their purchase decisions.

A further limitation is that Cronbach's alpha values indicated low reliability in some of the consumption value constructs. In particular, social, epistemic, conditional, and functional values had Cronbach's alpha value of 0.484, 0.439, 0.502, and 0.470, respectively. However, Pallant (2007) recommended that Cronbach's alpha value can be low, if there are few items in a construct. Since no quantitative approach has been applied to the model of Sheth et al. (1991) in the tourism context, the items measuring the constructs in this research were operationalised from a limited literature base. Those constructs were measured by only a few items (2-3). Another aspect noted by Hair et al. (2006) is that low reliability indicates inconsistency of inter-items, therefore, the items should be measured individually. But measuring individual items will increase the number of variables and make the results too complex to understand the grouped factors, which are theorised by Sheth et al. (1991). Although those constructs had low Cronbach's alpha values, the items in those constructs were grouped by factor analysis, satisfied by content validity, and had reliability because inter-item correlations met the standard criteria for reliability.

Furthermore, it is necessary to be cautious when considering the results regarding mean differences in the pattern of consumption values and the usefulness of information sources among socio-economic characteristics and purposes of trip. The results indicated statistically significant mean differences, but practical significance rarely existed. In general, small mean differences in the pattern of consumption values leading to travelling abroad and some travel information source usefulness among those respondent groups were found. It could be because the sample size was large, in this study  $n = 1,707$ , thus inferential statistical significance can occur by chance (Pallant, 2007). Struwig and Stead (2007) noted that as sample size increases, the probability of attaining statistical

significance increases. When the sample size is large the standard error of mean becomes small (Lomax, 2001). If the standard error is very small, it is possible for the results to be statistically significant, even though there are small mean differences (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009). For instance, the statistical results indicated that females held emotional and social values higher than did males, but the mean scores were tiny differences, only 0.07 for emotional value and 0.11 for social value. Females scored emotional and social values of 4.03 and 3.74, while males rated of 3.96 and 3.63 on those two variables, respectively.

A final limitation is un-testable H6, which hypothesised that travel information sources will influence country image, because there is no logical relationship between the usefulness of travel information sources and country image. The questionnaire asked respondents to rate the levels of usefulness from each source which they used for making their travel plans. This construct was designed mainly to test the relationship between the usefulness of travel information sources and tourists' purchase decision confidence. In addition, it was designed to measure whether the usefulness of travel information sources are different based on trip purposes, or socio-economic characteristics. Subsequently, it is illogical to connect the usefulness of travel information sources to country image.

## **7.6 Future Research**

There are many areas where the study could be extended regarding the model, analyses, and justifying the results of this research. Future researchers might apply this model to the tourism context in another country. Different countries would be expected to have varying consumption values and have different prominent attributes in their respective country image. Replication of this research to another country would help to improve measurement, and to develop a better understanding of the model relating to consumption values and market choices theorised by Sheth et al. (1991) and how these affect travel destination choice confidence in another focal country. Their results would also compare to the results of this study.

Furthermore, one of the limitations of this study is that there were low reliabilities of the measurement regarding five consumption values (Cronbach's alpha < 0.60), because there were few items in each construct. Future researchers should pay careful attention when

developing the items in the questionnaire regarding those five consumption values. According to Hair et al. (2006), increasing the number of items will increase the reliability value. To improve reliability value, future researchers should design more reliable items in accord with the suggestion of Gravetter and Forzano (2009), and Hair et al. (2006).

Future researchers might examine other variables, such as tourists' satisfaction, that might be useful to enhance the value and predictive power of the model regarding tourist's confidence in the purchase decisions. Howard and Sheth (1969) noted that consumer satisfaction is a variable that relates to purchase decision confidence. As the purpose of this study was to investigate tourists' perceptions before their experiences, the sample for this study was necessarily tourist arrivals to Thailand. Therefore, tourist satisfaction after their travel experiences was unable to be tested in this study.

This study could not test the influence of information sources on forming a country image because of the construct relating to the usefulness of travel information sources. The influence of information sources on country image is still an unanswered question. This relationship could be the subject for future research.

Lastly, this study employed three regression models to test the relationships of consumption values, travel information source usefulness, and country image to purchase decision confidence. But regression analysis can only examine a single relationship at a time. SEM (Structural Equation Modelling) can represent the interrelationship of dependent variables and examine latent variables (Hair et al., 2006). In order to understand the causal relationships and investigate the latent variables in the model, future researchers should perhaps use other analytic strategies, such as SEM, to test such relationships, and to compare their results with the present study.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Cover Letter and Questionnaire



Commerce Division

PO Box 84, Lincoln University,  
Canterbury 7647, New Zealand

Telephone 64 3 325-2811

Facsimile 64 3 325-3847

[www.lincoln.ac.nz](http://www.lincoln.ac.nz)

Dear Visitor

You are invited to participate in a survey that is a part of my Doctoral research project at Lincoln University, New Zealand. This research aims to better understand the factors affecting destination choice. It will assist tourism organizations to plan marketing strategies to better meet visitors' expectations.

Participation is voluntary and anonymous. It should take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete while you are in the international arrival lobby. Please fill out the following questionnaire by circling a number, ticking a box, and answering the questions. Please return it to me once you have finished. Alternatively, you can return it to me after it is completed by using the envelope provided, which is already addressed to my home in Thailand and the postage is paid.

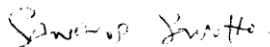
I deeply appreciate your taking the time to participate. There are no right or wrong answers. This survey just seeks your personal viewpoint. The answers will provide the research results to better understand tourist decision making and the factors affecting destination choice.

The research has been approved by the Human Ethics Committee of Lincoln University. The questionnaire is anonymous, and you will not be individually identified as a respondent. You may at any time withdraw your participation. If you complete the questionnaire, however, it will be understood that you are 18 years of age or older and have consented to participate in the project and consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email me at [srisuts2@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:srisuts2@lincoln.ac.nz), or call me at (02) 588-2761 in Thailand or (643) 325-3838 extension 8340 in New Zealand. Alternatively, you may contact my research supervisor Dr. David A. Cohen by email at [cohend@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:cohend@lincoln.ac.nz), or (643) 325-3838, extension 8320.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Best regards,



Sawaros Srisutto  
Commerce Division  
Lincoln University



**A Survey of Visitors to Thailand**

Please respond to all the statements in each section by following the instructions at the beginning of each section. If you have come to Thailand on business, please consider the questions from a non-business point of view; that is, how would you feel about these items if you were travelling for pleasure?

◆ **What were the factors that drove you to travel to abroad?**

.....  
.....  
.....

The following items focus on your reasons for travelling abroad. Please <u>circle the number</u> on the right that best fits your level of agreement with each statement.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
A destination with a great reputation for tourism appeals to me.	1	2	3	4	5
Beautiful scenery is an essential requirement when choosing my travel destination.	1	2	3	4	5
International travel enhances my social status.	1	2	3	4	5
I am usually interested in something new and different.	1	2	3	4	5
I travel to see special events. (e.g. festivals, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
When choosing a destination, I seek a wide variety of activity choices.	1	2	3	4	5
My primary reason for travel is to find excitement.	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer activities with my family and friends.	1	2	3	4	5
I am curious about this destination because I saw an interesting advertisement.	1	2	3	4	5
Travel to a place with a different climate is important to my travel decision.	1	2	3	4	5
Value for money is a critical aspect of my travel decision.	1	2	3	4	5
Travel makes me happy.	1	2	3	4	5
I travel to meet new people and socialize.	1	2	3	4	5
My travel decision was because I wondered what this destination would be like.	1	2	3	4	5
Discounted fares were an important part of my decision to travel.	1	2	3	4	5
I travel because it is an important source of relaxation.	1	2	3	4	5
I only travel to places where I will feel safe.	1	2	3	4	5
I chose this destination because my friends and relatives recommended it to me.	1	2	3	4	5
Travel is an opportunity to enhance my knowledge. (e.g. to study, language, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Finding enough time to travel to a faraway place is difficult.	1	2	3	4	5

Please <u>circle the number</u> to the right of each item that best fits your level of agreement.						
Since receiving travel information, what do you think about Thailand?		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Thailand has ...						
A	suitable accommodations	1	2	3	4	5
B	a variety of restaurants and exotic food	1	2	3	4	5
C	wonderful shopping	1	2	3	4	5
D	quality infrastructure	1	2	3	4	5
E	quality health services (e.g. hospital, spa, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
F	beautiful beaches and scenery	1	2	3	4	5
G	attractive architecture and monuments	1	2	3	4	5
H	cleanliness and unpolluted environments	1	2	3	4	5
I	personal safety	1	2	3	4	5
J	restful and relaxing places	1	2	3	4	5
K	exciting adventures (e.g. diving, rafting, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
L	plentiful nightlife and entertainment	1	2	3	4	5
M	appealing cities	1	2	3	4	5
N	interesting cultural attractions	1	2	3	4	5
O	friendly people	1	2	3	4	5
P	attractive rural areas	1	2	3	4	5
Q	fascinating traditional events (e.g. festival, sport, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
R	pleasant climate	1	2	3	4	5
S	political stability	1	2	3	4	5
T	inexpensive internal travel	1	2	3	4	5
U	convenient business, meeting or conference facilities	1	2	3	4	5
V	accessibility to neighbouring countries	1	2	3	4	5
W	few language barriers	1	2	3	4	5
X	a variety of things to see and do	1	2	3	4	5
Y	an opportunity for family activities	1	2	3	4	5
Z	low traffic congestion	1	2	3	4	5
AA	high quality of life	1	2	3	4	5
AB	uncrowded cities	1	2	3	4	5
AC	other (please specify and circle the number)	1	2	3	4	5
	.....					

◆ From the items above, please list your top three most important factors that made you decide to travel to Thailand by writing the letter given on the left after the number below.

(For example: 1. N = interesting cultural attractions, 2. C = wonderful shopping, 3. R = pleasant climate)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following information sources did you use when making your travel plans for this trip? Please <u>circle the number</u> to the right for each item that you used to make the decision.						
<u>Information Sources</u>	Did not use	Not at all useful	Less useful	Useful	More useful	Extremely useful
<u>Travel agent/tour operator</u>						
Brochures/pamphlets	0	1	2	3	4	5
Internet	0	1	2	3	4	5
Travel guide book	0	1	2	3	4	5
Television advertisement	0	1	2	3	4	5
Radio advertisement	0	1	2	3	4	5
<u>The Tourism Authority of Thailand</u>						
Brochures/pamphlets	0	1	2	3	4	5
Internet	0	1	2	3	4	5
Road show/trade show	0	1	2	3	4	5
Television advertisement	0	1	2	3	4	5
Radio advertisement	0	1	2	3	4	5
Friends/family/relatives						
Clubs/associations	0	1	2	3	4	5
Newspaper advertisement	0	1	2	3	4	5
Magazine advertisement	0	1	2	3	4	5
My own experience	0	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify and circle the number) .....	0	1	2	3	4	5

How much did each of the following items limit your travel plans? Please <u>circle the number</u> to the right that place reflects the level of its limitation.					
	No limitation	Slight limitation	Moderate limitation	Much limitation	Great limitation
Amount of travel information	1	2	3	4	5
The interest of family and friends in this trip	1	2	3	4	5
Having to travel with someone else	1	2	3	4	5
Available vacation time	1	2	3	4	5
Money/budget	1	2	3	4	5
Travelling time to destination	1	2	3	4	5
Own personal health/physical condition	1	2	3	4	5
Interesting activities at destination	1	2	3	4	5
Tour package/tour agent services	1	2	3	4	5



◆ **Before you decided on Thailand, did you consider other countries?**

No  Yes (please specify which countries) .....

◆ **If yes, why did you not choose any of them?**

.....  
 .....  
 .....

These items refer to your decision to visit Thailand. <b>Please circle the number to the right that best fits your level of agreement.</b> How confident are you that...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
the information you used to make this decision was accurate?	1	2	3	4	5
there was enough information available to you?	1	2	3	4	5
this visit is a strong expression of your values?	1	2	3	4	5
your wants and needs will be fulfilled by this visit?	1	2	3	4	5
your decision process was as thorough as it could have been?	1	2	3	4	5
all things considered, this was your best choice?	1	2	3	4	5

**Please tick the box and answer the questions which are applicable to you.**

- Are you?  Male  Female
- What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ years old
- What is your nationality? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is your current country of residence? \_\_\_\_\_
- Please check your annual household gross income level (before taxes) (Unit = US\$)  
 \$20,000 or less  \$20,001 - \$40,000  \$40,001 - \$60,000  \$60,001 - \$80,000  \$80,001 - \$100,000  
 \$100,001 - \$120,000  \$120,001 - \$140,000  \$140,001 - \$160,000  More than \$160,000
- What is your highest level of education?  
 Primary  Secondary  Tertiary  Postgraduate  Other \_\_\_\_\_
- What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
- Apart from yourself, how many people are you travelling with?  
 \_\_\_ children (under 18 years old) \_\_\_ adults (over 18 years old)
- How many times have you travelled abroad, including this trip? \_\_\_\_\_ time(s)
- Is this your first time visiting Thailand?  Yes  No, how many times have you visited Thailand? \_\_\_\_\_ time(s)
- Including yourself, how many people were involved in deciding on your destination? \_\_\_\_\_ people
- What is the primary purpose of your visit to Thailand?  
 Leisure  Business/Conference  Visit friends or relatives  Study  Other \_\_\_\_\_
- How would you characterize your travel style on this trip?  
 Independent travel (Non-packaged tour)  Organized tour (Packaged tour)  Mix
- Where will you stay while visiting Thailand?  Hotel  Motel  Resort  Guest house  
 Private residents  Other \_\_\_\_\_
- How long will you stay in Thailand? \_\_\_\_\_ day(s)
- Excluding air fares, how much total budget do you expect to spend for the trip? US\$\_\_\_\_\_
- What activities will you participate in? (Please rank your top three most interesting tourism by writing the number 1, 2, 3; 1 = the most interesting)  
 \_\_\_ Nature-based and Beach \_\_\_ Cultural \_\_\_ Adventure \_\_\_ Sports \_\_\_ Shopping \_\_\_ Urban \_\_\_ Rural  
 \_\_\_ Meeting and conventions \_\_\_ Cruises \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Which destination(s)/region(s) will you visit in Thailand? \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for your time. We wish you a very good trip!

## Appendix 2: Deleted Cases

No. of Cases	Questions	Answers
16	How many times have you visited Thailand?	60 times
144	How many times have you travelled abroad, including this trip?	250 times
197	Excluding air fares, how much do you expect to spend for this trip?	US\$30,000
257	Excluding air fares, how much do you expect to spend for this trip?	US\$30,000
293	How long will you stay in Thailand?	1,000 days
987	How many times have you travelled abroad, including this trip?	300 times
1010	Apart from yourself, how many people are you travelling with?	71 children
1169	How long will you stay in Thailand?	365 days
1208	How many times have you visited Thailand?	60 times
1214	How many times have you visited Thailand?	80 times
1269	Apart from yourself, how many people are you travelling with?	10 children

### Appendix 3: Country of Residence

Country Name	<i>f</i>	%	Country Name	<i>f</i>	%
USA	193	11.3	Ghana	9	0.5
Australia	167	9.8	Saudi Arabia	9	0.5
India	133	7.8	Spain	8	0.5
Singapore	76	4.5	Cameroon	7	0.4
Israel	73	4.3	Congo	7	0.4
New Zealand	70	4.1	Holland	7	0.4
Kenya	64	3.7	Indonesia	6	0.3
Iran	64	3.7	Korea	6	0.3
United of Kingdom	64	3.7	Italy	6	0.3
Malaysia	57	3.3	Norway	6	0.3
Hong Kong	57	3.3	Austria	6	0.3
Canada	51	3.0	Angola	5	0.3
Germany	44	2.6	Taiwan	5	0.3
Sri Lanka	41	2.4	Russia	5	0.3
Philippines	39	2.3	Scotland	5	0.3
South Africa	35	2.1	Nigeria	5	0.3
UAE	34	2.0	Egypt	5	0.3
France	30	1.8	Denmark	4	0.2
Bangladesh	28	1.6	Yemen	3	0.2
Pakistan	26	1.5	Belgium	3	0.2
Ethiopia	25	1.5	Sudan	3	0.2
Zambia	25	1.5	Malawi	3	0.2
Japan	25	1.5	Zimbabwe	2	0.1
Oman	19	1.1	Lebanon	2	0.1
China	17	1.0	Vietnam	2	0.1
Sweden	16	0.9	Poland	2	0.1
Kuwait	15	0.9	Mali	2	0.1
Bahrain	14	0.8	Turkey	1	0.1
Uganda	12	0.7	Hungary	1	0.1
Finland	12	0.7	Portugal	1	0.1
Switzerland	11	0.6	Luxemburg	1	0.1
Tanzania	10	0.6	Namibia	1	0.1
Netherlands	10	0.6	Swaziland	1	0.1
Ireland	10	0.6	Benin	1	0.1
<b>Total</b>				<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### Appendix 4: Country of Residence in Regions

Regions	Country Name
East Asia <sup>1</sup>	Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Philippines, Japan, China, Indonesia, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam
Europe	United Kingdom, Germany, France, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Netherland, Ireland, Spain, Holland, Italy, Norway, Austria, Russia, Scotland, Denmark, Belgium, Poland, Hungary, Portugal, and Luxemburg
North America	USA and Canada
Oceania <sup>2</sup>	Australia and New Zealand
South Asia <sup>3</sup>	India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Pakistan
Middle East	Israel, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Lebanon, and Turkey
Africa	South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, Zambia, Uganda, Ghana, Tanzania, Cameroon, Congo, Nigeria, Angola, Egypt, Sudan, Malawi, Mali, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Swaziland, and Benin

Note: <sup>1</sup> TAT includes Laos, Brunei, Cambodia, Myanmar, and others (6.1%, 0.2%, 1.4%, 1.0%, and 0.3%, respectively, of East Asia visitors): This research has excluded these visitors.

<sup>2</sup> TAT includes many pacific countries as others (0.6% of Oceania visitors): This research has excluded these visitors.

<sup>3</sup> TAT includes Nepal and others (4.7% and 2.9% of South Asia visitors): This research has excluded these visitors.

## Appendix 5: Socio-Economic Profiles of Tourist Arrivals by the TAT

	East Asia	Europe	The Americas	Oceania	Middle East	South Asia	Africa	Total	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		%
<b>Gender</b>									
Male	63.7	65.7	67.4	62.7	72.3	76.8	61.3	9,436,571	65.2
Female	36.3	34.3	32.6	37.3	27.7	23.2	38.7	5,027,657	34.8
<b>Age</b>									
≤ 24 years old	14.5	14.8	13.8	19.4	17.7	14.4	14.4	2,153,908	14.9
25-34 years old	27.1	26.3	22.7	23.9	28.3	29.6	26.1	3,851,347	26.6
35-44 years old	24.6	22.7	19.3	18.9	25.2	28.8	28.2	3,432,234	23.7
45-54 years old	19.3	18.8	19.8	19.7	17.6	18.2	20.3	2,767,578	19.2
> 54 years old	14.5	17.4	24.4	18.1	11.2	9.0	11.0	2,259,161	15.6
<b>Occupation</b>									
Professional	16.9	28.2	30.7	26.7	23.8	14.6	23.6	3,073,141	21.2
Administrator	15.8	13.9	10.0	15.1	10.0	8.6	13.1	2,081,716	14.4
Commercial	19.2	16.9	18.9	16.7	19.9	39.1	27.9	2,822,168	19.5
Labourer	23.5	18.2	12.6	15.6	19.1	14.2	12.4	2,960,023	20.5
Agricultural	2.6	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.4	233,380	1.6
Government	1.4	0.7	1.1	0.7	0.7	1.3	0.6	164,801	1.1
Housewife	6.2	2.5	3.1	2.8	6.6	9.0	6.6	731,702	5.1
Student	10.6	12.7	13.1	14.8	16.6	11.0	12.4	1,692,941	11.7
Retired	1.9	4.8	8.2	5.7	1.3	0.9	1.2	448,379	3.1
Others	1.2	1.1	1.5	1.1	0.8	0.6	0.9	167,281	1.2
Not stated	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.8	0.3	0.9	88,696	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>14,464,228</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Modified from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2007b)

## Appendix 6: Tourists' Consideration of Other Countries

Country Name	<i>f</i>	%
Malaysia	45	7.1
Singapore	45	7.1
China	40	6.3
Hong Kong	36	5.7
Vietnam	34	5.4
India	29	4.6
Europe	24	3.8
Australia	19	3.0
Indonesia	18	2.8
The United Arab Emirates	18	2.8
The United States of America	16	2.5
Cambodia	15	2.4
Laos	14	2.2
Japan	12	1.9
Myanmar	12	1.9
Bali	11	1.7
Philippine	11	1.7
The United Kingdom	10	1.6
France	9	1.4
Brazil	8	1.2
Africa	8	1.2
South America	8	1.2
Italy	7	1.1
Sri Lanka	7	1.1
Taiwan	7	1.1
Turkey	7	1.1
Bhutan	5	0.8
New Zealand	5	0.8
Costa Rica	5	0.8
Cook Islands	4	0.6
Dubai	4	0.6
Mexico	4	0.6
Caribbean	3	0.5
Egypt	3	0.5
Hawaii	3	0.5
Nepal	3	0.5
South Asia	3	0.5
Spain	3	0.5
South East Asia	2	0.3
Argentina	2	0.3
Canada	2	0.3
Cuba	2	0.3
Greece	2	0.3
Germany	2	0.3
Jamaica	2	0.3
Korea	2	0.3
“Many”	9	1.4
Others * (Andaman, Belgium, Chile, Denmark, Fiji, Ireland, Jordan, Maldives, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Portugal, Russia, Scotland, Seychelles, Tunisia, and Venezuela)	16	2.5
Missing	80	12.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: \* Each county has frequency = 1

### Appendix 7: Interest in Tourism Features

Categories	Nature based and beach		Cultural		Adventure		Sports		Shopping		Urban		Rural		Meeting and conventions		Cruises		Medical treatment		Food		Massage		Nightlife	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
The 1 <sup>st</sup> interest	527	30.9	329	19.3	144	8.4	72	4.2	404	23.7	66	3.9	40	2.3	183	10.7	30	1.8	17	1.0	4	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.05
The 2 <sup>nd</sup> interest	200	11.7	359	21.0	264	15.5	90	5.3	332	19.4	108	6.3	89	5.2	54	3.2	66	3.9	3	0.2	4	0.2	2	0.1	1	0.05
The 3 <sup>rd</sup> interest	171	10.0	237	13.9	195	11.4	100	5.9	328	19.2	167	9.8	100	5.9	79	4.6	98	5.7	0	0.0	10	0.6	3	0.2	3	0.2
No rating	728	42.7	701	41.1	1,023	60.0	1,364	79.9	562	33.0	1,285	75.3	1,397	81.9	1,310	76.8	1,432	83.9	1,606	94.1	1,608	94.3	1,621	95.0	1,621	95.0
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>95.3</b>
Missing	81	4.7	81	4.7	81	4.7	81	4.7	81	4.7	81	4.7	81	4.7	81	4.7	81	4.7	81	4.7	81	4.7	81	4.7	81	4.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## **Appendix 8: Regions of Thailand**

Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand (n.d.)



## Appendix 9: Correlation Matrix

### 9.1: Correlation matrix of consumption values for 20 items

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16	A17	A18	A19	A20
A1	1.000	.308	.189	.134	.104	.193	.115	.170	.124	.059	.187	.143	.044	.067	.092	.146	.270	.129	.086	.107
A2	.308	1.000	.130	.173	.069	.187	.163	.129	.119	.149	.156	.180	.122	.150	.073	.173	.177	.108	.113	.079
A3	.189	.130	1.000	.129	.223	.146	.111	.100	.252	.159	.051	.074	.182	.122	.153	.054	.119	.144	.134	.083
A4	.134	.173	.129	1.000	.153	.268	.216	.041	.056	.073	.062	.275	.242	.205	.036	.138	-.016	.043	.253	.059
A5	.104	.069	.223	.153	1.000	.279	.216	.077	.282	.167	.038	.090	.264	.177	.155	.094	.063	.108	.114	.068
A6	.193	.187	.146	.268	.279	1.000	.332	.138	.210	.183	.148	.219	.251	.246	.137	.190	.126	.142	.166	.114
A7	.115	.163	.111	.216	.216	.332	1.000	.142	.195	.170	.125	.218	.234	.213	.168	.187	.084	.144	.087	.072
A8	.170	.129	.100	.041	.077	.138	.142	1.000	.181	.104	.133	.104	.025	.031	.124	.140	.226	.207	.068	.110
A9	.124	.119	.252	.056	.282	.210	.195	.181	1.000	.275	.121	.082	.163	.267	.230	.136	.206	.238	.084	.085
A10	.059	.149	.159	.073	.167	.183	.170	.104	.275	1.000	.297	.167	.190	.158	.164	.212	.147	.158	.080	.098
A11	.187	.156	.051	.062	.038	.148	.125	.133	.121	.297	1.000	.190	.079	.056	.301	.165	.209	.119	.067	.175
A12	.143	.180	.074	.275	.090	.219	.218	.104	.082	.167	.190	1.000	.309	.199	.103	.337	.092	.084	.223	.105
A13	.044	.122	.182	.242	.264	.251	.234	.025	.163	.190	.079	.309	1.000	.256	.125	.177	.000	.087	.279	.049
A14	.067	.150	.122	.205	.177	.246	.213	.031	.267	.158	.056	.199	.256	1.000	.240	.167	.083	.229	.187	.108
A15	.092	.073	.153	.036	.155	.137	.168	.124	.230	.164	.301	.103	.125	.240	1.000	.199	.191	.204	.109	.190
A16	.146	.173	.054	.138	.094	.190	.187	.140	.136	.212	.165	.337	.177	.167	.199	1.000	.250	.183	.098	.110
A17	.270	.177	.119	-.016	.063	.126	.084	.226	.206	.147	.209	.092	.000	.083	.191	.250	1.000	.281	.020	.150
A18	.129	.108	.144	.043	.108	.142	.144	.207	.238	.158	.119	.084	.087	.229	.204	.183	.281	1.000	.107	.188
A19	.086	.113	.134	.253	.114	.166	.087	.068	.084	.080	.067	.223	.279	.187	.109	.098	.020	.107	1.000	.130
A20	.107	.079	.083	.059	.068	.114	.072	.110	.085	.098	.175	.105	.049	.108	.190	.110	.150	.188	.130	1.000

Note: A1 = A destination with a great reputation in tourism appeals to me., A2 = Beautiful scenery is an essential requirement when choosing my travel destination., A3 = International travel enhances my social status., A4 = I am usually interested in something new and different., A5 = I travel to see special events (e.g. festivals, etc.)., A6 = When choosing a destination, I seek a wide variety of activity choices., A7 = My primary reason for travel is to find excitement., A8 = I prefer activities with my family and friends., A9 = I am curious about this destination because I saw an interesting advertisement., A10 = Travel to a place with a different climate is important to my travel decision., A11 = Value for money is a critical aspect of my travel decision., A12 = Travel makes me happy., A13 = I travel to meet new people and socialize., A14 = My travel decision was because I wondered what this destination would be like., A15 = Discounted fares were an important part of my decision to travel., A16 = I travel because it is an important source of relaxation., A17 = I only travel to places where I will feel safe., A18 = I chose this destination because my friends and relatives recommended it to me., A19 = Travel is an opportunity to enhance my knowledge (e.g. to study, language, etc.)., A20 = Finding enough time to travel to a faraway place is difficult.

## 9.2: Correlation matrix of consumption values for 15 items

	A1	A2	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A15	A16	A17	A18
A1	1.000	.308	.134	.104	.193	.115	.170	.124	.059	.187	.143	.092	.146	.270	.129
A2	.308	1.000	.173	.069	.187	.163	.129	.119	.149	.156	.180	.073	.173	.177	.108
A4	.134	.173	1.000	.153	.268	.216	.041	.056	.073	.062	.275	.036	.138	-.016	.043
A5	.104	.069	.153	1.000	.279	.216	.077	.282	.167	.038	.090	.155	.094	.063	.108
A6	.193	.187	.268	.279	1.000	.332	.138	.210	.183	.148	.219	.137	.190	.126	.142
A7	.115	.163	.216	.216	.332	1.000	.142	.195	.170	.125	.218	.168	.187	.084	.144
A8	.170	.129	.041	.077	.138	.142	1.000	.181	.104	.133	.104	.124	.140	.226	.207
A9	.124	.119	.056	.282	.210	.195	.181	1.000	.275	.121	.082	.230	.136	.206	.238
A10	.059	.149	.073	.167	.183	.170	.104	.275	1.000	.297	.167	.164	.212	.147	.158
A11	.187	.156	.062	.038	.148	.125	.133	.121	.297	1.000	.190	.301	.165	.209	.119
A12	.143	.180	.275	.090	.219	.218	.104	.082	.167	.190	1.000	.103	.337	.092	.084
A15	.092	.073	.036	.155	.137	.168	.124	.230	.164	.301	.103	1.000	.199	.191	.204
A16	.146	.173	.138	.094	.190	.187	.140	.136	.212	.165	.337	.199	1.000	.250	.183
A17	.270	.177	-.016	.063	.126	.084	.226	.206	.147	.209	.092	.191	.250	1.000	.281
A18	.129	.108	.043	.108	.142	.144	.207	.238	.158	.119	.084	.204	.183	.281	1.000

Note: A1 = A destination with a great reputation in tourism appeals to me., A2 = Beautiful scenery is an essential requirement when choosing my travel destination., A4 = I am usually interested in something new and different., A5 = I travel to see special events (e.g. festivals, etc.)., A6 = When choosing a destination, I seek a wide variety of activity choices., A7 = My primary reason for travel is to find excitement., A8 = I prefer activities with my family and friends., A9 = I am curious about this destination because I saw an interesting advertisement., A10 = Travel to a place with a different climate is important to my travel decision., A11 = Value for money is a critical aspect of my travel decision., A12 = Travel makes me happy., A15 = Discounted fares were an important part of my decision to travel., A16 = I travel because it is an important source of relaxation., A17 = I only travel to places where I will feel safe., A18 = I chose this destination because my friends and relatives recommended it to me.

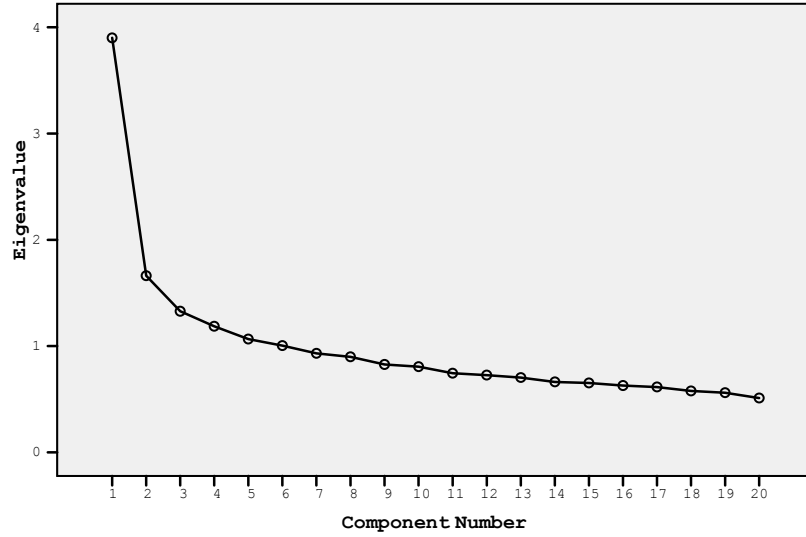
### 9.3: Correlation matrix of country image

Code	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	K	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z	aa	ab
a	1.000	.515	.397	.281	.252	.318	.279	.033	.205	.327	.252	.273	.282	.298	.378	.222	.179	.179	.063	.204	.192	.222	.077	.321	.217	-.049	.115	-.094
b	.515	1.000	.391	.212	.226	.305	.251	.012	.146	.281	.293	.283	.263	.305	.364	.216	.184	.150	-.010	.164	.136	.181	.058	.316	.195	-.090	.097	-.131
c	.397	.391	1.000	.393	.261	.238	.214	.053	.121	.264	.246	.282	.279	.256	.218	.171	.186	.109	.096	.193	.197	.162	.054	.267	.217	-.001	.110	-.021
d	.281	.212	.393	1.000	.466	.243	.264	.351	.315	.254	.227	.192	.309	.211	.182	.203	.204	.213	.283	.176	.279	.219	.179	.197	.216	.204	.293	.199
e	.252	.226	.261	.466	1.000	.207	.141	.299	.318	.196	.205	.153	.237	.155	.168	.174	.201	.213	.251	.170	.262	.203	.156	.148	.204	.176	.241	.159
f	.318	.305	.238	.243	.207	1.000	.394	.123	.136	.407	.411	.297	.242	.295	.319	.255	.234	.214	.080	.181	.029	.174	.091	.344	.182	-.008	.086	-.019
g	.279	.251	.214	.264	.141	.394	1.000	.207	.150	.271	.333	.215	.315	.393	.285	.344	.332	.223	.174	.163	.113	.197	.098	.307	.186	.071	.156	.065
h	.033	.012	.053	.351	.299	.123	.207	1.000	.444	.215	.145	.052	.211	.068	.034	.120	.196	.224	.318	.069	.173	.118	.183	.059	.177	.423	.378	.433
i	.205	.146	.121	.315	.318	.136	.150	.444	1.000	.362	.202	.115	.238	.107	.224	.183	.197	.251	.354	.205	.180	.182	.201	.156	.184	.266	.319	.259
j	.327	.281	.264	.254	.196	.407	.271	.215	.362	1.000	.430	.313	.323	.304	.354	.251	.235	.274	.177	.242	.107	.144	.123	.315	.226	.119	.182	.106
k	.252	.293	.246	.227	.205	.411	.333	.145	.202	.430	1.000	.441	.335	.311	.277	.305	.298	.256	.139	.238	.152	.193	.107	.333	.225	.073	.147	.041
l	.273	.283	.282	.192	.153	.297	.215	.052	.115	.313	.441	1.000	.408	.289	.226	.190	.235	.124	.009	.174	.148	.184	.053	.264	.201	-.016	.105	-.017
m	.282	.263	.279	.309	.237	.242	.315	.211	.238	.323	.335	.408	1.000	.460	.276	.290	.327	.229	.209	.231	.219	.220	.206	.311	.251	.136	.242	.142
n	.298	.305	.256	.211	.155	.295	.393	.068	.107	.304	.311	.289	.460	1.000	.389	.386	.349	.188	.134	.198	.113	.192	.109	.349	.179	.062	.125	.018
o	.378	.364	.218	.182	.168	.319	.285	.034	.224	.354	.277	.226	.276	.389	1.000	.380	.290	.215	.105	.225	.084	.174	.116	.353	.208	-.039	.116	-.060
p	.222	.216	.171	.203	.174	.255	.344	.120	.183	.251	.305	.190	.290	.386	.380	1.000	.439	.243	.217	.225	.169	.227	.167	.292	.180	.102	.156	.088
q	.179	.184	.186	.204	.201	.234	.332	.196	.197	.235	.298	.235	.327	.349	.290	.439	1.000	.268	.204	.204	.201	.227	.149	.204	.232	.133	.193	.131
r	.179	.150	.109	.213	.213	.214	.223	.224	.251	.274	.256	.124	.229	.188	.215	.243	.268	1.000	.284	.266	.123	.195	.134	.237	.206	.210	.270	.156
s	.063	-.010	.096	.283	.251	.080	.174	.318	.354	.177	.139	.009	.209	.134	.105	.217	.204	.284	1.000	.263	.229	.150	.206	.124	.147	.352	.269	.308
t	.204	.164	.193	.176	.170	.181	.163	.069	.205	.242	.238	.174	.231	.198	.225	.225	.204	.266	.263	1.000	.227	.287	.118	.271	.219	.142	.187	.105
u	.192	.136	.197	.279	.262	.029	.113	.173	.180	.107	.152	.148	.219	.113	.084	.169	.201	.123	.229	.227	1.000	.319	.217	.066	.243	.111	.207	.128
v	.222	.181	.162	.219	.203	.174	.197	.118	.182	.144	.193	.184	.220	.192	.174	.227	.227	.195	.150	.287	.319	1.000	.219	.292	.236	.068	.178	.084
w	.077	.058	.054	.179	.156	.091	.098	.183	.201	.123	.107	.053	.206	.109	.116	.167	.149	.134	.206	.118	.217	.219	1.000	.189	.153	.258	.149	.222
x	.321	.316	.267	.197	.148	.344	.307	.059	.156	.315	.333	.264	.311	.349	.353	.292	.204	.237	.124	.271	.066	.292	.189	1.000	.323	.029	.177	-.008
y	.217	.195	.217	.216	.204	.182	.186	.177	.184	.226	.225	.201	.251	.179	.208	.180	.232	.206	.147	.219	.243	.236	.153	.323	1.000	.149	.276	.164
z	-.049	-.090	-.001	.204	.176	-.008	.071	.423	.266	.119	.073	-.016	.136	.062	-.039	.102	.133	.210	.352	.142	.111	.068	.258	.029	.149	1.000	.427	.625
aa	.115	.097	.110	.293	.241	.086	.156	.378	.319	.182	.147	.105	.242	.125	.116	.156	.193	.270	.269	.187	.207	.178	.149	.177	.276	.427	1.000	.467
ab	-.094	-.131	-.021	.199	.159	-.019	.065	.433	.259	.106	.041	-.017	.142	.018	-.060	.088	.131	.156	.308	.105	.128	.084	.222	-.008	.164	.625	.467	1.000

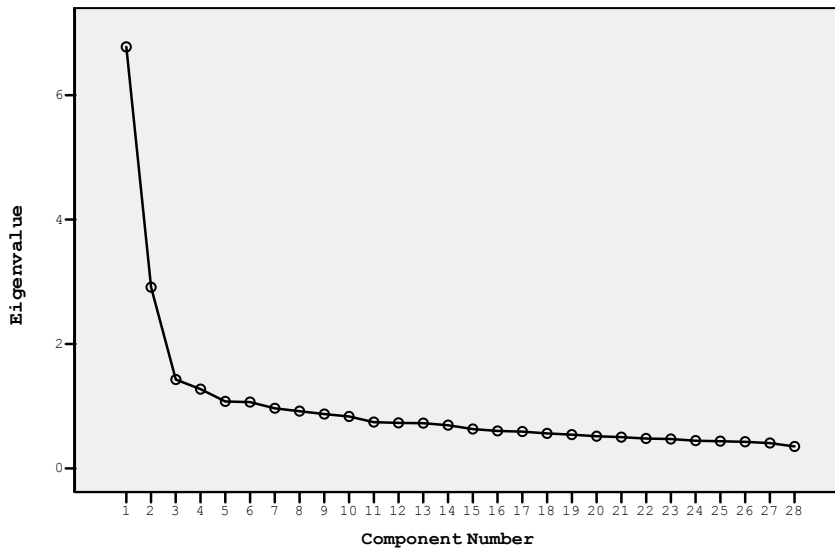
Note: Codes are shown in the questionnaire (see Appendix 1, p. 195)

## Appendix 10: Scree Plot

### 10.1: Scree plot of factor rotation of consumption values



### 10.2: Scree plot of factor rotation of country image



## Appendix 11: Rotated Component Matrix of Consumption Values (20 Items)

Attributes	Factor Loadings						Communalities
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	
<b>Factor 1</b>							
Travel makes me happy.	.649						.548
My primary reason for travel is to find excitement.	.557						.447
I travel to meet new people and socialize.	.548						.488
I am usually interested in something new and different.	.547						.486
When choosing a destination, I seek a wide variety of activity choices.	.513						.421
I travel because it is an important source of relaxation.	.505						.505
My travel decision was because I wondered that this destination would be like.	.432						.447
<b>Factor 2</b>							
I chose this destination because my friends and relatives recommended it to me.		.682					.555
I only travel to places where I will feel safe.		.617					.515
I prefer activities with my family and friends.		.532					.354
<b>Factor 3</b>							
I travel to see special events (e.g. festivals, etc.)			.659				.488
International travel enhances my social status.			.617				.549
I am curious about this destination because I saw an interesting advertisement.			.609				.533
<b>Factor 4</b>							
Value for money is a critical aspect of my travel decision.				.779			.676
Travel to a place with a different climate is important to my travel decision.				.647			.547
Discounted fares were an important part of my decision to travel.				.489			.472
<b>Factor 5</b>							
A destination with a great reputation for tourism appeals to me.					.748		.621
Beautiful scenery is an essential requirement when choosing my travel destination.					.616		.458
<b>Factor 6</b>							
Travel is an opportunity to enhance my knowledge (e.g. to study, language, etc.)						.675	.569
Finding enough time to travel to a faraway place is difficult.						.579	.469
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	3.902	1.662	1.328	1.187	1.066	1.005	
<b>Variance (%)</b>	19.508	8.311	6.640	5.933	5.330	5.025	
<b>Cumulative Variance (%)</b>	19.508	27.819	34.459	40.391	45.722	50.746	
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	0.678	0.484	0.501	0.502	0.470	0.227	
<b>Inter-Item Correlations</b>	0.235	0.238	0.251	0.256	0.308	0.130	
<b>Number of items (N=20)</b>	7	3	3	3	2	2	
<b>Number of valid cases</b>	1,584	1,652	1,644	1,655	1,681	1,696	

Note: 1) Using principal component analysis method with varimax orthogonal rotation  
2) Suppress absolute values less than 0.40

## Appendix 12: Rotated Component Matrix of Consumption Values (15 Items)

Attributes	Factor Loadings				Communalities
	F1	F2	F3	F4	
<b>Factor 1</b>					
A destination with a great reputation for tourism appeals to me.	.671				.549
I only travel to places where I will feel safe.	.669				.536
I prefer activities with my family and friends.	.535				.326
Beautiful scenery is an essential requirement when choosing my travel destination.	.494	.439			.438
I chose this destination because my friends and relatives recommended it to me.	.454				.372
<b>Factor 2</b>		<b>F2</b>			
Value for money is a critical aspect of my travel decision.		.682			.514
Travel to a place with a different climate is important to my travel decision.		.603			.438
Discounted fares were an important part of my decision to travel.		.590			.429
I travel because it is an important source of relaxation.		.489			.406
<b>Factor 3</b>			<b>F3</b>		
I am usually interested in something new and different.			.691		.514
Travel makes me happy.			.637		.545
<b>Factor 4</b>				<b>F4</b>	
I travel to see special events. (e.g. festivals, etc.)				.730	.552
I am curious about this destination because I saw an interesting advertisement.				.628	.522
When choosing a destination, I seek a wide variety of activity choices.			.470	.491	.487
My primary reason for travel is to find excitement.			.413	.462	.407
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	3.264	1.414	1.247	1.111	
<b>Variance (%)</b>	21.757	9.424	8.312	7.409	
<b>Cumulative Variance (%)</b>	21.757	31.182	39.494	46.903	
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	0.556	0.535	0.429	0.570	
<b>Inter-Item Correlations</b>	0.202	0.224	0.275	0.253	
<b>Number of items (N=15)</b>	5	4	2	4	
<b>Number of valid cases</b>	1,627	1,648	1,672	1,602	

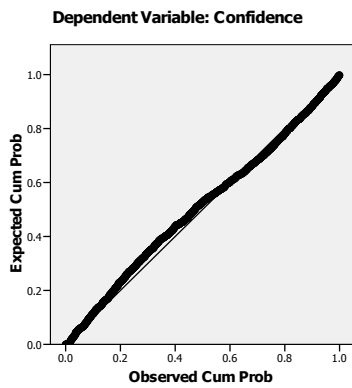
Note: 1) Using principal component analysis method with varimax orthogonal rotation

2) Suppress absolute values less than 0.40

## Appendix 13: Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

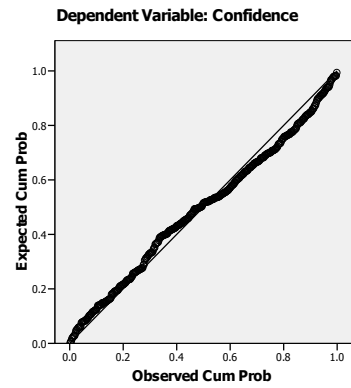
Six Dimensions of Country Image vs.  
Purchase Decision Confidence

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



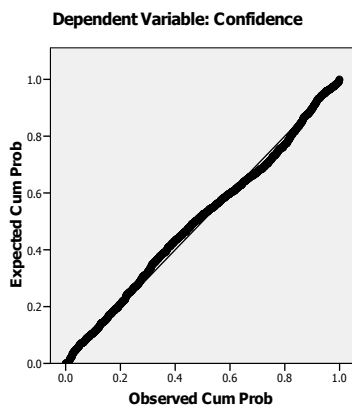
The Usefulness of Eleven Travel Information  
Sources vs. Purchase Decision Confidence

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

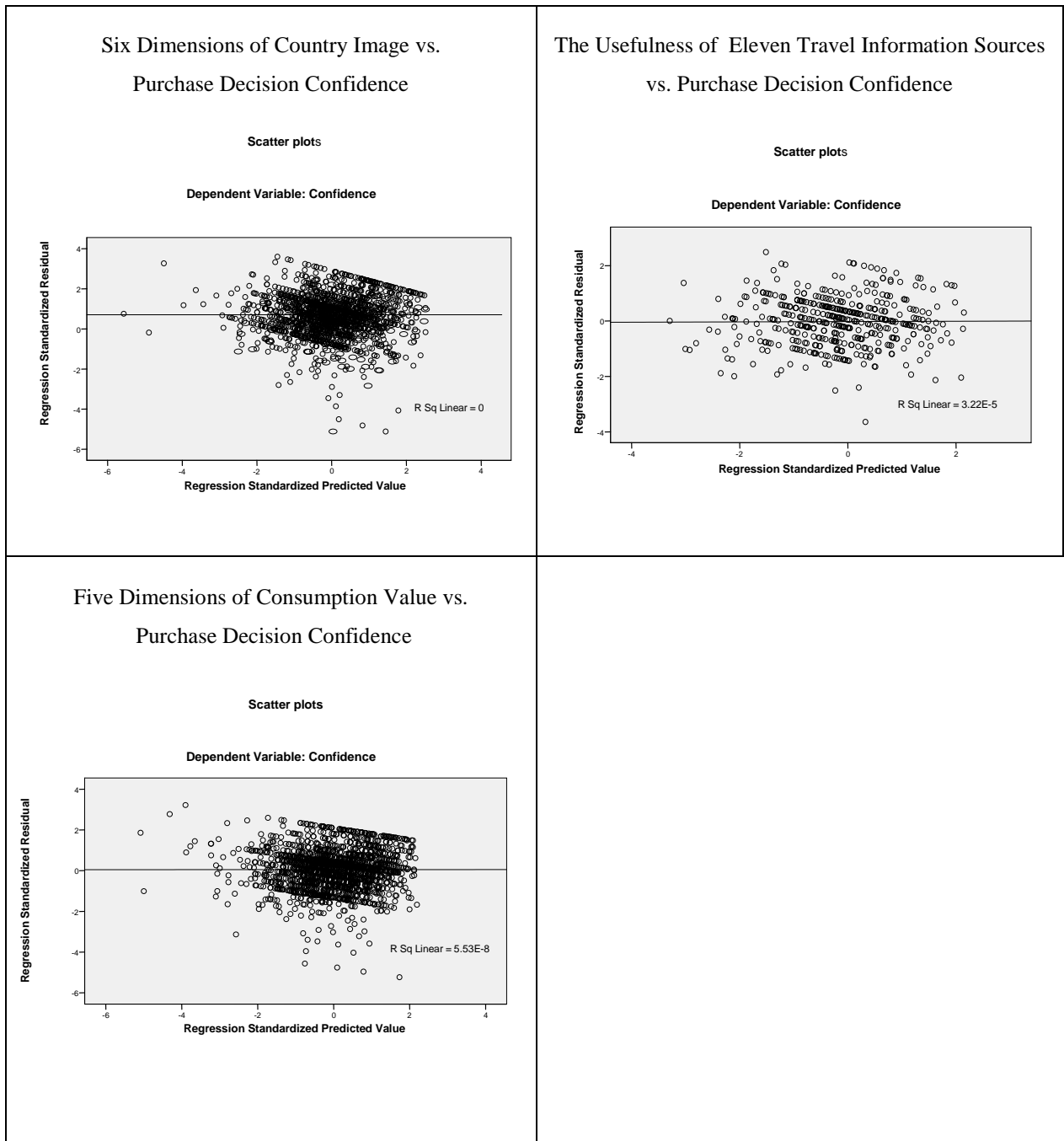


Five Dimensions of Consumption Value vs.  
Purchase Decision Confidence

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



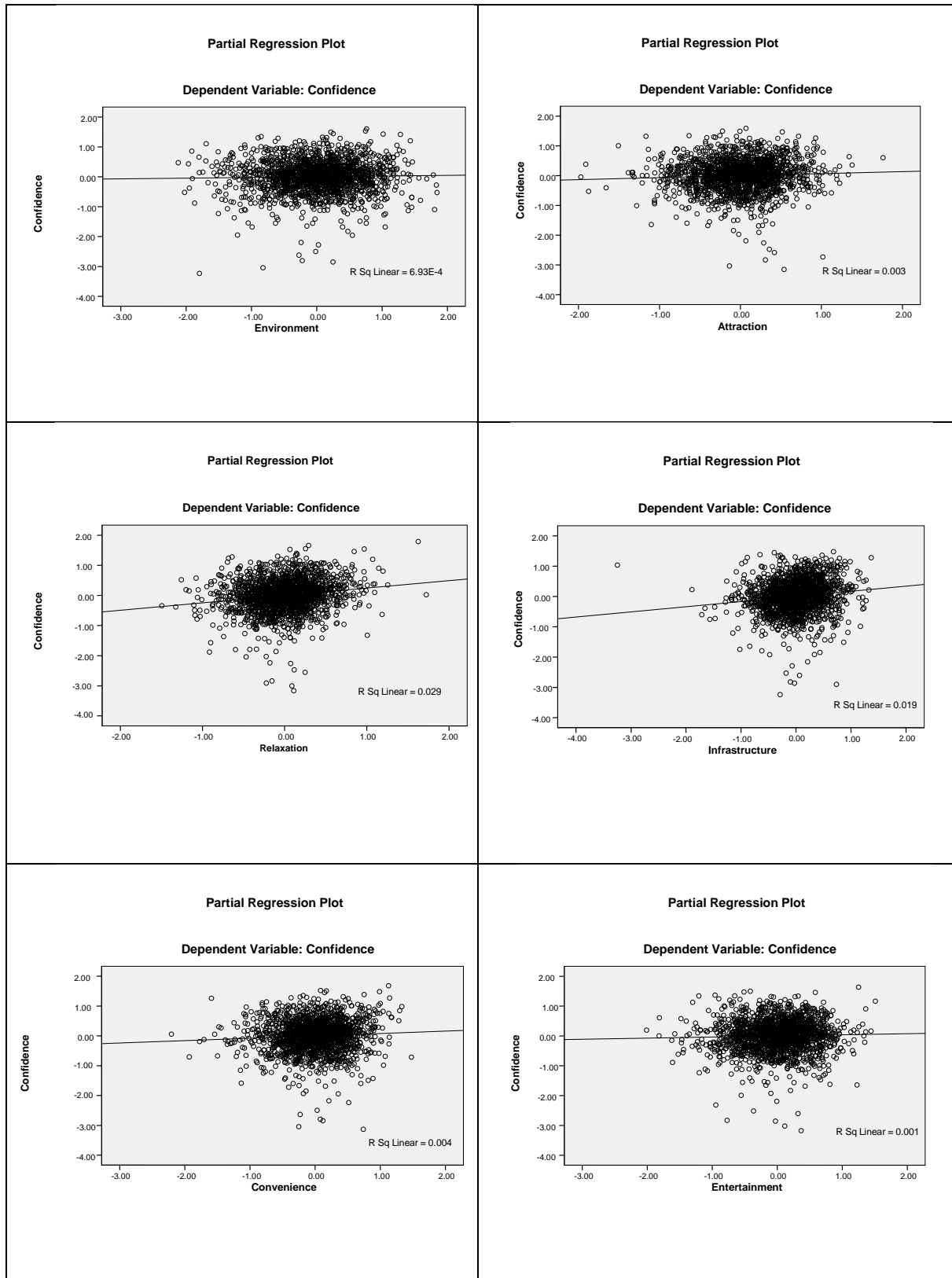
## Appendix 14: Residuals Scatter Plots of Three Regression Models



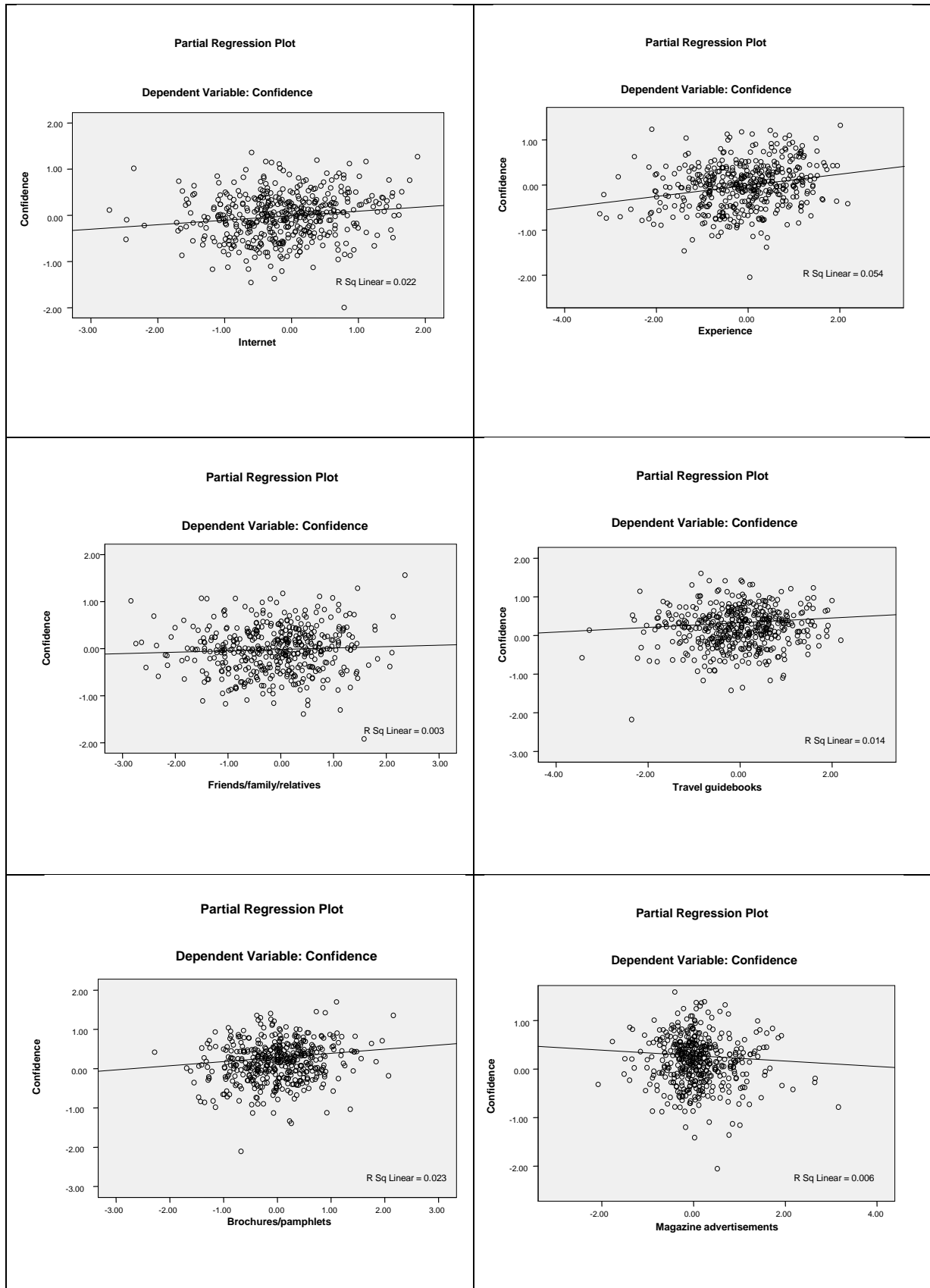


# Appendix 15: Scatter Plots of Standardized Residuals against Predicted Values

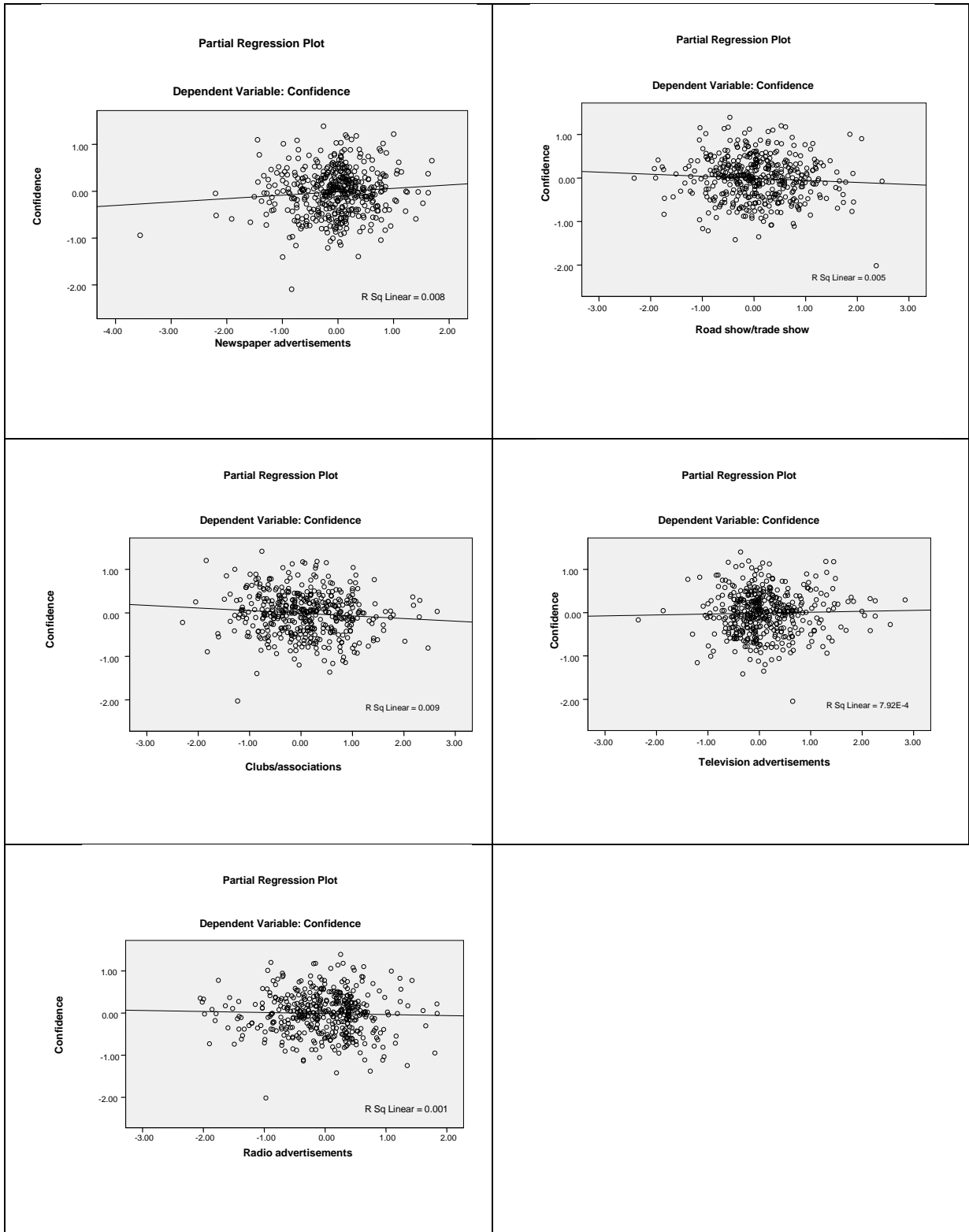
## 15.1: Six dimensions of country image vs. purchase decision confidence



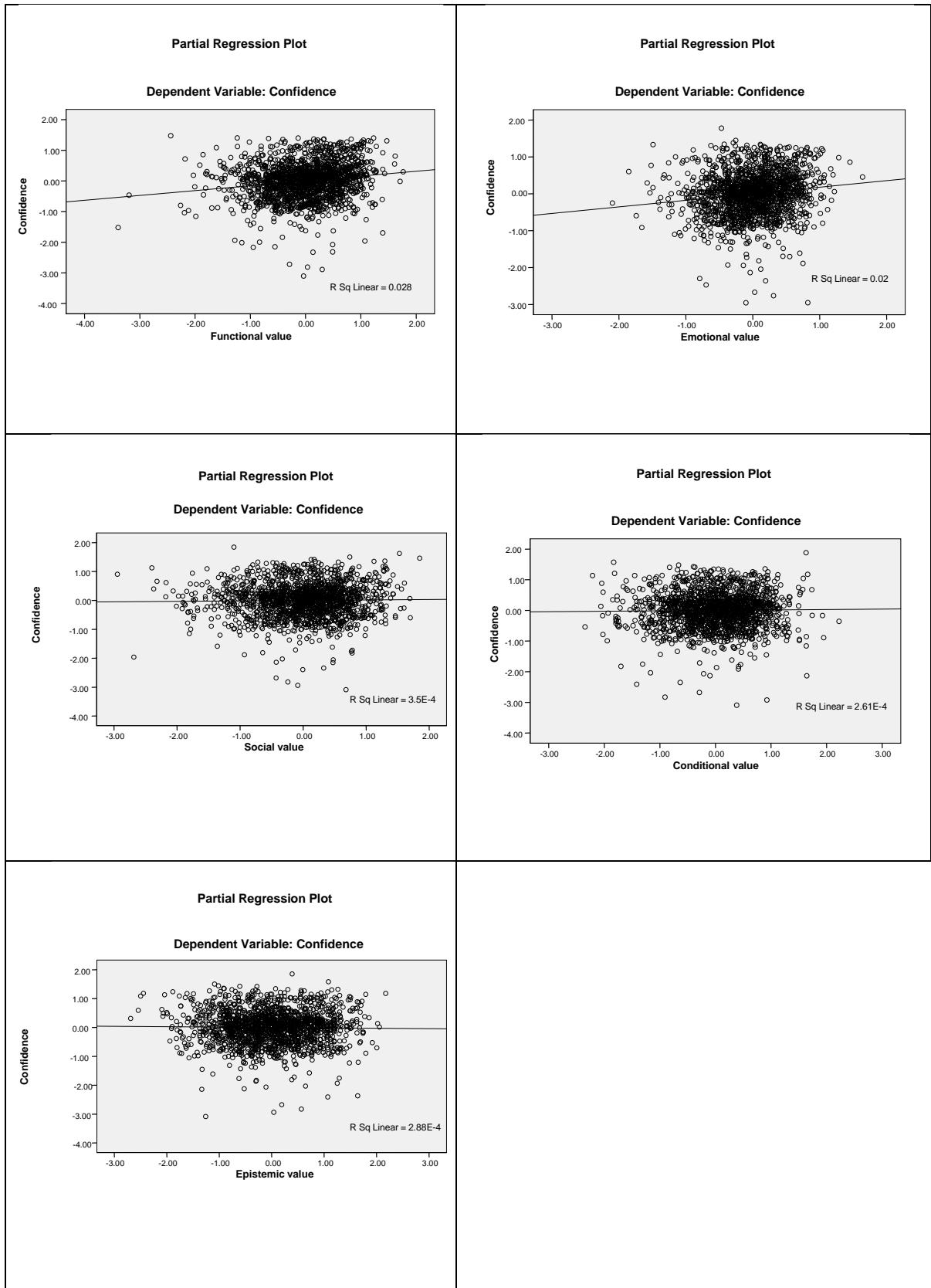
## 15.2: The usefulness of eleven information sources vs. purchase decision confidence



## 15.2: The usefulness of eleven information sources vs. purchase decision confidence (Cont.)



### 15.3: Five consumption values vs. purchase decision confidence



## Appendix 16: Multicollinearity Statistics

### 16.1: Pearson correlation matrix of country image attributes

	Confidence	Environment	Attraction	Relaxation	Infrastructure	Convenience	Entertainment
Confidence	1.000	.178	.310	.392	.350	.279	.296
Environment	.178	1.000	.264	.273	.256	.395	.214
Attraction	.310	.264	1.000	.579	.428	.388	.520
Relaxation	.392	.273	.579	1.000	.523	.425	.549
Infrastructure	.350	.256	.428	.523	1.000	.422	.468
Convenience	.279	.395	.388	.425	.422	1.000	.385
Entertainment	.296	.214	.520	.549	.468	.385	1.000

### 16.2: Pearson correlation matrix of information source usefulness

	Confidence	Internet	Experience	Friends/family/ relatives	Travel guidebooks	Brochures/ pamphlets	Magazine Ad.	Newspaper Ad.	Road show/ trade show	Clubs/ associations	TV Ad.	Radio Ad.
Confidence	1.000	.266	.260	.247	.244	.283	.197	.215	.202	.215	.127	.097
Internet	.266	1.000	.289	.298	.380	.348	.247	.193	.318	.193	.212	.125
Experience	.260	.289	1.000	.313	.220	.239	.309	.288	.241	.288	.132	.178
Friends/family/relatives	.247	.298	.313	1.000	.241	.278	.277	.308	.176	.308	.140	.097
Travel guidebooks	.244	.380	.220	.241	1.000	.359	.220	.205	.358	.205	.205	.206
Brochures/pamphlets	.283	.348	.239	.278	.359	1.000	.398	.415	.515	.415	.337	.345
Magazine Ad.	.202	.318	.241	.176	.358	.515	1.000	.722	.347	.413	.540	.578
Newspaper Ad.	.156	.208	.314	.353	.158	.318	.722	1.000	.413	.538	.361	.364
Road show/trade show	.197	.247	.309	.277	.220	.398	.347	.413	1.000	.722	.434	.361
Clubs/associations	.215	.193	.288	.308	.205	.415	.444	.538	.384	1.000	.491	.439
TV Ad.	.127	.212	.132	.140	.205	.337	.434	.491	.540	.491	1.000	.681
Radio Ad.	.097	.125	.178	.097	.206	.345	.361	.439	.578	.439	.681	1.000

### 16.3: Pearson correlation matrix of consumption values

	Confidence	Functional	Emotional	Social	Conditional	Epistemic
Confidence	1.000	.233	.217	.110	.105	.067
Functional	.233	1.000	.316	.280	.206	.157
Emotional	.217	.316	1.000	.259	.325	.301
Social	.110	.280	.259	1.000	.315	.262
Conditional	.105	.206	.325	.315	1.000	.293
Epistemic	.067	.157	.301	.262	.293	1.000

### Appendix 17: ANOVA of Information Source Usefulness by Purposes of Trip

	Group	Internet		Experience		Friends/family/ relatives		Travel guidebooks		Brochures/ pamphlets		Magazine Ad.		Newspaper Ad.		Road show/ trade show		Clubs/ associations		TV Ad.		Radio Ad.	
		f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean
<u>Purpose of trip</u>																							
Leisure	1	1,003	<b>3.93</b>	750	3.88	934	<b>3.87</b>	826	<b>3.62</b>	770	3.14	568	3.02	528	2.85	442	2.90	522	2.90	578	<b>2.69</b>	449	2.31
Business/conference	2	319	<b>3.73</b>	285	<b>3.72</b>	279	<b>3.61</b>	248	<b>3.21</b>	251	3.18	202	3.10	195	3.02	184	2.95	202	3.01	227	<b>2.92</b>	190	2.56
VFR	3	95	3.81	93	<b>4.13</b>	108	<b>4.01</b>	77	3.49	68	3.00	52	3.00	51	3.00	44	2.70	54	2.94	57	2.54	45	2.36
Others (e.g. study, medical treatment, etc.)	4	56	3.90	45	3.91	54	<b>4.19</b>	45	3.40	44	3.42	30	3.40	33	3.24	28	3.21	34	3.24	38	2.99	29	2.41
Total		1,473	3.88	1,173	3.86	1,375	3.84	1,196	3.52	1,113	3.15	852	3.05	807	2.91	698	2.92	812	2.94	900	2.75	713	2.38
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.397		0.113		0.200		0.007		0.346		0.056		0.056		0.325		0.073		0.912		0.075
<b>F-value</b>			3.936		3.70		7.782		10.126		1.757		1.422		2.511		1.403		1.381		4.073		2.572
<b>p-value</b>			0.008		0.012		0.000		0.000		0.154		0.235		0.058		0.241		0.247		0.007		0.053
<b>Scheffé post hoc test</b>			<b>1&gt;2</b>		<b>3&gt;2</b>		<b>1,3,4&gt;2</b>		<b>1&gt;2</b>												<b>2&gt;1</b>		

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Not at all useful to 5 = Extremely useful, 0 = Did not use was excluded

2) Mean differences indicated by Scheffé post hoc test are in **bold**.

## Appendix 18: TV Advertisements Usefulness by Trip Purposes and Regions of Residence

Categories	Regions							Total
	East Asia	Europe	North America	Oceania	Middle East	South Asia	Africa	
Leisure	2.66	2.39	2.49	2.39	2.85	2.96	3.33	2.69
Business/conference	3.01	2.05	2.22	2.43	2.73	3.11	3.10	2.92
VFR	2.79	2.41	2.22	2.12	3.22	2.37	3.25	2.54
Others (e.g. study, medical treatment, etc.)	3.17	3.50	2.50	3.00	3.09	2.50	3.14	2.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>2.39</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>2.37</b>	<b>2.87</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>3.21</b>	

Note: Respondents rated items where 1 = Not at all useful to 5 = Extremely useful, 0 = Did not use was excluded

### Appendix 19: ANOVA of Information Source Usefulness by Socio-Economic Characteristics

		Internet		Experience		Friends/ family/ relatives		Travel guidebooks		Brochures/ pamphlets		Magazine Ad.		Newspaper Ad.		Road show/ trade show		Clubs/ associations		TV Ad.		Radio Ad.	
	Group	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean
<b>Gender</b>																							
Male	1	911	3.84	772	3.85	829	<b>3.75</b>	740	<b>3.39</b>	707	<b>3.10</b>	554	3.05	532	2.91	466	2.91	546	2.97	587	2.76	470	2.41
Female	2	577	3.93	416	3.88	561	<b>3.97</b>	469	<b>3.73</b>	439	<b>3.24</b>	310	3.06	287	2.93	241	2.91	277	2.88	326	2.72	254	2.35
Total		1,488	3.87	1,188	3.86	1,390	3.84	1,209	3.52	1,146	3.15	864	3.05	819	2.91	707	2.91	823	2.94	913	2.75	724	2.39
Levene's test (Sig.)			0.193		0.993		0.009		0.770		0.793		0.630		0.120		0.525		0.428		0.428		0.116
t-value			-1.725		-0.480		-4.000		-5.546		-2.358		-0.169		-0.272		0.015		1.173		0.593		0.694
p-value			0.085		0.632		0.000		0.000		0.019		0.866		0.786		0.988		0.241		0.553		0.488
<b>Region of residence</b>																							
East Asia	1	262	<b>3.66</b>	256	3.80	250	<b>3.61</b>	218	<b>3.35</b>	213	3.03	203	3.13	199	2.92	178	2.89	192	2.97	202	<b>2.79</b>	172	2.37
Europe	2	224	<b>3.98</b>	169	3.73	215	<b>3.64</b>	210	<b>3.73</b>	170	<b>2.82</b>	110	2.84	106	<b>2.58</b>	85	<b>2.61</b>	99	<b>2.56</b>	124	<b>2.39</b>	92	<b>2.03</b>
North America	3	216	<b>4.06</b>	141	4.06	196	<b>4.14</b>	174	<b>3.78</b>	130	3.17	87	2.80	73	2.73	67	2.64	84	2.94	82	<b>2.43</b>	60	2.28
Oceania	4	205	3.86	159	3.86	187	3.88	177	3.68	161	<b>3.28</b>	98	2.93	86	2.83	65	2.75	85	2.66	103	<b>2.37</b>	84	<b>2.21</b>
Middle East	5	210	3.76	150	3.86	190	<b>3.97</b>	152	<b>3.29</b>	163	3.20	129	3.04	130	2.87	113	3.07	137	<b>3.07</b>	136	<b>2.87</b>	106	2.51
South Asia	6	196	3.86	171	3.81	183	<b>3.74</b>	152	<b>3.27</b>	165	<b>3.29</b>	134	3.26	132	<b>3.20</b>	114	3.05	126	3.03	144	<b>2.96</b>	117	2.44
Africa	7	175	3.97	142	3.96	169	<b>3.99</b>	126	3.48	130	<b>3.17</b>	103	3.20	93	<b>3.15</b>	85	<b>3.20</b>	100	<b>3.21</b>	122	<b>3.20</b>	93	<b>2.81</b>
Total		1,488	3.87	1,188	3.86	1,390	3.84	1,209	3.52	1,132	3.15	864	3.05	819	2.91	707	2.91	823	2.94	913	2.75	724	2.39
Levene's test (Sig.)			0.972		0.011		0.020		0.249		0.001		0.003		0.001		0.050		0.014		0.022		0.012
F-value			4.880		1.679		7.567		7.742		6.069		3.335		4.924		3.961		4.699		12.127		5.526
p-value			0.000		0.123		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.003		0.000		0.001		0.000		0.000		0.000
Scheffé post hoc test			<b>2,3&gt;1</b>				<b>3&gt;1,2,6</b>		<b>2,3&gt;1,5,6</b>		<b>4,6,7&gt;2</b>		-		<b>6,7&gt;2</b>		<b>7&gt;2</b>		<b>5,7&gt;2</b>		<b>7&gt;1</b>		<b>7&gt;2,4</b>
							<b>5,7&gt;1</b>														<b>5,6,7&gt;2,4</b>		<b>6,7&gt;3</b>
<b>Age</b>																							
18-24 years old	1	162	<b>4.06</b>	108	3.80	167	<b>4.16</b>	130	<b>3.76</b>	109	3.08	107	3.12	101	2.90	77	3.10	100	2.83	100	2.89	68	2.63
25-34 years old	2	500	3.90	384	3.79	478	3.85	411	3.62	383	<b>3.03</b>	284	3.07	270	2.88	235	2.92	280	3.04	308	2.76	245	2.42
35-44 years old	3	389	<b>3.83</b>	322	3.90	354	<b>3.70</b>	301	<b>3.41</b>	289	3.19	230	3.03	219	2.89	195	2.91	219	2.94	233	2.75	190	2.39
45-54 years old	4	311	<b>3.77</b>	258	3.88	275	3.85	259	<b>3.39</b>	247	3.17	179	3.05	166	3.03	145	2.79	162	2.90	191	2.63	156	2.25
> 54 years old	5	124	3.87	116	3.95	114	<b>3.69</b>	107	3.48	116	<b>3.47</b>	63	2.98	63	2.86	55	2.95	62	2.77	80	2.81	65	2.35
Total		1,486	3.87	1,188	3.86	1,388	3.84	1,208	3.52	1,144	3.15	863	3.05	819	2.91	707	2.91	823	2.94	912	2.75	724	2.39
Levene's test (Sig.)			0.066		0.000		0.062		0.289		0.616		0.496		0.952		0.344		0.005		0.509		0.133
F-value			2.657		0.767		5.977		4.447		4.842		0.233		0.671		1.094		1.228		1.105		1.763
p-value			0.032		0.547		0.000		0.001		0.001		0.920		0.612		0.358		0.297		0.353		0.134
Scheffé post hoc test			<b>1&gt;3,4</b>				<b>1&gt;3,5</b>		<b>1&gt;3,4</b>		<b>5&gt;2</b>												

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Not at all useful to 5 = Extremely useful, 0 = Did not use was excluded

2) Mean differences indicated by Scheffé post hoc test are in **bold**.



### Appendix 19: ANOVA of Information Source Usefulness by Socio-Economic Characteristics (Cont.)

		Internet		Experience		Friends/ family/ relatives		Travel guidebooks		Brochures/ pamphlets		Magazine Ad.		Newspaper Ad.		Road show/ trade show		Clubs/ associations		TV Ad.		Radio Ad.	
	Group	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean	f	Mean
<b>Income</b>																							
≤ US\$20,000	1	302	3.78	240	<b>3.73</b>	307	3.89	241	3.51	239	3.04	198	3.14	178	2.97	160	2.99	181	2.92	202	2.85	149	<b>2.61</b>
US\$20,001-40,000	2	334	3.90	261	3.84	311	3.89	268	3.50	264	3.18	200	3.08	200	2.94	170	2.96	194	3.03	209	2.88	165	2.44
US\$40,001-60,000	3	252	3.76	202	3.79	236	3.70	209	3.61	200	3.15	151	3.10	153	2.91	129	2.89	152	2.91	160	2.77	137	2.41
US\$60,001-80,000	4	141	3.91	116	3.88	128	3.81	121	3.42	113	3.20	81	3.06	71	3.03	65	2.80	80	2.98	87	2.60	61	<b>2.09</b>
> US\$80,000	5	357	3.99	289	<b>4.03</b>	313	3.86	295	3.52	250	3.21	185	2.95	171	2.84	140	2.84	165	2.90	199	2.57	170	<b>2.20</b>
Total		1,386	3.87	1,108	3.86	1,295	3.84	1,134	3.52	1,066	3.15	815	3.07	773	2.92	664	2.91	772	2.95	857	2.75	682	2.38
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.031		0.159		0.314		0.325		0.233		0.391		0.489		0.360		0.498		0.052		0.033
<i>F-value</i>			2.990		2.863		1.395		0.661		1.052		0.887		0.569		0.674		0.450		3.246		4.550
<i>p-value</i>			0.018		0.022		0.233		0.619		0.379		0.471		0.685		0.610		0.773		0.012		0.001
<i>Scheffé post hoc test</i>			-		5>1																-		1>4,5
<b>Education</b>																							
Primary & Secondary school	1	197	3.77	173	3.84	192	3.91	163	3.58	153	3.13	125	3.10	128	2.92	105	3.02	127	2.93	129	2.77	105	2.46
Tertiary	2	639	3.91	507	3.90	599	3.81	504	3.51	493	3.19	362	3.11	333	2.90	283	2.96	330	2.88	386	2.79	295	2.46
Postgraduate	3	602	3.87	466	3.84	549	3.83	502	3.50	461	3.11	341	2.97	321	2.92	289	2.84	333	2.98	361	2.68	294	2.29
Total		1,438	3.87	1,146	3.86	1,340	3.83	1,169	3.52	1,107	3.15	828	3.05	782	2.91	677	2.92	790	2.93	876	2.74	694	2.39
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.100		0.432		0.418		0.354		0.806		0.054		0.426		0.234		0.588		0.471		0.755
<i>F-value</i>			1.520		0.393		0.726		0.331		0.970		1.596		0.050		1.358		0.664		1.117		2.535
<i>p-value</i>			0.219		0.675		0.484		0.718		0.380		0.203		0.951		0.258		0.515		0.328		0.080
<b>Occupation</b>																							
Professionals	1	381	3.94	278	3.82	345	3.79	310	3.55	278	3.15	198	3.01	179	2.98	154	2.92	190	2.92	205	2.66	164	2.36
Adm. & Managerial	2	306	3.81	278	3.90	286	3.81	248	3.45	245	3.22	193	3.15	176	3.03	159	3.06	169	2.98	206	2.83	169	2.38
Clerical & Commercial	3	258	3.88	205	3.77	235	3.93	211	3.44	209	3.17	160	3.21	157	2.90	136	2.82	155	3.06	171	2.85	130	2.44
Tech. & Associate Prof.	4	153	3.93	114	4.07	139	3.78	118	3.61	107	3.17	79	2.92	78	2.76	72	2.96	80	2.93	86	2.60	72	2.41
Labourers & Service	5	87	3.90	80	4.00	82	3.88	74	3.64	67	3.12	53	3.08	48	3.08	41	3.10	48	3.04	54	2.77	45	2.48
Others(e.g. student, government, unemployed, etc.)	6	195	3.83	148	3.85	202	3.97	161	3.60	158	3.07	111	2.88	109	2.72	82	2.71	115	2.72	115	2.63	84	2.26
Total		1,380	3.88	1,103	3.87	1,289	3.85	1,122	3.53	1,064	3.16	794	3.06	747	2.92	644	2.92	757	2.94	837	2.74	664	2.38
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.734		0.024		0.149		0.682		0.872		0.150		0.059		0.873		0.101		0.717		0.869
<i>F-value</i>			0.850		1.544		1.319		1.008		0.512		2.023		2.027		1.692		1.499		1.456		0.445
<i>p-value</i>			0.514		0.173		0.254		0.412		0.767		0.073		0.073		0.134		0.188		0.202		0.817

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Not at all useful to 5 = Extremely useful, 0 = Did not use was excluded

2) Mean differences indicated by Scheffé post hoc test are in **bold**.

## Appendix 20: ANOVA of Country Image by Socio-Economic Characteristics

	Group	<i>f</i>	Relaxation	Infrastructure	Entertainment	Attraction	Convenience	Environment
<u>Gender</u>								
Male	1	1,045	<b>4.04</b>	<b>3.91</b>	3.91	<b>3.87</b>	3.56	3.13
Female	2	662	<b>4.09</b>	<b>3.99</b>	3.91	<b>3.95</b>	3.55	3.11
Total		1,707	4.06	3.94	3.91	3.90	3.56	3.12
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.581	0.049	0.235	0.413	0.131	0.316
<i>t-value</i>			-2.028	-2.779	0.076	-2.853	0.397	0.536
<i>p-value</i>			0.043	0.006	0.939	0.004	0.692	0.592
<u>Region of residence</u>								
East Asia	1	292	<b>3.89</b>	3.93	4.01	<b>3.80</b>	3.52	<b>3.00</b>
Europe	2	253	<b>4.19</b>	<b>3.85</b>	3.88	3.90	3.48	<b>3.04</b>
North America	3	244	<b>4.17</b>	3.99	3.94	<b>4.05</b>	3.54	<b>3.09</b>
Oceania	4	236	<b>4.12</b>	3.94	3.83	<b>4.01</b>	3.62	<b>2.83</b>
Middle East	5	232	<b>4.07</b>	<b>3.85</b>	3.96	<b>3.83</b>	3.55	<b>3.25</b>
South Asia	6	229	<b>3.97</b>	3.99	3.84	<b>3.81</b>	3.63	<b>3.37</b>
Africa	7	221	<b>4.00</b>	<b>4.06</b>	3.96	3.89	3.55	<b>3.34</b>
Total		1,707	4.06	3.94	3.91	3.90	3.56	3.12
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.200	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.014	0.036
<i>F-value</i>			12.157	4.620	2.949	7.336	2.301	21.275
<i>p-value</i>			0.000	0.000	0.007	0.000	0.032	0.000
<i>Scheffé post hoc test</i>			<b>3&gt;1,6</b> <b>2&gt;6,7</b> <b>2,3,4,5&gt;1</b>	<b>7&gt;2,5</b>	-	<b>3&gt;1,5</b> <b>4&gt;1</b> <b>3,4&gt;6</b>	-	<b>6&gt;1,2,3,4</b> <b>7&gt;2,3,4</b> <b>2,3,5&gt;4</b> <b>5&gt;1,4</b>
<u>Age</u>								
18-24 years old	1	183	4.12	3.87	<b>4.03</b>	3.88	<b>3.47</b>	3.18
25-34 years old	2	553	4.03	3.91	3.94	3.87	<b>3.49</b>	3.09
35-44 years old	3	451	4.03	3.97	3.90	3.87	<b>3.62</b>	3.11
45-54 years old	4	362	4.08	3.98	3.89	3.96	<b>3.60</b>	3.13
> 54 years old	5	156	4.05	3.96	<b>3.77</b>	3.98	3.60	3.17
Total		1,705	4.06	3.94	3.91	3.90	3.56	3.12
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.482	0.243	0.085	0.222	0.434	0.170
<i>F-value</i>			1.225	1.944	4.086	2.366	6.043	0.950
<i>p-value</i>			0.298	0.101	0.003	0.051	0.00	0.434
<i>Scheffé post hoc test</i>					<b>1&gt;5</b>		<b>3&gt;1</b> <b>3,4&gt;2</b>	
<u>Income</u>								
≤ US\$20,000	1	346	4.00	3.91	3.88	3.85	<b>3.49</b>	<b>3.22</b>
US\$20,001-40,000	2	379	4.06	3.94	3.96	3.86	3.52	3.16
US\$40,001-60,000	3	287	4.06	3.92	3.90	3.87	3.59	3.14
US\$60,001-80,000	4	163	4.03	3.97	3.90	3.92	3.53	<b>3.00</b>
> US\$80,000	5	407	4.11	3.97	3.91	3.98	<b>3.62</b>	<b>3.00</b>
Total		1,582	4.06	3.94	3.91	3.90	3.55	3.12
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.535	0.216	0.176	0.228	0.672	0.211
<i>F-value</i>			1.827	0.895	0.853	2.973	3.240	6.504
<i>p-value</i>			0.121	0.466	0.491	0.018	0.012	0.000
<i>Scheffé post hoc test</i>						-	<b>5&gt;1</b>	<b>1&gt;4,5</b>
<u>Education</u>								
Primary & Secondary school	1	238	4.02	3.90	3.96	3.85	3.06	3.07
Tertiary	2	740	4.05	3.95	3.93	3.89	3.56	3.12
Postgraduate	3	673	4.08	3.96	3.88	3.93	3.57	3.12
Total		1,651	4.06	3.95	3.91	3.90	3.55	3.11
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			0.027	0.712	0.434	0.178	0.412	0.143
<i>F-value</i>			1.106	1.183	1.688	1.748	1.112	0.550
<i>p-value</i>			0.331	0.307	0.185	0.174	0.329	0.577

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree

2) Mean differences indicated by Scheffé post hoc test are in **bold**.

**Appendix 20: ANOVA of Country Image by Socio-Economic Characteristics  
(Cont.)**

	<b>Group</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Relaxation</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Entertainment</b>	<b>Attraction</b>	<b>Convenience</b>	<b>Environment</b>
<u>Occupation</u>								
Professionals	1	431	4.03	3.93	3.88	3.93	3.54	3.07
Adm. & Managerial	2	359	4.05	3.96	3.87	3.83	3.62	3.15
Clerical & Commercial	3	283	4.04	3.94	3.93	3.86	3.54	3.16
Tech. & Associate Prof.	4	175	4.12	3.96	4.00	3.92	3.51	3.11
Labourers & Service	5	104	4.08	3.96	4.05	4.03	3.59	3.19
Others(e.g. student, government, unemployed, etc.)	6	240	4.09	3.92	3.89	3.94	3.53	3.14
Total		1,592	4.06	3.94	3.91	3.90	3.56	3.12
<i>Levene's test (Sig.)</i>			<i>0.988</i>	<i>0.437</i>	<i>0.495</i>	<i>0.430</i>	<i>0.617</i>	<i>0.729</i>
<b>F-value</b>			<b>0.969</b>	<b>0.249</b>	<b>2.252</b>	<b>2.741</b>	<b>1.501</b>	<b>1.086</b>
<b>p-value</b>			<b>0.436</b>	<b>0.940</b>	<b>0.047</b>	<b>0.018</b>	<b>0.186</b>	<b>0.366</b>
<b>Scheffé post hoc test</b>					-	-		

Note: 1) Respondents rated items where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree

2) Mean differences indicated by Scheffé post hoc test are in **bold**.