

Study of Thai Tourists' Characteristics in Traveling to Korea*

การศึกษาลักษณะของนักท่องเที่ยวไทยที่เดินทางไปท่องเที่ยวประเทศเกาหลี

อัคร์จินดา ตรีสุวรรณ**

บทคัดย่อ

เนื่องด้วยแนวโน้มการเพิ่มขึ้นของการไปท่องเที่ยวเกาหลีมีเพิ่มมากขึ้น การวิจัยนี้ต้องการศึกษาปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อความต้องการไปท่องเที่ยวเกาหลีเพื่อค้นหาปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจเดินทางไปท่องเที่ยวเกาหลีของนักท่องเที่ยวไทยและกระแสเกาหลีมีผลต่อการตัดสินใจไปท่องเที่ยวเกาหลีหรือไม่อย่างไร ขอบเขตของการวิจัยในครั้งนี้คือนักท่องเที่ยวไทยที่เดินทางไปท่องเที่ยวเกาหลีกับบริษัททัวร์ เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการศึกษาในครั้งนี้ใช้แบบสอบถามจำนวน 323 ชุดเพื่อรวบรวมข้อมูล ณ สนามบินสุวรรณภูมิ ผลการศึกษาพบว่านักท่องเที่ยวส่วนใหญ่เป็นเพศหญิง มีอายุระหว่าง 30 – 39 ปี จบการศึกษาระดับอนุปริญญาหรือปริญญาตรี ทำงานบริษัทเอกชน มีรายได้น้อยกว่า 20,001 บาท มีค่าใช้จ่ายเฉลี่ยประมาณ 30,001 – 60,000 บาท / ครั้ง / คน นอกจากนี้ ปัจจัยทางประชากรศาสตร์ที่มีผลต่อความต้องการไปท่องเที่ยวเกาหลี เช่น สถานภาพการหย่าร้างและการทำงานมีผลทำให้จำนวนวันในการเดินทางไปท่องเที่ยวลดลง ในขณะที่นักท่องเที่ยวที่มีสถานภาพการสมรสและนักท่องเที่ยวที่มีรายได้สูงมีผลต่อค่าใช้จ่ายในการไปท่องเที่ยวที่เพิ่มขึ้น ในส่วนของปัจจัยทางกระแสเกาหลีหรือการรับวัฒนธรรมเกาหลีมีผลต่อความถี่ในการไปท่องเที่ยวเพิ่มขึ้น เมื่อนักท่องเที่ยวรับวัฒนธรรมเกาหลีเป็นระยะเวลายาวนานก็จะมีผลต่อความถี่ในการไปท่องเที่ยวที่เพิ่มขึ้น

Abstract

Due to the increasing demand of Thai tourists toward traveling trend to Korea, this study aimed to investigate factors affecting demand for traveling to Korea in order to find out factors affecting Thai tourists' decision on traveling to Korea and how Korean wave influenced Thai tourists on traveling decision Korea as well. The scope of this study was Thai tourists who traveled to Korea with tour agent. Method: The study distributing using 323 questionnaires at Suvarnabhumi airport as a mean to collect data from the respondents. Result: The study founded that the majority of the respondents were female and single with the age between 30 – 39 years old, hold college diploma or bachelor's degree, working in the private companies and have income less than 20,001 baht and have expenditure about 30,001 – 60,000 baht / trip

* A study of Thai tourists' characteristics in traveling to Korea submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Art, Program in Korean Studies, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University. This study has Associate Professor Ph.D Worawet Suwanrada as an advisor.

** A student of Korean studies, Graduate school, Chulalongkorn University.
E-mail: aukjinda@yahoo.com

/person. Moreover, Demographic factor have an effect for demand travel to Korea. For example divorced status and working status effect the reduction of length of stay. While married status's tourist and high income tourist affect the raise of expenditure per trip. In term of Korean wave factor have an effect for frequency of travel to Korea. When the tourist absorbing Korean culture for long time. It has an effect the raise of frequency of travel.

1. Introduction

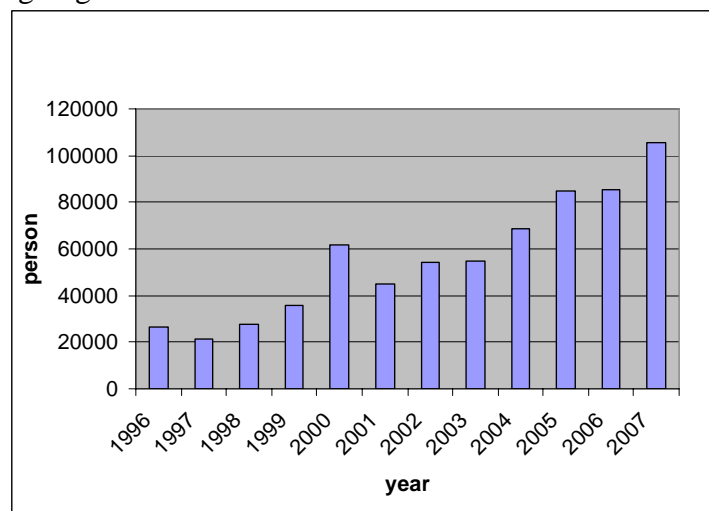
Nowadays, people can easily connect to each other and learning a lot of thing through media. Many kinds of media, such as television, radio, books, magazine, internet, etc, have an influence on the society in many ways. Korea is one of the excellent examples for applying the creative presentation of Korean tourism through media.

And that is the starting point in grasping attention of people around the world through “Hallyu” is mean “Korean wave”. “Hallyu” or “Korean wave” the first was called by Chinese mass media which is a phenomenon of South Korean pop culture that popular among Asian countries by using media as a tool to publicize.

Korean wave also gain the popularity in Thailand. It was first hit in Thailand in 2001 from the drama “Autumn in my heart” and “Winter love song”. After that, many kinds of media flow to Thailand in form of songs, movies, games, books, etc.

As the domination of Korean wave in Thai society, unavoidably, Thai people want to get closer to Korea. Many Thai people turn to try Korean foods, study Korean language, use Korean products, or even inspire many to visit Korea. With these increasing demands on Korean trend, those behaviors were a plus to Korea's tourism, especially the new style of tourism called “Hallyu Trip” or “Drama Tour”. Hallyu trip or Drama Tour is a program tour, visiting the place that used as the location on drama or T.V. series. Therefore, Korean wave can benefit in many ways to Korea, especially in term of tourism.

Graph 1 : Outgoing Thai tourists to Korea



Source : Tourism Authority of Thailand. *Statistic Report 1996 - 2007*. Annual report

Statistically, before 2000, there were only 35,000 Thai tourists per year who visit Korea. However, after 2000, the growth of the number of Thai tourist visiting Korea keeps on increasing significantly. In 2007, there were more than 100,000 of Thai tourists per year visiting Korea. The marked increasing traveling trend to Korea was a very interesting case study. Moreover, the primary data collect from Osotho magazine, Thai travel magazine edited by Tourism authority of Thailand (TAT), and Bangkok business newspaper found that most of advertisement on Korea program tour since 2008 onwards all provided Hallyu trip or drama tour. Nami Island was one of the famous visiting places from well-known Korean drama, “Winter Love song.” However, the visiting places will be adjusted to fit with the popular trend of those hit drama during that period. Also, different seasons led to changing in activities, for example, ski resort during winter, sightseeing beautiful flowers and trees during summer and autumn.

There are also many related tour program linked with Korean wave in order to attract more demand, such as, visiting the restaurant that Korean superstar is an owner, visiting on-air studio, etc. So media consider one of the influential factors affecting Thai tourists’ decision to travel in Korea.

A goal of this study was to study factors affecting demand for traveling to Korea; especially Korean wave have an influence on demand for Thai tourist traveling to Korea or not? In addition, this study investigated the reason visiting Korea and attitude toward Korea of Thai tourists.

Finding from this study is expected factors affecting Thai tourists’ decision for traveling in order to adopt the right strategy in promoting tourism as well as to predict to the trend of Thai tourist toward Korea destination.

2. Literature Review

Review of related literature and research included theories, concepts, and past researches follow;

2.1 Tourism Demand

Tourism demand has been defined in numerous ways, including ‘the total number of persons who travel, or wish to travel, to use tourist facilities and services at places away from their places of work and residence’ (Mathieson and Wall 1982) and ‘the relationship between individuals’ motivation [to travel] and their ability to do so’ (Pearce 1995). In contrast, more economic – focused definitions of demand are more concerned with ‘the schedule of the amount of any product or service which people are willing and able to buy at each specific price in a set of possible prices during a specified period of time’ (Cooper *et al.* 1993).

There are three principal elements to tourism demand:

(1) *Effective* or *actual demand*, which is the number of people who has participating in tourism.

(2) *Suppressed demand*, which consist of the population who would like to travel but cannot travel due to circumstances (e.g. lack of expenditure for travel or limited of holiday). But sometime it can be ‘deferred demand’ when circumstance change or Know as ‘potential demand’ (e.g. lack of tourism supply such as a shortage of bed spaces).

(3) *No demand* is the population who has no desire to travel and those who cannot travel due to sickness.

2.2 Tourist motivation

The pervious theory is about tourism demand but tourism demand cannot happen without tourist motivation. Motivation is ‘felt need’ and the action needed or chosen to satisfy that need. (Sharpley 2006) However, Graham Dann, which summaries that there are two key ways of looking at motivation which reflect two disciplinary perspectives on the subject:

(1) Motivation as a psychological phenomenon (intrinsic motivation)

Every individual has deep-rooted needs and desires. This approach is concerned with establishing a link between such psychological needs and identified goal-oriented touristic behavior.

(2) Motivation as a social/sociological phenomenon (extrinsic motivation)

There are a variety of forces or pressures arising from an individual’s social and cultural environment which may influence his or her needs and motivation. Such external or extrinsic pressures may come from family and friends, the work environment, or society.

2.3 Factors influencing place’s public image

Many different factors influence a place’s image or perception held by outsider. Many people have images of different places, and these vary in different countries and cultures. According to Kunczik (1997), the construction of place’s image is a lengthy socialization process with different socialization agents, such as the home environment, school, the literature and the media.

The effect of two major factors on a place’s public image: films and media news. A deep understanding of the role of the media in shaping places’ images is essential for a grasp of the media strategies applied by places to improve image.

Place image in the mass media

The role of the mass media in this process is crucial. While people usually become aware of occurrences in their immediate environment from direct contact with the events, they learn about events that occur in more distant places primarily from the media.

Place image in T.V. series and films

The effect of television shows and films on the image of countries, cities and tourist destinations. Most people have not visited many of places, so one of their main sources of knowledge of the world is what they see in films and television (Weimann, 2000). Numerous examples exist of places that have been negatively affected by television show, especially those that focus on police officers, homicide detectives, violence, poverty and social problem.

Films, however, can also have a very positive influence on a place’s image. For example, the New Zealand Tourism Board estimates the worldwide effect on the first The Lord of the Rings movie as the equivalent of a \$41 million promotional campaign. In addition to promoting the country’s image.

Places image in the news media

While films or television can contribute greatly to a place’s positive or negative image, most places concentrate their efforts on obtaining positive coverage in the news media because of their enormous popularity and their major role in shaping public opinion (Weimann, 2000).

Sutasinee Maskhao (2006) study about Tourism promotion strategy through Korean TV miniseries. This study explain that Korean T.V. series make a good image of Korea but most interviewer from this research have not intend to travel to Korea. Because of budget, time limit and interesting place in Korea.

Fonthip Barameerattanachai (2008) study about The influence of Korean drama on Korean tourism toward people in Bangkok area. The result of this study found that most of people who watched Korean T.V. series interested travelling to Korea and decide travelling to Korea. This study using questionnaire with people who has an experience travelling to Korea and people who never been to Korea.

Samuel Seongseop Kim, Jerome Agrusa, Heesung Lee and Kaye Chone (2007) study about Effects of Korean television dramas on the flow of Japanese tourist. The result of this study found that Korean television dramas have an effect for Japanese tourist decide travel to Korea. And Korean television dramas also have an effect on relationship between Korean and Japan; have become more positive in term of relation between people.

3. Methods

This study is a survey research, using questionnaire as a tool to collect data from sampling group, who were Thai tourist traveling to Korea.

3.1 Target population and sample group

The target population of this research was the outgoing Thai tourist who will go to Korea.

Sample group size was 323, who were going to Korea with tour agent from January to February 2010. The researcher applied non probability sampling group by using random samples from Thai population who will go to Korea with tour agent at Main terminal, Departure hall from Suvarnabhumi airport from January to February 2010 Wednesday – Friday and none airlines limit for covering the scope of study and accomplishing the research objective.

3.2 Research tool

This research used questionnaire as a tool. Literature review were synthesize as a guideline for drafting questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of 4 parts. Part 1 and 2 is close-ended question with multiple choices. Part 3 is 5-levels scale questions. Part 4 is close-ended question with multiple choices and 5-levels scale questions.

Part 1: Demographic characteristics or demographic factor consisted of gender, age, education, career and income.

Part 2: Information on traveling to Korea. This part consisted of traveling characteristic (e.g. travel frequency, length of stay), travel expenses per trip, popular place for visiting, reasons affecting traveling decision to Korea.

Part 3: Attitude toward Korea. This part consisted of opinion about Korea in many parts, for example, questions about sightseeing places, Korean wave, Korean product, and Korean people.

Part 4: Media factor affecting traveling decide to Korea. This part consisted of all about media factors

These questionnaires were pre-test with the 15 respondents as the mean to find the deficiency in order to make the final correction into the applicable questionnaires.

3.3 Data analyze

The research will analyze data through computer program. The findings will be presented as follows:

(1) The object of this study was investigated personal data or demographic factor, reason for travel to Korea and attitude of Thai tourists toward Korea. Descriptive statistic analysis was applied to summarize the characteristic of sample group and tourist's behavior by using percentage. Also, Likert Scale was added in order to provide a clearer measure on the level of attitude toward Korea by dividing into 5 levels; that is strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. In addition, A Multiple Linear Regression is applied to test the hypothesis in order to find the relationship of each factor that affecting demand for travel to Korea.

(2) This study also using descriptive analysis for analyzes each characteristic of Thai tourist and tourist behavior that travel to Korea.

4. Result of the study

In order to fulfill the objectives of the study, results presented in this section are composed of 5 parts. First, Personal data respondents is presented. Second is Thai tourist behavior who going to Korea Third, indicated Thai tourist attitude toward Korea, the forth part is Reaching capacity to Korea culture of Thai tourists, and the five part is Results of a multiple regression analysis were present.

4.1 Personal data respondents

The majority of respondents could be described as female (70.3%) and single (61.6%). Their ages are between 30 – 39 years old (35.0%), hold college diploma or bachelor's degree(61.3%), working in the private companies(37.5%) and have income less than 20,001 baht(31.0%).

From the finding, the majority is female. Nowadays, (Staates et al., 2006) women have a good education and a good job more than past. So women become a large group of tourist and they travel for a good opportunity to their work, their experience and their education. Unsurprisingly, female became the majority group for this study. In addition, travel demand also depend on the tourist's leisure, finding from survey show that most female tourists are interesting in doing Korean activity such as watching Korean dramas / movies, listening Korean songs etc. Hence, all that activities can motivate traveling decision. According to the theory of McIntosh & Goeldner (1990), the single group can easily travel due to less responsibility from family. Added with the late marriage among the current generation, so, single tend to travel more than the others marital status which also match with the finding that most respondents is the single with the aged range between 30 – 39 years. In contrast, married couples with children tend not to travel because of family responsibility. Moreover, the study found that most of male group travel with their family because males were busy working, and have less time for travel plan. Importantly, (Page , 2009) the female members in the family have an influence on decision – making. In many case, (McIntosh & Goeldner, 1990) the traveling decision depend on their children as well. Also, divorced do not travel much due to lack of partner. In term of education, people in similar career and income range tend to enjoy sharing similar interest. Mostly, they will persuade their friends, therefore, the travel was mostly in form of gang.

Finding from survey found that most of tourists are 30 – 39 years old, hold college diploma or bachelor degree, work with private companies, and have income less than 20,001 baths. This can analyze that most of tourist group who travel to Korea is a working group and was interested to travel to Korea because they have the same interesting about Korea.

4.2 Thai tourists behavior who travel to Korea

In term of Thai tourists' behavior, the research founded that female enjoy traveling to Korea more than male and most of them are first time traveler to Korea (85.4%). Most of tourist had bought the package tour for the trip in the range of 20,000 – 30,000 baht (60.1%). Most of them spend pocket money around 10,001 – 20,000 baht per trip (43.7%). However, the pocket money also varied by income. Higher income tends to spend more money. As known from the basic economic rule of demand, (Reisinger, 2009) tourists consider that how they can gain maximize benefits in the purchase for their goods and services. Finding from tourism behavior found that most of tourist with income range of less than 20,001 baths bought their tour package around Baht 20,001 – 30,000 per trip. It showed that they must be really interested in traveling to Korea since their income was less than the package tour. That mean they have to save money for some period in order to cover the package tour while the pocket money vary with income. The higher income range tends to buy the higher tour package in order to buy more convenience, more luxury traveling, no matter in form of airlines, accommodation, foods, etc. However, those with no income (unemployed, students, housewives) also travel with the family support. From the traveling frequency, the study founded that those with income less than Baht 20,001 are more likely to visit Korea more often than other income groups since the expenses are not so high and they have interest and intention in traveling to Korea. However, the higher income range may interest visiting the farer destination. In conclusion, tourism was somehow in form of satisfaction-based product. Even the package tour and the others expense during the stay in Korea are nearly double of their earned income, however, money was not considered as the big obstacle on tourism. In addition, both gender considered Korea as an interesting destination. Most of male tourists travel with family (10.2%) while most females travel with friends (32.5%). Most tourists thought that the reasonable time for traveling is 5 days (66.9%). The popular place for travel among male and female Thai tourist is the natural resources with the beautiful scenery (39.3%). Most of tourist gain information on traveling to Korea from friend.

4.3 Thai tourists' attitude toward Korea

This part indicated general opinion about Korea of Thai tourist

Table 1 : Thai tourist's attitude toward Korea

Description	Mean	S.D.
Korea is a good place for traveling and has natural attractions	3.89	0.676
Travel to Korea is expensive	3.14	0.728
Korea is a technology country	3.73	0.696
Korea produces a good quality product	3.56	0.634
Korea food has a good taste and has many kind of food	3.38	0.701
Korea dramas/movies have an interesting story to pursue	3.78	0.807

Description	Mean	S.D.
Korea songs are beautiful song and easy to remember	3.29	0.843
Korea culture has flow to Thailand too much	3.81	0.815
Doing plastic surgery is a common for Korean people	3.92	0.810
Korean people are polite, gentle and friendly	3.07	0.785
Number of respondents	323	

From the above findings there is only a small portion of disagreement. Therefore, the study can conclude that most of Thai tourists have a positive attitude toward Korea because most of traveling decision to Korea was inspired from Korean wave. Unsurprisingly, the result from this part became positive.

4.4 Reaching capacity to Korean culture of Thai tourists

Finding from survey found that most Thai tourists experience watching Korean dramas/movies and tasting Korean food respectively. Movies and dramas are the most important factors affecting traveling decision to Korea. Interestingly, most of Thai tourists have a positive attitude toward traveling to Korea since most of them are eager and expect to experience the beautiful scenery and follow the tracking tour as shown in their favorite movies and dramas. As the plus of positive image of Korean dramas conveying through media, unsurprisingly, dramas/movies can fantasize, grasp more attention including stimulate the significant growth of Korea's tourism. Therefore, most Thai tourists, especially women have the positive attitude toward traveling in Korea. On the other hand, Korean food does not affect traveling decision to Korea because they can easily having Korean food in Thailand whenever they want.

With a plus of globalization, Korean wave is seen as a tool for exported culture product through a variety media in order to promote their country and their product worldwide. The survey found that Thai tourists were reached to Korean culture by watching Korean dramas and movies through free T.V. channel followed by bought Cd or DVD. According to Neilson's research, his study found that Thai people spent time on television about 7 hours per day on average. So, T.V. is the most influential media and plays a crucial role in promoting Korean tourism for Thai people. With the plus of conveying both in form of picture and voice which provide more understanding and feeling, TV can attract a large number of audience. In addition, nowadays, T.V. became the first needed appliance product in nearly all households. Beautiful scenery can save a hundred words; therefore, TV was the perfect media in promoting tourism industry. Moreover, the survey on attitude found that most Thai tourists have a positive attitude toward Korea, and considered Korea as the beautiful scenery destination. Of course, the positive attitude always leads to the positive effect in other field as well. Korean songs, Korean foods, Korean novels/magazines, Korean language, Korean product all enjoy the positive outcomes from Korean wave. In summary, Korean wave can consider as an important factor motivating Thai tourist in traveling to Korea.

4.5 Results of a multiple regression analysis

Results of multiple regression analysis to find out correlation between each factor (Such as demographic factor, Korean wave factor) and demand for travel are length of stay, expenditure per trip, frequency of travel.

Table 2 : Results of a multiple regression analysis to predict Length of stay

Independent Variables	B	t
Constant	4.737	25.834*
Gender (female = 1 , male=0)	-0.076	-1.003
Age	0.002	0.464
Marital status (Married = 1, Others = 0)	-0.032	-0.364
Divorce/widow status (Divorce/Widow = 1,Others=0)	-0.717	-2.963*
Work status (Work=1, None work=0)	-0.210	-2.224*
Income	0.001	1.434
Channels of absorb Korean wave	0.000	-0.045
Korean culture's absorbing period	0.053	1.271
R = 0.241		R ² = 0.058

*p < 0.05

Finding from table2 found that the two independent variables, divorced/widow status and work status, was significant contribution in predict length of stay (B = -0.717 and -0.210, p < 0.05). Divorced or widow status has an effect on reduce of length of stay because they have not partner to travel with. And working status also has an effect on reduce of length of stay due to limited of holiday.

Table 3 : Results of a multiple regression analysis to predict Expenditure per trip

Independent Variables	B	t
Constant	38418.481	9.451*
Gender (female = 1 , male=0)	-2896.553	-1.731
Age	121.394	1.293
Marital status (Married = 1, Others = 0)	5470.201	2.832*
Divorce/widow status (Divorce/Widow = 1,Others=0)	-1234.469	-0.230
Work status (Work=1, None work=0)	3466.730	1.658
Income	0.094	4.855*
Channels of absorb Korean wave	-115.572	-0.327
Korean culture's absorbing period	360.007	0.392
R = 0.475		R ² = 0.225

*p < 0.05

In term of expenditure per trip found that the two independent variables, marital status and income, was significant contribution in predict expenditure per trip (B = 5470.201 and 0.094, p < 0.05). It can conclude that marital status and income have an effect on the raise of expenditure. Because marital status always travel with their family so they must paid for their family also. High income also spends a lot of money for their facility.

Table 4 : Results of a multiple regression analysis to predict Frequency of travel to Korea

Independent Variables	B	t
Constant	0.742	3.450*
Gender (female = 1 , male=0)	-0.113	-1.271
Age	0.005	0.913
Marital status (Married = 1, Others = 0)	-0.094	-0.921
Divorce/widow status (Divorce/Widow = 1,Others=0)	-0.255	-0.899
Work status (Work=1, None work=0)	0.125	1.128
Income	0.001	-1.076
Channels of absorb Korean wave	0.027	1.461
Korean culture's absorbing period	0.114	2.336*
R = 0.205		R ² = 0.042

*p < 0.05

In term of frequency of travel found that Korean culture's absorbing period domain was a significant contributor in predict frequency of travel to Korea (B = 0.114, p < 0.05). Finding from table4 can conclude that tourists who absorbing Korean culture for a long time have trend traveling to Korean more. They are interesting in Korea and want to get closer to Korea that inspires them to visiting Korea more than one time.

5. Conclusion

The increasing demand of Thai tourists toward traveling trend to Korea, the purpose of this study aimed to investigates factors affecting demand for traveling to Korea. Noticeably, after 2000, Korean wave was overflowed to Thailand through all kinds of media and still remain till now with well-welcome. Those kinds of Korean fever also flow all over Asian countries as known as "Hallyu" which mean "Korean Wave". That is one of the main factors affecting Thai tourists' decision for traveling to Korea. The primary data of 323 questionnaires was collected from the sampling group of Thai tourists who will travel to Korea at Suvarnabhumi airport. Descriptive statistic analysis was used to analyze data. The result of this study were most of tourist were female and having the first experience travel to Korea. The most popular place for Thai tourists was the places with beautiful scenery and beautiful natural resource as they have seen from Korean drama. That led to the new traveling trend known as "Hallyu trip" or "Drama tour" that always have in program tour. Most of Thai tourists' experienced watching Korea drama and most of them considered Korean drama as the inspiration for traveling decision to Korea. Therefore, Korea dramas not only stimulate the growth of Korea's tourism, but also built the good image for Korea including indirectly promote Korean product and culture worldwide. The survey found that besides watching Korean drama as a first rank of activity, Thai tourists also enjoyed watching Korean movies, listen Korean songs, having Korean food, using Korean products, learning Korean language. In term of attitude, most of them have positive attitude toward Korea. So, Korean wave can consider as the most significant factor affecting the demand for traveling to Korea.

As the currently popular trend of Korean wave among Thai teenager, this research mainly focused on Korean wave affecting traveling decision in Korea. However, the effect of Korean wave may be changed in the future. Due to time limitation and the narrow scope of sampling group, the further study should study on the different sampling group. Also, the season should be taking into consideration because the result may be different due to the changing trend and changing in lifestyle varying on different period of time.

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