

## Abstract

In the dynamic global environment of today, understanding how travelers acquire information is important for marketing management decisions. For destination marketing managers, understanding information search behavior of travelers is crucial for designing effective marketing communication campaigns because information search represents the primary stage at which marketing can provide information and influence travelers' vacation decisions. Therefore, conceptual and empirical examinations of tourist information search behavior have a long tradition in tourism marketing literature.

The purpose of this study is to segment Chinese pleasure tourists visiting Bangkok regarding information sources. This study also examines Chinese pleasure tourists' information search behavior by studying the demographic and travel characteristics of the tourists. Finally, the study identifies the factors that are likely to influence their information search behavior.

Data from the pleasure travel markets survey for the Chinese were used to segment the market by information sources. A total of 384 self-administered questionnaires were conducted from October to November, 2004 at Bangkok International Airport. Cluster analysis was used to classify all the cases. Chi-square was used to test hypotheses.

The result of this study shows that the Chinese pleasure tourists use a number of information sources, with the travel agency the most important source, followed by friend and relatives, and internet. Five information sources segments were identified: travel agency, internet, combination information, internet/television/ travel agency,

and friend and relatives. The result shows that characteristics of respondents in each cluster are related to demographic and travel characteristics. Results of the study confirmed that both demographic and travel characteristics affect tourists' information search behavior.

