

Abstract

The research objectives of the study are to investigate international pleasure traveler's current images of nine destinations in East Asia Pacific: China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Korea Rep., Vietnam and Cambodia and also identifies the destination's strength and weakness in both visitor and nonvisitor.

The destination's image is measured in terms of overall images, perceptual/cognitive attributes (including scenery/natural attraction, climate, historical/cultural attraction, nightlife and entertainment, tourist infrastructure, value of money, safety, and hygiene and cleanliness), affective attributes (pleasant-unpleasant, relaxing-distressing, attractiveness-unattractiveness). The demographic factors are measured in terms of gender, age, marital status, education, income and sources of information.

The data were collected by 300 respondents in United States: Vermont, Washington D.C. and New York. The sample survey will be carried out to adults (18-65 years old) The perceptions of destination's image on overall image and affective evaluations of destinations are measured with 7 point Likert scale (with 1 means very negative to 7 means very positive). The perceived of perceptual/cognitive is measured with 5 Likert scale (with 1 means offers very little to 5 means offers very much). MANOVA is used to assess images differences between destinations. Univariate significances is examined to see which images items are significantly different across tourist destinations. Post Hoc contrasts are examined to determine which destinations are differentiated on each image attributes.

MANOVA shows nine East Asia Pacific destinations are differentiated based on image of both visitors' and nonvisitors' segments. Univariate show significant difference on each image items among nine destinations in visitors' and nonvisitors' segments.

The Univariate test shows significant differences among nine destinations of visitors' segment in twelve variables: scenery/natural attraction, climate, historical/cultural attraction, nightlife and entertainment, tourist infrastructure, value of money, safety, and hygiene and cleanliness, pleasant, relaxing and attractiveness and overall impression..

Nonvisitors' segment, the Univariate test shows a significant difference among nine destination in twelve variables: scenery/natural attraction, climate, historical/cultural attraction, nightlife and entertainment, tourist infrastructure, value of money, safety, and hygiene and cleanliness, pleasant, relaxing, attractiveness and overall impression.

Scenery/natural attractions and historical/cultural attractions appear to be characteristics that are perceived by most respondents as image and can be influence their decision to visit Thailand. Thailand is perceived to be a destination that possess a rich scenery/natural and historical/cultural attractions quite different from China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Korea rep., Vietnam and Cambodia. Therefore respondents view Thailand as a country from which they are able to seek satisfaction from the experience of differing scenery/natural and historical/cultural attractions.

To conclude, nine East Asia and Pacific destinations are differed on perceptual/cognitive, affective and overall image with visitors' and nonvisitors' segments. While perceptual/cognitive items are the most differentiating elements in visitors' and nonvisitors' segments, affective items also distinguish factors in visitor's and nonvisitors' segment.