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"Imagination is more important than knowledge." – Albert Einstein

By
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'Thailand as new destination for Norwegian travelers'

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Abstract

Selling a destination has become a challenging task in today's modern high-technological environment. Travelers can obtain a huge variety of choices about any destination from online networks. This study utilized Thailand as a destination to market to Norwegian travelers, figuring Thailand's successful example to be a model for many Asian countries that wish to be a top destination for westerners. A few topics that were focused in the thesis include how Thailand attracts the Nordic travelers by presenting a desired image, and the most important determinants for Norwegian travelers to select a destination are shown from the result of a quantitative survey. This study found that the most efficient way of influencing Norwegian travelers was through word-of-mouth (WOM) effects.

The quantitative survey was carried out at the University of Stavanger with 162 respondents, which can be segmented into two groups: visitors who had been to Thailand and non-visitors who had not been to Thailand. A comparison study was constructed and the result showed that these two groups shared high correspondence to the choices of the sources of information, length of stay in the destination, motivation factors and the purpose of visit to the destination. Demographic figures are suggested to be an influential determinant for these two groups to reach a resemble result.

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Foreword

Without the support of my family and my most respectful professor, Dr. Linda Stromei, this paper would never be finished and presented. Through her obliging guidance, I have learned not only the academic focus in this paper, but also the humanity values we should each possess. I am very grateful to be a student of Dr. Stromei.

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Finally, I have to say 'thanks' to myself for being able to graduate and obtain a master degree. This is a dream for many Asians and I have had this dream for more than a decade. Now I have proved my ability and I cannot say how much I am contented with myself.

1 Introduction

Selling a destination is no longer an easy task in this modern information technology (IT) world. Every place and every country has something to offer to the tourists. Each of these offers can be viewed clearly behind the computer screen and the competition has risen to the global level. How does a destination stand out amongst the others? What kind of marketing plan will aid a destination to attract the maximum number of tourists? Will it be possible to target tourists from a certain nationality by ascertaining the motivation factors behind them? These are some of the research topics discussed in this thesis.

This paper focused on two countries to demonstrate the choices of travel destination:

- 1) A nation where its people have a long history of travel, and still have the capacity to travel: Norway;
- 2) A nation that has variety to offer to tourists but comparatively a new destination for Northern Europeans, that is, Thailand.

This thesis would link these two countries on a same thread and eventually find out what a new destination should focus on within its marketing strategy in order to become a successful and attractive destination.

The history of travel of Norwegians dates back to the Viking period, when the Vikings were known for their ship-building skills and their ability to navigate. Based on their lack of fertile lands to cultivate, the Vikings traveled to other lands, including the New World, to seek trade and colonize. Favored lands included those nearest to their own shores; England, Ireland, France, and Iceland. More distant destinations included Greenland and Newfoundland across the Atlantic Ocean in the 1st century AD (Logan, 2005).

From the 19th century, poverty was a major reason for many people to travel further from home. Between 1850s and the early 20th century, half of the population in Norway had traveled and migrated to the USA (Mørkhagen, 2009). With the discovery of offshore oil in 1969, Norway became one of the richest countries in Europe. Overseas travel now is not for migration, but for business and pleasure. Disposable income is channeled toward travel. As

a high income nation like Norway, people earn NOK 262900 annual income on average and have four to five weeks annual leave (SSB, 2011a). There is a high correlation between prosperity and affordability, particularly related to travel. Approximately 80% of the population in Norway goes on a holiday each year, and their length of stay averages of 15 to 16 days (SSB, 2011b). However, there is also some 'norm' and 'tradition' for Norwegian travelers, which in the hospitality term, is known as a travel pattern.

Statistics Norway (2011b) stated that Spain is the most popular destination abroad for Norwegian tourists, followed by Denmark and Sweden. Norwegian's choice of foreign destinations is very much affected by their own environment. The long, cold winter months results in Norwegians having expertise in winter sports, especially skiing – the nation often strikes a few gold medals in the Winter Olympics Games. The tough, bitter and dark winter months have not dimmed the spirits of Norwegians, but made them a more athletic race. However, when it comes to choice of holiday destination, Norwegians prefer to choose a place that offers warm temperature and plenty of sunshine. Southern Europe is the most popular destination, with Spain being at the top of the list. Many chartered flights are arranged to accommodate the demand of the 'sun-chaser' Norwegian tourists. Furthermore, quite a number of Norwegian pensioners choose to stay in Spain during the cold, bitter winter months and only spend the summer time in Norway. This kind of climate-refugee has existed in the Norwegian society since the 1960s (Jacobsen, 2002). Not only Norway, but residents from other Nordic countries such as Sweden and Denmark are also a big source of tourist income for Spain and other countries in the Mediterranean region.

Nevertheless, in recent years, travel trends have changed slightly, and gradually. With the aid of advance technology such as the Internet and mobile phone, Norwegians have discovered locations much further afield. The one particular country that has captured many Norwegian's eyes is Thailand. Thailand is one of the eleven countries in the South East Asia

region. Its land size is slightly bigger than Spain, which is 513,120 km². The population is much denser than in Norway, with almost 62 million more people living in Thailand than Norway (Davies, 2004).

Thai people have the benefits of a tropical climate, with two obvious seasons throughout the year: the rainy, and the dry seasons. The northern part of Thailand is dominated by higher altitudes and shares a cooler temperature, whereas the southern part is known for its heat and humidity. The Gulf of Thailand is predominantly the industrial centre of the nation, and the capital, Bangkok is located along the river Chao Phraya (Davies, 2004).

Travelers to Thailand can enjoy a vast variety of activities, from sun-and-beach, shopping, nightlife, parties, to cultural sightseeing, spiritual wellbeing, and health tourism. The greatest edge for Thai tourism is that this nation has an outstanding image – from its food, its diverse landscapes, its history, but most profoundly, it may be the people who live on this land who have formed the amazing Thai culture. The question asked in this study was what attracts Norwegian travelers most to Thailand, and whatever it may be; this research paper was aimed at finding out the answer.

Previously it was mentioned that Norwegians are people who love to travel; both in their home country and abroad. However, this paper focused only on the outbound travel of Norwegian travelers. The motive differences between inbound and outbound travel is itself a huge topic and it can be a further research study in the future. On the other hand, Thailand was chosen to be part of this study partly because of the background of the writer. The writer grew up in a country next to Thailand and always wondered why Norwegian travelers traveled in mass to Thailand in the recent years, but not to some other Southeast Asia countries. From his observation and interaction with Norwegian people, he found a regular travel pattern of the Norwegian tourist: in their own country, they love to be close to the nature, and many of them own a cabin by the beach or in the mountains. When they travel to

other countries, sun and beach seem to be the factors that determine their choice. This has been proven to be right, at least with the destinations such as Spain and in the Mediterranean region (more details will be discussed in chapter 2). However, when it moves toward a new destination such as Thailand, much further away and more exotic, would the same formula attract the attention of the Norwegian tourists? The problem statement is presented as:

‘What factors determine choice of destination abroad for Norwegian tourists?’

and ‘Are factors that attract Norwegian tourists to the Asian destination, the same as compared to Spain, or the Mediterranean region?’

Based on the questions above, the first hypothesis was formed:

H1: ‘Sun and beaches are the major determinants for Norwegian travelers’ choice of travel to Thailand.’

Another observation the writer has made is the main motive of many Thai people, especially Thai women who migrated to Norway. During the recent years, the economy in this Nordic country has been a boom. People from different nations arrived in Norway searching for jobs and a better life. Norway is also one of the countries that provide homes for thousands of refugees. Diversity of ethnicity can be noticed easily in this once-only-blonde-and-tall nation. Skilled workers come not only from Eastern Europe, or many developing countries around the world, but also from France, Germany, Sweden, the UK, and the US, which represent the advanced western countries. However, there is a distinctive point about the Thai migrants: many of them move to Norway for family reunion purpose, and transnational marriage (Statistics Norway, 2011c). A transnational marriage involves two different cultures, and again, Thai people have such a strong culture that it can be an influence for the Norwegian husband to visit repeatedly the wife’s homeland once they engage in a marriage.

In the hotel where this writer worked, there were four Thai women working at the housekeeping department for 2-5 years. All of them were married to a Norwegian husband. Each year they would travel back to Thailand with their husband and children. Their main purpose of travel was visiting friends and relatives (VFR) in their hometown, apart from taking a leisure trip somewhere else in Thailand. During a few conversations with those Thai wives, the writer also discovered that, despite living in Norway for some years, these Thai women rarely visited any other European countries. Their holidays were predominantly trips back to Thailand and spending time with their Thai family. Many Asians are very much family-oriented, and amongst Thai people, this is an important part of their culture too. As Thai people are generally perceived as friendly people, and for the purpose of visiting family and friends in Thailand, along with other activities such as cultural visits and shopping, it was worth exploring if the transnational marriage between Norwegian and Thai gives an influential rise onto the new trend of Thai tourism from the far North. This background inspired the second hypothesis of this paper:

H2: ‘Visiting family and friends is a major determinant for Norwegian travelers’ choice of travel to Thailand.’

The travel pattern and destination choices change according to time and technological advances. Ever since the Internet has been able to link the world more closely, travelers have been able to find information about their desired destination more easily, quickly, and with higher efficiency. This applies specially to long-distance travel. People form their own perceptions about a place according to what they see and what they have heard and often this misleads them to a wrong or negative image. For example, the residents in tropical countries perceive Norway as an extremely cold country, and it may come as a surprise that in reality, in some parts of Norway people do enjoy the beach and swimming in the sea during summer period; also, snow does not fall in some Norwegian cities as much as they perceive. With the

advancement of technology, online social networks have been created. More accurate information can also be obtained and travel barriers are reduced to a minimum. This encouraged more travelers to go for long-distance destinations. However, when it comes to reliable information, do the Norwegian travelers tend to rely on the social networks or does the traditional word-of-mouth effect give a heavier weight to influence their destination choice? Based on this scenario, the third hypothesis was formed:

H3: ‘Word-of-mouth is the main source of information for Norwegians to decide to travel to Thailand.’

1.1 *The importance of this study*

Many studies have been done on the topic of motivations and destination choices, and some have researched the Scandinavian perception about their vacation in the South. However, very little attention has yet been paid to the aspects between Norwegian travelers and Asian destinations. Asia, in the very recent years, has been seen as one of the fastest growing regions, especially with the economic boom in China. Nevertheless, the costs of travel in most of the Asian countries (except Japan and South Korea) is still considerably cheaper compared to the costs of travel in Europe and North America (UNWTO, 2011). As many emphasize on the financial budget when they are planning a vacation, others are more in tune with how to get their expectations fulfilled, inspired either by the mind-related motivations or body-related motivation (Prebensen, Skallerud & Chen, 2010; see Literature Review). It may be interesting to find out about the main determinants for Norwegian tourists travel abroad, especially to another continent and later applies the result onto other Scandinavian countries’ residents. This may inspire further research working in the similar field.

This research study focused on the field of marketing. Marketing is a ubiquitous tool in the tourism industry. With selling destination, one question is often asked: Why does country A enjoy a higher profile and is more well known by tourists than country B, even if the two countries share similar geographical or societal factors? Thailand is surrounded by many beautiful countries like Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia and Myanmar. Any of these countries could attract the attention of the Norwegian travelers, but so far it has been Thailand that has captured the most attention. Thailand's success is worthy to be noticed and researched by many Asian countries if these countries wish to excel in the tourism trade with the western countries. This is the contribution of this master thesis, and it is for the goodwill of the land where many hidden spots are still invisible to the eyes of the West. Perhaps the example of Thailand could teach them a lot.

The next chapter will explore the theories of marketing concept, particularly with image and branding. Norwegian tourists' travel behavior will also be discussed to show their motivation toward overseas destination. The last part of chapter two demonstrated how Thailand had built a unique image to be one of the top destinations in the world.

Chapter three will discuss the methods employed by this research study and the reasons for using those methods. Chapter four will report the result and analysis of the survey. Detailed discussion about the findings of the survey will be presented in this chapter. The last chapter concludes the research findings and recommends some useful advice to the concerned tourism organizations which aim to do better with marketing and tourist's motives.

2 Literature Review

This paper starts with the exploration of theories between marketing concepts and customer perception, then move to describing the general travel behavior and needs of Norwegian tourists displayed by previous research papers, as well as the vitality of feeling familiarity toward a destination in order to increase the traveler's motivation and preference. The last part of the literature review shows how, as a new destination, Thailand is able to pull the tourists (in particular with Norwegian) to repeatedly visit this south-east Asian country.

The aim of this thesis is to find out how and why a destination can stand out strongly and deliver the desired products or services to a targeted group of people. Destination branding is a closely related subject to this research theme and will be discussed widely by illustrating a few examples in the earlier part of the literature review, while Thailand as a branded destination will be presented in the last part of this chapter. Destination branding is part of the specific subject of marketing concept, so the review of marketing theory and its history will be introduced initially.

2.1 Marketing concept and image management

Marketing concept has existed for more than 60 years. The concept of marketing today, however, as compared to when it was first invented, has been evolved and redefined in great extent of difference. The core of marketing is to sell a product to the customers, so in the earliest days marketing is almost the equal term of 'selling'. Following the changes of social values and development of new technology, marketing does not only cover the topic of 'what to sell', but more importantly 'how to sell', that is, understanding the needs and demands of the clients; satisfying their desire in the exchange process; and building up a long-term relationship with them and making them loyal to the brand (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders & Wong, 1999).

In the article 'Milestones in Marketing', Quelch and Jozz (2008) had listed the brief history and some of the seminal authors that contributed to the theory of marketing. This is one study that enlisted the evolution and progress of marketing management, where five authors with their masterpieces were discussed. In 1956, segmentation and differentiation were re-introduced by Smith Wendell, even though these strategies had already existed as early as in 1900s. Segmentation is a strategy to identify and categorize the customers in order to group them with similar characteristics, needs or desires. Segmentation had become feasible in the mid-50s, according to Smith, because the ability of collecting market data was improved. Differentiation on the other hand, is the strategy to distinguish a product (can be destination or service) from the others, in order to make it more appealing to a certain target market. Branding is one of the examples of differentiation.

In 1964, 'The Concept of the Marketing Mix' by Neil Borden was published in the Journal of Advertising Research, with 12 ingredients enrolled: 1) product planning; 2) pricing; 3) branding; 4) channels of distribution; 5) personal selling; 6) advertising; 7) promotion; 8) packaging; 9) display; 10) servicing; 11) physical handling and 12) fact-finding and analysis. These are not the four Ps that almost every marketer is familiar with. It can also be noticed some of the marketing functions overlap with another. For example, branding and advertising are more likely under promotion; channel of distribution and personal selling can be categorized as one function; product planning and display shares the same resources. The four Ps known to many as marketing mix were originated by Jerome McCarthy around the same period of time. The four Ps of pricing, product, place and promotion seems to be a much simpler and effective marketing tool for today's corporate world (Quelch et al., 2008).

Not long after the period of marketing mix, Philip Kotler and Sidney Levy presented their work entitled 'Broadening the Concept of Marketing' in 1969. Marketing was once a tool used mainly in the business domain, but with the argument by authors like Kotler, the

function of marketing as powerful communication medium has since been extended to many non-business organizations, which includes the political area. This is the turn of the image of marketing; as long before marketing was viewed as in-genuine messenger, and promotion was not related to any quality product. The transition has since made marketing being accepted as a popular method to create a unique identity (Quelch et al., 2008).

In 1978, a new period started in the marketing field after conjoint analysis introduced by Paul Green. Conjoint analysis is a highly technical step-by-step guide designed for marketers 'to understand why consumers prefer one product or supplier over another'. This is a new research method that could measure and predict the choice of customers, with correlation of the marketing tools like pricing, positioning and market segmentation. Some of the famous brands that have applied conjoint analysis as an edge are Marriott hotel chain, AT&T cellular phone service and New York E-Z Pass automated toll collection system (Quelch et al., 2008).

The last milestone of the marketing theory happened in 1980s with the concept of 'Globalization of Marketing' brought up by Theodore Levitte, a professor at Harvard Business School. Internet has transformed the 'huge' world into a global village where distance does not seem a big issue any longer (Quelch et al., 2008). Anyone from any corner of the world could purchase any products he/she wishes, through the online websites. Marketers have tried hard to balance between standardization of the product and retain the unique quality of 'localness' in the product. With globalization in mind, the consumers' diversity based on cultural and national differences also urge the supplier to understand the motivational behind the choices of consumers.

In the twenty-first century, marketing has continued to prove to be a valuable tool to the success of many businesses; this includes the tourism industry. Selling a destination has been a process that involves the four Ps (marketing mix: product, price, place, promotion), as

marketers need to decide how the 'product' (destination) should be presented to the consumers, with which range of 'prices' should the product be sold, through which distribution channel the product can be most effectively known by consumers (place) and which image of the product should be promoted so that it creates a positive outcome and increase the number of visitors to that destination.

Image-building connects deeply with marketing mix, especially with the process of 'product' and 'promotion'. When a product or destination is sold to a new target group, it is vital to create a desired mental image within the potential buyers. The image sets a standard for the destination so that the visitors have an idea what to expect during their visit. However, destination image needs to be promoted and reconfirmed into the mindset of the visitors because unexpected situations and events can affect the image of a destination easily; for example, terrorist attack or nature disaster. To obtain a desired image, a destination will have to be promoted continuously. Thus image management is a powerful and very important tool in the tourism industry. When tourists are undergoing the process of selecting a specific destination, one of the major determinants is the image of a place (Page, 2009). Every destination has an image; it can be positive or negative. Positive image is doubtlessly an asset for a nation, while negative image can act as a liability to push away the visitors. Furthermore, image can aid to a country's edge of being differentiated from the rest of the competitors in the global market.

Building an image for a destination requires long and consistent process of marketing plans and strategy. In the present market, some market players prefer promoting the image as a nation, such as New Zealand; others are more keen in promoting the image of a region, like Provence in southern France or Tuscany in Italy. There is more focus only on a city, and that becomes equally successful as the previous two image-builders, for example, Dubai, Las Vegas, Hong Kong and Paris. Regardless of the size of the destination, if the branding

strategy is right and able to transcend the image into the heart and brain of the tourists, it will prove to be a successful example and the fame of the destination will spread through rapidly.

However, what makes a destination own an outstanding image and how does it happen? To obtain a desired image, any destination will have to adopt a strong brand image (Lumsdon, 1997). Branding a destination is similar to branding a product or a company, even though it involves more stakeholders and could be more complex. McDonald's, Disney, Starbucks are amongst the organizations which own an exceptional image. People from all over the world, regardless age or races, can easily spot the bright yellow 'M' as the symbol or image of McDonald's Fast Food Restaurants. Corporate values and identity are acting as supporting ground behind the image. In order to brand a destination, it is pre-eminently to understand the identity of the destination and what the values this destination uniquely has comparison with other destinations. Destination identity or national identity can involve a multi-dimensional composition which is mainly composed by the cultural aspect of the place, as well as other context include history, geography, urban planning and design, landscape architecture, and environmental psychology (Waterton & Watson, 2010). Two successful examples will be discussed in the following chapter to illustrate the practical process of image making.

2.1.1 New Zealand (as by Bell, 2005)

The official slogan of visiting New Zealand is '100% Pure'. The most distinctive product that the Kiwis (refer to New Zealander) sell to the tourists is their pure nature. With little over three million population, New Zealand is located far from other continents. The closest, neighboring country is Australia, which can only be reached by plane, as the fastest mode of transport, or by ship. New Zealand is divided into two islands, the North Island and the South Island. Its isolated location made it known only to the western world in 18th century, after discovered by James Cook (Phillipa, 2005). With less density of population in

a big size of country, New Zealand preserves its nature with enormous care, and the beautiful yet dramatic landscape has now become the national identity. The branding of New Zealand as a 100% pure nation, does not only promote a set of images, but the brand carries a deeper message which invites tourists with green awareness and mostly, nature-lovers to see the country. Its differentiation lies at its identity as a country that avoids issues of environmental degradation and land contestation. Its “pure” nature is portrayed as a metaphor of identity, which seems very much like a geopolitical statement, but brings huge economic benefits through the tourism industry. New Zealanders are aware of the nation’s distinctive selling points and their lifestyle and emotional needs are continually focusing on protecting the nature, thus the national image.

New Zealand’s tourism is officially promoted by governmental and commercial programs; both internally and externally. The two-side promotion can urge the internal audiences join forces and being part of the nation’s image, while the external audiences are introduced to a world of untouched nature and wilderness. However, the most influential promotion for New Zealand’s nature’s beauty was through the trilogy film ‘Lord of the Rings’ (directed by Peter Jackson), which most of the scenes were shot in the South Island. Another film called ‘The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe’ also used New Zealand as background of the film and that too, further extol the tourism of New Zealand (Sibley, 1989; 2006).

In the case of New Zealand, the nation’s image is connecting to the nature. Its differentiation stands at the sustainability and green-awareness of the locals and the visitors. The nation brand does not only sell ‘100% Pure’ nature to the outsiders, but frames the perception, response and experience of a country (Bell, 2005, p.20).

2.1.2 Dubai (as from Bagaen, 2007)

Unlike New Zealand, Dubai is marketing itself in a totally different dimension. Being one of the seven emirates in the UAE, Dubai was once heavily dependent on oil exports. The fear of running out of oil drives the UAE into some other investment and Dubai has re-invested its capital to become an 'instant' city – a city where everything becomes possible.

Taking Singapore as inspiration, Dubai has progressed from a boring oil trading port into a vibrant, top business and tourist destination. The biggest transformation came with the announcement of freehold ownership of certain properties which available to investors of all nationalities in year 2002. The unique location of Dubai, between the East and the West, also determines Dubai to be one of the busiest transport hubs and global commerce centre. Dubai is also the third most important re-export centre after Hong Kong and Singapore. Today 75% of Dubai's population is made up of expatriates (Bagaen, 2007).

The image of Dubai relates heavily to the architecture and urban development of the city. In less than 30 years Dubai has changed from a desert backwater port into a city with multi-dimensional construction projects. Buildings, especially the tallest ones in the world, are often kept as the image of a destination. Kuala Lumpur is inseparable with Petronas Twin Towers (the tallest between year 1998 and 2004), and Taipei with Taipei 101 (the tallest from year 2004 until 2010). Now the record has been taken by Dubai, with its 828 meters tall Burj Khalifa. Even before the completion of Burj Khalifa, Dubai has prided itself with other architectures. One of them is Burj Al Arab Hotel. Located on an artificial island and can only be reached by a private bridge, Burj Al Arab Hotel is one of the most up-class hotels in the world, as well as a landmark and image of Dubai (Bagaen, 2007).

The Palms projects is another icon that uniquely owned by Dubai. Due to the large demand of residential homes and property boom, the world largest man-made islands in the shape of a palm tree, as Dubai's most important symbol, are constructed to provide 1500

beachside villas and 2200 shoreline apartments. The Palm project is known as the eighth wonder of the world, as many have admired Dubai's ability of creating something almost impossible. Another project similar to the Palms, called the World, shaped as the world map by many man-made islands, is also under construction (Khan, 2006).

Dubai's brand image comes from the innovative, highly advanced technological and modern approach of development. Unlike New Zealand, Dubai does not have a powerful slogan – 'Definitely Dubai' is the slogan. However, the clear identity of a westernized city in the Arab world is enough to make a statement. Furthermore, with the rapid progress of different architecture construction, Dubai has reached the vision of being a tourism destination and the hub for financial services and real estate.

New Zealand and Dubai are two very different cases, but both succeed in creating a strong image that is recognized by the rest of the world. New Zealand focuses on the organic resource, that is, the pure nature as selling point, whereas Dubai emphasizes on the high-tech architecture, which promotes the innovative and open spirits. These two examples demonstrate strong image first and foremost connects to the identity of the destination itself – what the destination has and can best offer to the visitors. The identity is blended with the perception of the potential visitors, because an independent image without the connection of understanding what the consumers' need, has little hope to become successful and popular. A popular image often matches the expectation and motivation of the target market. In the next part of the literature review, the perception of a target group, Norwegian travelers, will be discussed to display the importance of understanding the target market's characteristics, can truly inspire a destination popularity.

2.2 *Norwegian travelers: the characteristics*

There have been numerous studies that focused on the topic of destination choice in the past decades. The motivations and expectations on a certain destination are varied from one nationality to another (Kozak, 2002; Prebensen, 2007). For example, Norwegian tourists visit Spain mainly for the purpose of sun and beach, whereas French tourists may be more interested in cultural activities which the Spanish can offer, such as flamenco dance and *corrida de toros*, the bullfight. It is the perceptions of the visitor that will determine which destination they will choose. Therefore it is essential to understand what forms the tourist's perception regarding a destination, both before and after their visit.

A few studies have been centralized on the perceptions and travel patterns of Norwegian tourists (Jacobsen, 2002; Prebensen, 2005; Kleiven and Prebensen, 2006; Thrane, 2008). Norwegians emphasize heavily on the sun and beach element, as a result of the long, cold and dark winter months in the Nordic region. Once the Norwegian travelers feel comfortable with a destination (or a region, especially Mediterranean or Southern Spain), they tend to become repeat and regular visitors to this warm climate destination. In a way, they seem to find a second home away from the North – a warmer, sunnier, yet affordable and familiar place.

When Thrane (2008) examined the determinate affect Norwegian students' destination choices for their summer trip, she concluded there were huge differences regarding the motivations of domestic travel and outbound travel. Due to the Norwegian geographical topography, most Norwegians travel domestically to be close to nature – fjords, mountains and wilderness. Because their homeland can offer such an abundance of nature, it explains why Norwegians emphasize heavily on other push factors such as beach, nightlife, big cities and shopping, etc. to maximize their travel experience on the foreign trip.

Jacobsen (2002) found out five vacation interests were related to Norwegian tourists upon their visiting Southern Spain: 1) experience of the place; 2) nightlife, new acquaintances and freedom; 3) recreation away from daily life; 4) romance and pleasure; and 5) health, sports, and social visits. He also mentioned about 'sameness', or familiarity, as a vital issue when Norwegians travel outbound. The topic of familiarity will be discussed in the later part of this paper to show that not only Norwegian travelers, but many other nationalities also acquire about destination familiarity prior to their travel.

Prebensen is another researcher who published more than half a dozen articles about Norwegians' travel behavior. She has confirmed Norwegian tourists as the 'Sun tourist' as well as the repeat visitor to the Mediterranean region (2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2007). Her latest work (with Skallerun and Chen, 2010) shows that the motivations of the sun-and-sand tourists can fit into two dimensions: body-related dimension and mind-related dimension. Under each of the dimensions, two motivations are related, that is, sun and warmth-related motivations, and fitness and health motivations under body-related dimension; escapism motivations, together with culture and nature motivations are under the mind-related dimension. Her studies (2006, 2010) review sun/beach seekers as one but not the only important motive for Norwegian travelers, as family considerations and peace/quiet stay are also points not to be missed out regarding the Norwegian tourists.

The one characteristic that is obvious in both Prebensen's and Jacobsen's research, is the repeat visits of Norwegian holiday-makers to the warm-climate destination. In the area such as Mallorca, or on Canary Islands, Norwegian tourists can meet many situations which make them feel at home. There are many other Norwegian and Nordic (Danish and Swedish in particular) tourists whom they can speak with in the same tongue, share the same joke, and that many services and products in the host destination are created to adapt to the taste of the Nordic visitors (Jacobsen, 2002). For example, the food provided in the restaurant, the

newspapers imported from the Nordic region, and so on. The climate is no doubt the major determinant for the Norwegian traveler to come to the Southern region, however, the aspect of 'home-plus-something else' (sunshine and beaches) has put a profound weight in the mind of these Northern visitors too.

The theory of being familiar with a repeated visit destination is shared by Decrop (2006) as he divides the vacationers into six types: habitual, rational, hedonic, opportunistic, constrained and adaptable. The first two types of vacationers show the similar characteristics of many Norwegian tourists, as described by Prebersen (2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2007, 2010) and Jacobsen (2002). Habitual vacationers are risk-averse and like to feel at home at the destination whereas rational vacationers are careful and realistic decision makers and their choices are well-thought out and predictable. Both of these types of vacationers have one similar character, that is, risk aversion, or to avoid bad surprises. Although tourists are attracted to new places, they are attached to their home environment. This argument can be tested further with the perspective of 'McDonaldization' by Ritzer (2004). McDonaldization refers to the global success of McDonald's fast-food chain because it offers consumers, workers and managers efficiency, calculability, predictability and control. The link between McDonaldization and tourist vacation is demonstrated by many tourists who want their vacation to be a) highly predictable; b) highly efficient; c) highly calculable; and d) highly controlled (Egmond, 2007), just like what a customer expects from a set meal from McDonald's. Overall, these expectations match the habitual and rational vacationer's decision making process while they choose their holiday destination.

A tourist is influenced by his 'norm' when he is travelling. His social behavior becomes partly a motivation for his choices of destination. The information he attains from his society, gradually forms a preconceived image that generating some certain expectations for his future destination experience (Martín, Collado, del Bosque & del Mar García de los

Salmones, 2008). The reason for a tourist who travels far away to a place is not necessary because it is famous or extremely beautiful, but mainly for the feeling or understanding he has towards this place. This recalls the comparative analysis of tourist motivation and destination (Kozak, 2002) mentioned in the beginning of this essay.

2.3 *Destination Familiarity*

The repeat visit to a foreign destination such as Spain shows that Norwegian tourists highlight the element of familiarity when they travel outbound. Destination familiarity (Yang, Yuan & Hu, 2009) provides adequate information and knowledge about a destination and thus enhances the feeling of security and comfort within the vacationer about their destination choice. It is also shown that the longer the travel distance, the more time the traveler will spend on searching for information about the destination (Gitelson et al., 1995). However, there appears hundreds of different ways of getting information in the modern society; thus the question, which is the preferred medium for getting destination familiarity amongst the Norwegian tourists?

Many non-visitors first obtain indirect experiences about a destination from their society, from the TV, advertisements, books, word-of-mouth communication with friends or relatives, etc. to inspire them to a particular place to have the 'real' experience (Prentice and Andersen, 2000). The latest way of getting indirect experiences is through social media. Social media is a comparatively new, but rapidly developed marketing concept. It is defined as 'media that is designed to be distributed through social interaction and can include blogs, social networks, wikis, podcasts, video and social bookmarking' (Brady, 2010). Social networks are the most popular type of social media, for example Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn dominant the major market share. Today travelers participate actively in social networks to obtain and exchange information. In the USA, seven out of ten online

travelers are with at least one social network, and two thirds of online travelers are Facebook users (PhoCusWright Market Research, 2010). The virtual interactions of social networks no doubt stem from the development of the internet, but a nation with a high frequency of internet usage and high-speed bandwidth also encourages the performance and popularity of social networks because enormous amount of images and simultaneous messages are involved. Norway as one of the advanced technology countries, allows its people to access social network and obtain desired information with an efficient and fast way. However, will it be trustworthy enough with the information one obtained from an online stranger? Will the latest social network replace the other, more traditional way of gathering information, when Norwegian tourists search for destination familiarity?

Word-of-mouth is a more traditional way of advertisement. Unlike the paid commercials on TV, newspapers, radio, or internets, WOM is purely a free recommendation when one party is inspired to share some special experiences about a visited destination. Prebensen et al. (2010) noted that WOM information tends to be positive because people are more likely to share with another party (potential visitor) after having experienced a high level of satisfaction from their previous trip. Their study also suggests new media, like social networks, can be blended with WOM practice to achieve a more impressive indirect experience so that potential visitors are highly motivated to a destination.

Murphy, Mascardo & Benckendorff (2007) have categorized the WOM effects into two sources: from friends and relatives, and from other travelers. Those who obtained WOM information from friends and relatives were generally repeat visitors and their purpose of travel was visiting friends and relatives at the destination. The second group of travelers who required destination knowledge from other travelers, showed their demographic profile being in a younger age group and lower income level. Their high frequency of using public transport during their travel, favored them to meet and know other travelers and exchange

WOM information. Between the two groups, it is debatable of which WOM effect is greater: the information getting from someone known for a long time, or someone who had barely shared a short trip in a coincident manner and may not meet again in the future? It does make more sense that the WOM information acquired from family and friends is more plausible. Furthermore, the familiarity with friends and relatives spurred from sharing similar cultural setting and social values also make their travel experiences to be more convincingly transmitted.

Yang et al. (2009) further stressed the imperative connection between WOM effects and the potential to visit a distant destination. Their research found out the higher the level of destination familiarity, the greater the intention to visit that destination in the future. WOM effects contribute significantly to the destination familiarity, as compared to the other types of medium. They proposed the Chinese society emphasized social relationship, which is the interaction and communication process within the circle of family and friends; and word-of-mouth is a great output of the social relationship. However, it is not the Chinese society that takes a heavy weight on social relationship; most of the Asian cultures accentuate the family aspect in many ways too. Even in the western society, family-orientation is often an important part of the culture, although individualism is more valued than collectivism (Hofstede, 2001).

Rittichainuwat (2008) assessed that a variety of motivational factors can predict the tourist behaviors, but other variables based on the demographics and lifestyle should also be taken into consideration. Furthermore, what a destination can offer to the targeted tourist market is even more important and is yet to be examined. The next part of the literature review will discuss some facts about Thailand, together with the advantages Thailand has earned in the world tourism market by displaying a strong image.

Rittichainuwat (2008)'s theory has inspired the present study to be a practical example to evaluate the relationship between tourists' motivations and their destination choices, in addition to correlate with the variables found in the demographic features which will be secondary influence factors to the choices of destination.

2.4 Thailand as a tourist destination

2.4.1 Geography facts

Thailand has a land size of 514,000 square kilometer, which is nearly equal to the size of Spain or France. It is located on two peninsulas: the Indochina Peninsula and the Malay Peninsula. Thailand borders with Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos on the Indochina Peninsula, and neighbors with Malaysia on the Malay Peninsula. The south region is located at this narrow Malay Peninsula, with the Gulf of Thailand on its east side and the Andaman Sea on its west. Here is where some of the most luxurious and lucrative resorts ever been found in the world (Davies, 2004; see Appendix A).

Thailand has a population of over 60 million people, which is 15 times of the population in Norway. Tourism is one of the top three income sources, although agriculture utilizes more than half of the land usage. With its warm climate and rainy season, commodities like coconut, rubber and palm oil tree are easily cultivated and so plantations dominate the usage of the land mass. There are also vast plains that produce more than 20 million tons of rice each year in Thailand, making it one of the main rice exports in the world (Davies, 2004).

The landscape in this tropical country varies from the northern hills and mountains, to the southern long coastal line dotted with hundred of paradise islands. In the middle of Thailand stands the capital, Bangkok, where the Chao Phraya River cuts through the city and many canals, or khlongs, as locals call them, are still being used as hundred years ago.

Bangkok is nicknamed as ‘Venice of the East’ because of the high frequency of using the water highway for transportation (Davies, 2004).

Thailand is some 8600 km away from Norway. Within 10 hours by plane one can reach Bangkok from Oslo, Norway (Davies, 2004; TAT, 2011a). No doubt this is a long-haul travel, however, long-distance trip has become comparatively easier and cheaper with the development of technology and the expansion of competitive global business environment. Many travel company, such as TUI, Ving, and Apollo, provide Norwegian travelers the package tour with chartered flight to the Oriental Wat (temple) country; that too has contributed greatly to the popularity of visiting Thailand amongst Norwegian tourists.

2.4.2 *Push-and-Pull Factors*

The two major factors for tourists to visit a destination are the ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors. As early as in 1970s, researchers have contributed to exploring these two travel motivations. ‘Push’ factor refers to the internal motivation that drives people to a place, for example: ego-enhancement (Dann, 1981), escape (Yuan and McDonald, 1990), relax (Crompton, 1979), seeking or learning, stimulus avoidance (Beard and Ragheb, 1983), exploration (Gitelson and Kertetter, 1990). These are some of the intra-personality or psychological factors that decide why tourists travel to certain places, but not the other. The core push factors for Norwegian tourists to sun-and-beach destination are relaxation and escape (Prebensen et al., 2006b). However that does not mean the other push factors, such as exploration and seeking, do not attribute to Norwegians’ choice of destination. They barely emphasize on the scale of relaxation and personal escape more than the other push factors.

The pull factors, on the other hand, refer to the external or physical features of a destination that attracts the potential travelers. The features usually relate to the positive image of the destination. For instance, some of the pull factors that lie in Thailand’s promotion campaign are beautiful beaches, national parks, historical/cultural sightseeing,

fairs and festivals, religious/spiritual events, shopping, friendly locals, nightlife and entertainment, etc. (TAT, 2011a). As people come with different types of needs (push factor) to Thailand, it is understandable not all the pull factors correspond to the different push factors. People with certain push factors will appeal to certain type of pull factors, as concluded by previous research (Rittichainuwat, 2008a). The demographic background is always considered a big factor related to push-and-pull factors. People in different age groups, education levels, earning, gender, country of residence, and even their previous travel experiences will very much affect their future choice of destination. A common example is the primary push factors of young people are different from the senior travelers. Both of these age groups may find Thailand equally attractive, but young travelers tend to be more curious and adventurous, more cost conscious, and do not mind traveling alone. Their chosen destination, therefore underlines the elements of excitement, cheaper accommodation, and inexpensive mode of transportation. In contrast, the senior travelers look at the aspects of traveling with partners (friends or relatives), health and safety issues, and with many years of savings, are able to afford more luxurious vacations. Their choice of destination highlights the factors of cleanliness, less crime, easy accessibility and comfort.

Due to the matrix connection between push-and-pull motivations and the diverse demographic factors, the role of semiotics in promoting a country's image is set in. Semiotics is the science of signs and symbols. All touristic destinations can be a sign for tourists. 'Sign', described by McCannell (1976), consists of two elements: signified and signifier. Signified is a physical object which can be contacted with human's physical senses such as touch, see, smell and hear; whereas signifier is a mental image of signified, the object. Different people can have very diversified signifier upon the same signified. Take Paris as example. Lot of Asians think that Paris is a romantic city, a place where one can easily fall in love with another person. The Chinese nickname Paris as 'flower city' because

flowers are often symbolized as the symbol of love. On the other hand, Americans may see Paris as a centre of culture where different types of art flourish. The signified here is Paris, but with two different signifiers: the Asians think of it as a city of passion while Americans think of it as the centre of art. The different versions come from the social value these two societies possess.

Nevertheless, there are some unified signifiers (mental image) in the worldwide version. For example:

Egypt	=====→	image of Pyramid
China	=====→	image of Great Wall
London	=====→	image of Big Ben
Las Vegas	=====→	image of gambling and many replicas of world-famous architects
Caribbean	=====→	beaches and sunshine

The importance of studying the relationship between semiotics and tourism is to understand: from different group of tourists there can be very different expectations due to their social behavior and the home environment they are familiar with. Therefore, it is essential to present different images to different travelers when designing a promotional campaign. Thailand is a successful example that integrates the science of semiotics into promoting its tourism up to the international level. The work of semiotics is similar to the image-making process, which has been discussed in the earlier part of this chapter.

In 2009, US based magazine *Travel and Leisure* rated Bangkok as the number 1 tourist destination and Chiang Mai as number 5. In 2011, Thailand was voted ‘The Best Tourist Country In The World’ by Norwegian Grand Travel Award (TAT, 2011b). This is the 8th year in a row that Thailand won this award, and it shows that the number of

Norwegian travelers to Thailand can likely to catch up with those who visit Spain in the future.

2.4.3 *Image of Thailand*

What are the images Thailand has presented to the world that makes it so popular amongst other touristic destinations?

Thailand, originally known as 'Siam' until the year 1939, is the only country in the South East Asia region that has never been colonized by the Western power during the Empire Period (from early 19th century to 1950s) (Davies, 2004; TAT, 2011a). History reflects its effect on the present. The freedom from being dominated by another country contributes to the 'free way of thinking' many modern Thai people possess, and this has been magnified in their daily lives. Many western tourists are surprised about the open-mindedness of Thai, and it becomes an attractive sign to draw the tourists to come to Thailand again and again. An example can be shown with the issue of ladyboys. Known to the Thai as kathoey, ladyboys are more of a group of males who refer to the western term intersexual, more than transgender (Jackson, 1999). Many ladyboys are working in the tourism and entertainment centers, especially in Pattaya where some of the most famous cabaret shows figured only by ladyboys.

The serenity and acceptance that appears in Thai's nature is influenced by their belief system, the Buddhism (Davies, 2004; TAT, 2011a). It is inseparable between the social behavior and Buddhism amongst Thai people. Many can only think that the Land of Smiles, as referred in the tourism campaign for Thailand, can achieve that because of its deep root of Buddhist teaching. On the contrary, Malaysia, the Muslim country further south of Thailand, shares a similar geographical advantage for promoting tourism, yet it is never as popular as Thailand, especially amongst the Scandinavian tourists. The comparison shows that religious status can be a big influence on destination choice. Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory

(2001) further supports this suggestion, as his research proves that Thailand and Scandinavian are both high in feminine culture, which agreed by Schütte and Ciarlante (1998), these two cultures share the attitudes of caring and nurturing for others. The sharing of similar natures and cultural morals can bring a certain level of destination familiarity to the tourists which can increase the repeated visits of the tourists to that destination.

One of the most lucrative attractions about Thailand is the variety of touristic activities throughout the country. The northern part is famed for the hill tribe and the unpolluted nature where one can go for hiking, trekking, as well as seeing many of the historical ruins. At the south where the most luring beach haven can be found, all sorts of hedonist doings are offered; sun, sand, sea and party are the themed activities in any given days here. Some of the famous islands are Phuket, Phi Phi and Koh Samoi. Not to forget the big, metropolitan cities such as Bangkok (the City of Angel) and Chiang Mai (Rose of the North) offer the vibrant city life and bargaining shopping experience, along with hundreds of Buddhist temples to be visited wherever you go (Rittichainuwat, Hailin & Mongkhonvanit, 2008b; TAT, 2011a). As Cohen described in his book *“Explorations in Thai tourism”* (2008), Thailand presents the *past* with its authentic culture and the natural beauty, as well as many historic architecture; whereas its *present* can be stressed through super-modern facilities which satisfy the familiar pleasures of the tourists back to their homeland. Thailand is indeed, a country where tourists can experience double-faceted life: the pristine nature at the north versus the hedonic party-life at the south; the spiritual Buddhist life versus the tourism-oriented prostitution; the relax spa treatment versus the violent kick-boxing; the quiet rural life versus the chaotic metropolitan city life. All of these contrasts are a manifestation of the Thai culture and they add to the excitement to the tourists’ wishes to come back to see more of the layers of this amazing country.

As mentioned earlier, familiarity and risk aversion are major characteristics of Norwegian tourists. In order to avoid bad surprise, they will need to collect enough information to obtain 'destination familiarity' as well as reduce the travel barriers caused by unfamiliar food, language problem, jet lag, etc (Rittichainuwat, Hailin & Mongkhonvanit, 2006). One of the best ways to prepare for a new destination, as suggested earlier in this paper, is through WOM communication with some known friends or relatives; in this way, the information obtained is considered more first-handed and trustworthy. Furthermore, if the information or knowledge is received from the tourist's wife or husband, that seems to be even more reliable.

2.4.4 *VFR as a factor to attract Norwegians to Thailand*

Norway and Thailand started their tourism history not long ago, but with the aspect of transnational marriage, these two nations have shown a significant progress since 1990s. In the past decade, thousands of Norwegians have married to foreigners and most of these foreigners end up settled down in Norway. Here are some statistics about the transnational marriage amongst Norwegians. In 2003, 1100 Norwegian men married to Asian women; more than half of those were from Thailand. As from 1st May 2005, there were 3589 Norwegian men who had a Thai spouse (Utnem, Hårtveit & Ekern, 2007). According to UDI (Norwegian Directorate of Immigration), there are four major groups of immigrants: labor, family-based, humanitarian and education. Labor immigration was the largest category in 2009, with 38 percent in total. Most of the labor immigrants came from new EU member states, especially from Poland. Family-based immigration took up 31 percent. Out of 13700 persons who arrived in Norway as family immigrants in 2009, 9600 came through family reunification. Thailand was one of the five largest groups. With another 4000 immigrants who came to establish a new family through marriage or partnership, again Thailand was in the top five; 580 persons in this group were Thai. Table 1 shows the permits granted for

family immigration to major countries by Norway, between years 2001-2009. Thailand is at the position number 2, just after Poland (SSB, 2011c).

Figure 1 shows a more detailed analysis among the immigrants from non-Nordic countries with family as reason for immigration. It is very clear that most Thais (especially women) came to Norway with the intention to marry to a Norwegian husband, as family establishment took up a much bigger percentage compared to family reunification. The difference between the two visas is that, immigrant who comes with family reunification is invited by a family member; usually sharing the same bloodline, whereas immigrant comes with family establishment reason is to create a new family with the local, or to enter an exogamic marriage. This is not applicable to all nationalities, for example, Pakistan shares the similar scenario as Thailand, with family establishment over the reason of family reunification. However, even though Pakistanis came to Norway to establish a family, they still preferred to marry to a spouse with the same country background as themselves, or enter an endogamic marriage. This has been confirmed by Statistics Norway (2011c).

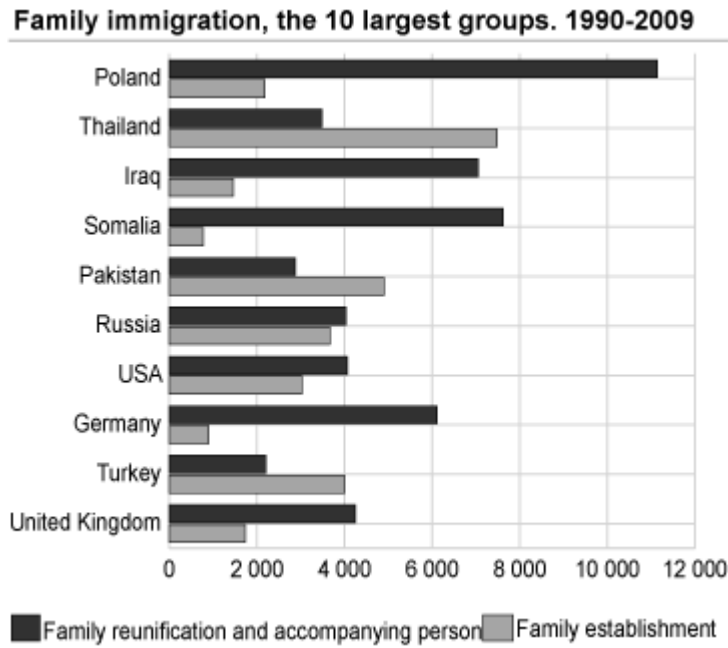
It is obvious that Norwegian husband would travel together with the Thai wife, as this contributes to the factor of familiarity and risk aversion when they travel to such an exotic destination. Visiting friends and relatives (VFR) can therefore be seen as a major motivation for many repeated Norwegian visitors as they pursue their trip to Thailand where they have a personal affiliation with the local residents.

VFR can be one of the major motivations for Norwegian travelers to visit Thailand, but other factors such as costs of travel and good value for money should not be overlooked. Thailand is considered a developing country. With the current economic background, westerners from European countries or North America find that travel in Thailand is much cheaper compares to travel in any western countries. This does not only apply to Thailand, but also to many other Asian countries (UNWTO, 2011). Previous research also showed that

many westerners chose to retire in Thailand because their ‘pension go much further in low-cost Thailand’ (Howard, 2009; Vieregge, Phetkaew, Beldona, Lumsden, & DeMicco, 2007).

Figure 1

Family immigration to Norway



Source: Statistics Norway

2.4.5 *Quality and pricing factors*

The quality of travel products and services puts a significant effect in attracting visitors to attend to a destination. The quality does not only cover the western standard of accommodation and facilities (in regard to target the western market) but it also guarantees high standard of cleanliness and sanitation as well as safety and stability of the political situation. Both tangible and intangible aspects are included while evaluating the quality of service or product in the tourism industry. One way to know about Thailand offering high quality of tourist services and products is through the award the nation has won, voted by the foreign tourist organization. In 2011, Thailand was voted as the most popular travel destination in Asia for the eighth consecutive year during the 8th Go Asia Awards in Berlin, Germany. The Awards also honored Bangkok Airways as the second best airline in Asia,

after Singapore Airlines, while the Best Hotel in Asia was awarded to Siam @ Siam Design Hotel & Spa, Bangkok. Swedish Grand Travel Award 2011 recognized Thailand as "Best Tourist Country 2011", while the Norwegian travel trade has rated Thailand the 'World's Best Tourist Country' in the 2011 Norwegian Grand Travel Award making this the eighth consecutive year that Thailand has received the award (TAT, 2011b).

Pricing and quality are two important factors to pull visitors to Thailand, yet the greatest selling point is the differentiation and image Thai tourism authority has created and maintained throughout the tourism process. In a study developed to compare the perceptions of international visitors and Thai residents about Thailand as a tourist destination, the two most important items perceived by the Thai residents (toward a destination) were friendliness of residents and cultural activities. What one expects is usually what one shall offer. Because of the high expectation of friendliness imprinted in the Thai's mindset, the foreign visitors have been offered to that kind of welcoming attitude when they travel to Thailand. This has become part of the image of Thailand, as implied by the name 'The Land of Smiles'. Differentiation of a destination creates an experience that simply not available elsewhere and that feeling is quite unlike anything that the visitors can experience at home. Thailand is able to achieve an image that differentiates from the rest of the Asian countries – as the eastern ambiance spurred from a strong culture combined with western facility. This shows the greatest strength of a national identity, a brand that no other destination can replace.

3 Method

3.1 Design

This study was a non-experimental research study, as there was no control group or treatment involved, as opposed to experimental research. The aim of any non-experimental research is to find out the information or proof of certain behavior from a target group, examine the relationship between the given variables and finally, explain the happening phenomenon. This qualifies the present study as a non-experimental research. There are four methods under non-experimental research, namely descriptive, historical, correlational and quantitative method (Neumann, 2009).

This research study utilized quantitative method to collect data and to analyze the result. It started with a basic idea, then developed into three hypotheses, and to test those hypotheses a questionnaire was designed to gather data. The study was therefore a deductive research study because it began with a theory and tested the theory by looking at specific observations (Neumann, 2009).

On the other hand, the study was conducted with a descriptive design. This means the outcome of the research would be described by examining the relationship between different variables. The need of using descriptive method is to gather more information about a current issue, which in this case, the motivation factors of Norwegian travelers to Thailand. The quantitative method and a questionnaire consisting of quantitative questions were employed because the research was dealing with a large amount of data. With a considerate amount of data the research study will be able to represent the general population. In short, this research is a non-experimental, quantitative, and descriptive study.

3.2 Sample and Structure

There are two strategies to collect a sample for a research study: Probability sampling and Non-probability sampling. The former chooses the sampling randomly while the latter

selects the sampling intentionally. Under non-probability sampling, two different sampling techniques are introduced. They are convenience sampling and quota sampling. Quota sampling focuses on certain characteristics such as ages 30 to 40, white male, high education background, etc. to decide if the participant qualifies for the study. Convenience sampling is also called accidental or hazard sampling, disadvantages itself with a non-representative sample but it is easy, cheap and fast to accomplish (Neuman, 2009). Due to the time constraint and financial issues, this research study used convenience sampling as its basis to collect data. However, further research on a more representative sample of the population can be developed, following the results of this update study.

One hundred and sixty-two respondents answered the survey in Questback, one of the most popular web surveys used by many business and non-business organizations in Norway. After the author designed and uploaded the questionnaire, it was sent out to all the employees and administrative staff at the University of Stavanger, from 9th to 15th May, 2011.

This group was chosen to participate in the survey because of three reasons: 1) they had the capacity of time and money to travel abroad each year; 2) their demographic backgrounds could be diverse, which would show interesting preferences in their travel patterns and choices; 3) the staff working at this university were predominantly Norwegian by nationality, which fit into the requirement of the research theme.

The questionnaire was presented in two languages: English and Norwegian (bokmål). Most of the respondents used Norwegian for daily communication, so by having the questionnaire in their language, it could generate more interest and increase the response rate.

The web survey displayed several weaknesses, despite its efficiency and large coverage of the target group. One limitation is no one was available to aid or clarify the questions if the interviewee was confused about the content of the questionnaire. This might lead to incomplete answers or inaccurate data which would affect the reliability of the survey.

The second limitation was that no one can investigate under which condition a respondent was completing the survey (Neuman, 2009). The mood-swing after a conflict, or drinking alcohol while answering the questionnaire will definitely cause a void to the survey research.

In order to avoid the limitations that appeared on the survey, there were pre-tests of the questionnaire. The English version was pre-tested by a professor whose native language is English, and also another research student who has profound experience with surveys, both at work and her study. The Norwegian version was pre-tested by two Norwegian persons, in which one had been to Thailand and another had never traveled there. The pre-tests eliminated the language barriers and minimized misinterpretations between the languages (the Norwegian version was translated from the English version). The language functionality in the survey was aimed at the simplest and closest way to the author's meaning, in every possible way, so that the limitations stated above were diminished.

Besides the advantage of being quick and inexpensive, web surveys offer anonymity and interviewer bias (Neuman, 2009). Bias can post a huge damage on the reliability of the survey. As much as possible, it is an area the author wished to keep afar, and that could be proven in some of the questions designed in the questionnaire.

3.3 *Questionnaire*

The survey aimed at two segments of Norwegian travelers. The first segment consisted of visitors who had been to Thailand, and the second was non-visitors, those who had not been to Thailand. In the latter part of this study, the first segment is referred to as 'visitors' and the second segment as 'non-visitors'.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts, and consisted of 25 questions altogether. The three divisions were labeled as part A, answered only by 'visitors'; part B, answered only by 'non-visitors'; and part C, which collected the demographic features of the participants and was answered by both visitors and non-visitors. Part A consisted of eleven

questions, part B with five questions and part C with eight questions (see Appendix B). Parts A and part B shared a similar question structure as the variables found in these two parts were compared in the discussion part of this thesis (Chapter 4, page 70).

A Likert scale design was used in the questions that measured the degree of motivation to travel to a new destination. These questions (A2, B1) consisted of 20 statements on a five-point scale ranging from (1) unimportant, (2) somewhat important, (3) important, (4) very important to (5) extremely important. By using a Likert scale the intensity, hardness, or extremity of a respondent's feelings or opinions on a chosen variable are measured and displayed (Neuman, 2009). This was very important to this research study because the aim of this thesis was to find out the determinant factors which had a correlation with the intensity of any given motives in the survey. At Question 9 in part A, the Likert scale was again employed to measure the level of satisfaction experienced by 'visitors' after their trip to Thailand.

The tourist motive items constructed in the questionnaire were partly taken from Prebensen's research (2006, 2010). Seven motive categories were used: GENERAL (4-item summed scale), SUN/WARMTH (3 items), FAMILY/FRIENDS (4 items), CULTURE (3 items), REDUCE STRESS (3 items), HEDONIC (2 items), and NATURE (1 item). The motive construction played a vital role in the survey because by calculating the mean scores of each category, the researcher thus confirmed or rejected the first two hypotheses.

In order to minimize bias, a question asking about the purpose of their visit was set into the questionnaire. The motives and purpose of a respondent should correlate to a certain level. By using two questions for a similar topic, the survey has increased the credit of its validity and reliability.

Other questions presented in part A and B of the survey questionnaire tested the variable of travel pattern, frequency of travel and length of stay. Open answers such as

‘Other, please specify’ were inserted in Questions A6–A8 and B4-B5. In that way respondents could write down any additional information which may not be presented in the questionnaire. This could enrich the quality of data and also avoid some of the omitted choices.

Out of 25 questions, two were qualitative questions. Unlike quantitative data analysis, which involves only numbers, analyzing qualitative data enables researchers to find patterns and meanings in texts and words and the interpretation of this kind of open-ended question is extended to a wider area than if the researcher just investigates the result (Neuman, 2009). Qualitative data presents the values and beliefs of the respondents which are difficult to code by using quantitative analysis.

The two qualitative questions were presented as a two-facet-on-a-coin format, as they asked the visitors (who had been to Thailand) to describe the same situation with different manners. The two questions were presented in part A in the questionnaire, as below:

‘A10. Any unfavourable comments about your visit to Thailand?’

‘A11. Any favourable comments about your visit to Thailand?’

As any experienced researcher could determine, in case one of the questions above was omitted, another would present only a positive or a negative manner, but not both manners about a situation (in this case, it was the experience about Thailand trip). Therefore these two qualitative questions had not only enriched the information of the survey, but they were presented with an unbiased manner.

The demographic features collected in part C of the questionnaire included the variables about gender, age, marital status, educational background, income, and frequency of travel abroad. These variables are often related to travel patterns and choice of destination. For instance, the higher income a person earns, the more financially ready he/she could be to travel abroad; or, a single female most likely has more time to travel than a female with

children. It was believed that from the demographic features presented above, some cross tabulation would be found with other variables in part A and B within the questionnaire.

3.4 *Reliability and Validity*

Reliability and validity are two measurements that decide if a research study presents what it should present, over a long period of time. They are the indicators of a research study being deemed valuable and worth notice by the public or the other academic members.

Reliability can be defined as consistency and dependability in regard to measure the result of any survey. Validity, on the other hand, measures if the survey has found out what it intended to find out, that is, how close it is with the result of the research project matches the reality (Neuman, 2009).

To increase the level of reliability of the questionnaire of this research paper, pre-tests were run and the items within the questionnaire were assessed by a research expert to measure if they were comprehensible and would not lead to any misinterpretation. The questionnaires were available in two languages, so that the respondents felt more related with the language they were more used to. Again the language function in the questionnaire was thoroughly checked by both English and Norwegian native speakers to increase the level of reliability.

Part of the questionnaire was based on previous travel research (Prebensen, 2005; 2010) which has been published and validated. Using the questions that have been used by experts in the same field increases the validity of the content of this questionnaire. Furthermore, the questions utilized were directly linked to the hypotheses and the theme of this thesis. Through analysis, these questions displayed the results with a direct and straightforward manner. In another term, the questionnaire shows what it measures. This too has increased the level of validity of this research. In short, the author is confident the research paper illustrating a high level of validity and reliability. However, perfect reliability

and validity can never be achieved. Through further follow-up research based on the present subject, the level of 'truth' can yet be highlighted and enhanced.

3.5 *Limitations of the questionnaire*

There were three limitations against the survey's methodology. The first was the time constraints issue, secondly the generalization to a larger population, and third, the weakness of using web survey.

- a) Time and setting – The time frame for collecting the data through Questback was very limited. Since the author only obtained the permission of access for using a Questback survey after Easter holiday (in May), it delayed the whole process of gathering data. Furthermore the survey was not set under a reminder system, which could act to remind those 'potential respondents' to answer the survey a few days before the deadline. If the time concerned was longer and the reminder setting of Questback was arranged in order, the author believed the sample size could be much larger and more representative.
- b) Generalization – Because of financial constraints, the present research project chose convenience sampling to gather the data. The biggest weakness of a convenience sample is that it has a limitation to represent the whole population. The survey was sent out in a higher educational institution, therefore the demographic figures might show a high level of educational achievement which could be contrasted to the generalizability of the rest of the population.
- c) Disadvantage of using web survey – By using web survey or e-mail questionnaire, the process of answering the questionnaire is out of the control of the author. The respondents might not complete every question on the questionnaire which would lead to incomplete answers or missing values. There could be no knowledge about under which condition the respondents were answering their survey, or how

seriously and sincerely they dealt with the survey. These could all add to the limitations of this survey instrument.

4 Data Analysis and Discussion

The purpose of this thesis was not only to discover the determinant factors and favorite activities for travelers who been to Thailand, but also for the potential, or referred as non-visitors as below. By doing so more effective marketing and promotional campaigns can be raised and reach the different target groups. Therefore, at the analysis part, two groups will be discussed separately: Norwegians who have been to Thailand (visitors) and Norwegians who have never been to Thailand (non-visitor or potential visitors). These two groups will be compared later with the major issues that assembled the hypotheses.

The survey design is divided into three parts. The first part, part A, was answered only by those who had been to Thailand. The second part, part B, was for those who had never been to Thailand. The last part, part C, reports the demographic figures, which both the groups answered. There were 162 respondents who answered the survey through Questback, amongst them 44 had been to Thailand, while 118 had never traveled to Thailand.

One of the unforeseen incidents that happened to the survey was some participants did not answer all the questions, due to carelessness or other reasons, even though the writer had put up a reminder 'Please kindly complete all the questions' every second page of the survey questionnaire. Instead of rejecting these incomplete respondents, their incomplete answers were treated as 'missing values' so that the rest of the answers could be counted as part of the sample.

4.1 *Visitors who have been to Thailand*

The demographic figures of the 44 respondents who had visited Thailand are as below:

Table 1

Demographics of Visitors to Thailand

Gender	
Male	36.4%
Female	63.6%
Marital status	
Single	20.5%
Married / Cohabitation	79.5%
Age	
18-25 years	0.0%
26-35 years	11.4%
36-50 years	40.9%
51 and older	47.7%
Educational level	
Lower than High School	2.3%
High School	6.8%
Associate Degree	6.8%
Bachelor Degree	2.3%
Masters Degree	50.0%
Doctorate/Professional Degree	1.8%
Income level	
Less than 300,000	0.0%
310,000 – 450,000	37.2%
460,000 – 600,000	37.2%
610,000 – 1 million	18.6%
Prefer not to disclose	7.0%
Frequency to travel abroad	
1- 3 times	72.7%
4 – 8 times	20.5%
9 times or more	0.0%
I prefer to have my vacation in Norway	6.8%

Females accounted for two-thirds of the respondent number, for a total of 28, and 16 males took part in this survey. Nearly half of them (21) were 51 years and older. Another 18 were between 36 and 50 years old, and five of them were between 26 and 35 years old. From the age range it would appear that the older the respondents were, the more interested they were to visit Thailand.

Four out of five of the respondents were married or living with a partner. Only nine were single in this group of respondents. Half of the respondents held master degrees while more than one fourths held doctorate degrees. This group had shown achieving a fairly high level of education. Their educational background could be one of the main factors underlining their motivations to visit Thailand, as well as the most popular activities they enjoyed in Thailand (see Questions A2 and A8). This could also possibly affect their travel pattern (see Questions A4 and A5).

Regarding to the income earnings, most of the respondents had an annual income between NOK 310000 – 600000. Sixteen respondents earned between NOK 310000 – 450000 per year, while another 16 earned between NOK 460000 – 600000. Eight of them had an income of NOK 600000 – 1 million. Three respondents preferred not to disclose how much their earnings were. Generally this group of respondents were average high income earners, in regard to the living standards in Norway (SSB, 2010a).

The travel experience could also affect one's motivation and choice of destination. Thirty-two out of 44 respondents traveled abroad between 1 to 3 times each year, while nine respondents enjoyed their vacation 4 to 8 times outside Norway. Only three respondents preferred to stay in Norway for all their vacations. This co-related to the fact that Norwegians had great capacity in terms of finance and time to travel abroad.

A2. How important were the following factors when you chose to visit Thailand?

Twenty statements were given under this question and the respondents could choose from 1 to 5 to decide the degree of importance with each statement. The five levels of measurement are: 1 represents ‘unimportant’, 2 as ‘somewhat important’, 3 as ‘important’, 4 as ‘very important’ and 5 represents ‘extremely important’.

Figure 2 summarized the result of the motivation factors that were important for the visitors. The top three priority reasons to be considered, when Norwegian travelers planned and decided for a trip to Thailand were: 1) Getting away from stress and pressure (3.58; see Figure 3); 2) Getting to know the Thai culture and people (3.56; see Figure 4); and 3) The country is safe to travel to (3.52; see Figure 5).

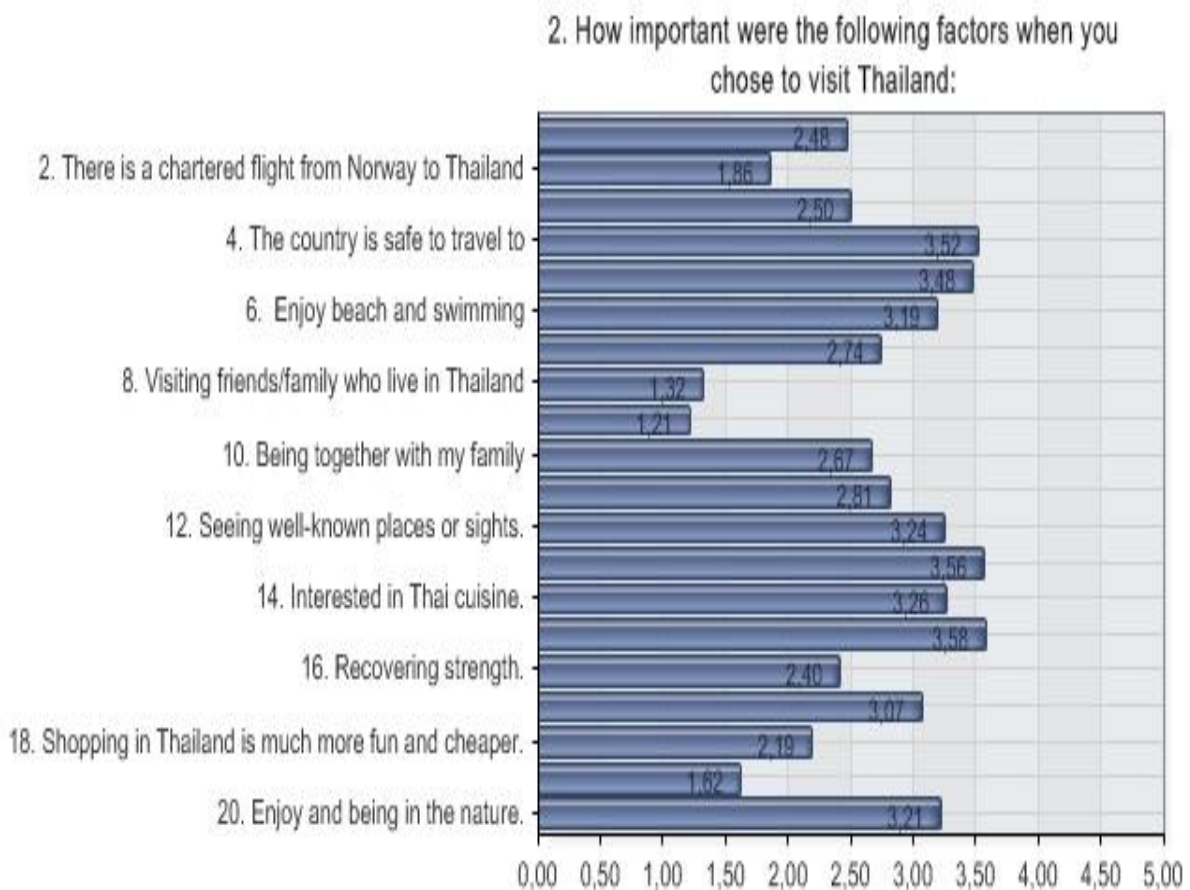


Figure 2: Motivation factors for Norwegian travelers to Thailand

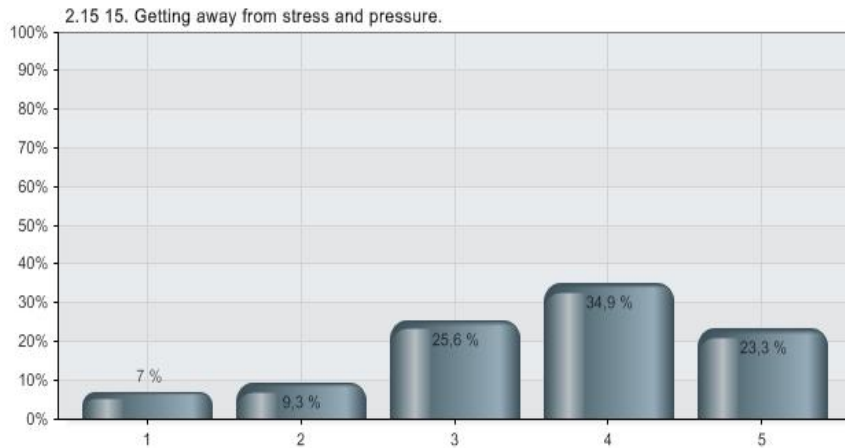


Figure 3: Getting away from stress and pressure

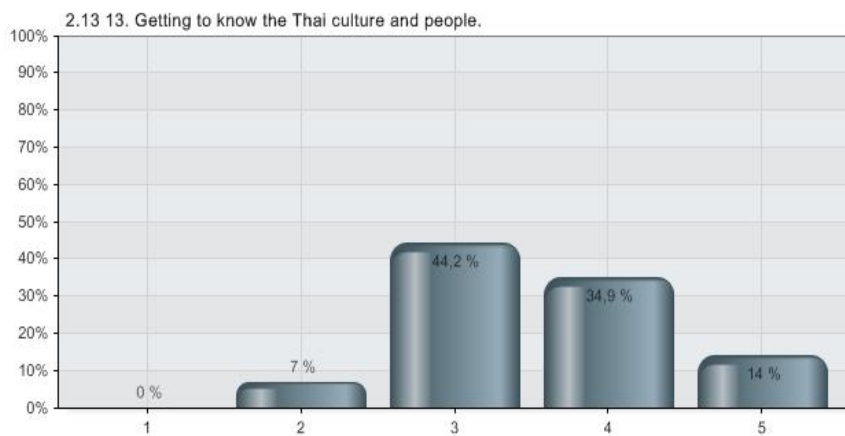


Figure 4: Getting to know the Thai culture and people

Scale of importance:

- 1 Unimportant
- 2 Somewhat important
- 3 Important
- 4 Very important
- 5 Extremely important

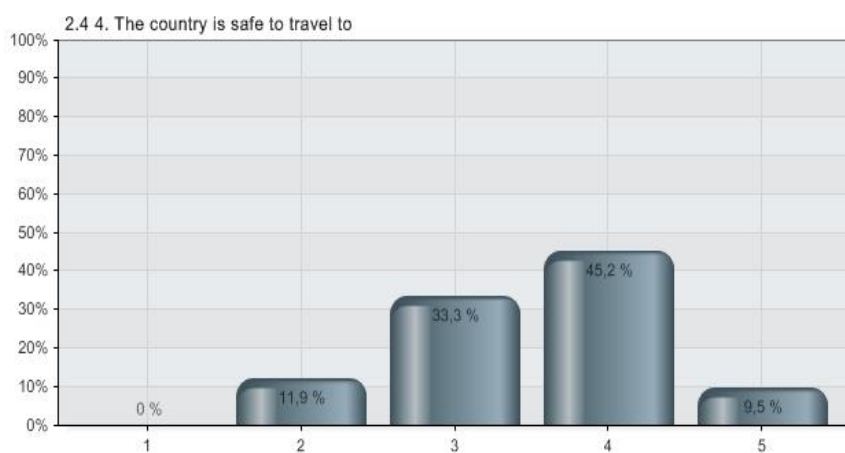


Figure 5: The country is safe to travel to

Question A2 is especially designed to find out the factor analysis of motivation variables. The factors are grouped into 7 categories: GENERAL (4 items including cost,

convenience, facility, safety), SUN/WARMTH (3 items), FAMILY/FRIENDS (4 items), CULTURE (3 items), REDUCE STRESS (3 items), HEDONIC (2 items), NATURE (1 item). The table below presents the alternatives by category and gives the mean scores for each alternative.

Table 2

Alternatives by category

	Alternative	Mean
GENERAL (including cost, convenience, facility, safety)		2.60
1. It is not so expensive compared to other places	2.48	
2. There is a chartered flight from Norway to Thailand	1.88	
3. Western standard of lodging and amenities available	2.50	
4. The country is safe to travel to	3.52	
SUN/WARMTH		3.13
5. The weather is warm all year	3.48	
6. Enjoy beach and swimming	3.18	
7. Sunbathing	2.74	
FAMILY/FRIENDS		1.73
8. Visiting friends/family who live in Thailand	1.32	
9. Getting to know my Thai friends/family better	1.21	
10. Being together with my family	2.67	
11. Doing something with my family	2.81	
CULTURE		3.35
12. Seeing well-known places or sights.	3.24	
13. Getting to know the Thai culture and people.	3.56	
14. Interested in Thai cuisine.	3.26	
REDUCE STRESS		3.02
15. Getting away from stress and pressure.	3.58	
16. Recovering strength.	2.40	
17. Having time to do what please me	3.07	
HEDONIC		1.91
18. Shopping in Thailand is much more fun and cheaper.	2.19	
19. Enjoy nightlife and party.	1.62	
NATURE		3.21
20. Enjoy and being in the nature.	3.21	

With the mean scores of each alternative, the culture factor was considered the highest motivation for visitors to Thailand. Nature is lined up as the second most important factor which contrasted the theory by Thrane (2008), which considered Norwegian tourists did not seek to experience nature when they traveled abroad due to the abundance of nature offered in their own country. Sun/warmth was still an important motive category, and this confirmed whether the Norwegian travelers were in Europe (southern Spain) or on another continent (Thailand), climate was a major determinant for their choice of destination.

A3. How many times have you visited Thailand?

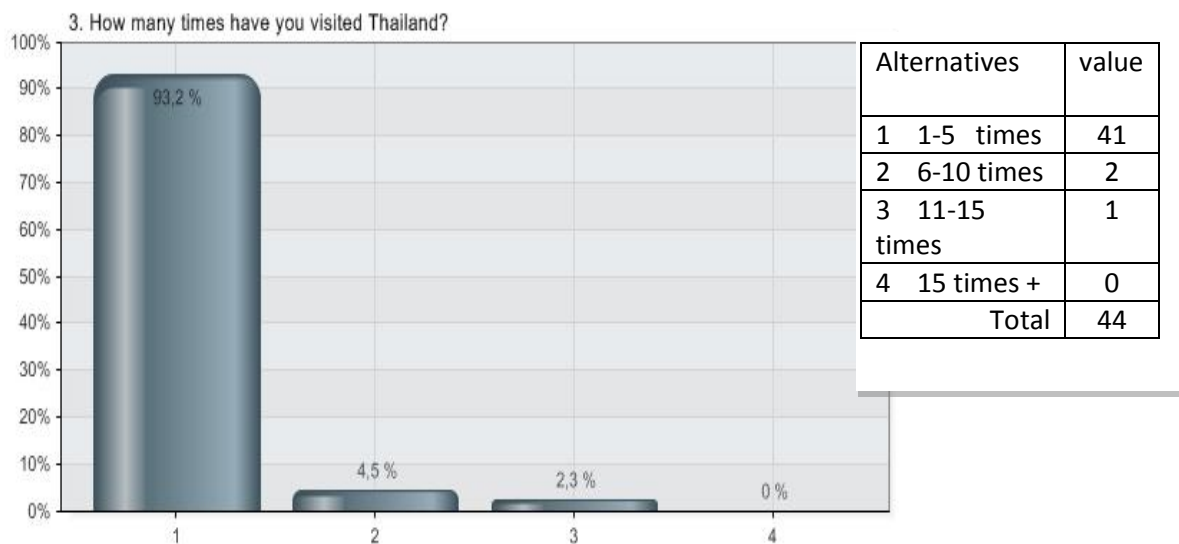


Figure 6: Frequency of travel to Thailand

Out of 44 respondents who had been to Thailand, 41 had been there between 1 - 5 times; 2 visitors between 6 – 10 times; and only 1 respondent had traveled to Thailand more than 11 times but less than 15 times. None had been in Thailand for more than 15 times. This question showed the high level of potential for Thailand being a repeated visit destination, and the frequency of visit to Thailand by Norwegians is fairly high. The level of income is very much related to the result of this question. Out of 74.4% of the respondents had an annual income between NOK 310,000 and NOK 600,000. These income levels are

considered ‘average’ and ‘above average’ in Norway. The cross tabulation between income level and the frequency to Thailand can be viewed in Table 4:

Table 3

Cross tabulation between income level and frequency of travel to Thailand

Times been to Thailand	annual income (NOK)	Less than 300,000	310,000 – 450,000	460,000 – 600,000	610,000 – 1 million	Prefer not to answer
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
1- 5 times	93.2	0.0	100.0	93.8	87.5	66.7
6 – 10 times	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	33.3
11 – 15 times	2.3	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0	0.0
16 times or more	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
N	44	0	16	16	8	3

A4. How long did you usually stay when you visited Thailand?

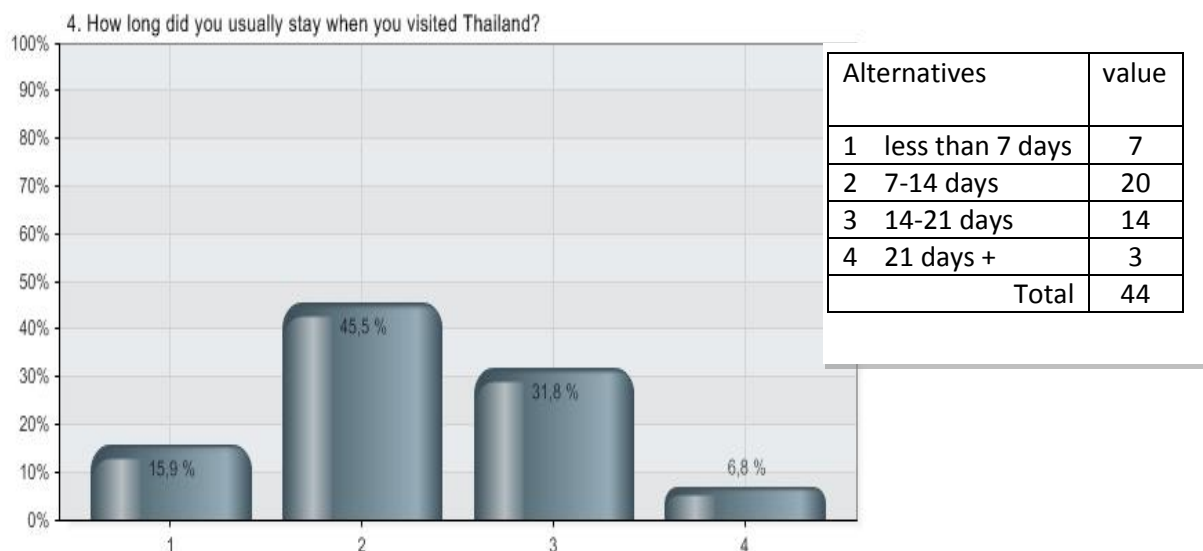


Figure 7: Length of stay in Thailand

With this question, four alternatives were given. Almost half of them (45.5%) chose to stay in Thailand between 7-14 days, another 31.8% chose between 14-21 days. Only seven

respondents were staying for less than 7 days, and three visitors had been there for more than 3 weeks. The ideal length of stay in Thailand was therefore, more than a week and less than 3 weeks. Norwegian travelers preferred to stay such a long period in Thailand mainly because it is considered long-distance with 10 hours' flight travel time from Oslo to Thailand. It usually takes a few days to get over jet-lag and become familiar with the differences of culture and weather factors. This could explain the reason for staying longer when traveling inter-continent.

A5. When you traveled to Thailand, you usually chose _____ (type of tour)

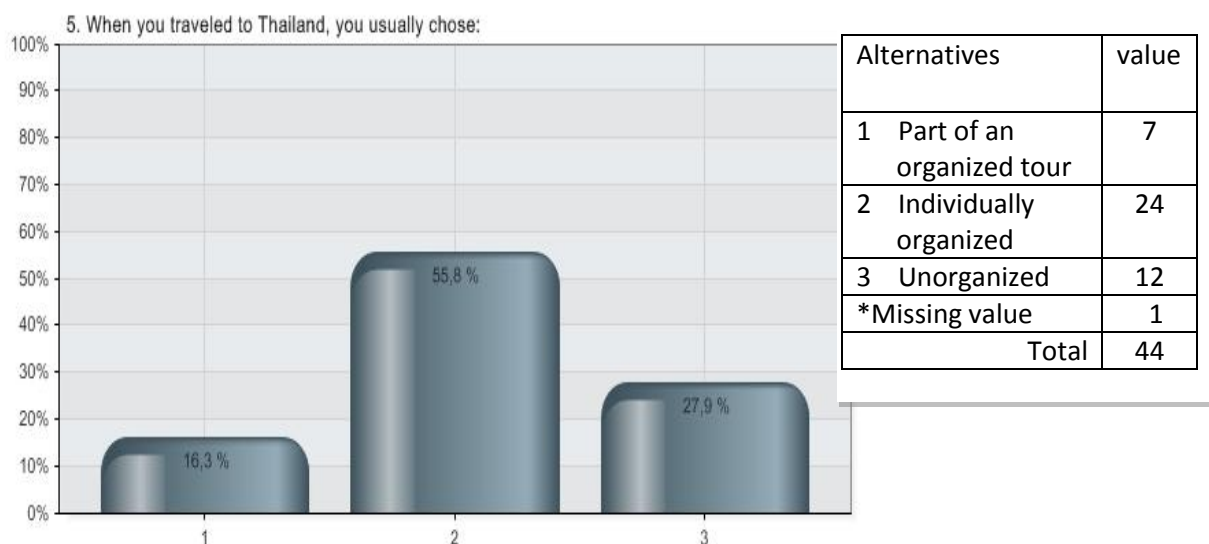


Figure 8: Type of tour

Three alternatives were given under this question: ‘Part of an organized tour (package tour/chartered flight)’, ‘individually organized’, and ‘unorganized’. Surprisingly most of the respondents preferred individually organizing their trip to Thailand, as contrasted to Jacobsen’s (2002) and Prebensen’s (2005a, 2006) research on Norwegian travelers to Southern Europe, who traveled mostly with package tour. There were 24 respondents (55.8%) who chose the alternative of individually organized for their trip to Thailand. Only 7 respondents (16.3%) used organized tour, which showed a diverse preference between those

who travel to Spain (preference to organized tour) and to Thailand (individually organized). Another 12 respondents (27.3%) answered ‘unorganized’ when they traveled to Thailand, mostly because they answered that they traveled with their spouse or close friends who would perhaps organize and arrange the whole itinerary for them.

A6. Where did you stay MOSTLY when you traveled in Thailand?

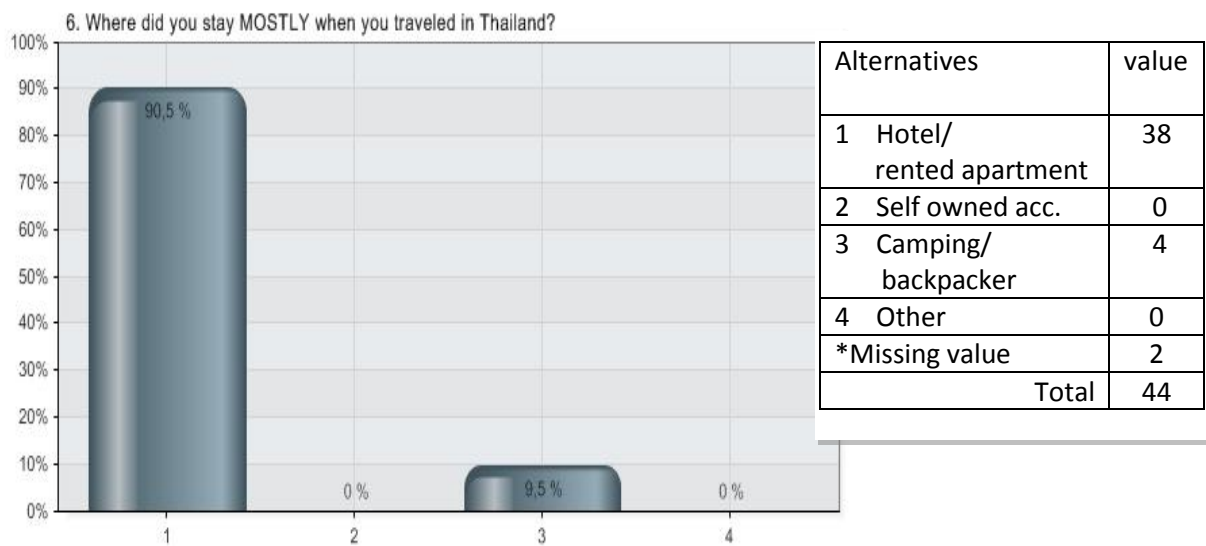
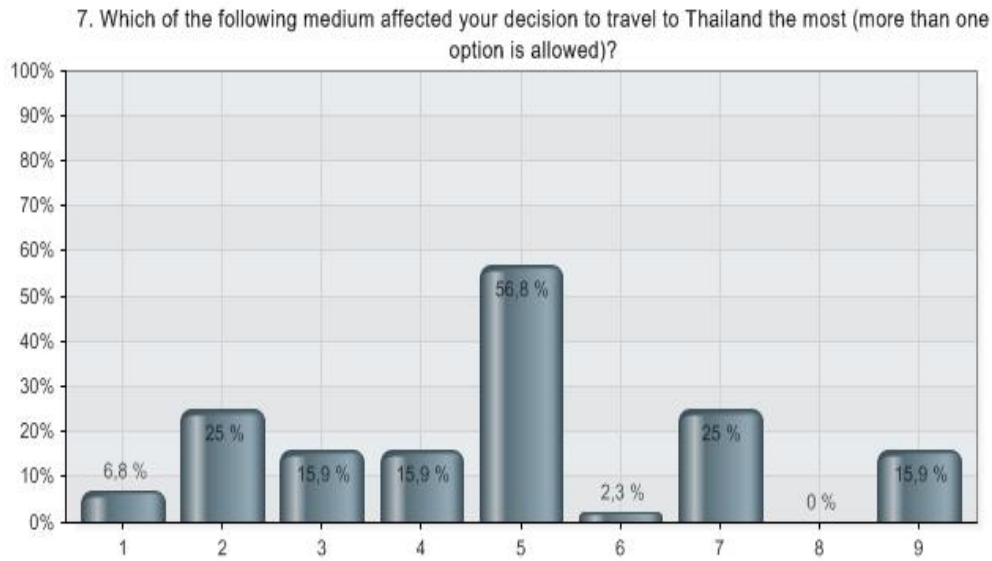


Figure 9: Type of accommodation

There were 4 alternatives given under this question: ‘hotel/rented apartment’, ‘self-owned house/apartment (friends or family)’, and ‘camping/backpacker’. As many as 38 respondents selected hotel or rented apartment as their main accommodation in Thailand. This revealed a certain level of safety and comfort they required while traveling in an unfamiliar country. Four respondents chose camping or backpacker. None of the respondents stayed with friends or family in Thailand, and this corresponded very much to the low motivation level of visiting friend and relatives (VFR purpose) as shown at question A2 (see Figure 2).

No other alternatives of accommodation beside the above three were chosen.

A7. Which of the following medium affected your decision to travel to Thailand the most?



Alternatives	1 Travel agency	2 Brochures/ guidebook	3 TV/radio advertisement	4 Internet/ social media	5 Family/ friends	6 Tourism fair	7 Newspapers/ Magazines	8 Outdoor Ad.	9 Other
Value	3	11	7	7	25	1	11	0	7

Figure 10: Sources of information

This was one of the essential questions that will answer the third hypothesis of this study. Nine alternatives were given to the respondents and they could check several options if necessary. This explains why the total percentage is over 100% with this particular question. The question was to find out the main sources of getting information by Norwegian travelers for their trip to Thailand, and to which extent they trusted those mediums. Getting information from friends and family located the highest rate. This showed that word-of-mouth (WOM) effect is a powerful marketing tool as opposed to other sources. Newspapers or magazines were the second choice of getting information about Thailand, and travel brochures or travel guidebooks were the third highest rate.

The electronic device, such as TV and radio advertisements, as well as social media (Twitters, Facebook, Youtube, etc.), did not gather much of the interest within this group of respondents. Yet in the future WOM effect may be able to combine with electronic systems,

especially the Internet, to make the information much more accessible among known friends or relatives so the information coming directly from family/friends through electronic systems can become highly recommended.

A very small number of respondents chose to use travel agency service. This has co-related to the validity of question A5 which many respondents preferred individually organizing their trip (see Figure 8). Only 1 out of 44 respondents paid attention to item 6, the tourism fair and none had been affected much by outdoor advertisement, for example, the bus stop billboard.

A8. What was the main purpose for you to visit Thailand?

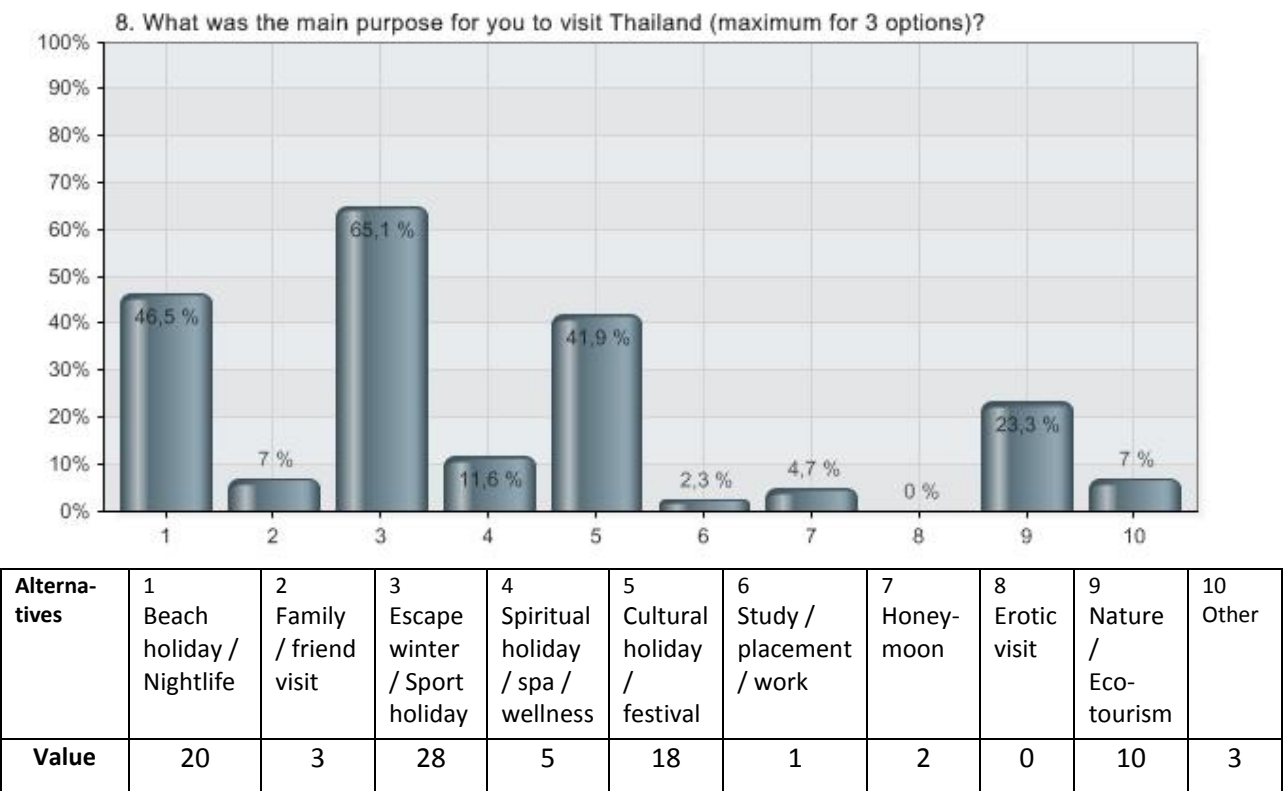


Figure 11: Purpose of visit to Thailand

This question co-related to A2: motivational factors analysis. Ten alternatives were given and multi-selection was allowed. This explains why the total percentage counted was over 100% for this question.

The top three purposes for visiting Thailand were 'escape winter/sport holiday' (65.1%), 'beach holiday/nightlife' (46.5%) and 'cultural holiday/festival' (41.9%). Weather and beach posted huge consideration for destination choice by Norwegian travelers, regardless their travel to Spain or to Thailand. These are the 'original' motivation factors Prebensen (2005a) and other researchers had concluded in their papers about Norwegian travelers to Spain. It showed the similar result with the visit to Thailand. Participating in cultural holiday or festival is also an important factor and this again co-related to the educational level of this group of respondents. In the psychological aspect, the higher level of education a person has reached, the more sophisticated he/she will become. As a consequence, interest in cultural activities is related to the level of education.

Nature or eco-tourism yielded a significant level of importance for Norwegian tourists. This did not correspond to the findings of Thrane (2008) as she suggested Norwegians did not search to experience nature while going abroad. One explanation was of the diversified climate and geography between Thailand and Norway, which made the Norwegian visitors more excited in exploring the tropical nature. As Thrane's research study was based on Norwegian students who traveled to Spain, it should be highlighted the topography of Spain is still 'European' which did not excite the Norwegians as much as with Thailand's tropical nature. The second factor was Thrane's target on students as her sample whereas this paper focused on university staff, so the education level and travel experiences between the two groups would yield a rather different result with their purpose of foreign travel.

Table 5

Cross tabulation between education level and frequency of travel to Thailand

	Highest level of education	Lower than High School	High School	Associate Degree	Bachelor Degree	Master Degree	Doctorate/ Professional Degree
Purpose of visit	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Beach holiday / Nightlife	46.5	100.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	59.1	35.7
Family / friend visit	7.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	4.5	7.1
Escape winter / Sport holiday	65.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	63.6	50.0
Spiritual holiday / spa / wellness	11.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.7	0.0
Cultural holiday / festival	41.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0
Study / placement / work	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1
Honeymoon	4.7	0.0	0.0	50.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Erotic visit	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nature / Eco-tourism	23.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	31.8	21.4
Other, please specify	7.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	14.3
N	43	1	3	2	1	22	14

A9. How satisfied were you with your Thailand trip in general?

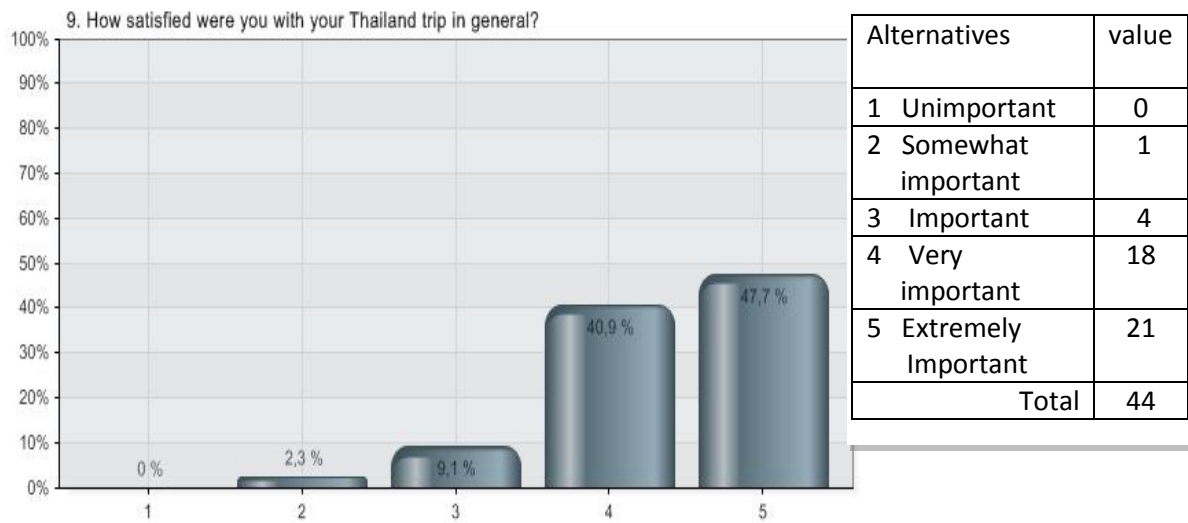


Figure 12: Level of satisfaction

This question was testing the degree of satisfaction level of the respondents by using the Likert scale which measured satisfaction from (1) not satisfied at all to (5) extremely satisfied. Forty-three out of 44 visitors chose ‘satisfied’, ‘very satisfied’, and ‘extremely satisfied’ to conclude their experience in Thailand. This finding co-related Thailand being voted as ‘The Best Tourist Country In The World’ by Norwegian Grand Travel Award seven years at a row (TAT, 2011b). The highly satisfied clients have the potential to be repeat visitors, and very likely to share their positive experience with their friends and relatives (Yang et al., 2009). This forms the word-of-mouth effect, which was one of the most influential sources of information as shown at Question A7 (see Figure 10).

The high level of satisfaction obtained by Norwegian travelers told the fact that, in spite of some known travel barriers, such as long-distance, language and cultural differences, etc. Thailand still had the ability to make the foreigners feeling welcome. Taking the motivation factors (of Question A2) as consideration, the top three factors to inspire Norwegians who traveled to Thailand were: ‘getting away from stress’, ‘knowing the Thai culture and people’, and ‘safety’. The level of satisfaction reflected the visitors had obtained the desired result from a vacation in Thailand, where they had refreshed themselves, and got know better and became more familiar with the exotic Thai culture by having a certain degree of contact with the locals, and they felt safe while they traveled in Thailand.

4.2 *Visitors who have never been to Thailand (Non-visitors)*

The second part of the analysis showed the results of the survey answered by potential visitors, or non-visitors to Thailand. This group of visitors had never been to Thailand but the data could be greatly useful to generate idea for marketing plan in order to the non-visitor group and make them feel more invited to the Land of Smiles. Many of the questions in this part were similar to part A. The incomplete answers were again treated as ‘missing values’ so that the rest of the answers could be counted as part of the sample.

The demographic figures of the 118 respondents who had never visited Thailand are:

Table 5

Demographics of Non-visitors to Thailand

Gender	N
Male	52
Female	60
*Missing values	6
Marital status	
Single	18
Married / Cohabitation	95
*Missing values	5
Age	
18-25 years	2
26-35 years	24
36-50 years	41
51 and older	49
*Missing values	2
Educational level	
Lower than High School	1
High School	3
Associate Degree	8
Bachelor Degree	27
Masters Degree	44
Doctorate/Professional Degree	33
*Missing values	2
Income level	
Less than 300,000	2
310,000 – 450,000	48
460,000 – 600,000	40
610,000 – 1 million	23
Prefer not to disclose	4
*Missing values	1
Frequency to travel abroad	
1- 3 times	103
4 – 8 times	7
9 times or more	2
I prefer to have my vacation in	
Norway	3
*Missing values	2

The number of males and females who participated in part B of the survey was 52 male and 60 female. It was almost equal with the number between the two genders. Ninety-five out of 118 were married or living with a partner, while 18 were single.

Nearly half of the respondents were 51 years and older, for a total of 49 respondents. Another 41 respondents were between 36 and 50 years old, 24 of them were between 26 and 35 years old. Only 2 respondents were between the age of 18 and 25.

Forty-four of the respondents held a master degree while another 33 held doctorate degrees, and 27 obtained a bachelor degree diploma. Nearly seven-eighths of the non-visitors had finished their university study which indicated a high level of education was achieved. Their education background could be one of the main factors underlining the reason for a contemplated future visit to Thailand, in addition to the age factor and marital status.

Regarding to the income earnings, the average income of the respondents was between NOK 310000 – 600000. Forty-eight respondents earned between NOK 310000 – 450000 per year, while another 40 earned between NOK 460000 – 600000. Twenty-three of them had an income of NOK 600000 – 1 million. Four respondents preferred not to disclose how much their earnings were. Generally this group of respondents was average high income earners, in regard to the living standards in Norway. Two respondents received an income less than NOK 300000, which was considered rather low. The income level was believed to have a direct impact on the non-visitors' decision to travel abroad (SSB, 2011b).

The travel experience could also affect one's motivation and choice of destination. Among 118 respondents, 103 traveled abroad between one to three times each year, while seven respondents enjoyed their vacation four to eight times outside Norway, and two had even traveled abroad for more than nine times each year for holiday trips. Only three respondents preferred to stay in Norway for their vacation. This result again co-related to the fact that Norwegians had great capacity in terms of finance and time to travel abroad.

B1. How important were the following factors when you chose to visit Thailand

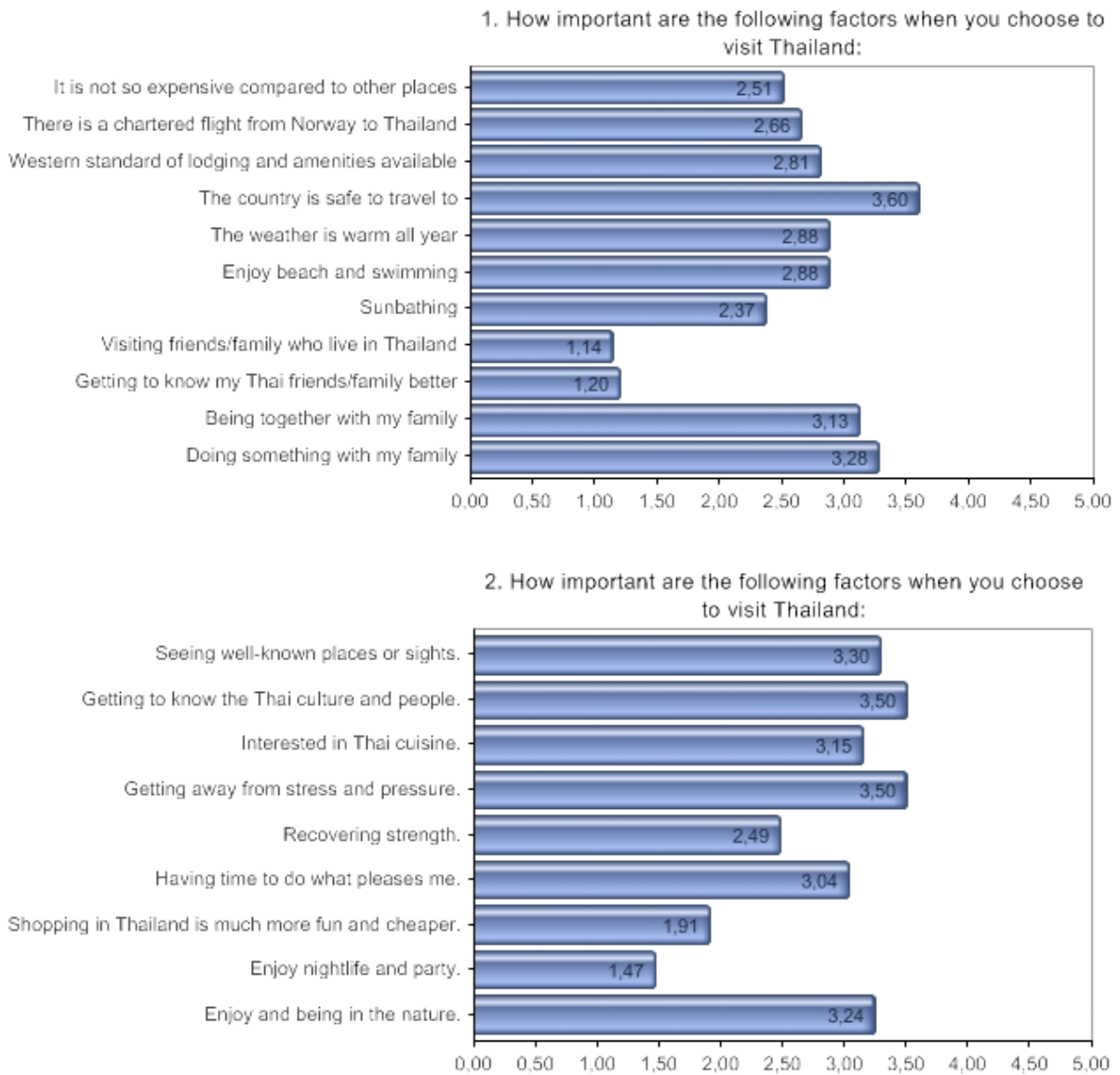


Figure 13: Motivation factors for non-visitors to Thailand

Question B1 was purposely designed the same as Question A2 so that a comparison between the two groups (visitors and non-visitors) could be set up in the later part of the analysis. Twenty statements were given under this question and a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) unimportant to (5) extremely important was used to find out the motivation factors of the non-visitors.

The results indicated the top three motivation factors were: 1) The country is safe to travel to (3.6); 2) Getting to know the Thai culture and people (3.5); and 3) Getting away from stress and pressure (3.5). Safety was the first priority amongst the potential visitors. This might recall the research theory of Norwegian travelers being characterized as risk-averse and wishing to avoid bad surprise (Decrop, 2006). The seeking of peace and quiet, as well as interest in cultural learning aspects, was also mentioned by Prebensen (2005a). The least important motivational factor was visiting family and friends who lived in Thailand. Shopping was not a popular motivating factor for the potential visitors either.

B2. If you decide to travel to Thailand, you will most likely choose (type of tour):

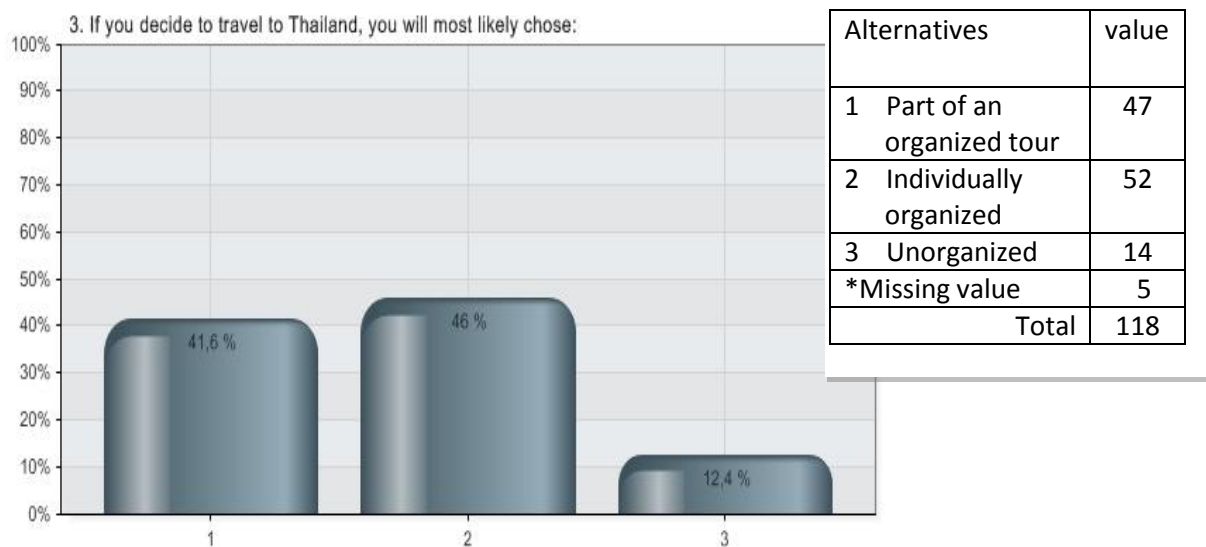


Figure 14: Travel pattern

The result of this question showed the travel pattern of the travelers when they went for vacation in Thailand. Nearly half of the non-visitors chose to individually organize the long-distance trip, which meant they would book the flight tickets, arrange the accommodation and transports in the destination, and organize their itinerary without the help of a travel agency. However, nearly the other half of non-visitors selected to be part of an organized tour to travel to Thailand. The result showed that potential visitors could be highly

independent, but at the same time could also seek help from the professionals in the tourism industry, that is, booking their trip or getting advice from the travel agency.

B3. When you go for a vacation in foreign country, says, somewhere in Asia, how long do you think you will be likely to stay?

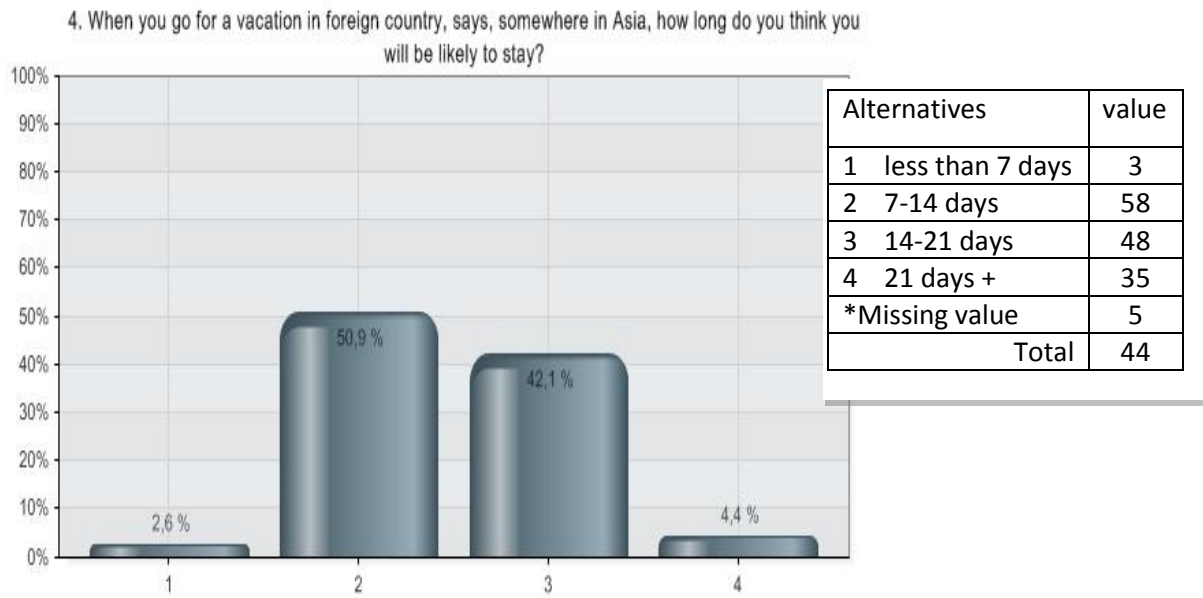


Figure 15: Length of stay for potential visitors

With this question, four alternatives were given. Half of the respondents (50.9%) chose to stay in Thailand between 7-14 days, another 42.1% chose between 14-21 days. Only three respondents would stay for less than 7 days, and five respondents would choose to stay for more than 3 weeks. The ideal length of stay in a new, long-distance travel destination was therefore, more than a week and less than 3 weeks. The results of the non-visitors coincided with the results of visitors who had been to Thailand (see Question A4, Figure 7). It might explain that the same reasons for staying longer while they travel inter-continent, which were jet-lag and needed some times to getting familiar with the differences of culture and weather factors.

B4. From the media listed below, which have you seen or heard a lot about Thailand tourism (more than one option is allowed)?

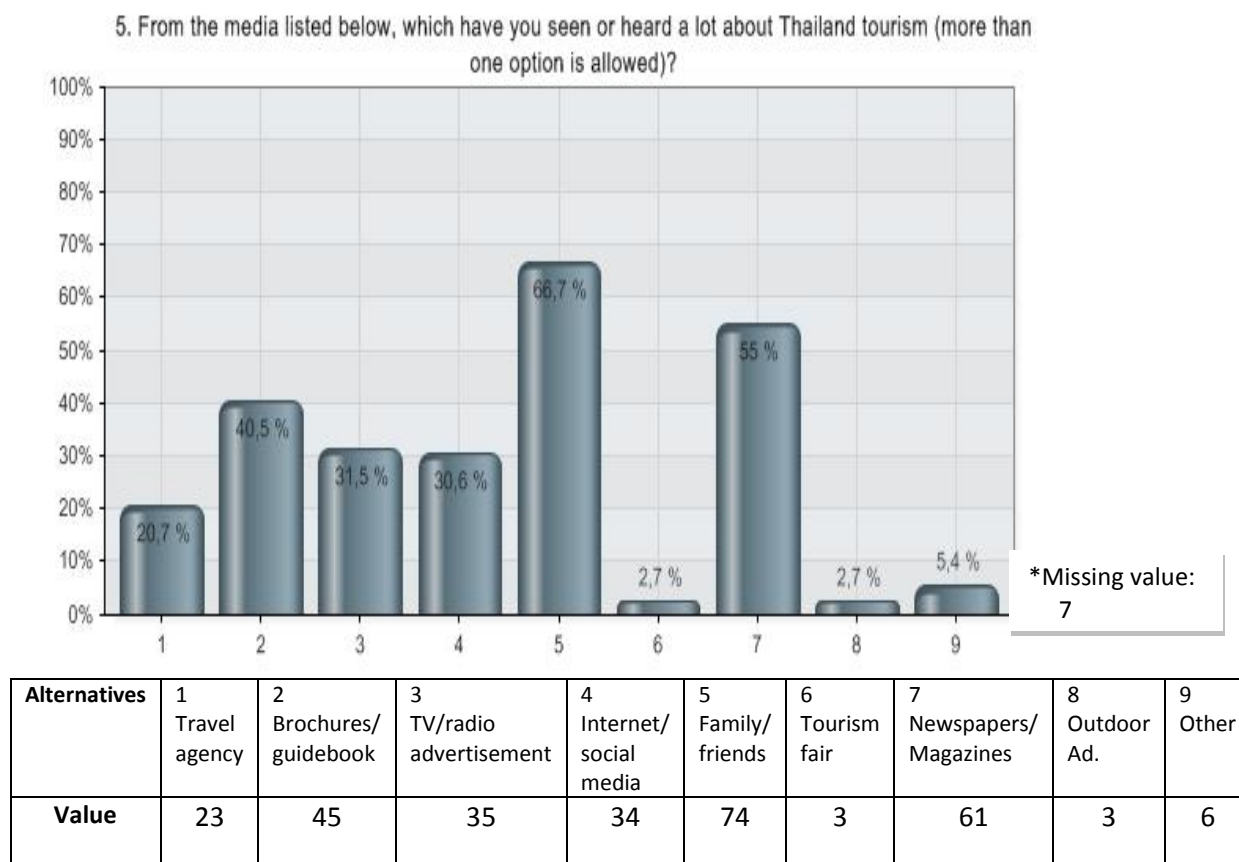


Figure 16: Sources of information

This question underlined the importance of finding out ‘how’ to target the potential Norwegian tourists. Nine alternatives were given to the respondents and they could check several options if necessary. This explains why the total percentage is over 100% with this particular question. The result showed the most effective media or source of information utilized by Norwegian travelers when they planned a vacation abroad. The top three medias were: 1) family and friends; 2) newspapers and magazines; 3) travel brochures and guidebooks. Tourism board and tourist fair, together with outdoor advertisement (billboard) located the least interests from the non-visitors. The result of non-visitors based on this question, was again correlated with the result of visitors who had been to Thailand (see Question A7, Figure 10).

The trend of using internet or social networks was fast catching up. Online networks showed a more influential power, compared to the travel agency, to affect the buyer’s choices. It was therefore believed that non-visitors were fairly independent when searching for travel information, as this correlated to Question B2 (see Figure 14).

B5. If you decide to visit a country where you have never been to (e.g. Thailand), what will be your main motivation (more than one answer is allowed)?

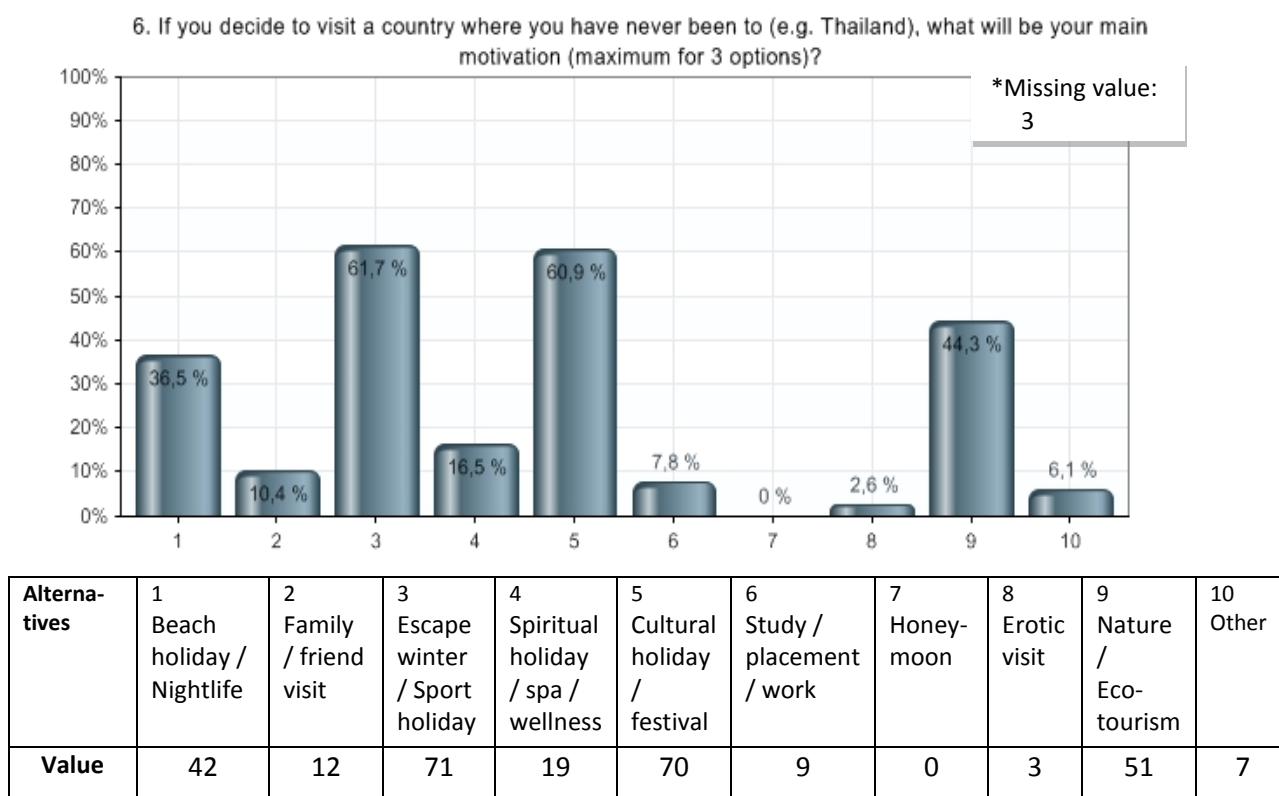


Figure 17: Purpose of visit to a new destination

The last question in this part co-related to B1: motivational factors analysis. Ten alternatives were given and more than one selection was allowed. This explains why the total percentage counted was over 100% for this question.

The top three purposes for potential visitors to Thailand were ‘escape winter/sport holiday’ (61.7%), ‘cultural holiday/festival’ (60.9%) and ‘nature/eco-tourism’ (44.3%).

Weather, culture and nature should therefore be highlighted by the tourism board to target the potential Norwegian tourists. No one was thinking about going to Thailand for their

honeymoon. Honeymoon was usually related to romance, and this revealed that Norwegians rarely thought of Thailand as a romantic land. This could give some ideas for the concerned tourism authorities to promote the possible prospect of attracting the honeymoon couples to Thailand.

4.3 Comparison Study

The comparison analysis was set up to find out if there was any resemblance or difference between the segment of visitors and non-visitors. The trends of these groups could provide market researchers precious information about the strategy on marketing mix, or the four Ps (product, place, promotion, price). The comparison of the two segments was based on three topics: the source of information, the purpose of visit, and the motivation factors.

4.3.1 Source of information (Media)

Table 6

Comparison of two segments by source of information (from top to bottom)

Medium alternatives	Visitors	Non-visitors
Family / friends	56,8 %	66,7 %
Newspapers / magazines	25,0 %	55,0 %
Travel brochures / guides	25,0 %	40,5 %
TV/ radio advertisement	15,9 %	31,5 %
Internet / Social media	15,9 %	30,6 %
Travel agency	6,8 %	20,7 %
Tourism board / Fair	2,3 %	2,7 %
Advertisement at bus stop (billboard)	0,0 %	2,7 %
Others	15,9 %	5,4 %

In the selection of media for getting information about Thailand, both visitors and non-visitors groups showed very similar trend pattern. Family/friends is on the top of the list

when it came to getting information about Thailand. The second choices for visitor-group were newspapers/magazines and travel brochures/guides which displayed the same percentage of 25%. For non-visitor group, choice of newspapers/magazines was 55% while travel brochures/guides dominated 40.5%. The results illustrated that regardless if the respondents had been to Thailand or not, the top three most influential ways to spread information about a new destination were 1) by family/friends, also known as word-of-mouth; 2) from newspapers/magazines; and 3) through travel brochures/guides. This implied which channel of distribution the tourism authorities should focus on more, so that the marketing outcome could reach its maximum level.

Social activities as part of the promotion campaign would be a suitable idea to attract the attention of both visitors and non-visitors. For instance, setting up a booth to display Thai culture and cuisine during the celebration of 17 May, Norwegian Constitution Day will attract a crowd to know more about Thailand. Follow-up programs such as flower festivals or Thai-Norwegian cooking competitions can be printed out as brochure beforehand and handed out to the public on the Constitution Day at the stall. Advertisements could also be arranged with local or regional newspapers to get a bigger marketing effect. This suggestion demonstrated the three sources of information were being used to promote the image of a destination with thoughtful planning.

4.3.2 *Purpose of visit*

Results showed that for both visitors and non-visitors, the prime purpose for taking a trip to a long-distance destination was to escape winter or for a sport holiday. Considering the long, dark, and cold winter season in Norway, it was more likely the Norwegians traveled far away to escape winter more than for sport holiday.

Table 7

Comparison of two segments by purpose of visit

Purpose of visit	Visitors	Position (viewed by visitors)	Non- visitors	Position (viewed by non- visitors)
Escape winter / Sport holiday	65,1 %	1	61,7 %	1
Beach holiday / Nightlife	46,5 %	2	36,5 %	4
Cultural holiday / festival	41,9 %	3	60,9 %	2
Nature / Eco-tourism	23,3 %	4	44,3 %	3
Spiritual holiday / spa / wellness	11,6 %	5	16,5 %	5
Family / friend visit	7,0 %	6	10,4 %	6
Honeymoon	4,7 %	7	0,0 %	9
Study / placement / work	2,3 %	8	7,8 %	7
Erotic visit	0,0 %	9	2,6 %	8
Other, please specify	7,0 %		6,1 %	

The second and third important purposes of visits were slightly different between the two groups. Visitors who had been to Thailand chose beach holiday/nightlife and cultural holiday/festival as their secondary purpose. On the other hand, as much as the non-visitors emphasized on cultural holidays, they were more in tune with nature/eco-tourism than beach holiday. It did not, however, mean beach holiday was not a significant purpose for non-visitors. As escaping winter was such a highly motivational factor for Norwegian travelers to visit Thailand, the tourism board could focus on promoting campaigns which portray Thailand with a warm, friendly, and easily accessible image. Beach, culture and nature were important inspirations so these factors should be emphasized on the promotion campaign. Suggestion of short advertisement video focused on each of these themes: beach, culture,

nature, escape winter, should be made and broadcasted on TV and on the Internet or online social networks so that more Norwegians would get the awareness of visiting Thailand.

The purpose of spiritual holiday/spa/wellness located as number five on the list for both visitors and non-visitors. This showed a potential marketing opportunity in this area. Many famous and luxurious hotels in Thailand offer spa and wellness treatment to the clients. If the tourism board could co-operate with some of these most qualified spa treatment centres and provide a package that includes the element of beach, culture, nature-experience, and wellness treatments – 4-in-1 package, then the chances of pulling Norwegian visitors to Thailand could increase to a great extent.

4.4 *Discussion*

The three hypotheses in this study were closely related to the survey which obtained 162 respondents through Questback. The result of the survey has been discussed in the last chapter, and the discussion on the hypotheses will be presented here.

The first hypothesis was ‘sun and beaches are the major determinants for Norwegian travelers’ choice of travel to Thailand’. This statement was tested in Question A2, A8, B1 and B5. Between the two segments of travelers: visitors who had been to Thailand, and non-visitors who had never been to Thailand, both felt highly motivated by the factors of sun and beach. The mean scores of the motivation factor analysis at Table 7 confirmed this finding and the hypothesis is thus affirmed.

The second hypothesis was ‘visiting family and friends are major determinants for Norwegian travelers’ choice of travel to Thailand’. The research background for this statement came from the statistics result published in the last decade by Statistics Norway, which informed Thai people as one of the largest group of immigrants who came to Norway to establish new family (SSB, 2010c). In order to test the connection between the topic of

immigration and tourism, this hypothesis was formed. Based on the analyses on Questions A2, A8, B1 and B5, however, hypothesis 2 was not confirmed. Both segments did not prioritize VFR (visiting friends and relatives) purpose, and the motivation factors for VFR, or getting to know Thai family and friends scored little importance. Although the result from this group of respondents did not support hypothesis 2, it could be argued that the sample was restricted (convenience sample) and if this hypothesis was tested using a larger, randomly selected population, it may have a very different outcome.

One of the important finds from the survey was that cultural visits attract huge interest within the Norwegian society. Not only the places and food in Thailand impressed the Norwegian travelers, but the friendly and helpful personality of Thai locals was also one of the essential motivations for tourists' choice to experience Thailand. Among other reasons, safety was the primary concern of the non-visitor segment. This was highly prioritized especially after the news of the tsunami hitting Thailand in year 2004, and also political upheaval causing explosions at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in November, 2008 (BBC, 2011). The environmental factors caused by politics or economics will directly affect the trends and destination choice of a certain group of travelers. This is a major point to contemplate while setting an image for a destination. The negative issues may happen due to sudden and uncontrollable situation, but effective promotion campaign will keep pulling the tourists back by screening the mindset of the tourists with constant, positive image of that destination.

The third hypothesis was 'word-of-mouth is the main source of information for Norwegians to decide to travel to Thailand'. This statement was confirmed by both of the segments, under the result of Questions A7 and B4. This hypothesis was thus affirmed. Even though Internet is the latest communication channel in an advanced country like Norway, the society still prefers to get travel information from those whom they are close to or they know

personally. Word-of-mouth (WOM) is considered positive recommendations which will benefit the related destination and to attract future or repeat visits to that destination. The WOM effect is also an indicator as to what extent the travelers were satisfied with their last visit. The more satisfied the visitors felt about the destination, the more they would share their experience with others (Prebensen et al, 2010).

Some of the traditional distributing channels still owed large favor by the Norwegian travelers. Newspapers, magazines, travel brochures and guidebooks are among the examples. Nevertheless, with the rapid development of social media, it is advisable to merge WOM practice with the new media to bring forward more interaction among the travelers, as well as between the social media users and the tourism organizations. One of the fashionable ways of promoting a place these days is through personal blogs. The tourism board or tourism organization should make a link with some of the individual bloggers who are deeply into sharing their travel experiences and ask to share their company link on the blogger's site. By doing so, more personal recommendations can be created, which is illustrated by the effect of WOM.

5 Conclusion

The main purpose of this master thesis was to examine the motivational factors by the Norwegian travelers who choose Thailand as a holiday destination. Previous research (Jacobsen, 2002; Prebensen, 2005a; Thrane, 2008) has shown that sun/warmth and stress reduction were the major reasons for Norwegians to travel to Southern Europe, but the present study has showed a contrast and changed result in the motivational aspect when Norwegians travel outside Europe. Even though sun/warmth was still a top factor to motivate Norwegians to travel to Thailand, the top two motivations found in this study however, were culture and nature.

The findings of the present study also reported word-of-mouth (WOM) effect as the most effective medium in transmitting the information, knowledge, and travel experiences about Thailand. As suggested by Prebensen et al. (2010), the more satisfaction a tourist has toward a destination, the more information about that destination he/she will share with others. The positive recommendations will in turn form a mental image and become the foundation of motivation for those who have yet to travel to Thailand. Other highly influential media found in the research findings were newspapers, magazines, travel brochures and travel guidebooks. These are the materials any concerned tourism authority should employ if they plan to market to the Norwegian tourists.

The findings also revealed the two groups of respondents: *visitors*, those who had been to Thailand, and *non-visitors*, those who had never been to Thailand, shared very similar trends and preferences in their motivational aspects and ways of getting travel information. Marketers could again utilize this finding and apply it to make strategic marketing plans which can appeal to both the segments of visitors and non-visitors (those the marketers hope to make visitors). Demographic features were no doubt another determinant factor for Norwegian travelers during the process of selecting vacation destination. Educational

background, income level, age, and frequency of travel abroad showed the correlation with the travel pattern, purpose of visit and preferences of the tourists.

On the other hand, this thesis study has made a conceptual link between the marketing theory and the motivational factors. Image and branding are two components under the marketing mix. When a destination is undergoing the creation of an image, it should not overlook the motivational factors dominated by the target market. With Thailand as an example; since Norwegians are highly attracted to its nature and culture, the next promotional campaign could highlight the beauty of nature and the variety of activities tourists can participate in, or focus on the festivals and cultural events happening in Thailand. Thailand is known as the 'Land of Smiles' which indicates the openness and friendliness of Thai people is vital for many tourists to attain good experiences. This component is seen as the most differentiated point of Thailand amongst the competitors. Therefore it is important to continually promote the image of Thai people as the friendly and gentle host while adding other elements such as nature and culture into the package.

Another suggestion for promoting a destination profile is to associate the destination with a branded, international sports event, especially the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup (Fyrberg, 2008). Celebrity appearances in a destination will also bring credits and raise the public awareness about that destination. By holding an international event and inviting the appropriate celebrity to attend, is very likely to increase the popularity and image of a destination.

This study confirms Thailand has a huge potentiality to be the top most popular destination for Norwegian vacationers. By promoting the right image to a certain market means the tourism authority understands the motivational factors behind the target market and will be more likely to fulfill a high level of satisfaction to the visitors. The successful

example of Thailand can be posted as a model for other Asian countries that wish to progress well in targeting the western market, especially in the Scandinavian region.

Limitations of the study and future research

The sample of this study was gathered in an environmental setting that highly prioritized education. Because of that, the respondents were viewed to be a group of high education achievers. The generalization was therefore relevant and limited to those types of representatives. The motivation factors and purpose of visit may show a different result if the same study were set in another, or more random environment.

Another shortcoming in this research was the lost data. Due to a technical problem data from forty respondents were lost and could not be recovered. The lost data were connected to the non-visitor segment, and they might have affected the result if they could have been analyzed.

The present research has contributed to the understanding of Norwegians' travel motives. Some further research is suggested to stress to the other Scandinavian groups, and comparative studies can be performed so that tourists' choices and trends within this region can be made available. It is also advisable to investigate further about the spending pattern of Norwegian tourists within the category of accommodation and other touristic activities when they travel outside Europe, so that a better organized package profile will be provided to fulfill their needs and wants.

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Appendices

Appendix A:

Thailand and its neighboring countries



The figure was retrieved 05.05.2011 from CIA (2011).

Appendix B:

Questionnaire

I am a master’s student at the Norwegian School of Hotel Management inviting you to participate in my survey, which focuses on travel destinations and choices among Norwegian tourists. This research is for my master’s thesis.

This survey is absolutely confidential and you will remain anonymous. Your identity and personal information will be kept confidential and the information used only in the aggregate for research purposes.

I am looking forward to your participation in this research, and thank you in advance for your participation.

Would you like to answer this survey in

English or Norsk

A1. Have you been to Thailand?

- Yes (continue with question part A)
- No (please skip part A and go directly to **Part B**)

A2. How important were the following factors when you chose to visit Thailand:

	 Not at all Extremely important 				
1. It is not so expensive compared to other places	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
2. There is a chartered flight from Norway to Thailand	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
3. Western standard of lodging and amenities available	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
4. The country is safe to travel to	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
5. The weather is warm all year	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
6. Enjoy beach and swimming	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
7. Sunbathing	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
8. Visiting friends/family who live in Thailand	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
9. Getting to know my Thai friends/family better	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
10. Being together with my family.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

- 11. Doing something with my family. 1 2 3 4 5
- 12. Seeing well-known places or sights. 1 2 3 4 5
- 13. Getting to know the Thai culture and people. 1 2 3 4 5
- 14. Interested in Thai cuisine. 1 2 3 4 5
- 15. Getting away from stress and pressure. 1 2 3 4 5
- 16. Recovering strength. 1 2 3 4 5
- 17. Having time to do what please me. 1 2 3 4 5
- 18. Shopping in Thailand is much more fun and cheaper. 1 2 3 4 5
- 19. Enjoy nightlife and party. 1 2 3 4
5
- 20. Enjoy and being in the nature. 1 2 3 4
5

A3. How many times have you visited Thailand?

- 1- 5 times
- 6 – 10 times
- 11 – 15 times
- 16 times or more

A4. How long did you usually stay when you visited Thailand?

- less than 7 days
- 7– 14 days
- 14 – 21 days
- 3 weeks or more

A5. When you traveled to Thailand, you usually chose:

- Part of an organized tour (package tour/chartered flight)
- Individually organized
- Unorganized

A6. Where did you stay MOSTLY when you traveled in Thailand?

- Hotel/rented apartment
- Self-owned house/apartment (friends or family)
- Camping/backpacker
- Other _____

A7. Which of the following medium affected your decision to travel to Thailand the most (more than one option is allowed)?

- Travel agency advertisement
- Travel brochures / guides
- TV/ radio
- Internet / Social media (e.g. facebook, twitter, blog)

Family / friends

Tourism board / Fair

Newspapers / magazines

Advertisement at bus stop (billboard)

Other _____

A8. What was the main purpose for you to visit Thailand (more than one answer is allowed)?

Beach holiday / Nightlife

Family / friend visit

Escape winter / Sport holiday

Spiritual holiday / spa / wellness

Cultural holiday / festival

Study / placement / work

Honeymoon

Erotic visit

Nature / Eco-tourism

Other _____

A9. How satisfied were you with your Thailand trip in general?

Not at all				Extremely satisfied
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

A10. Any unfavourable comments about your visit to Thailand?

A11. Any favourable comments about your visit to Thailand?

Part B – if you have answered part A, please skip this part and go to PART C.

B1. How important are the following factors when you choose to visit Thailand:

	Not at all				Extremely important
1. It is not so expensive compared to other places	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
2. There is a chartered flight from Norway to Thailand	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
3. Western standard of lodging and amenities available	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

- 4. The country is safe to travel to 1 2 3 4 5
- 5. The weather is warm all year 1 2 3 4 5
- 6. Enjoy beach and swimming 1 2 3 4 5
- 7. Sunbathing 1 2 3 4 5
- 8. Visiting friends/family who live in Thailand 1 2 3 4 5
- 9. Getting to know my Thai friends/family better 1 2 3 4 5
- 10. Being together with my family. 1 2 3 4 5
- 11. Doing something with my family. 1 2 3 4 5
- 12. Seeing well-known places or sights. 1 2 3 4 5
- 13. Getting to know the Thai culture and people. 1 2 3 4 5
- 14. Interested in Thai cuisine. 1 2 3 4 5
- 15. Getting away from stress and pressure. 1 2 3 4 5
- 16. Recovering strength. 1 2 3 4 5
- 17. Having time to do what please me. 1 2 3 4 5
- 18. Shopping in Thailand is much more fun and cheaper. 1 2 3 4 5
- 19. Enjoy nightlife and party. 1 2 3 4
5
- 20. Enjoy and being in the nature. 1 2 3 4
5

B2. If you decide to travel to Thailand, you will most likely chose:

- Part of an organized tour (package tour/chartered flight)
- Individually organized
- Unorganized

B3. When you go for a vacation in foreign country, says, somewhere in Asia, how long do you think you will be likely to stay?

- less than 7 days
- 7– 14 days
- 14 – 21 days
- 3 weeks or more

B4. From the media listed below, which have you seen or heard a lot about Thailand tourism (more than one option is allowed)?

- Travel agency advertisement
 Travel brochures / guides
 TV/ radio
 Internet / Social media (e.g. facebook, twitter, blog)
 Family / friends
 Tourism board / Fair
 Newspapers / magazines
 Advertisement at bus stop (billboard)
 Other _____

B5. If you decide to visit a country where you have never been to (e.g. Thailand), what will be your main motivation (more than one answer is allowed)?

- Beach holiday / Nightlife
 Family / friend visit
 Escape winter / Sport holiday
 Spiritual holiday / spa / wellness
 Cultural holiday / festival
 Study / placement / work
 Honeymoon
 Erotic visit / sex tourism
 Nature / Eco-tourism
 Other _____

Part C - Demographic features

C1. Gender: Male Female

C2. Age group:

- 18-25 years 26-35 years 36-50 years 51 and older

C3. Marital status: Single Married / Cohabitation

C4. Are you a Norwegian citizen: Yes No – time spent in Norway _____

C5. What is the highest level of education that you have obtained?

- Lower than High School High School Associate Degree
 Bachelor Degree Masters Degree Doctorate/Professional Degree

C6. What is your annual income (NOK)?

- Less than 300,000 310,000 – 450,000 460,000 – 600,000
 610,000 – 1 million

C7. On what basis do you work at UIS?

- Full time job Part time job Extra help Other

C8. How often do you have your vacation outside of Norway EACH YEAR?

1- 3 times 4 – 8 times 9 times or more

I prefer to have my vacation in Norway

Appendix C:

Motivation factors under scale – ‘visitor’ segment

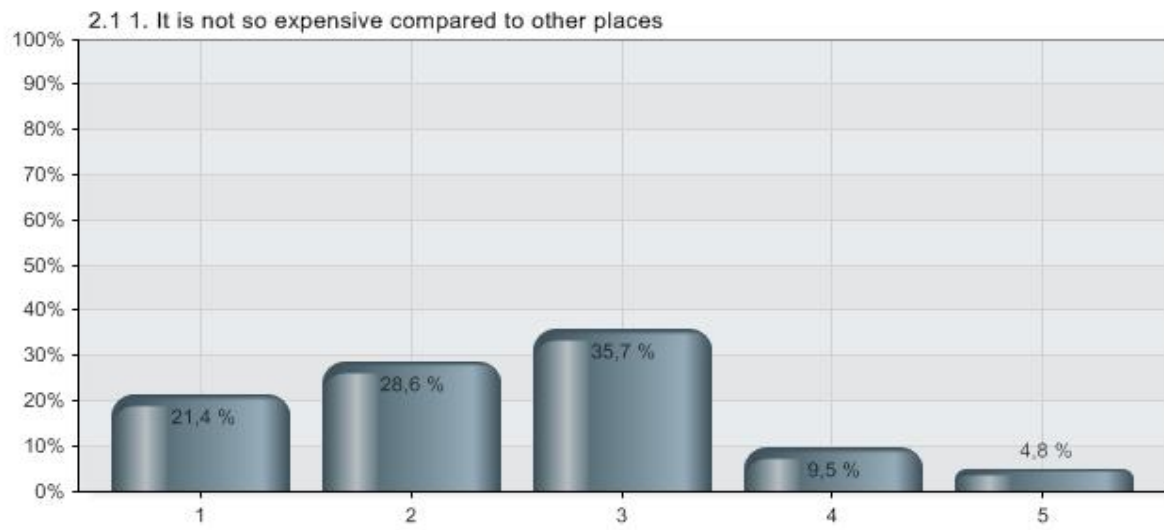


Figure C.1 – Expense compared to other places



Figure C.2 – Importance of chartered flight

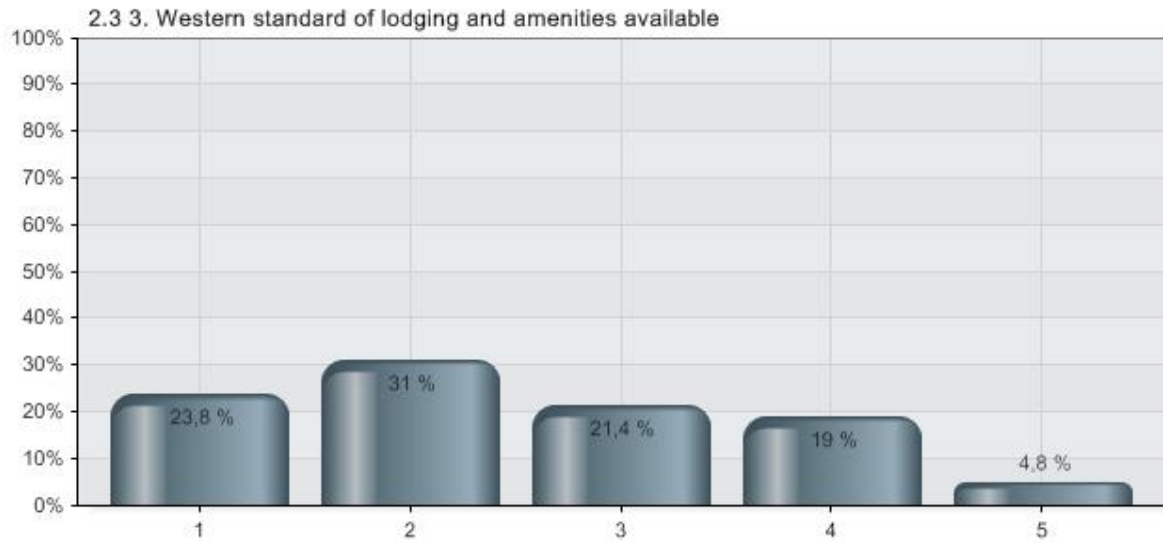


Figure C.3 – Importance of Western standard of lodging, amenities

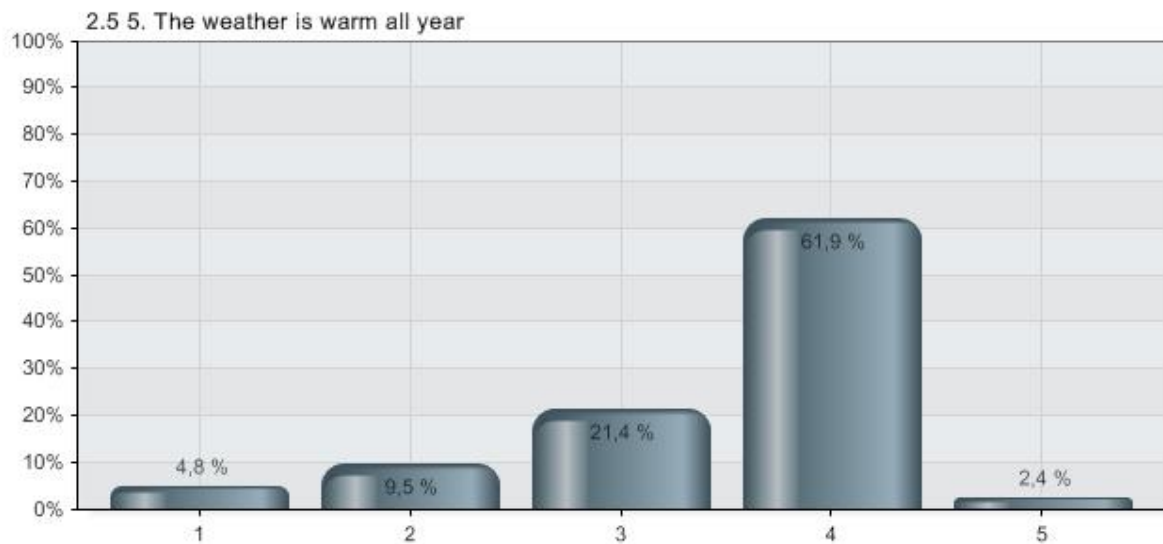


Figure C.4 – Importance for weather

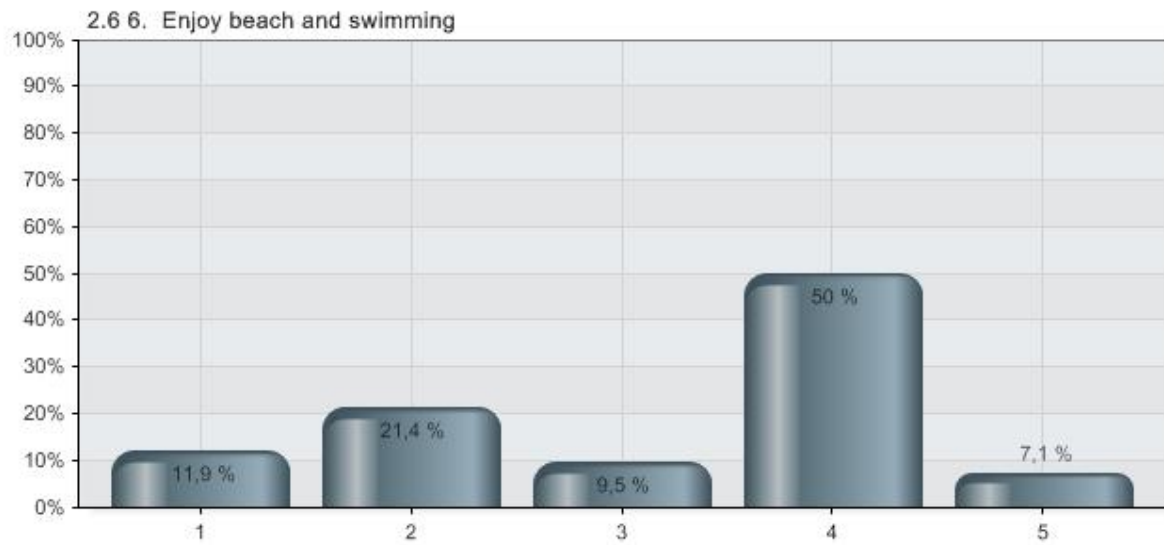


Figure C.5 – Beach and swimming

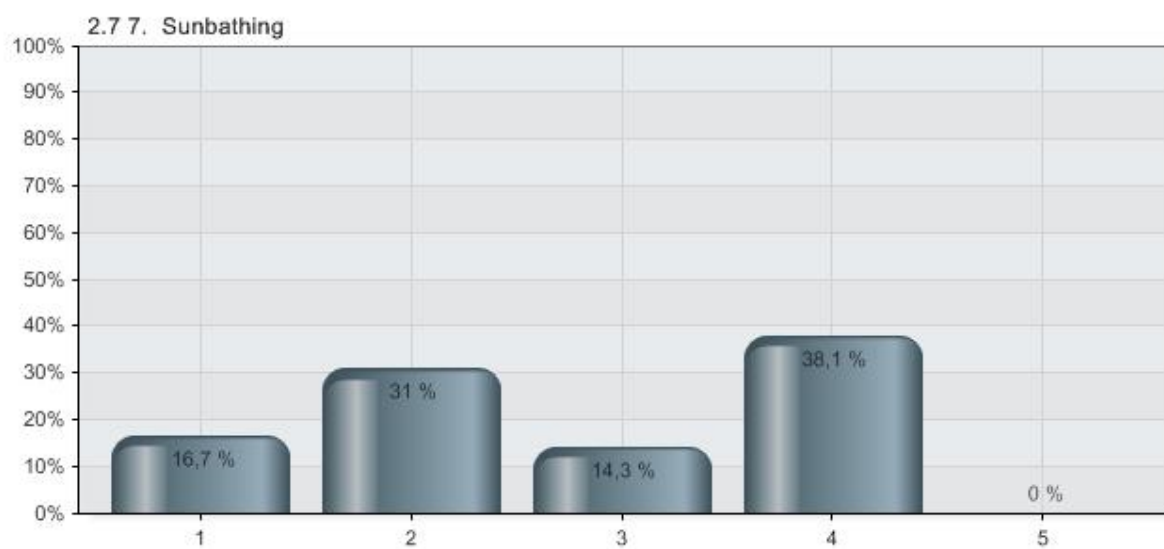


Figure C.6 - Sunbathing

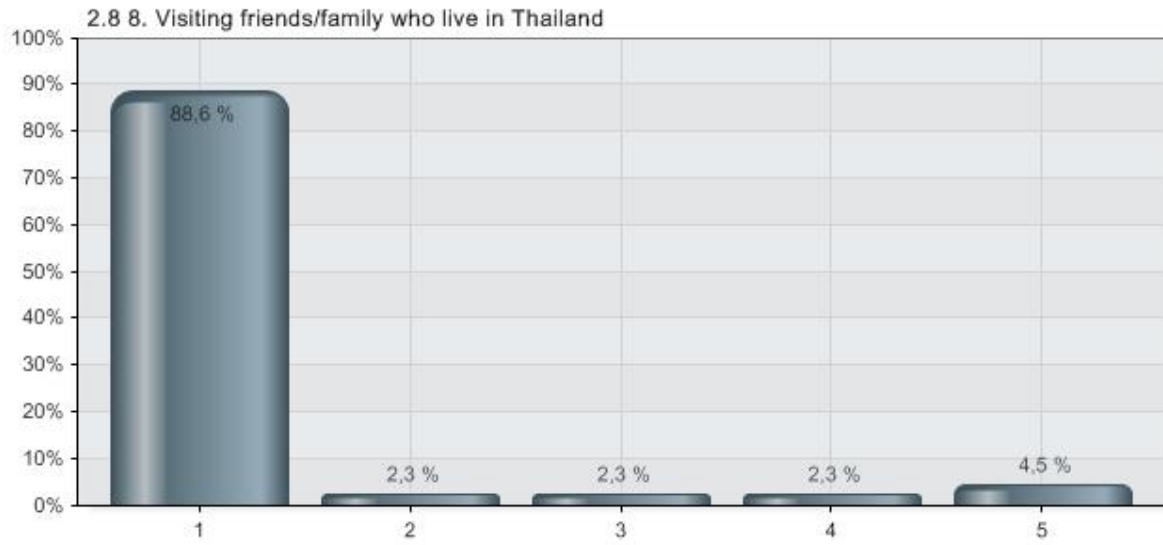


Figure C.7 – Visiting Family

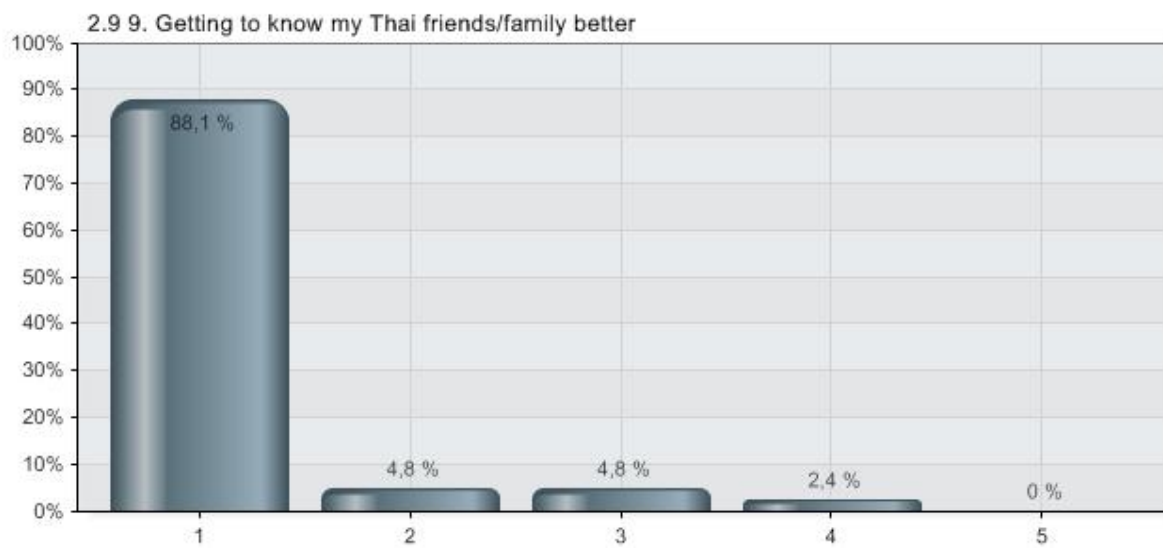


Figure C.8 – Getting to know family and friends

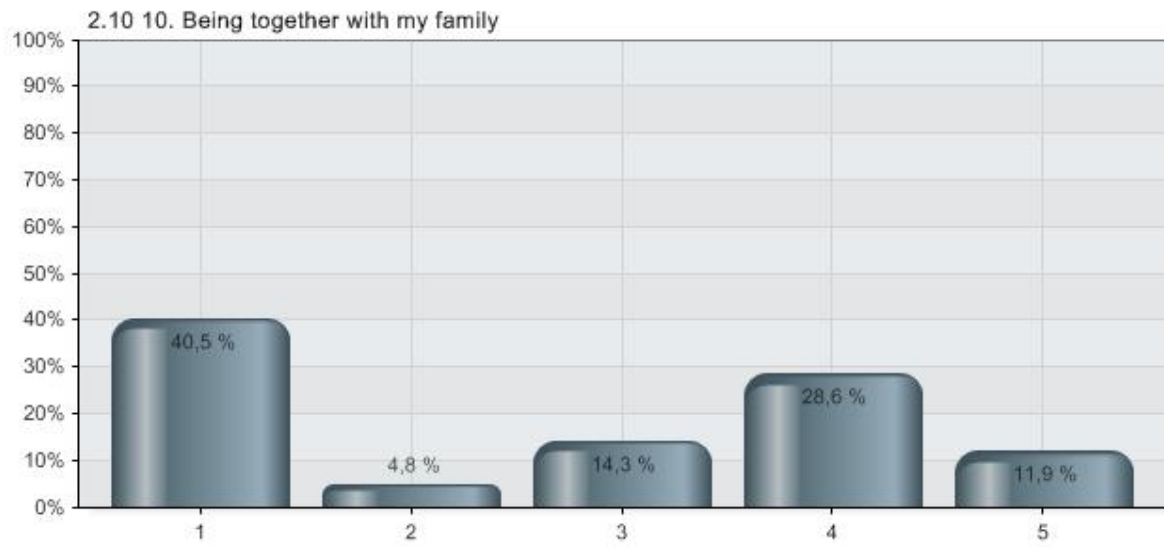


Figure C.9 – Being with family

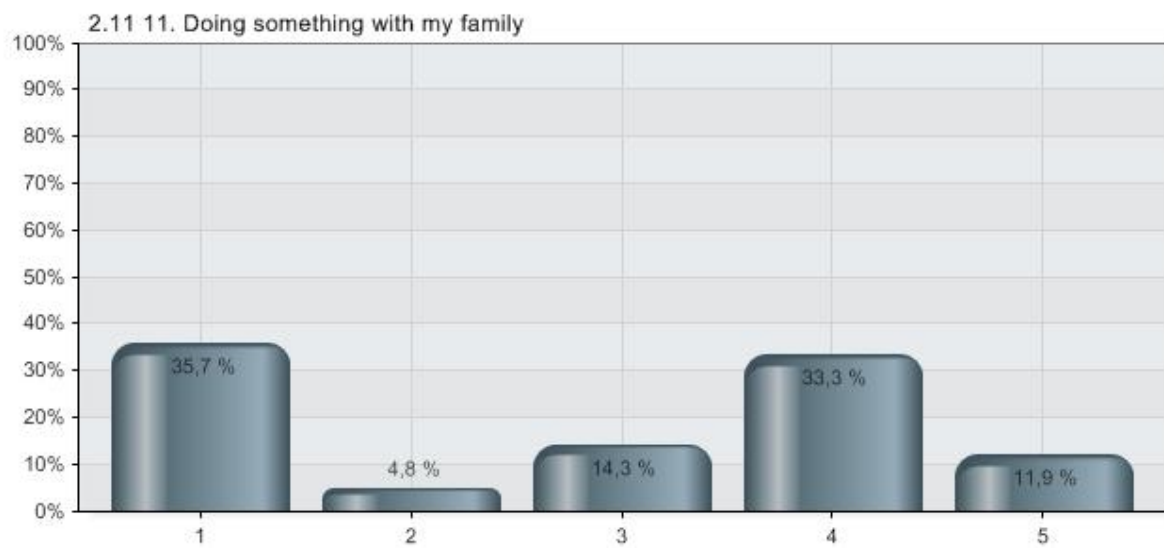


Figure C.10 – Family activities

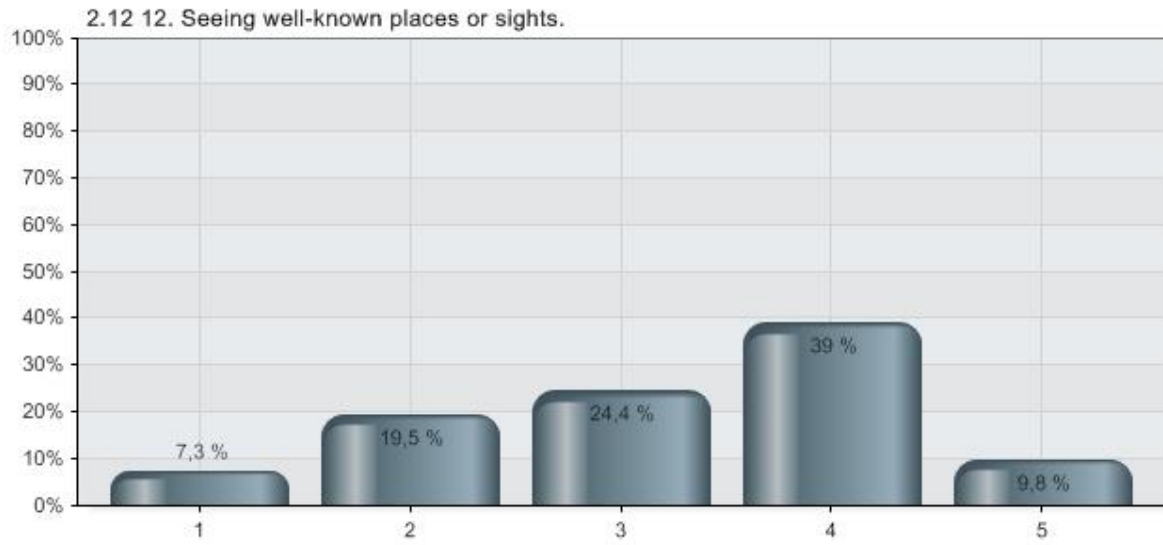


Figure C.11 – Seeing sights

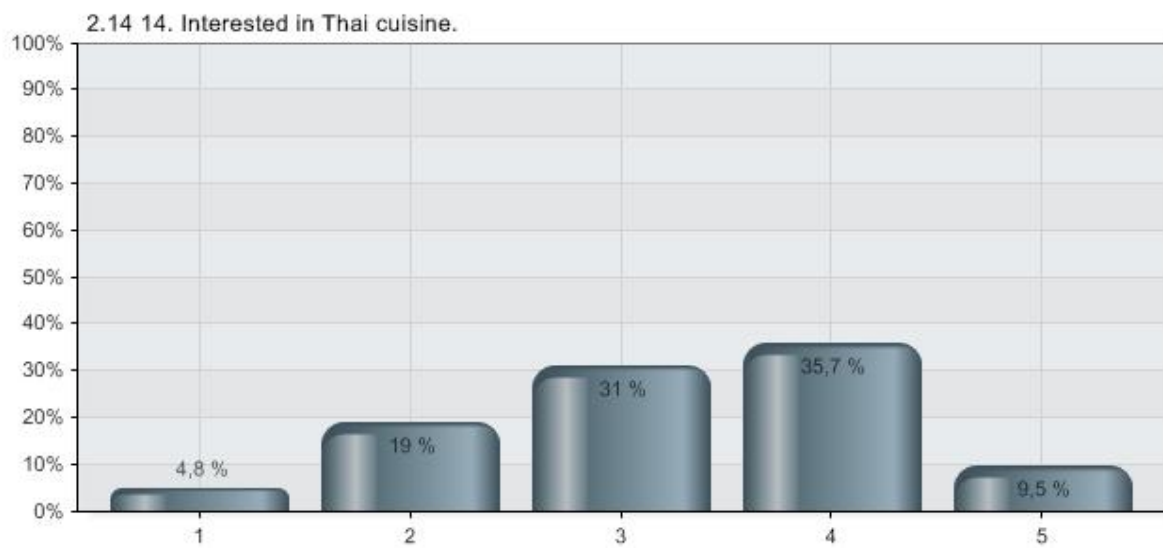


Figure C.12 – Thai cuisine

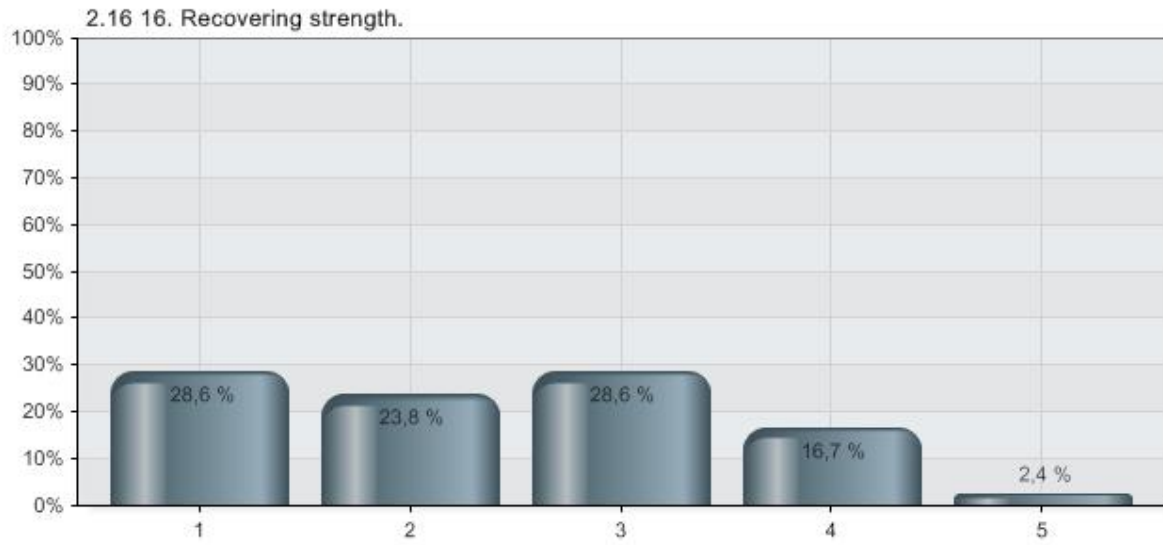


Figure C.13 – Recovering strength

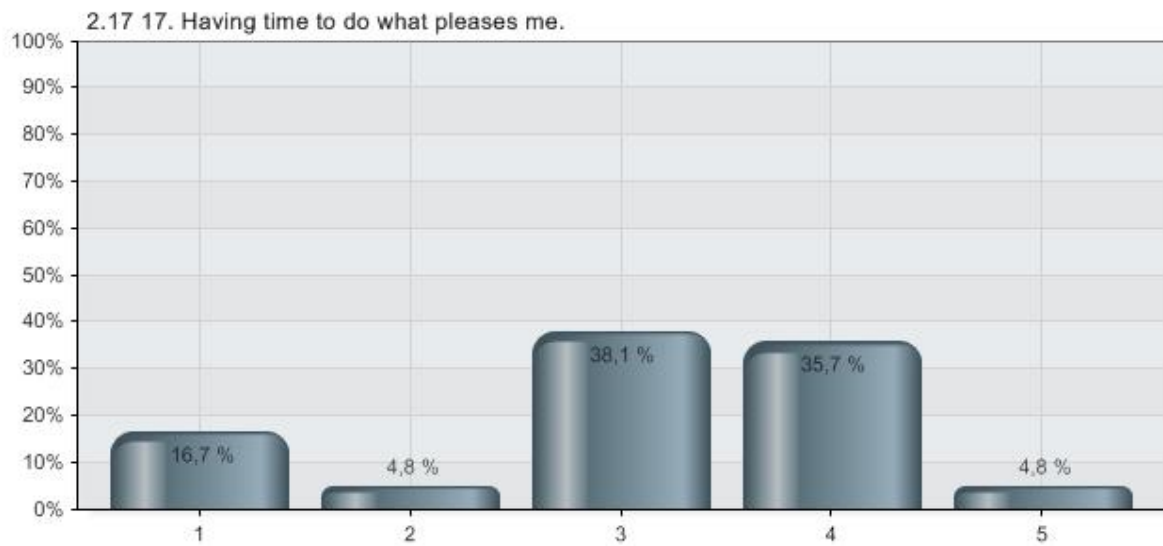


Figure C.14 – Spending time on one's own

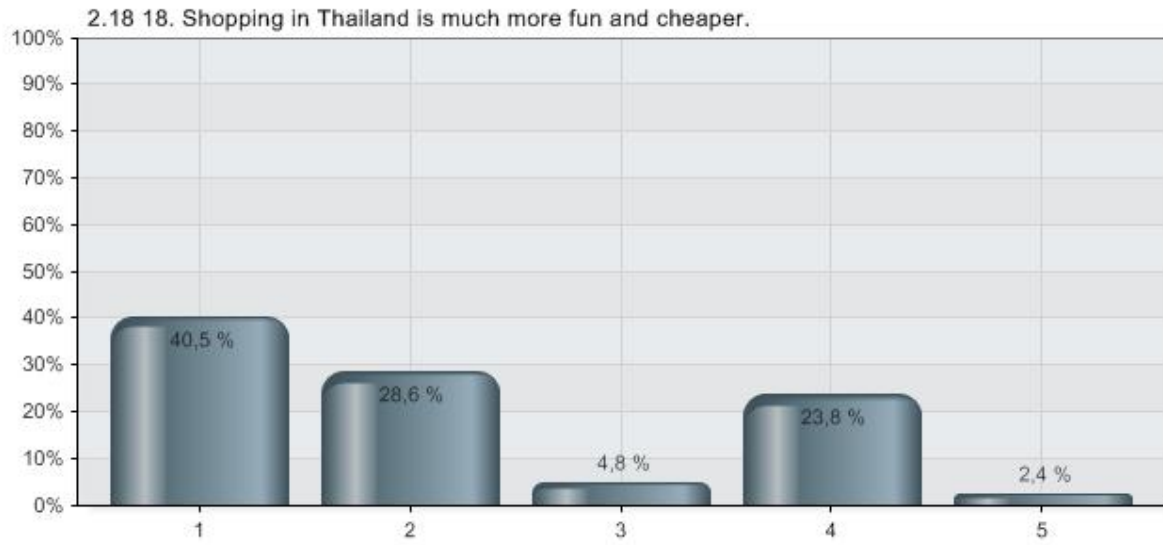


Figure C.15 - Shopping

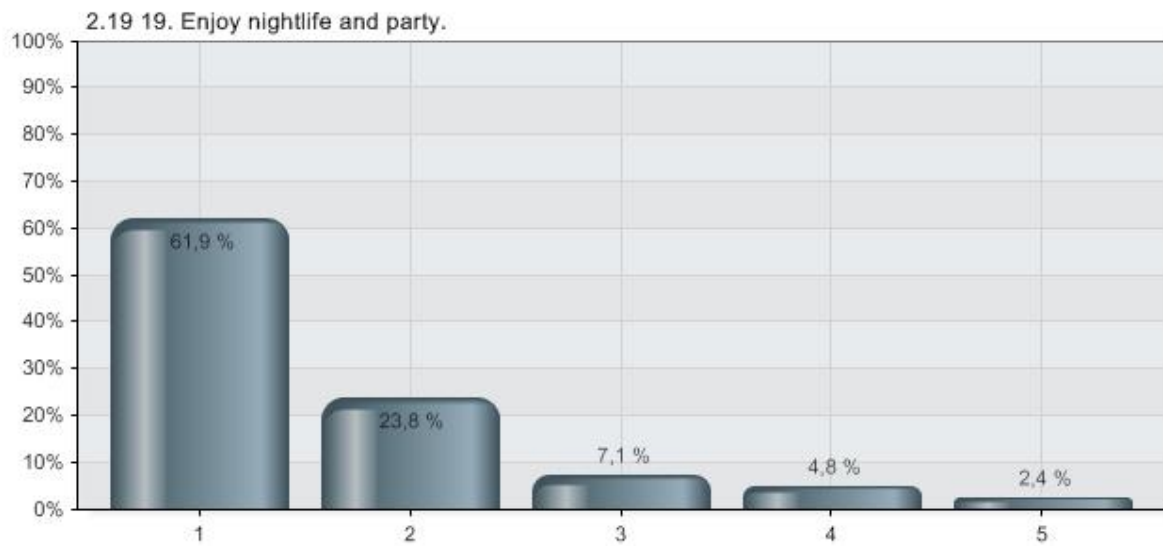


Figure C.16 – Night Life

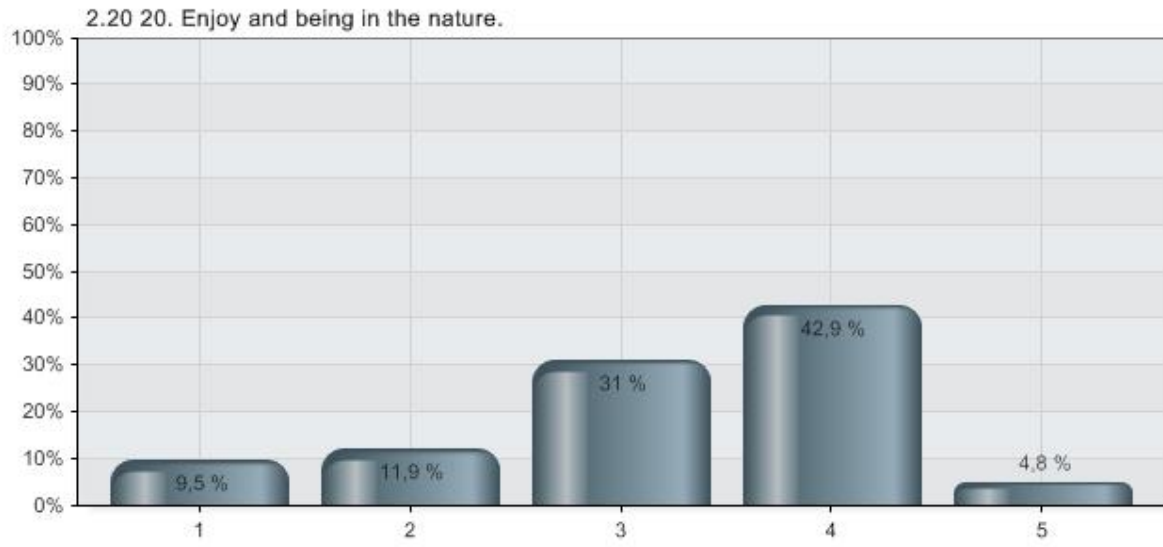
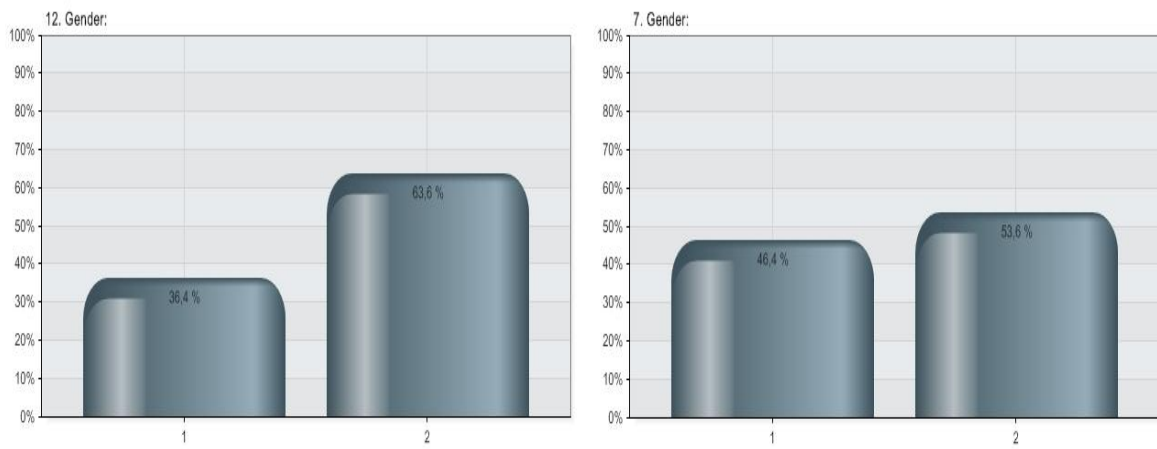


Figure C.17 - Nature

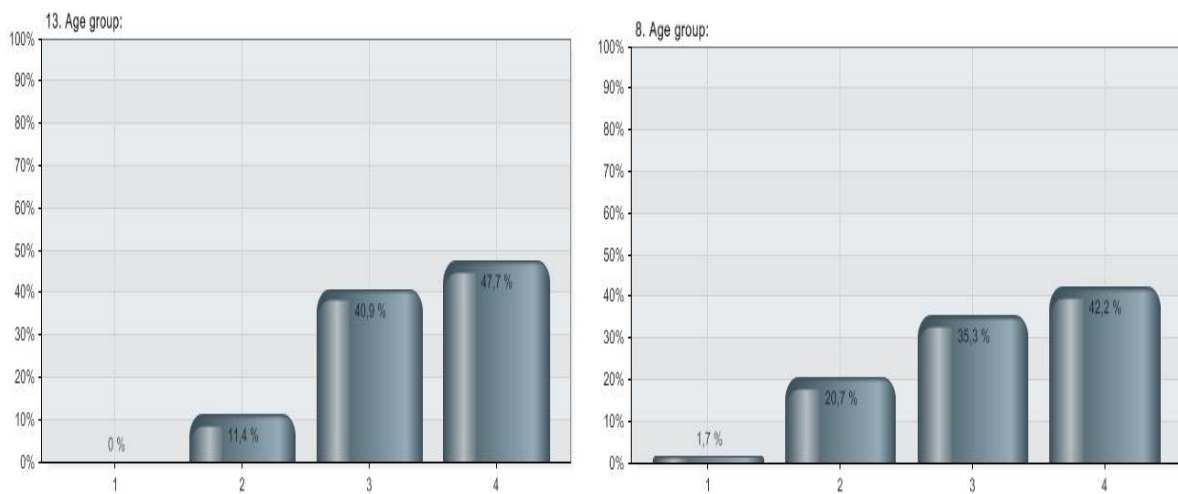
Appendix D:

Demographic figures for Visitors (Left chart) and Non-visitors (Right chart)



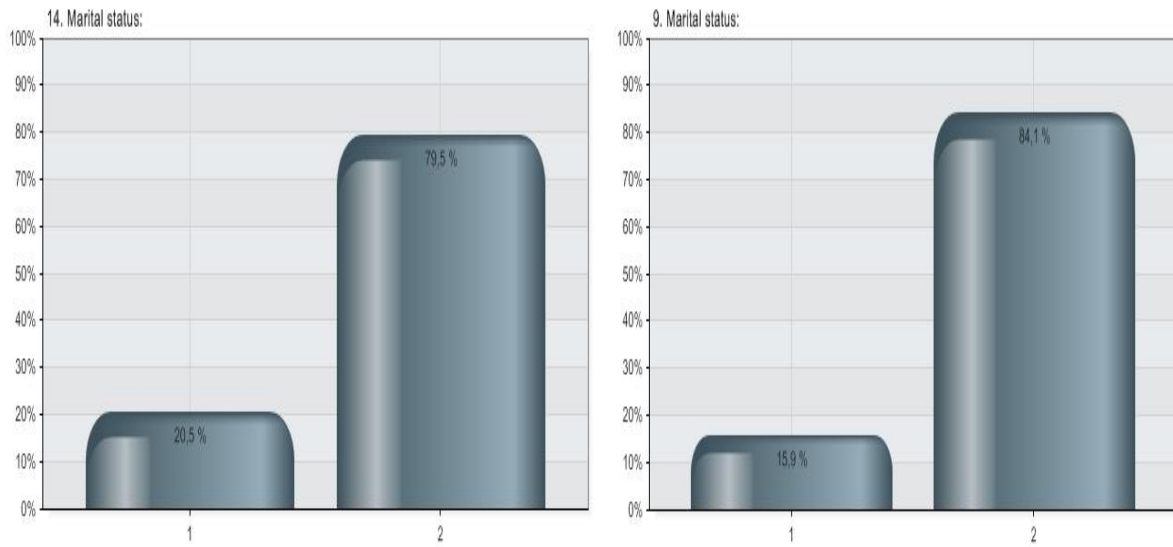
Alternatives	1	2
	Male	Female

Figure D.1 Gender of Visitors and Non-visitors



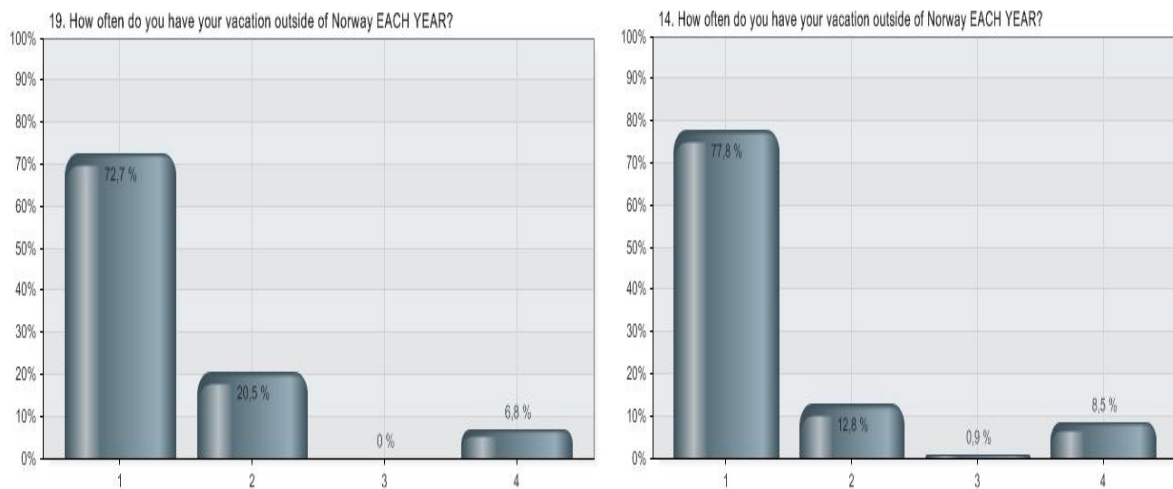
Alternatives	1	2	3	4
	18-25 years	26-35 years	36-50 years	51 and older

Figure D.2 Age group of Visitors and Non-visitors



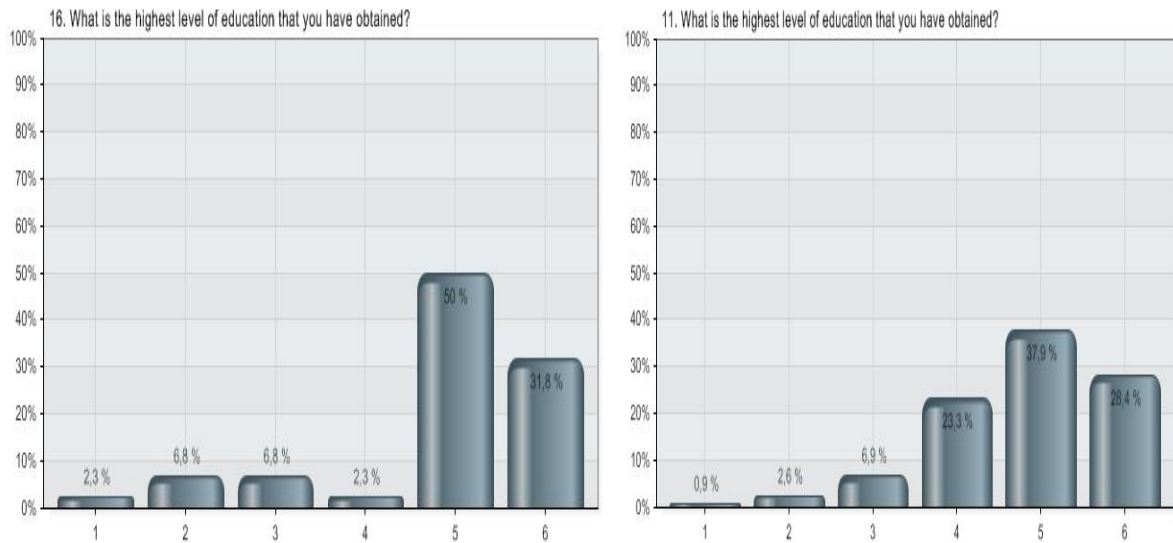
Alternatives	1	2
	Single	Married / Cohabitation

Figure D.3 Marital status of Visitors and Non-visitors



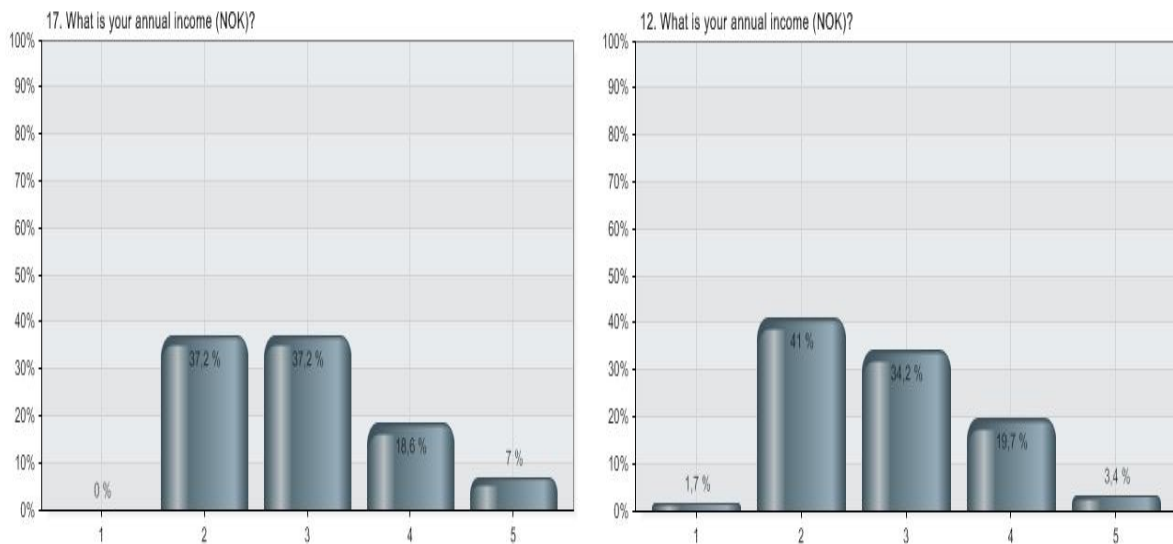
Alternatives	1	2	3	4
	1- 3 times	4 - 8 times	9 times or more	I prefer to have my vacation in Norway

Figure D.4 Frequency of travel outbound by Visitors and Non-visitors



Alternatives	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Lower than High School	High School	Associate Degree	Bachelor Degree	Masters Degree	Doctorate/ Professional Degree

Figure D.5 Educational background of Visitors and Non-visitors



Alternatives	1	2	3	4	5
	Less than 300,000	310,000 – 450,000	460,000 – 600,000	610,000 – 1 million	Prefer not to answer

Figure D.6 Income level of Visitors and Non-visitors