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Thai Tourists' Souvenir Shopping Experience in Korea

Sirin Poraksa*

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Shopping is considered a 'must-do' activity for most people on travel. One of the major parts of tourist shopping is the purchasing of souvenirs. Souvenirs are universally associated with tourism as a commercially produced and purchased object to remind the purchaser of the experience.

Recently, Korea becomes one of the most popular destinations that many Asian tourists like to visit. Among those Asian tourists, the number of Thai tourists bound for Korea shows an incredible rapid growth. Thai people pick Korea and Seoul as their favorite country and city to visit for three consecutive years since 2009. One of the major reasons why Thais are choosing to tour Korea is the enthusiasm for Korean pop culture. That is, 'Hallyu' has influenced Thais' decision to visit Korea and purchase Korean products.

The primary objective of the current research is to explore the shopping experiences of Thai tourists, specifically their souvenir shopping. It adopts a reflexive interpretive approach to bring light to the various meanings Thai tourists attach to the souvenirs they purchase in Korea. In order to accomplish the objective, the individual interviews were conducted. A total of 12 Thais who have experienced traveling in Korea participated in the study. Four themes were identified through interview text analysis. First, the research participants almost always purchase souvenirs in Korea because the souvenirs represent their identities as tourists. Especially, they purchase the souvenirs as gifts for others, including family members, friends, and colleagues. The souvenirs as gifts show love and thanks to others, and they cement the social relationship. However, purchasing souvenirs for others is more like the moral obligations which evoke the psychological stress. Secondly, the research participants feel closer to Korea while shopping souvenirs around. Thirdly, they obtain imaginative experiences and pleasure through souvenirs related to the Korean pop culture. Souvenirs provide them to visually extraordinary experiences. Lastly, souvenirs purchased in Korea act as visible status marker when they go back to Thailand. They show the socioeconomic status and lifestyles. Tourists themselves and others place special value to souvenirs that were purchased out of Thailand.

The findings of this study are of both academic and practical importance. Souvenirs are among the most pervasive elements of the travel experience. However, souvenir shopping is the complicated

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consumer behavior within tourism both from business and social science perspectives. Along the same line, it needs strategic approaches in order to maximize the economy effects. It concludes by suggesting how further research could offer unique insights into how the souvenirs are positioned both in the context of tourism academics and industry.

Key words: souvenir, souvenir shopping experience, Thai tourists, Korean tourism

I. Introduction

Korea became one of the most popular destinations that many Thai outbound tourists dream of. According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (www.tourismthailand.org), the number of Thai tourists bound for Korea with touristic purpose has increased more than triple times from 2005 (69,994) to 2013 (205,631). According to the Korea Tourism Statistics by the Korea Culture and Tourism Institute (www.tour.go.kr), the number of Thai tourists rose 10 percent in 2005 and 25.3 percent in 2012. In a survey of 3,800 Chinese, Japanese and Thais by pollster Nielsen, most Thais named Seoul as the city they want to visit this year. They picked Korea and Seoul as their favorite country and city to visit for three consecutive years since 2009 (Seoul Capital News, 2011.3.15). Kasikorn Research Center (2010) also reported that South Korea became one of the most popular Eastern Asian destinations among Thai tourists. This data can clearly show an incredible rapid growth in the proportion of Thai

tourists traveling in Korea.

There are many reasons why more and more Thais are choosing to tour Korea. The biggest draw is the enthusiasm for Korean pop culture. In the early 1990s, Japanese cultural exports dominated the Thai's popular youth imagination (Siriyuvasak & Shin, 2007). After the Korean soap operas, such as "Winter Sonata" "Autumn in my Heart", and "Full House" have hit in the late 1990s and the early 2000s, as do k-pop bands like Super Junior, the number of Korean drama and movie contents broadcast on the Thailand's over-the-air TV channels in 2011 totaled 59, and their combined broadcasting time was 81,523 minutes. In the meantime, in a survey of 1,000 Thailand people, 836 said Hallyu had influenced their purchasing of Korean products (Korea Times, 2011. 12. 6). The focus has shifted from Japan to Korea, as Korea is suddenly viewed by Thai fans as "hip" and "trendy." More recently, "Hello Strangers" and other Thai movies were filmed on Nami island in Korea, and they have been a big hit among Thai moviegoers, further encouraging more Thais to visit Korea.

Meanwhile, shopping has become a major component of the tourist experience. According to the Korea Tourism Organization (2010), Thai tourists buy cosmetics, clothes, and other fashion and beauty-related products, while per-capita spending among Thai tourist reached \$1,392 in 2010, higher than Japanese tourists' average of \$1,070. Since tourism is related to quest for extraordinary experiences in another time and another place, bringing souvenirs home from extraordinary places can make the tourists feel the extraordinary experiences at home in the everyday life. The souvenir can be regarded as the recapture or reproduction of tourist gaze and tourist experiences influenced by the power of cultural experience production.

The previous research regarding souvenir purchase has been concentrated on the consumer behavior and satisfaction on buying souvenir and gift products (Kim & Littrell, 1999, 2001; Swanson & Horridge, 2004). Seldom did the scholars focused methodologically on the depth meaning and explanation about the mechanism which dominates consumers to buy souvenirs. Despite of the considerable increase of Thai outbound tourists traveling to Korea, little research exists that investigates the souvenir purchase behavior of Thai tourists in Korea. All things considered, this study aims to understand Thai tourists' souvenir shopping behavior and experiences in Korea, especially the meaning they ascribe to the souvenir, and present clues to the sales promotion of souvenir goods.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Tourism and souvenir shopping

Shopping is considered a 'must-do' activity for most people on travel and much of what tourists buy can be classified as souvenirs. Souvenir is originally a French verb indicating the action to remember. Translated as an English noun it represents an object might be a place, occasion, event or even a person (Swanson & Timothy, 2012).

The term souvenir has several general connotations within tourism literature. The first view of souvenirs can be seen primarily from the merchants' or supplier's perspective. As a tourist commodity, it is found in souvenir shops and handicraft markets. The commodity has exchange value in the marketplace and is produced, distributed, and consumed with few emotional attachments (Swanson, 2004). The second refers to the tourists' perspective. As a symbolic reminder of an event or experience, it serves as tangible markers of events, places or experiences, imbued with meaning and consequence. Souvenirs can trigger an imaginary return to memorable times and places, and are often strategically placed in the home where they can best be seen by family members and visitors (Peters, 2011). Tourists also purchase the souvenirs in order to fulfill their desire of novelty (Timothy, 2005), or authenticity

(MacCannell, 1999). Also, souvenirs serve as gift for self or for significant others (Park, 2008). They accomplish the social needs.

Meanwhile, academic perceptions of souvenirs can be quite contrary (Swanson & Timothy, 2012). Scholars concurrently describe souvenirs in a positive light or criticism. They are simultaneously granted significance and disregarded (Ramsay, 2009). On the one hand, souvenirs are highly regarded by tourists: they are tangible, magical, sentimental, and cherished objects of memorable experiences; or an "intangible reminder or golden memory." (McKercher & du Cros, 2002, p. 230). On the other hand, many studies disparage souvenirs as cheap, insubstantial, mass-produced kitsch with which tourists have a "misguided preoccupation" (Lasusa, 2007, p. 287). The contrary nature of the views of souvenirs is further illustrated by the consideration of the souvenir as a commodity for sale to remember "locations and experiences that are not for sale" (Stewart, 1993, p. 136). Overall, tourism and souvenir research has tended to so far to focus on three major aspects: souvenirs as holders of meaning (Lasusa, 2007; Morgan & Pritchard, 2005; Stewart, 1993), souvenir as tradable commodities (Hu & Yu, 2007; Reisinger & Turner, 2002), and souvenirs as products of commodification (Adams, 2008; Hume, 2009).

2.2 Thai outbound tourist traveling to Korea

Thai outbound tourism has been fueled by the rapidly rising income level of middle class Thais. This rise in disposal income has led them to search for tourism destinations abroad. According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand, the average growth rate of the outbound tourism was 12.7% since 2000 compared to 6.1% with the growth rate of the local tourism. Furthermore, it has gone up to the 17.8% from 2005 to 2007. Thais reported that Japan is the top destination for Thai travelers followed by Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and China, and that they are ready to spend more on overseas travel.

Thai outbound tourist traveling to Korea has been increasing significantly since 2001. Before 2000, only a small number of Thais, such as 20,000 to 30,000 per year travelled Korea, and most of them travelled for business. However, Thai outbound tourists traveling to Korea have increased more than triple times from 2005 to 2010. From Korea Tourism statistics, the number of tourists from Japan, Taiwan declined while those from Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and China increased.

The most universal reason why Thais are more and more interested in touring Korea is 'Hallyu,' "Korean Wave", or 'Korean Fever' sweeping Thailand. As the domination of Korea pop culture in Thai society, Thai people

want to get closer to Korea. Many Thai people like to try Korean foods, study Korean, and visit Korea in the end. Because of 'Korean fever,' Thai people had a better image of Korea than they had about 10 years ago (Boonsueb, 2011). Furthermore, Korean pop stars have influenced their purchasing behavior. Korean fashions from clothes to cosmetics become a new trend among Thais' young generation. For instance, 78.2% of Thai women use Korean cosmetics (Boonsueb, 2011). In addition, other factors are influenced to Thai outbound tourists to Korea. First is the convenience of transportation because of increasing flights, especially low-cost airlines, making possible lower budget. Visa exemption between Korea and Thailand also contributes to Korea's attractiveness as destination. And due to the rising income level in Thailand, many Thais can afford to travel oversea.

There is no research about Thai tourist's consumer behavior except Chaipinit and Phetvaroon (2011). They investigated motivation and behavior of Thai outbound tourists to Europe. According to their study, Thai tourists received traveling information from travel agents and internet sources. And most of Thai tourists traveled to Europe for relaxation and leisure, and the most popular activities are visiting architectural sites and sightseeing. Thai tourists are influenced by the desire to experience European landscapes, and explore new things including different cultures and lifestyles. Even

though Chaipinit and Phetvaroon (2011)'s study provides the insights about Thai tourist's behavior, it would be different from outbound tourists to Korea. For example, one of the most popular activities for Thai outbound tourists to Korea is shopping for favored Hallyu products or visiting their favorite movie/dramas shooting locations (Boonsueb, 2011). Thus, it is acknowledged that destination could be a factor to influence tourists' behavior.

III. Methodology

3.1 Individual interview

In order to understand the experiences of Thai tourists' souvenir shopping, individual interviews were conducted. A total of 12 participants who have experienced traveling in Korea participated with the individual interview, and they were fully briefed of the aim of the research. Also, they are informed that the interviewing process was recorded, it guarantees the confidentiality, and they can quit anytime for any reasons. The interviews were conducted from July 16, 2011 to August 24, 2011 in Bangkok and other Metropolitan regions, Thailand. The interview questions were unstructured in order to make them freely as possible. The interviews were conducted around the essential experiences of Thai peoples' trav-

eling experiences in Korea, and especially their experiences of purchasing souvenirs. For example, the reason why they pick Korea to travel, the types of souvenirs they purchase in Korea, meaning of souvenir in their traveling experiences, or any differences in souvenir shopping they experiences in Korea and in Thailand. The participants were asked to choose Thai or English. The records of interview were translated into Thai at first, and retranslated into English afterwards. To ensure the intersubjective agreement, the participants were contacted both via e-mail or phone calls.

3.2 Research participants

The participants were 20s to 50s years old, and have at least once travelled in Korea. Most of the participants had previous knowledge about Korea by watching Korean dramas and TV show programs. All of them purchased the souvenirs from Korea, since they thought that purchasing souvenirs is a must to do when they make a trip. The more specific information about the research participants as follows.

Ampaipan (39 years old/female)'s first trip to Korea was 2 years ago with her friends. At that time, she found out traveling Korea is not troublesome even though she cannot speak Korean. She, then, travelled Korea again with her younger sister. She enjoyed shopping small souvenirs such as key rings, pens, or local snacks. Arthit (24 years old/male) is majoring

Korea during her undergraduate college. It greatly motivated him to travel in Korea. He is personally interested in food, so he bought during his trip in Korea Kimchi and preserved squid back home. Chumpol (38 years old/male) is a businessman. He visited Korea for business for the first time in 2009. Since then he has started watching Korean dramas, he became interested in Korean culture. Afterwards, he travelled Korea several times. He likes to buy a set of spoons and chopsticks as souvenirs.

Jirarat (30 years old/female) had visited Korea for the first time in 2004 when the tourism in Korea was not much popular among Thais. She bought many pieces of souvenirs both for self and others. As shopping mania, she often comes to Korea for shopping. She considered local cosmetics as souvenirs, too. Jinarpa (51 years old/female) went to Korea for four times in past two years. As Korean drama mania, she carried lots of knowledge about Korea. Seeing the drama scene, chilling weather, and Korean fashion are major motivation to visit Korea. Pang (27 years old/female)'s first trip to Korea was 7 years ago. She won a Korean singer ticket in a Thai radio program. After coming back from the first trip, she started watching Korean dramas, and learning Korean.

Palakorn (26 years old/male) is fascinated in Korean culture. He enjoys Korean foods, and sightseeing Korean traditional street. He likes to collect souvenirs such as jigsaws at Korean

palace and Namsan Tower, postcard, pens, bookmarks, etc. Putthachat (30 years old/female) heard many times from friends how interesting the trip in Korea. So she decided to visit Korea with her friends. She loves shopping, and seeing people around at coffee shop. She bought dolls, passport covers, and magnet as souvenirs. Ramphai (26 years old/female) loves visiting Korea during vacation because of no entry visa and short flight. She is magnet and postcard collector. She thought souvenirs remind her good experiences of her travel. Thanaporn (24 years old/female) is majoring in Arts, so she is interested in visiting art galleries and visiting landmark building. She thought that souvenirs must be something unique, and that's why she bought necklace, lighters with graphic arts, and bottles of Korean alcohol, soju. Wekmatee (28 years old/female) did not have any special interest in Korea, but due to Korea got hit as a popular destination among Thais, she thought that she must have to go at some time. Rather than landscapes and sightseeing, she is most interested in Koreans' lifestyles, for instance, eating, fashions, relaxing. She bought Korean seaweeds as her souvenirs. Wilai (29 years old/female) is a Korean drama mania. That's why she decided to visit Korea at first. Moreover, she knew many Korean colleagues in Korea and Thai. And she is pretty familiar with Korean culture. She purchased local foods such as seaweeds and ginseng as presents for her colleagues.

3.3 Text analysis

This research used the phenomenological reflection of van Manen (1990) which is the wholistic and selective approach to seek the essential meanings of the experiences. In the wholistic approach, the text as a whole is attended, that is what sententious phrase may capture the fundamental meaning or main significance of the text as whole? And meaning by formulating such a phrase is expressed. In the selective approach, what statements or phrases seem particularly essential or revealing about the experience is highlighted. Through reading a text several times and ask those questions, it is noted that certain experiential themes recur as commonality in the various descriptions, and then hold on to these themes by lifting appropriate phrases or by capturing in singular statements the main thrust of the meaning of the themes.

IV. Results

4.1 I shop souvenirs, therefore I am the tourist

In the event of hunting through the international market for places where one can visit and buy the best souvenirs, the individual automatically engages in tourist activities and

therefore becomes a tourist. Many of the tourists feel that their trip is not complete if they have not purchased the souvenirs (Horridge & Swanson, 2006). Most of the participants in this research said that when they travel, they always purchase souvenirs. This is because they think that souvenirs represent their trips thus making them tourists.

"I will keep buying souvenirs no matter how often I go to Korea." (Palakorn)

"Every time I go to Korea, I buy magnets, magnets, magnets. Even though I visit the same places I have ever been before, I still buy." (Jinarpa)

"I think even it is the same kind of souvenirs, but the design of products will be changed. Each piece of souvenirs tells me the experiences of each time I went to Korea." (Ramphai)

The research participants purchase souvenirs because of their friends, relatives, and colleagues back in Thailand. They said that in order to have a good social relationship with friends, relatives as well as colleagues, they should do buy the souvenirs as gifts for others. The research participants buy souvenirs in order to express love and thanks to others while they feel a moral obligation toward others. Although the participants were not asked to bring the souvenirs directly, they will be guilty returning home without 'something'. Souvenirs cement the social relationship (Komter &

Vollebergh, 1997).

"I buy the souvenirs as gifts for my colleagues, everyone in the office. I am just afraid that if I don't give the gifts to someone, those who don't receive might feel not good toward me." (Jinarpa)

"Some friends of my mother knew that I went to Korea. Mom told me to buy something for her friends. In case I am back without any gifts, it makes me feel guilty. I don't know how to tell them when they ask me about my trip. Thai people always bring something back to others, especially when we go to overseas, right?" (Pang)

In spite of implicit tradition, purchasing and selecting a souvenir for others make them feel stress. It is more like an assignment on duty which evokes stress on them. Furthermore, a souvenir must not be expensive. They consider that it is time-consuming, money-wasting, and psychological exhaustion activity.

"Buying souvenirs while traveling are troublesome. It wastes time and money, to spend unnecessary things. Almost everyone knew that I went to Korea. It is the reason why I need to purchase a lot of souvenirs." (Wekmatee)

"Searching and buying souvenirs as gifts for others is a kind of pressure. Searching for the right things makes me so stressful." (Wilai)

Souvenir shopping experience for Thai tourists in Korea is considered a 'must-do' activity as presents for others back in Thailand.

Souvenirs are a means of assisting social relationships, and expression of affection and thanks while showing traditional etiquette.

4.2 Getting closer to Korea through sparkling shopping experiences

All participants in this study said that Korea is a good place for shopping, since there are shopping places spread everywhere, not only markets, but also subway stations, airports, museums, and sightseeing places. Also, they had positive attitudes toward shopping in Korea. They delightfully went shopping many affordable price items. Analyzing the interviews of participants, it was found out that the participants who did independent trips went to shopping at Insadong Street, which represents Korean traditional culture and craft. They noted that they could not only buy various kinds of souvenirs, but also could enjoy the culture at the same time. On the other hand, the one travelling with package tour bought souvenirs at the shops set up by tour program. Nevertheless, some of participants said that they still could enjoy and purchase the variety of products. Even through souvenir shopping is not the primary motive for undertaking the trip in Korea, it is still one of preferred tourist activities among the research participants.

"Korea is a good place to shopping. Korean fashion is fabulous. Seoul is a place of 24 hours

for shopping." (Jirarat)

"You can shop everywhere in Korea from the early morning today until the early morning of the next day! It's so cool! I enjoyed shopping during the trip very much. We can also go shopping 24hrs in Seoul. It's amazing!" (Ampaipan)

"I like Korea because there are many shopping places." (Wilai)

Moreover, the decision making of purchase depends mainly on the impressions of shopkeepers' service performance. The shopkeepers who are able to speak Thai language gave the Thai tourists strong impression, during shopping in Korea. This shows the attempt of the shop to encourage the shoppers to spend money more on souvenirs. Since there is a language barrier among Thai tourists and Korean shopkeepers, the showing of attempt to recommend the products in Thai language supported Thai tourists to purchase more products.

"They know that there a lot of Thai tourists. That's the reason why they provide Thai-speaking staff. Thai people like this kind of service. It's like they know what the customers want. And it is advantage for both Thai tourists and the shops." (Arthit)

"I felt so good that the shopkeeper in Etude can speak a bit Thai, although I didn't actually want her help. However, she made me impressed. And I felt I wanted to buy more products because of her kindness." (Thanaporn)

4.3 Realization from drama to reality

As Korean wave gains popularity in Thailand, Thai people want to get closer to Korea. Many Thai people try Korean foods, study Korean language, purchase Korean product, or even inspire to visit Korea (Treesuwan, 2010). With increasing demands on Korean trend since 2000s, the new style of tourism called "Hallyu Trip" or "Dream Tour" which visit the place that used as the location on drama or TV series. Most of people who watched Korean TV series are interested in visiting Korea (Suppasawatgul, 2010). That is, media is one of the influential factors affecting Thai tourists' decision to travel in Korea (Kim & Kim, 2009; Suh & Suh, 2004).

"I bought spoons in Korea. I saw it in the Korean drama. Every time I use a set of spoon and chopsticks I bought in Korea, I feel as if I were a main actress eating 'bibimbub' on the drama." (Pang)

"I bought silver chopsticks which represent Korea. No matter who see the chopsticks, they can know that they have been from Korea. When I use them in Thai, I can feel Korean atmosphere." (Chumpol)

"Before I went to Korea, I saw the Korean TV program. One of the Super Junior wore big cute gloves. I planned that I would definitely get one when I was in Korea. You know what? I wear the gloves bought from Korea. And my husband

bought it, too. I feel like we are Korea love couple." (Puttachat)

Thai tourists visit the shot places of Korean drama scenes, such as Nami Island. It provides them to visual experience of extraordinary images. In order to keep the note as everyday picture, Thai tourists purchase substitute articles which is souvenirs. This act is considered that they go through fantasized path; they obtain imaginative experiences and pleasure contributed through souvenir consumption. Urry (2002) argues that the photos, postcards, and souvenirs can be regarded as the recaptures of tourist gaze influenced by the power of cultural experience production.

4.4 Show-off the lifestyles

The participants in this study have experience on travel in Thailand domestic area. And it is not necessary for them to buy local souvenirs for gifts to others. Souvenirs overseas act as visible status goods. They show the socioeconomic status and lifestyles. Tourists themselves and others place special value to souvenirs that were purchased out of Thailand.

"One reason to giving souvenirs to others is that I want to show off, I just returned from Korea. Travel abroad is concerned as a luxury, and classic. It smells as high-so people. So buying Korean souvenirs makes more luxurious." (Arthit)

"Buying souvenirs means I have visited other countries. If I give my friend a piece of souvenirs, she will immediately ask if I went to Korea. Recently, the image of traveling Korea is more popular than the past. But, it still remains being high-so. So, buying, collecting, giving souvenirs are in the purpose of showing off, let others know that I have ever been Korea." (Jirarat)

The souvenirs are purchased for oneself as well as for others. Some of the participants in this study said that they decorated photos of Korea as well as Korean souvenirs in their living room because it is the open space for visitors to see.

"I intentionally put the photos and souvenirs on the desk in the living room. Guests can easily notice that I have travelled a lot. When friends come to my home, everyone knows that I went to Korea. And they ask me about the trip, then I happily tell them my experiences." (Puttachat)

V. Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, Thai tourists expressed their souvenir shopping experiences while traveling in Korea. From the perspective of Thai tourists in this study, souvenir itself reminds them that they are tourists. In this process, they express affection and duty to their significant others, and spend the imaginative experiences about Korea which are fantasized through the Korean

Wave. And they considered souvenirs as the object of a status marker. What has been said can be classified under the rubric of souvenirs as messengers of meaning, symbolic memory, and consumable commodities (Swanson & Timothy, 2012).

The findings of this study are academic importance. First of all, there are little studies as regards shopping behavior and souvenir consumption among different nationalities while certain Asian tourists are typically portrayed as big spenders. In this study, we can acknowledge that the Korean wave has influenced Thai tourists to choose Korea as their travel destination, and souvenir shopping helped them to acquire extraordinary experiences as well as to display the self in the mode of conspicuous consumption. Secondly, souvenirs are the symbolic marker of their tourists' identities, the purchasing souvenirs for others as gifts are the psychological burdens, feeling stress. It might reflect the unique Asian culture and customs that use souvenirs as a means of supporting a relationship with others (Park, 2008). Additionally, since the overseas travel represents the tourists' socioeconomic status, the souvenirs become a status marker. The souvenirs abroad display tourists' lifestyles, including their income and leisure practice. Even though the number of outbound Thai tourists has been increasing, the opportunity to travel abroad is still limited. So that's why Thai tourists favor souvenirs attached logos, directly showing that they visit

Korea. It might cause the commodification of traditional handicrafts as souvenirs. The art's social significance is diminished as it is mass-produced for tourist consumption. Likewise, the souvenirs have no real connection to the cultural elements they purport to display.

On the other hand, the research contributes to the practical practice. For instance, owing to the political and economic ties between Korea and Thailand, the Korean Wave in popular culture could be viewed in the tourism industry context. Thai tourists in Korea want to copy their Korean idols; it could be a good marketing point. Kim (2011) reported that Korea's television content exports have acted as a determinant of tourism demand to Korea, increasing the number of tourists' arrivals to Korea. This suggests that Korea needs strategic approaches in exporting its television content in order to maximize the economy effects and enhance the efficiency of implementing its tourism. Thai tourists in this study also express that a good point of shopping in Korea is the shopkeepers' foreign language ability. Paying attention on customer service improves the good experiences and satisfaction to the customer, and Thai tourists care the language service, affecting their shopping satisfaction and the amount of spending. Additionally, the factor of season, such as winter, is important because it doesn't snow in Thailand. To attract more visitors from the Southeast Asian country, the number of flights connecting those countries

should be increased, especially during winter. Furthermore, as Chu, Baek, and Ko (2013) suggested, low-cost airlines take chance to build a branding of a k-pop airline.

The research has thrown up many questions in need of deeper insight. Souvenirs are among the most pervasive elements of the travel experience; they are everywhere and take on many forms; they have existed as long as people continue to travel. There is still much to learn about the souvenir and its complexities within tourism both from business and social science perspective. For instance, more broadly, the future research should be needed to narrow a scope of the research participant into generation/gender group or travel mode to compare experiences of souvenir consumption. Especially, gender makes difference both in the souvenirs purchased and the motivations for purchase (Wilkins, 2011). It would be interesting to compare experiences of souvenir consumption between genders. Along the same line, social and cultural factors influencing tourists' souvenir purchasing behavior have to be adequately examined in the future study. Furthermore, along with the Korean mass media power, it would be interesting to define and compare experiences of souvenir consumption among tourists from other countries in the consumer culture's perspective.

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